



# **Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023**

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Bronze

Typically, the experience students have at Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance and the outcomes it leads to are high quality, and there are some very high quality features.

### Student experience: Bronze

The student academic experience is typically high quality and there are some very high quality features.

Very high quality features include:

- support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted
- a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support.

### Student outcomes: Bronze

Student outcomes are typically high quality and there are some very high quality features.

Very high quality features include:

- very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses
- articulation of the educational gains the provider intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students.

There was also an outstanding quality feature:

- outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

# About the assessment

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a national scheme run by the Office for Students (OfS) that aims to encourage universities and colleges (providers) to improve and deliver excellent teaching, learning and student outcomes.

The TEF does this by assessing and rating providers for excellence above the high quality baseline that we expect from all providers. It covers undergraduate courses.

Throughout this document, we use the terms 'outstanding' and 'very high quality', which are defined in terms of the TEF 2023 assessment as follows:

- 'outstanding': the quality of the student experience or outcomes are among the very best in the sector, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider
- 'very high quality': the quality of the student experience or outcomes are materially above the relevant high quality minimum requirements, for the mix of students and courses taught by a provider.

The assessment was carried out in 2022-23 by the TEF Panel, a panel of academics and students who are experts in learning and teaching. This document sets out a summary of the panel's findings and judgements.

The panel reviewed the following evidence:

- numerical indicators produced by the OfS, using national datasets
- a submission made by the provider, setting out its own evidence
- a submission made by the provider's students, setting out students' views.

The panel applied its expert judgement to:

- identify particular features of the student experience and student outcomes that are excellent (above the high quality baseline requirements)
- decide a rating for the 'student experience' and for 'student outcomes'
- decide an overall rating for the provider.

Throughout the assessment the panel took account of the context of the provider and judged how well it delivers teaching, learning and student outcomes for its mix of students and courses.

In making its decisions the panel took account of the OfS general duties and the public sector equalities duty.

# Summary of panel assessment

## Information about this provider

Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance is a 'Christian Pentecostal confessional college that seeks to resource the Church for 'ministry and mission.' It was founded in 1925 to train ministers for the Elim Pentecostal Church and today has a broader focus on ministerial and public service training for careers in healthcare, public service, business and third sector charitable work.

The provider articulates a threefold focus of 'heads, hands and hearts' combining intellectual skills (heads), professional skills (hands) and personal spiritual formation (hearts). In 2020-21, it had 120 full-time undergraduates and 20 part-time undergraduates all on first degree programmes. There is also a postgraduate population of 290 over a four-year aggregate.

The provider has both 'campus-based' and 'context-based' students, the latter being students who live and work in their home context and come to the campus for a week during each module for in-person lectures.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses.

Full details about the provider's student demographics used in the TEF 2023 assessment are available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/data-used-in-tef-2023/).

More information about this provider can be found on the OfS Register at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/).

## Student experience: Bronze

Throughout this section, we refer to indicators. These indicators are based on students' responses to the National Student Survey. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses.

The panel found the quality of the student academic experience is typically high quality and there was some evidence in the provider and student submissions and the indicators that the high quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel found:

- most features do not offer enough evidence of very high quality
- two of the features are very high quality
- most indicators are in line with expectations, but there was statistical uncertainty because of the small sample sizes.

The student submission provided positive evidence of learning experiences; it also noted inconsistencies with regards to learning resources. The student submission itself, whilst having 20 responses (out of a cohort of 140), does not survey 'context students' (those studying at home rather than on campus) and the panel felt this restricted how representative the student submission could be. It noted that neither the provider submission nor the student submission went into sufficient detail on student voice and how students engage with their curriculum and the provider.

The panel judged that the evidence indicates that the aspect 'best fits' with the description 'some features of the aspect are very high-quality for most groups of students', giving this aspect a 'Bronze' rating.

The panel's assessment of the student experience features is set out below.

## Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel found that there was not enough evidence that this is very high quality.

The 'teaching on my course' indicator provided initial evidence of very high quality feature for full-time students. However, the 'assessment and feedback' indicator provided initial evidence of not very high quality for full-time students. Part-time students were not considered for either indicator because of small numbers.

Additional evidence in the provider submission includes:

- positive open comments from the National Student Survey on the faculty, lectures, teaching and course content
- several quotes from the validating institution (University of Chester) about the high quality teaching

- end of module evaluations with modules scored 4.3 or greater out of five. These scores indicate that students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that modules and assessments are clear, but it is not stated how many students responded to these evaluations
- three extracts from 2021-22 external examiner reports.

The student submission contained a specially commissioned survey showing that 90 per cent of the 20 students who responded (out of 42) were very satisfied or satisfied with the quality of teaching and assessment.

The panel considered a range of evidence of very high quality in relation to teaching, but there was not enough evidence of very high quality in relation to assessment. Considering the evidence available, the panel felt that there was not enough data to show very high quality or that the provider has embedded very high-quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment.

### **Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch**

The panel considered there is not enough evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

Evidence in the provider submission includes:

- references from three quotations from the National Student Survey 2022, which the panel felt demonstrate positive student experiences in relation to engagement and stretch
- data from the optional bank of National Student Survey questions demonstrating high indicators for course delivery, learning materials, balance of approaches to teaching, delivery of course and practical activities.

The student submission notes data from a specially conducted survey that 90 per cent of respondents were very or satisfied with course content, alongside two direct quotations, which reflect positive stretch and challenge.

The provider's ethos of 'head, hands, heart' is demonstrated in the approach to course content with practices-based learning and placements a major part of its provision. However, while the provider cites evidence of student satisfaction, it does not focus on what it does in practice.

Overall, while the panel recognised the evidence of satisfaction provided, the panel was of the view that there was not enough evidence of very high quality with regard to course content and delivery which effectively encourages the provider's students to engage in their learning and stretches students to develop their knowledge and skills. Considering this, the panel could not conclude that the feature overall is very high quality.

### **Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement**

The panel considered there to be insufficient evidence of very high quality for this feature.

Evidence in the provider submission includes:

- quotations from responses to the National Student Survey 2022, showing 88 per cent of respondents agreed 'my learning has benefited from modules that are informed by current

research'. Additionally, 94 per cent of graduates agree that 'practical activities on my course have helped me to learn'

- information on staff drawing on ministry and professional experience, with 12 lecturers being ordained ministers and nine involved in professional associations
- details of a small grant in 2022-23 from Science for Seminaries to employ a part-time lecturer to enrich research-informed curricula. It notes a two-day conference in autumn 2022 aimed at students, with half of the 75 attendees being students
- how staff are pursuing research within their confessional theological tradition
- references to the provider's 'close' working relationship with the European Pentecostal Theological Association and its peer-reviewed academic publication
- the provider's Institute for Pentecostal Theology (launched in January 2020) hosts two annual public lectures and regular research seminars that are open to all students, where 'researchers and practitioners present papers that can be used as learning resources in modules'

The student submission includes survey data (20 respondents), showing 90 per cent indicated the research of staff contributes to the student academic experience. However, this survey does not include responses from 'context-based' students, only 'campus-based' students and the impacts of this research are not detailed.

While staff are clearly research active, the panel noted that the provider's submission does not sufficiently demonstrate the impact this has on students or the curriculum. In addition, the panel recognised that some, but not all, students benefit from placements. It is not made clear within the provider's submission how students are supported to source these or during the placement experience. The Science for Seminaries grant may also have positive benefits for students but is outside of the scope of this assessment period.

Overall, the panel concluded that there is not enough evidence of very high quality in relation to the provider's use of research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students. Considering the evidence, the panel could not conclude that the feature overall is very high quality.

### **Staff professional development and academic practice**

The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature.

The provider states that continuing professional development of the faculty is a key part of its learning and teaching strategy. Evidence of very high quality in the provider submission includes:

- annual in-house staff development events with a focus on teaching, learning, and assessments
- staff attend the validating body's annual learning and teaching conferences

- all lecturers are encouraged and supported financially to gain professional teaching qualifications. The majority of college staff have 10 or more years' experience within higher education
- the provider has one senior fellow and three other members of faculty are working towards their fellowships
- the provider allocates a weekly research day, for publishing, attending, and presenting papers at conferences, and undertaking further academic qualifications
- the provider has seven lecturers with PhDs and 12 with masters' level degrees.

The panel found evidence that there is very high-quality support for staff development, specifically through conferences and financial support for teaching qualifications, and the provider promotes excellence academic practice through internal development events and a generous amount of time allocated for research which is translated into teaching development. Overall, the panel felt that, given the provider's context as a small, specialist institution with a focus on vocational courses training students to enter ministerial practice, the evidence provided demonstrates very high quality staff professional development and practice.

### **Learning environment and academic support**

The panel found that this a very high quality feature.

The 'academic support' indicator provides initial evidence of very high quality for this feature for most students. The provider and student submissions give further evidence including:

- details of an induction process that gives students materials, study sessions and specific support for those at different levels of study to support transition and demonstrate new expectations of their work
- all new level 4 students engage in six relevant study skills sessions in the first two months of study to aid induction
- all students belong to a tutor group that meets weekly, with two one-to-one personal tutorials a year
- new pastoral group lunches for part-time pastoral group lunches students were created in response to student feedback
- students on blended delivery saw a change in 2021 to more effectively replicate the experience of campus-based students
- students have access to a 'pastoral dean' in addition to their pastoral tutor.

The student submission includes five direct quotations expressing general positive satisfaction with the availability and accessibility of academic support. It also states that 'when support was used or accessed it was both helpful and heavily informative'. However, the student submission also includes evidence that the level and focus of this support can be inconsistent and sometimes brief. It is seen by some students to be more aligned to those who seek a career in ministry than those who do not.



Overall, the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support. There is clear evidence that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support. Subsequently, the panel found enough evidence of very high quality within this feature.

## **Learning resources**

The panel considered there is not enough evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

The 'learning resources' indicator for full-time students provides initial evidence of not very high quality. There is no indicator for part-time students due to very low student numbers.

The provider submission attributes the low indicator in part to a 'misperception' among students that context-based or campus-based students have an advantage over the other and is trying to rectify this in future by making an online library available for all.

The submission provides additional evidence of learning resources including:

- full access to ProQuest through the validating body
- over 470 eBooks, more than 37,000 print collection and over 200 journal titles in the library, with 24/7 access and a reference only copy of all core textbooks
- investment in an online platform to support context-based students.

Survey result data in the student submission states that 80 per cent of students are very or satisfied with how learning resources support teaching and learning. This only applies to 'campus-based' students. It notes a student quotation indicating 'a lack of performing arts core books and small amounts of scientific texts too.'

The panel judged that there is not enough evidence that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high-quality teaching and learning. Subsequently, the panel found this feature to have not enough evidence of very high quality.

## **Student engagement in improvement**

The panel considered there is not enough evidence that student engagement is a very high quality feature.

The panel considered that even though the 'student voice' indicator showed initial evidence of at least very high quality, there was not enough evidence to corroborate the indicator results.

The provider's submission is brief and describes a variety of mechanisms such as programme committees and a staff/student liaison committee for gathering feedback from students. The submission also makes extensive use of the National Student Survey and its optional question banks, and the survey provided by its validating body. It does not appear that student representatives are established members of committees or boards but are invited to attend when deemed appropriate.

The student submission states that 90 per cent of students are very or satisfied with how well the provider engages with its students. While there is some positive evidence on how student voice is considered at the institution, the panel judged that neither submissions provided enough evidence of how student engagement has led to specific improvements or changes which impacted the experiences and outcomes of students.

Overall, engagement with student voice appears to be irregular rather than embedded and systematic. As such there is not enough evidence the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students. When looking at the evidence holistically, the panel found not enough evidence of very high quality within this feature.

## **Student outcomes: Bronze**

Throughout this section, we refer to indicators. The indicators for continuation, completion and progression rates are based on national data about higher education students. The indicators are 'benchmarked' to show how well the provider performs for its particular mix of students and courses.

The panel found that student outcomes are typically high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- two features that are very high quality
- one feature that is outstanding
- three features where there is not enough evidence of very high quality.

The panel did not think a 'Silver' rating would be the best fit because it noted different outcomes for those students not wishing to enter Christian vocations. The panel also did not think that a 'Requires Improvement' rating would be the best fit because there is only one feature below the level of very high quality.

The panel applied the criteria and considered that the rating with the best fit is 'Bronze.' This is because some features are very high quality for most groups of students.

The panel's assessment of the student outcomes features is set out below.

## **Approaches to supporting student success**

The panel did not consider there to be enough evidence that this feature is very high quality.

The provider submission describes its approaches to supporting students to complete, succeed in and progress beyond their studies. It has a specialist focus on training students for ministerial practice, and focuses on its 'heads, hands and hearts' strategy as a 'philosophy of education'.

The provider's submission gives evidence in support of this, including:

- a personal tutoring approach focussed on three areas: Pastoral, Academic and Careers
- a Future Thinking programme which facilitates student engagement and progression
- additional support and guidance provided for students who may have disabilities, particularly at induction and early studies stages
- the provider states it specifically support students at pre-entry stage, which the provider notes over the last five years has increased the number of students who arrive in college with a support plan already in place, allowing those students to achieve their potential from day one
- the provider notes that early study support sessions focussing on the basics of research and writing have impacted positively in reducing the failure rate, for example a drop to three out of 26 students (11 per cent) who fail their second module.

The student submission survey (campus-based students) notes 90 per cent satisfaction on 'how well does the college support its students to succeed and progress in their studies.' It identifies a concern that less support is available for students not wishing to pursue a career in ministry.

Overall, the panel found that the submission lacked enough evidence to provide confidence that the provider effectively supports all its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. Subsequently, the panel did not find enough evidence of very high quality within this feature.

### **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature.

The indicator provides statistical evidence that 'continuation' is very high quality for full-time and part-time students.

The indicator provides statistical evidence that 'completion' is very high quality for the majority of full-time students. There is no part-time student completion indicator due to very low student numbers.

The provider submission notes that some full-time students switch to part-time studies and that numbers do not 'precisely reflect the number of students who enter education and who complete within a three-year full-time period'. Additionally, programmes were changed in 2017-18 and some numbers may reflect students on previous programmes. Little evidence is given on how the provider aids students through continuation and completion, other than that 'services stay in regular contact with students to understand their circumstances and to offer guidance'.

On balance, the panel found there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses. Therefore, this led the panel to conclude that this shows a very high quality feature.

### **Progression rates**

The panel considered progression rates to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicator for full-time students is initial statistical evidence of outstanding quality 'progression'. Part-time progression rates are not published due to low numbers.

The provider also supplements indicator evidence with the 'graduate reflections' data of the Graduate Outcomes survey, which shows an above average score for the 'meaningfulness of current activity' but declining and below national average scores for 'activity fits with my future plans' and 'utilising what I learnt'.

Considering the evidence in the round, the panel found there are outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

### **Intended educational gains**

The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature.

Educational gains is articulated around the provider's ethos of 'head, hands and heart' to note academic, professional and personal formation. It appeals to high satisfaction with teaching (heads), effective placements and strong professional outcomes (hands) and personal discipleship (hearts). While this gain is not liable to measurement, its relevance for some of its students is clearly articulated as part of their move into the 'Christian vocation'.

The panel noted the absence of discussion on how the provider seeks to support students after graduation and throughout placements. Nevertheless, given the clear articulation of educational gains within the provider's context, and the articulation of how these gains are relevant for students wishing to enter theological vocations, the panel found this feature to be of very high quality.

### **Approaches to supporting educational gains**

The panel did not consider there to be enough evidence of very high quality in approaches to supporting educational gains.

The provider's submission provided the following evidence:

- students wishing to become church leaders would be expected to complete placements
- tutor programme enables regular contact to support students with studies and with personal challenges.

The student submission identifies less support for other career paths.

Overall, the panel felt that there was not enough depth and detail to demonstrate whether the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains. Subsequently, the panel did not find enough evidence of very high quality within this feature.

### **Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains**

The panel did not consider there to be enough evidence of very high quality in evaluation and demonstration of educational gains.

The provider submission focuses on pastoral support of students, not on evaluation of educational gains. The provider notes regular evaluation of student experience through the National Student

Survey and Graduate Outcomes. It does not indicate evaluation or strategic development in regard to stated educational gains, or to continuation, completion or progression themselves.

The panel considered there was not enough evidence that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students. Therefore, the panel found not enough evidence of very high quality within this feature.

## **Overall: Bronze**

The panel rated the student experience aspect 'Bronze' and the student outcomes aspect 'Bronze.'

The panel noted the guidance that the overall rating should not be higher than the highest aspect rating and should be no more than one rating higher than the lowest aspect rating. For this reason, the panel judged an overall rating of 'Bronze.'