



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

Point Blank Limited

Summary of outcomes

Overall: Gold

Typically, the experience students have at Point Blank Limited and the outcomes it leads to are outstanding.

Student experience: Gold

The student academic experience is typically outstanding.

Outstanding quality features include:

- highly effective teaching, assessment and feedback practices that are tailored to support students' learning, progression and attainment
- course content and delivery inspires students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretches students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential
- the use of research in relevant disciplines, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding quality academic experience for students
- embedded engagement with students, leading to continuous improvements to their experiences and outcomes.

There are also some very high quality features including:

- very high quality support for staff professional development, and the promotion of excellent academic practice across the staff body
- a supportive learning environment in which students have access to a range of very high quality academic support
- physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effective support for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses
- the provider's articulation of the educational gains it intends its students to achieve and why these are relevant to its students
- the evaluation of the educational gains made by students.

There are also some outstanding quality features including:

- outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses
- highly effective approaches to supporting students to achieve the intended educational gains.

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

Point Blank Limited is a small specialist music institution with an international reach offering undergraduate courses.

The provider began as a recording studio and then gradually started offering courses, expanding from short weekend courses to further education, online higher education and higher education undergraduate courses on campus.

In 2020-21 there were approximately 700 full-time undergraduate students, and 100 offshore students. Most of the music-based courses offered are categorised as Performing Arts. However, there are some categorised into other subject areas, including Business, Materials and Technology, and Journalism.

Around 40 per cent of the provider's students are under 21 years old, and around 40 per cent between 21 and 30. The remaining 12 per cent of students are over 31 years old.

The provider has a stated mission based on a strong integration with the professional music industry, prioritising professional practice in its course design and delivery, but also demonstrating a wider commitment to supporting skills and employment in the creative industries more broadly.

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.

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/.

Student experience: Gold

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.

Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- four outstanding quality features
- three very high quality features
- no features considered clearly below the level of very high quality or that may be of concern
- that the very high quality and outstanding features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered the best fit rating to be 'Gold'. This is because most features of the aspect are outstanding quality for all groups of students.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicators provided compelling initial evidence of:

- outstanding 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' for all students.

The provider submission gives further evidence of outstanding teaching, assessment, and feedback practices, for example:

- small class sizes, regular feedback, one-to-one tutorials and curricular and extracurricular masterclasses
- all students can access industry-specific experience as part of their higher education, which the panel noted supports students from all backgrounds to succeed
- responsiveness to industry input into curriculum design with a process for creating course content which is innovative within the sector. External examiners confirm the relevance of the course to sector practice and the consistency of academic standards
- tailoring of courses to the needs of industry and new students ensures the curriculum remains contemporary and relevant.

Taking both the indicator and submission evidence into consideration, the panel concluded that the provider has embedded teaching, feedback, and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment. The panel therefore considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission included evidence of:

- how small groups allow for teaching to be tailored to the individual and for students to develop their own creative ideas, which was supported by the student submission
- a learning environment where the materials students access are often highly produced media artefacts, which aligns with the core curriculum that it offers.

The student submission suggests that there is a strong sense of students influencing, and therefore actively engaging in and committing to, their own learning. It also describes outstanding opportunities for receiving feedback, including peer feedback using online platforms.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretch students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential. The panel therefore considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission included evidence of relevant industry practice across the breadth of its provision, including authentic, 'real world' assessment and collaborative projects in core modules.

The student submission draws on evidence gathered from an internal survey, and the provider includes details of research which is undertaken involving its students and which contributes to the sector and generates a wider cultural, real-world impact.

Taking evidence from both submissions into account, the panel concluded that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, professional practice and employer and industry engagement to contribute to an outstanding quality academic experience for its students.

Staff professional development and academic practice

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

The provider submission included evidence of very high quality support for staff professional development with some evidence of outstanding practice.

The panel noted details of the introductory module for all new starters which is written by academic staff for the benefit of other academic staff. The panel also noted that there has been significant investment in academic professional development through a commitment to PGCE study.

The provider recognises that its staff benefit from professional expertise and that there is an opportunity to enhance these skills further.

Overall, the panel concluded that support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted across the provider, demonstrating a very high quality feature.

Learning environment and academic support

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

The panel considered the 'academic support' indicator to provide probable statistical evidence of very high quality for all the provider's groups of students.

The provider submission describes how student success is supported through a variety of mechanisms, and the Academic Success Centre is a focus for monitoring, intervening and supporting students academically at risk. This allows for students to be referred for academic support which is a proactive strategy for identifying those that may require intervention. The panel noted however that the scope and impact of students' engagement with the Academic Success Centre was not fully evidenced.

Overall the panel concluded there was sufficient 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.

Learning resources

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

The panel found the overall indicator for 'learning resources' to provide strong evidence of not very high quality, although the panel noted that performance for this indicator has improved over the four year TEF period.

The provider submission included evidence of:

- significant investment in teaching space and equipment, including an enhanced library provision
- an outstanding digital space to support student learning.

The panel considered there was evidence of innovation and resources that are highly regarded by industry and external examiners, and concluded overall that the provider uses physical and virtual learning resources to support very high quality teaching and learning.

Student engagement in improvement

The panel found this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The 'student voice' indicator provided evidence of outstanding quality for all groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The provider submission sets out its approach to capturing and responding to the student voice including:

- a team of student officers that ensures the student voice is embedded at a strategic level and underpinned by the involvement of students on all major committees. This has led to some initiatives that improve employability and encounters with industry
- training for Student Voice Leaders that includes advice on facilitating consultation to help gain a broad range of meaningful feedback
- the Programme Voice Group which runs termly to report on module evaluation surveys and responses to these by the provider.

The panel noted evidence of action or change that has resulted from the student voice, such as designing the campus expansion project or clarity of assessments. The student submission also provided examples of how feedback from students was actioned.

Weighing up all the evidence, the panel concluded that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

Student outcomes: Silver

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.

Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- four features are very high quality
- two features are outstanding
- none of the features are clearly below the level of 'very high quality' or of concern
- that the very high quality and outstanding features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel applied the ratings criteria and considered the best fit rating to be 'Silver'. This is because most features of the aspect are very high quality for all groups of students.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

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

The provider submission included evidence of:

- embedded careers support within its activities, such as a careers hub and a newly devised Music Futures event emerging from partnership with students
- an established integrated foundation year model, which links to the provider's commitment to widening student participation.

The student submission provided several examples of how the provider has supported student success, such as ways to improve communication with its student body and responding to requests for additional careers events.

The panel considered all of the evidence and concluded that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

Continuation and completion rates

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

The indicator for 'continuation' provided strong evidence of very high quality. There was less certainty in the data for 'completion'.

The panel noted that the provider has identified where additional support for continuation and completion is needed and has given evidence of positive impact of targeted initiatives. An example of this is the Students of Colour Network that encourages students from underrepresented groups to engage with curriculum development.

Considering the indicators and submission evidence together, the panel concluded that there was sufficient evidence to suggest the provider has very high rates of continuation and completion for its students and courses.

Progression rates

The panel found this to be an outstanding feature.

The 'progression' indicator provided strong evidence of outstanding quality.

The provider submission included examples of outstanding practice, such as:

- extra-curricular modules in the final weeks of each term to support employability awareness and skills
- networking events, performances, and access to the Point Blank recording label to promote and provide management support for students to progress within the industry.

Considering all the evidence, the panel concluded that there are outstanding rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

Intended educational gains

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

The provider submission articulates educational gains as a set of transferable skills that link to

professional practice and employability. These are embedded within the curriculum and are skills which can be enhanced through extra-curricular activities such as networking events and the in-house record label.

The panel noted that the provider articulates academic and personal gains, however considered these areas to be less clearly described. Taking this into account, the panel considered there to be sufficient evidence to demonstrate a very high quality feature, but not an outstanding feature. The panel concluded that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

The panel found this to be an outstanding feature.

The provider submission included evidence of:

- supporting its students to achieve gains from their different starting points. An example of this is introducing a Foundation Year to address barriers to entry for some students and supporting them to gain relevant skills and confidence
- supporting the development of its educational gains by embedding it into all activities, particularly modules on professional development and academic skills on the Virtual Learning Environment, networking events, performances and access to the Point Blank recording label
- a successful student project evolving into an ongoing community project.

The opportunities described by the provider were considered by the panel to be highly relevant to students and to demonstrate a commitment to the student experience and outcomes beyond the standard curriculum offer. Therefore the panel concluded there to be sufficient evidence of highly effective support for educational gains, and an outstanding quality feature.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

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

The provider submission described its approach to evaluating student engagement, however the panel noted it was not as clear on how students succeed in achieving the intended educational gains, such as how many students have the opportunity to promote their music through the Point Blank recording label.

The panel considered that there was, however, the potential for drawing on sources of data for evaluation in the future and therefore concluded there to be sufficient evidence to demonstrate a very high quality feature, and that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

Overall: Gold

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgement, the panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Gold'.

The panel considered all the evidence across all features and across all the provider's student groups, subjects and courses to come to a 'best fit' decision regarding the overall rating for the provider.

In reaching this decision, the panel considered there to be evidence that the student experience and student outcomes are typically of outstanding quality. The 'Silver' rated student outcomes aspect included outstanding features, notably the support for educational gains linked to employability, which provides insights into, and networking within, the creative industries that lead to strong progression outcomes. The 'Gold' rated student experience aspect contributed a high proportion of outstanding features to also support this judgment.

Based on the range of evidence, the panel judged that the outstanding and very high quality features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. The panel considered this contextual factor throughout its assessment of all of the evidence.

Across the aspects, the provider presented compelling evidence to show that the approaches it adopts are typically embedded and tailored to its students.