

## TEF provider submission 2023

### 1. Provider context

Educational excellence at Royal Holloway (RHUL) builds on a commitment to inclusion, the promotion of equality of opportunity, and social justice that stretches back to our Victorian founders. That commitment is being renewed and reinvigorated as we address the aspirations and needs of our students. During the TEF period, we have grown significantly, opened new subjects and degrees, but also have experienced far-reaching changes in our student population.

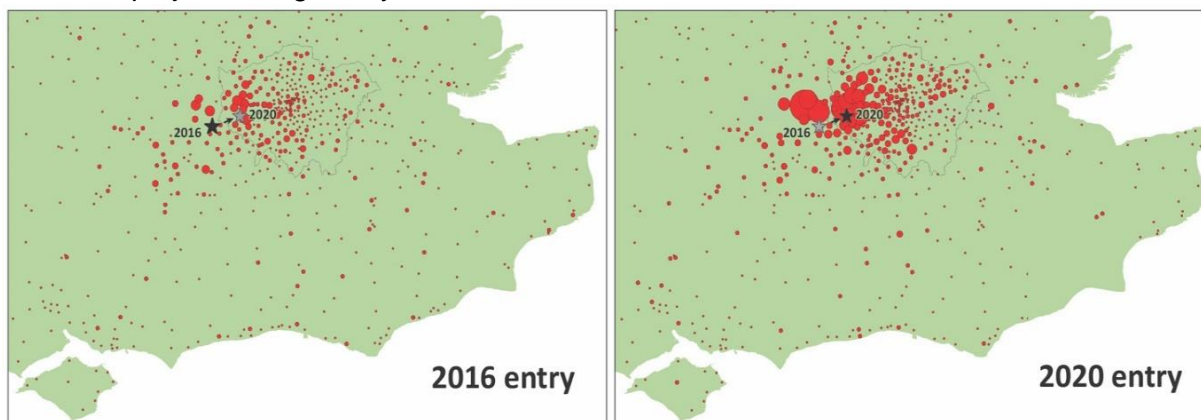
The modern university was formed in 1985 through the merger of two socially progressive institutions, Bedford College and Royal Holloway College, founded by Elizabeth Jesser Reid and Thomas Holloway. These were among the first places in Britain to provide women with a university education, and among the first to admit black students (e.g. the American liberationist, Sarah Parker Remond, or publisher, Margaret Busby). Royal Holloway's 1883 Foundation Deed argued 'that the education of women should not be exclusively regulated by the tradition and method of former ages; but should be founded on those studies and sciences which the experience of modern times has shown to be the most valuable, and the best adapted to meet the intellectual and social requirements of the students.' Inclusion, social justice, and educational excellence remain our core values.

We also pride ourselves on our strength as an educational community. Our character as a smaller campus-based university has been a major factor in that success, and this is reflected in our NSS scores: Learning Community sits 2.5% above OfS benchmark for 3 of 4 of the TEF years. In the decade 2013 to 2022 we have never been outside the top third of university providers for overall satisfaction, in 2019 and 2020 RHUL was among the top ten non-specialist English university providers.

Our education operates with three key priorities: inclusivity in its broadest educational sense, growing diversity of delivery, and continued innovation in practice and approach. Our plan is to be more accessible (in a large measure achieved), more inclusive (partly achieved), and to facilitate, accelerate, and celebrate our students' success. We measure their educational gains through academic achievements, high-quality employment outcomes, and civic engagement.

#### 1.1 RHUL's changing student population

Growth in numbers and demographic diversification have gone hand in hand. We have grown from a total student population of 10,300 in 2017 to 12,400 in December 2022. Around 82% of our students are undergraduate (UG). Controlled, substantial growth is a core element of our strategy based on a recognition of emerging demand.<sup>1</sup> In particular, the overall London student population has been projected to grow by over 50% between 2016 and 2030.<sup>2</sup>



The geography of our students has changed markedly towards West London and Slough. In 2021, 17% of our total UK UG intake was from just three West London boroughs: Hounslow, Ealing and

Hillingdon. The geography of students for 2016 and 2020 from the South-East and London is shown in figure 1; the star indicates the weighted geographic centre for all UK UG students.

Geographical change has been associated with changing student characteristics. In the decade 2005 to 2015, around 30% of UG students originated from Black and Global Majority (BGM) backgrounds. That has altered markedly in recent years; in 2020 for the first time, BGM students made up the majority of our intake (50% BGM, 45% White, 5% unknown). Students from Asian backgrounds now constitute over 30% of our total intake, with students from Bangladeshi heritage the fastest growing ethnic category (161% increase from 2017 to 2021). Our ethnic white population has also diversified with students from Polish, Romanian, and other Eastern European backgrounds. A greater proportion of our students now come from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 (26% of 2017 entry to 33% in 2021); an increasing number attended low performing schools (17% in 2017 rising to 21% in 2021); and first generation attending university increased from 32% to 36% (2017 to 2021). The proportion of our UK students attending state schools has increased to around 90% from under 80% (2011 entry).

In one important respect, however, RHUL remains less diverse: the majority (94%) of our students are aged 20 and younger on entry, taking full-time degrees, and entering with A level qualifications. In 2022, only 17 students were aged over 30, with 15 part-time students in a registered UG population of 10,100 (See section SO2). Around 10% of UK students enter with solely BTEC or a combination of A levels and BTEC qualifications. The successful introduction of integrated foundation degrees (2019) now offers an important route into study (SO1).

The proportion of students starting their degrees in campus halls has fallen (73% in 2018, 62% in 2021). There is a rise in commuting students (students travelling further than 3km) from 21% (2018) to 28% (2021). We remain strongly committed to in person teaching, but have adapted to meet the needs of this changing learning community, drawing from the experience of the pandemic in extending academic experience beyond on-campus learning.

## **1.2 RHUL's provision and organisation**

In 2019 we re-organised into six Schools, each led by an Executive Dean, to strengthen strategic leadership in teaching and to provide more active and responsive monitoring of academic quality. School Directors of Undergraduate Education (DUGE), and Directors of Student Experience have provided co-ordinated, strategic leadership, sharing good practice across cognate disciplines, and Schools now lead much of the work of quality review and development. RHUL is committed to teaching in established disciplines across the humanities, performing arts, social sciences, and STEM, protecting endangered subjects (e.g. modern languages). As a critical and creative community, we have an ongoing investment in the study, production, and performance of music, dance, drama, film, new media, as well as fiction, plays, poetry, and journalism. Figure 2 indicates the size of these Schools, their constituent departments, and how they map onto the CAH2 Subject categories used in the TEF analysis.

Research has also been re-organised, to capitalise on outstanding results in REF 2021. *The Times Higher (THE)* REF analysis showed the university in 28th position overall, and 14th for outputs, on the basis of proportion of 4\* 'world-leading' research. 42% of research was graded as 4\*, 46% at 3\*. No new UG departments opened in this TEF period, but initiatives immediately before have a major impact on our portfolio. Law (2015) has been a major driver of growth and diversification, its recruitment increased from 242 in 2018 to 445 in 2021, and the current student population is 56% BGM. Electronic Engineering opened in 2017, and a new Health Studies department will start UG degrees in 2023. RHUL also has a well-established structure of professional and academic services to support educational excellence, discussed in SE4 and 5.

Provider name: Royal Holloway, University of London  
UKPRN: 10005553

In line with these priorities, the university has invested in teaching and learning facilities (e.g. Emily Wilding Davidson Library, £60M; Shilling Building, Electronic Engineering, £20M), alongside specialist research spaces which students access (see SE6). In staffing, an alignment exercise in 2020-21 moved posts to growth areas, meaning that the School of Business and Management's (SBM) SSR, for example, improved to 19.1 for 2021-22 with 15 new posts added. English (Humanities) appointed 6 new staff in 2022-23, representing teaching areas reflecting diverse ethnic and educational backgrounds.

School / Department	CAH2 subject category	Total UG students Dec 2022 (FTE)	% UK students from BGM background
School of Business and Management (SBM)			
Management	Business & Management	1,940	65%
School of Engineering, Physical & Mathematical Science (EPMS)			
Computer Science	Computing	999	58%
Electronic Engineering	Engineering	111	70%
Mathematics	Mathematical sciences	164	48%
Physics	Physics and astronomy	236	37%
School of Humanities (HUMS)			
English	English studies	437	23%
Classics	History and archaeology	163	12%
History	History and archaeology	352	20%
Languages, Literatures & Cultures	Languages and area studies	289	23%
	Combined and general studies		
School of Law and Social Science (LSS)			
Economics	Economics	659	72%
Law & Criminology	Law	1,450	56%
	Sociology, social policy and anthropology		
PIR & Philosophy	Politics	599	45%
	Philosophy and religious studies		
School of Life Science and the Environment (LSE)			
Biological Sciences	Biosciences	473	57%
Earth Sciences	Geography, earth and environmental studies	99	35%
Geography		229	27%
Psychology	Psychology	898	40%
School of Performing and Digital Arts (PDA)			
Media Arts	Media, journalism & communications	436	34%
	Creative arts and design		
Drama, Theatre & Dance	Performing arts	220	11%
Music	Performing arts	154	23%

### 1.3 Context of TEF submission

TEF has provided an important opportunity for a detailed review of our data and processes. We worked closely with the Student Union (SU) from late spring, allocating significant additional funding to support their independent submission. There have been around 50 formal meetings between the TEF team and key stakeholders in Schools, departments and professional services, as well as workshops at various points in the drafting process. DUGEs have played a key role in the submission. Senior management have been actively involved in the process, and the document shared with Academic Board and Council.

## 2. Student experience

### 2.1 Academic experience and assessment (SE1-SE3)

TEF metrics for Teaching on my course are strong with the overall metric 1.7% above benchmark (in TEF Year 1, 2.7% above). 17 of 20 CAH2 subjects are above benchmark, with 9 over 2.5%, and more than 75% of students taught in departments ahead of benchmark. Split metrics for distinctive student characteristics, broadly in line with or materially above benchmark, align with overall university performance. Exceptional excellence (5% above benchmark) manifests in: Psychology; Geography; Earth Sciences; Physics; Music; Drama, Theatre and Dance; and Electronic Engineering. Our internal analysis of un-benchmarked NSS scores indicates sustained

high performance, top 25% of the sector, for these disciplines.<sup>3</sup> All NSS individual teaching questions are on average above benchmark for the TEF period, however we have seen a levelling off to benchmark in Year 4. There is variability within disciplinary performance, for example in Business and Management with an indicator value 73%, around 4% below benchmark.

For Assessment and Feedback our TEF metrics are also strong, the overall indicator is 1.1% above benchmark and was at or above benchmark in all 4 years. Of 20 CAH2 subjects, 14 are above benchmark, with 10 >2.5% above and scores showing excellence in: Combined and general studies; Engineering; English; Geography; History; Languages; Maths; Philosophy; Physics; Psychology. NSS scores confirm our success in ensuring feedback is timely, with indicators materially above benchmark for the most recent two years. Most student groups are in line with institutional performance, Subject scores are weaker for Business and Management (4.3% below benchmark) and Law (3.1% below).

**Teaching and learning strategies and the impact of pandemic.** At the start of this TEF period our strategic education planning was based on our Integrated Academic Strategy, emphasising 'dual excellence' and synergies between research and research-informed teaching.<sup>4</sup> An established teaching culture organised around departments was characterised by campus teaching. Assessment methods included project work, problem-solving, various forms of performance, dissertations and essays, with an emphasis in most disciplines on end of year invigilated examinations, especially for finalists. This traditional teaching and assessment culture was successful, for example 2019 NSS Q3 ('the course is intellectually stimulating'), was 89.7%, 4.6% ahead of benchmark. We were conscious of needing to review our approaches in relation to our changing student population, with initiatives to strengthen and diversify teaching and assessment, embed professional development and introduce more student-engaged teaching.

Response to the pandemic challenges accelerated innovation, developing clear principles that have informed our post-pandemic education. Rapid adoption of blended pedagogy happened in 2020. Teaching and assessment switched online, with fast-track validation involving Chief External Examiners, and QAA best practice guidance ensuring alignment to learning outcomes. A new agile management body, the Flexible Education Board, coordinated this transformation with DUGes giving leadership at School level. An effective social learning platform integrating Moodle (VLE) and MS Teams was introduced in September 2020. Student Union (SU) representatives co-designed significant elements of the pandemic response, with their Digital Learning Reports shaping the emerging TEL approach between 2020 to 2021.<sup>5</sup> We have looked forward from this experience and learnt from the pandemic to address the needs and expectations of our student community. The result is a more strategic approach to teaching and learning with implications for pedagogy, assessment, curriculum, skills development, and inclusion, with three key priorities.

First, we prioritise an inclusive educational approach, building upon earlier initiatives and our Access and Participation Plan (APP) commitments, reflecting concerns over inequality, student isolation, and digital poverty during lockdown.<sup>6</sup> Detailed evaluation has boosted initiatives addressing differential experience and outcomes through: effective transition and personal tutoring support, awareness of prior learning and assessment styles, the provision of skills-based opportunities, and an inclusive learning community. Second, we have encouraged diversity of delivery drawing upon the pandemic step-changes made in hybrid learning, TEL, and forms of assessment. Staff development (SE4) has emphasised diverse and flexible teaching approaches, to facilitate accessible, active, and engaging student-centred learning for both on-campus and online learners. Third, there have been drives for greater teaching innovation, particularly through extending the use of learning technology and other developments in teaching format and style that do more to inspire, stretch and challenge our students.



These post-pandemic priorities are addressed through the establishment of our Inclusive Education Board (IEB) (2021). It builds upon the recommendations of external research such as the 2019 UUK/NUS #ClosingtheGap report and the work of the Sutton Trust.<sup>7</sup> In particular, #ClosingtheGap's recommendations for stronger senior leadership, cultural change, inclusive environments, improved data, and understanding what works using applied research has shaped the IEB. The IEB is a holistic, cross-institutional approach focusing on the stages of the student journey (especially on transition to university), on particular projects to address performance and awarding issues, and on our use of data. It has a central focus on reducing inequalities in access, attainment gaps and progression, going beyond our specific APP commitments to improve our teaching and assessment. Expanding on our teaching prize success (see SE4) of stimulating innovative practice, we have also included a new competitive education scheme as part of the deliverables of the Inclusive Education Board, strategically linked to addressing our awarding gaps. An essential component is student co-creation, with funding (£6,000) supporting student partnerships. Projects have cross-institutional impact, such as students designing assessment information and employment activities for low engagement cohorts, Headstart (see SO1) and acting as peer mentors, producing more inclusive pedagogy and strengthening student engagement.

**Changing assessment.** Revisions made to our assessment strategy (2019) emphasised diversifying assessment, and encouraged more skills-based, authentic assessment. The emergency situation in spring 2020 brought about immediate and dramatic change. Working with the SU, QAA guidance, and External Examiners, a revised assessment policy deployed online assessments and time-limited open-book examinations, as well as innovative real-time and recorded online approaches to creative practice and performance. We analysed degree awarding patterns after safety-net changes to assessment and the degree algorithm in March 2020.<sup>8</sup> Detailed analysis of module data identified an improvement of on average 2-3% where assessment had moved from closed exam to open book exams. External examiner reports confirmed students were fully meeting all assessment criteria, with more emphasis on structured approaches and critical thinking, rather than memory work.

To enable resilience in the face of potential interruptions and to ensure that student outcomes were less dependent on terminal assessment, assessments were dispersed through the year. However, student surveys (particularly pulse surveys used in 2020-21 to gauge the impact of changes to teaching and assessment), and NSS (2021 and 2022) highlighted difficulties of assessment proliferation. The push for resilience through the year often broke assessment into smaller components, which in some cases compounded pressure on students in an already difficult context.

Learning from this experience, our major post-pandemic review of assessment, 'Assessment Futures', requires planned course level assessment reflecting course learning outcomes, rather than individual module assessments. We are reconsidering assessment volume and positioning in the academic year, aiming to reduce the number of assessment points without over-reliance on a terminal assessment period. Our emphasis on diversifying assessment, particularly forms of authentic assessment, seeks to improve engagement and outcomes, addresses learner diversity, and is mapped onto our new approaches to employability and education gains (see 3.2).

University level assessment criteria are driven by QAA Outcome Classification Descriptions, and there is widespread good practice of tailored assessment criteria, for example Psychology's WAKE approach (5.4% ahead of benchmark for Assessment), that trains staff to produce and students to understand systematic and structured feedback. Similar approaches have been adopted in other departments. Maths has introduced weekly rapid feedback micro-assessments, to support changing student needs. This has seen clear improvement in assessment and feedback NSS

scores (internal analysis of NSS 2022, Q10 and Q11 in top quartile of sector scores for Maths, Q8 and Q9 in top half.) School-level good practice is being built upon by Assessment Futures.

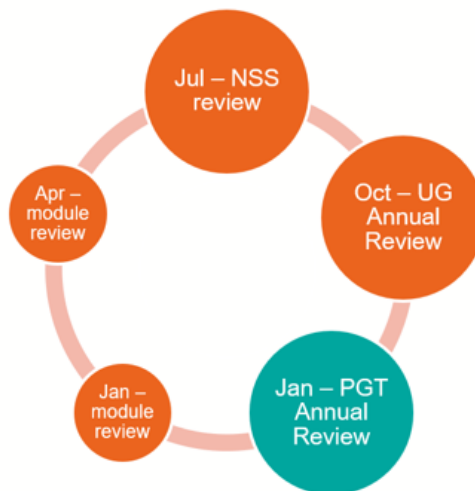
**Embedding good practice in teaching and assessment through quality assurance.** The university worked (2016-17) with its governing body to develop its quality assurance approach. Industry specialists on Council in quality control and continuous improvement helped design a system that was data-led, more rapidly responsive, and risk-based. This resulted in a model of continuous real-time response to student experience and performance, with key points in the academic year where issues and enhancement opportunities are rapidly addressed. (Figure 3)

We strengthened our external examining, with introduction of Chief External Examiners (EE) for each School (2019) in addition to around 150 degree-level EEs and appointed a Principal External

Examiner (2020), to give assurance on overall standards. EE commentaries gave strong support to our approaches in the pandemic, indicating compliance with QAA guidance and that the university performed well in difficult circumstances. EEs regularly highlight course stretch and innovation, the quality of final-year dissertations/projects, and the distinctiveness of teaching informed by research specialisms.

**Annual Quality cycle** - continuous real-time response to information about student experience and performance, with key points highlighted

- NSS data is analysed and benchmarked, and a response plan created to allow issues to be addressed before the new academic year
- Data on final awards, continuation, awarding gaps, latest Graduate Outcome survey results, combined with External Examiner and Student Voice reports. Action plans produced.
- Further quality assurance points throughout the year, including module feedback, feedback return compliance, Student Voice input



RHUL has a cyclical review system of all degrees (paused in the pandemic) with an emphasis on developmental review, prioritising skills and inclusion and increasing student engagement. The university introduced (2019) a Curriculum Audit Tool for all course validations, requiring new courses to provide a systematic evidenced evaluation of the proposed content in relation to: diversity and inclusion; assessment and feedback approach; research-informed teaching; professional development; and employability. A major review exercise took place across all degrees in 2021 to align course and module outcomes with the Skills 4.0 meta-skills used in CVstac (see 3.2).<sup>15</sup>

Royal Holloway's partnership with Study Group, who run the International Foundation Year and International Year One, is overseen by an Academic Board for curriculum, performance, standards, and onward progression into our degrees. Study Group have their own QA processes and OfS registration, and our staff contribute to their annual reviews.

**Inspiration, stretch and innovation in teaching and assessment.** Our NSS results demonstrate the effectiveness of our teaching in inspiring and stretching students to achieve their best. Our strongest Teaching scores are for Q3 ('course is intellectually stimulating'), 2.6% above benchmark over the full TEF period, and above benchmark every year. In NSS 2019 this was 4.6% above benchmark. Q4 ('course has challenged me to achieve my best results') is also above benchmark for the full TEF period, was very strong in 2019 (3.1% above) but is just below benchmark in the most recent NSS year. Qualitative NSS feedback from students across every department (2021 and 2022) indicates outstanding teaching quality, being repeatedly described as inspiring, excellent and engaging. Teaching staff are characterised as passionate, supportive and motivational,

enabling students to view their subject in a new way and delivering intellectually and creatively stimulating course content. Internal module questionnaires provide more evidence of inspiration, stretch and engagement: of the 1,000+ modules surveyed each year in 2020-21 and 2021-22, 71% scored 4.0 or above (5 point scale) for teaching quality.<sup>9</sup>

We have increased work-based and research-based learning opportunities to encourage students in 'learning without walls' and to engage with the university's research priorities. Experiential learning and authentic assessment equip students with valuable, future-facing knowledge and encourage wider ranges of learning skills, demonstrating real-world relevance. For example, in Politics, students prepare a policy brief for a government minister ignorant of the topic; in Geography and Earth Sciences, innovations including digital fieldtrips, using digital scans, digital site models, online archives and databases, drone-based field tours, and online interviews, have fed into enriched and more inclusive experiential learning. Media Arts final year projects emulate real-world production of a short film, and creative dissertations include industry-oriented projects where students develop the project proposal and budget for original digital media outputs, and pitch their ideas in public. Role-play in management modules incorporates proposals, presentations and Q&A to simulate a 'client' situation. Computer Science staff and students work together to conceive and develop proven commercial software solutions for clients using state-of-the-art technologies and methods. Code Groovers is the commercial software development arm of the Department of Computer Science. Its goal is to unleash the creativity of new computer scientists to create high-quality software, and to offer excellent value for money solutions.

We promote inspiration, stretch and innovation systematically. SE4 discusses our professional development, with its emphasis on student-centred teaching approaches, the Teaching Prize (TP) scheme, and how teaching excellence and innovation is built into career structures. We have used our teaching prizes to promote innovation in assessment and embed experiential learning. Classics (TP 2020) used material artifacts and cooking with authentic ingredients, to produce multi-sensory engagement with classical cultures. Within History, students are asked to produce an 'Unessay', a creative alternative to essays that diversifies assessment and allows students to think through the narrating of history in unconventional media (TP 2019). Students in other departments have produced graphic novels, poems, TV documentaries, interactive quizzes and musical compositions.

Students are inspired where teaching speaks to their lives and identities, with cross-university developments to inspire through content diversification, range of voices, and geographical reach. Developments pre-date recent calls for decolonised curricula, but added impetus was given by the active encouragement of the university and SU from 2018. There have been cross-curriculum reviews notably in Music, Drama and English, disciplines such as History, Geography and International Relations have built on established strengths in postcolonial approaches and expertise in the global South, other disciplines have diversified data and case studies. There are examples of more focused initiatives: The Drama department worked with the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee in West Bengal, with students engaging directly with advocates supporting sex workers and LGBTQIA+ rights, exploring performance as a creative strategy for activism. The departments of Law and Politics partnered with an institution in Somaliland to create an innovative legal advice website, enabling students to make a real difference to human rights and peacebuilding as well as generating understanding of stakeholders and international partnerships (TP 2022). A final year Politics and International Relations placement scheme gives BGM students the opportunity to earn a placement in Westminster with an MP (TP 2022).

Students are also inspired and stretched by innovative approaches drawing on the possibilities of new technology. In 2020, we drew upon research in our AHRC-funded cluster in virtual storytelling, StoryFutures, using augmented reality (AR) to develop new approaches to performing arts and

other subjects. The project brought together academics from Drama, Theatre and Dance, Media Arts, and Electronic Engineering, to produce an accessible, web-based toolkit called ARStorydecks.com for embedding AR into online teaching and performance-making (TP 2021). This empowered our theatre students to think dynamically about their digital performance-making to 'break the screen wall' and connect with students and audience members. As the project leader, commented in the *THE*, the point was 'not to be overwhelmed by the novelty of the technology, but to develop new immersive forms of story-telling, to change class-room hierarchies, and to deepen students' appreciation of interdisciplinarity.' The project leader was short-listed for the *THE* 'Most Innovative Teacher of the Year' award, and ARStorydecks has been used in other departments and rolled out as a national resource to 15 other universities through our StoryFutures Academy.<sup>10</sup> We have also innovated in online assessment for disciplines such as Maths, Computing, Economics and Management, through technological and pedagogic innovations, working particularly with the new capacities of Moodle, using plug-ins such as Coderunner and STACK (SE6).

**Research-informed teaching.** Students are inspired and stretched by direct engagement with research that is explicitly integrated into the curriculum. All degree courses are informed by current research and academic literature with the expectation that will include our own academics' research and scholarship. Our research is strong; the latest REF highlights this, see provider context. Our research catalysts in Quantum Science/Technology, Digital Technologies, Living Sustainably and StoryFutures all directly influence undergraduate teaching.

Research is systematically embedded in our degrees through clearly defined, progressive spines in research techniques and research design, and training in scholarly practice. These vary in disciplines, but typically in earlier years training focuses on research and scholarly techniques, while later years introduce training in research design and organisation. For example, in Biological Sciences the Year 1 research skills module 'Becoming a bioscientist' is followed by a compulsory 2nd year 'Biological data analysis and interpretation' module. Geography and Earth Sciences have mandatory modules at Year 1 and 2 in research techniques and field-training. Research dissertations (or equivalent) are offered on all degrees, at Year 3 or integrated Masters level and are core compulsory components in many degree courses. These are closely integrated into research training spines, and students have personalised supervision from expert academics.

Students benefit from specialist research and performance facilities, with training and hands-on experience of specialist equipment and at collaborative research sites. Examples include: the European Microkelvin Platform cryogenic facilities at our London Low Temperature Laboratory; electron-beam lithography; an RF electronics suite for particle accelerator diagnostics in class 4 lasers; a film and television production studio with high-definition digital multi-camera broadcast, DMX lighting grid, and vision mixing facilities; high spec Video Games labs. Performing Arts students are taught and perform in the state-of-the-art Caryl Churchill and Boilerhouse Theatres. Our world-class art collection is used in teaching; between 2018-19 and 2021-22 over 2,000 students across 10 disciplines had tailored classes in the Picture Gallery or archives. Schemes such as those in Computer Science, Psychology and Geography give placement experience on research projects.

The most striking impact and very clear inspiration and stretch is where student projects and participation in research projects has led to peer-reviewed publication. During the TEF period student work, either as developments of dissertations or as contributions to research teams has resulted in named author status for publications in over 20 peer-reviewed research journals, including: *British Journal of Psychology*, *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, *Proceedings of the Geologists' Association*, *BMJ Military Health*, *American Journal of Botany*. A recent student project published in *19th-Century Music*, won the Roland Jackson Award of the American Musicological



Society. Undergraduates have presented their work at international conferences, such as the 2018 IEEE Conference on Blockchain, and the 2022 International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence. Media Arts students were directly involved in REF-submitted practice outputs, and music dissertations have contributed inventories for the internationally recognised Database RISM.

We have successful progression into further study and research after our undergraduate degrees, between 2018 to 2022, 787 students commenced RHUL PhDs, including 20% with RHUL first degrees. Many of these students secured highly competitive research council awards such as AHRC, ESRC and NERC. There is active encouragement of under-represented students. Strengthening the 'pipeline' into research has been a key feature of successful Athena-Swan awards. There are initiatives, such as Psychology's Sarah Parker Remond studentship for Black UG students to work as research assistants, which support our BGM graduates moving into research careers, and which resulted in an SU 'You're Valued Award' and *THE* coverage. Transition rates into further study are high at RHUL, and while many are into vocational Masters, this is a broad indication of the scale of interest in further scholarship and research. Over the three years of the Graduate Outcomes Survey used for TEF approximately 24% of RHUL students have been in further study, compared with a sector average of 15%.

**Professional practice and employer engagement.** Professional practice is embedded into many courses and modules, particularly where academics are also active practitioners (e.g. Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Creative Writing), or where academics have substantial prior professional experience (e.g. Computer Science, Management.). External professionals are also used as visiting lecturers and involved in authentic assessment. For example, Music composition projects are workshopped by professional performers, whilst Geography students present their urban promotion plans to external industry assessors.

A wide range of RHUL degrees are accredited by relevant professional bodies (PSRBs). The proportion of RHUL undergraduates completing with a PSRB accredited qualification has risen from 29% in 2018 to 68% in 2022. Figure 4 indicates the disciplines with degree courses accredited and the relevant professional bodies.

School of Business and Management	School of Law and Social Sciences
Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)	British Psychological Society
Certified Practising Accountants (CPA) (Australian accreditation)	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)
Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport	Social Work England (SWE)
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA)	Solicitors' Regulations Authority
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)	School of Life Sciences and the Environment
Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW)	British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies
School of Engineering, Physical and Mathematical Sciences	British Psychological Society
British Computer Society	Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)
European Quality Assurance	Royal Geographical Society
Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET)	Royal Society of Biology
Institute of Physics	The Geological Society
National Cyber Security Centre	Educational Development Centre
The Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (IMA)	Higher Education Academy (HEA)

Some of these accreditations are required for further professional qualification and practice. For example, as well as British Computing Society accreditation our students are also able to attain additional accreditation from the National Cyber Security Centre/GCHQ certification. We are one of only 5 institutions with this award, and the only institution with accreditation for 3-year BSc and 4-year integrated MSci degrees. Importantly, SBM (around 20% of RHUL UGs) was accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in 2021. Less than 6% of the world's Schools offering business programmes hold this accreditation. AACSB's globally recognised accreditation has a focus on rigorous standards for educational quality and continuous improvement. The School has embraced the ethos, structures, and processes advocated by AACSB to drive a process of radical developmental reflection and redesign of its provision.

Employer engagement is built into leadership structures, with all Schools (and some individual departments) having employer advisory groups actively involved in curriculum reform and design, overseen by a Director of External Engagement. For example, Law & Social Science Advisory Board worked with academics and professional services on a School-level audit of transferrable skill developments that has fed into our wider approach to skills and educational gains (2021). The School of Humanities is reviewing UG skills and employability provision using employer advice, this has initially led to 'Career Taster Projects' (2021-22) where students complete an employer-designed task. Physics, after reviewing its skills mix and responding to student voice, greatly extended its provision of programming training. Using its Industrial Liaison Board, employers co-designed a new team Python project for final year students providing a real-world industry setting to develop skills. Employers participate in a Computer Science team project module to produce a full-scale piece of software delivered to a client specification and industry best-practice, with assessment based on review of product and process, and simulated client/developer interactions.

**Addressing Variability.** Teaching and Assessment scores are strong at institutional level, with institutional priorities in inclusion, assessment development, and diversification and innovation in teaching designed to improve student experience. There are areas of provision that our analysis of NSS question rankings indicate are among the strongest in the sector. The School structures and leadership roles, introduced 2019, offer a focused platform for sharing of good practice and educational innovations between disciplines, through quality reviews and networking.

We recognise there are areas where student satisfaction is lower than we would expect, particularly for larger programmes in Law and SBM. SBM, which has strong Student Outcomes metrics, shows some persistent NSS weaknesses. In response, SBM has strengthened degree management by introducing Pathway Leaders, responsible for developing curriculum and assessment strategies and improving student voice. A senior academic (teaching-focused) appointment now leads best practice and student experience improvements. SBM have diversified and streamlined assessment, reducing pressure points, and increasing authentic assessment (for example, Marketing Strategy in Context saw an 8% increase in median outcome following the changes). These educational developments, integral to AACSB accreditation, required the implementation of an Assurance of Learning (AoL) process. Degree-level competencies have been identified, with students' performance assessed against these goals and benchmarks introduced for the monitoring of accreditation status. This enabled the School to target academic support; specific measures include Year 1 presentation training, enhanced formative numeracy testing, and targeted referrals for support from CeDAS (SE5). In 2018, SBM led an initiative to support commuting students (the School had around half of all RHUL commuting students pre-pandemic) making adjustments to timetabling, study space and academic support. The success of this initiative was reflected in a 7% increase in NSS score for Organisation and Management for SBM (8% increase for Q16 'The timetable works efficiently for me.')

Law has a current assessment improvement action plan in response to the quality cycle. This includes systematic 'feed-forwards' in assessments; clearer management and visibility of feedback return dates; heightened visibility of grading criteria to ensure better understanding by students; student voice work via SSC to ameliorate how students perceive assessment fairness. We expect that improvements for all students will also impact the low scores for assessment and feedback for Black students as nearly half these students are in SBM and Law.

## **2.2 Resources, support and student engagement (SE4-SE7)**

### **SE4. Support for staff professional development and the embedding of academic practice**

We have a deeply established teaching culture, supported by our Educational Development Centre (EDC). Professional development is organised around HEA accreditation, with its strong

emphasis on reflexive, student-centred and innovative teaching. As well as requiring HEA status to complete probation, we require S/FHEA status for promotion to professor and for all promotions in our professorial banding scheme. Over the TEF period, we have been consistently above national averages for Fellowships awards. In 2018-19, this metric produced by Advance HE was 51.3% of staff for RHUL (sector = 40.7%), which increased to 61.5% in 2021 (sector = 46.1%). We currently have 86 HEA Senior Fellows and 4 Principal Fellows.

EDC's core training programmes (CPD) for academic staff are all accredited by Advance HE, and lead to various levels of HEA Fellowship; colleagues such as PDRAs, teaching technicians, and library staff also pursue educational CPD through these schemes. A key feature of our CPD programmes is a mandatory focus on inclusive education as a developmental activity, and an explicit requirement in the evidence for awards. Our Programme in Skills of Teaching to Inspire Learning (inSTIL) is designed for postgraduate teachers, for visiting lecturers, and other staff, such as post-doctoral researchers or technicians, leading to AFHEA. Completion is required for postgraduates undertaking solo UG teaching. Between 2018 and 2022 an average of 54 awards were made through inSTIL per year. CAPITAL (Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Teaching and Learning) is the main training programme for academic staff. We are now building on the success at FHEA and SFHEA level to strengthen the pathway to Principal Fellow through training and mentoring. We are committed to gaining more recognition through the National Teaching Fellowships (currently 3) and other excellence schemes.

The majority of academics are on teaching and research contracts, however there is an institutional commitment to the support and development of a teaching focused career route. The proportion of academic staff on teaching focused (TF) contracts increased from 19.9% to 24.7% between 2018 and 2022. 27 staff on the TF route have been promoted since 2017, including 5 to professor. Academic promotions include detailed teaching criteria, treated equally with criteria on research. At higher levels, there is an emphasis on teaching leadership, degree redesign, contributions to institutional educational initiatives, and sector contributions. To encourage innovation, the TF route includes additional criteria for educational scholarship, pedagogic and technological innovation. Teaching excellence is also embedded into annual staff review, which requires reflection of teaching and plans for teaching development, drawing upon evidence from compulsory annual peer review of teaching, student feedback, and external examiner comments.

Our commitment to inclusivity means we recognise the importance of role models for inspirational education. Targeted career development programmes include Springboard, for early career women; Advance HE's Aurora, a leadership programme for women; and Mandala for BGM staff. Our internal Enabling Women in the Promotion Process programme won a *THE* Award in 2016: 34% of delegates attending (2017 to 2022) achieved promotion to Reader or Professor. Between 2017-21, the proportion of female professors at RHUL rose from 28.6% to 31.1% (sector average 28.5%), and the proportion of BGM professors rose from 7.1% to 13.0% (sector average of 10.6%). This is important progress, but there is more to do in removing progression barriers.

Our annual Teaching Prize (TP) scheme is aligned to institutional priorities in inclusive education, diversity of delivery, and innovation. Around 8 prizes and 15 commendations are made annually, with bursaries to develop successful ideas (examples in SE1-3). A key developmental outcome of the scheme is to disseminate educational excellence, through our annual Teaching & Learning Symposium and the on-line 'Teaching & Learning Space' case-studies resource. Our Teaching and Learning Interest Group has regular events to share ideas, with recent focus on online pedagogies, inclusive education and promotion of academic integrity. At the Teaching & Learning Symposium, invited experts have addressed strategic priorities such as post-pandemic assessment strategies, race equality, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

Training in online and blended learning was vital in the response to the pandemic. There were for example 1,180 attendances at September 2020 training events and summer workshops with online attendance of around 300 per session. Training addressed the key features of the Moodle /Panopto/MSTeams core platforms, best practices for student engagement in asynchronous and synchronous online learning, effective dual-mode teaching, and assessment design to sustain academic integrity (SE6). Engagement with the E-Learning team's online training courses rose from 3,612 course views in 2018-19 to 9,401 in 2019-20 and 17,167 in 2020-21, when we launched two new courses on core VLE design requirements and flexible education design. In 2021-22, course views (after significant up-skilling in the pandemic) remained at around 6,000.

### **SE5. Learning environment and academic support**

RHUL students are provided academic support via Schools and Departments and centrally through CeDAS (Centre for the Development of Academic Skills). Over the past 4 years, we have significantly strengthened our central academic support, in response to student needs. In 2016-17, 65% of CeDAS support was towards international students within Management, Economics and Law. By 2022, 95% of first-year students now have at least one session delivered by our CeDAS team, with the team contributing to over 60 UG modules. Each School has a CeDAS Learning Developer working with School staff to ensure academic support is reflective and responsive to student requirements.

Support is by a combined approach of curriculum-embedded skills development and optional co-curricular academic skills activities. Embedded delivery in Year 1 supports the wider approach to transition (SO1), with academic skills support across all years. The implementation of Learning Developers has resulted in a wide range of tailored learning support in response to students' changing needs, with particular focus on academic writing and numeracy skills. The CeDAS team run academic support activities to support specific School needs, including writing cafes, mini-writing retreats and essay clinics. CeDAS are providing more 1:1 writing or maths tutorials, with around 1,100 1:1 30 minute sessions scheduled per year involving approximately 500 students, with student feedback consistently highlighting the usefulness of individualised feedback. We have significantly enhanced maths provision. CeDAS run workshops in parallel with Maths core modules to break down challenging content and provide practice. CeDAS runs maths diagnostics for Year 1 Biological Sciences and SBM students enabling more targeted support. An online numeracy course for Year 1 students has been developed in collaboration with SBM. Discipline-specific maths drop-in sessions, supported by level 5&6 student maths mentors, have been introduced to support students' changing needs. To support changes in assessment practices, CeDAS have expanded their assessment support, and extended support for re-sitting and repeating students. Examples include a guide to assessment, including an Open Book Exams resource (2,900 hits in 2020-21), and a podcast on transition back to in-person exams co-designed with the SU.

For more personalised academic support, all UG students are allocated a personal tutor. Based on student feedback, we substantially updated our personal tutoring practices in 2017. Key enhancements were setting required minimum numbers of tutor-tutee meetings across all years, establishing Department-level Senior Tutors, and an institutional Principal Tutor. This is providing more standardisation of personal tutoring systems, although there are models of good practice, e.g. Geography and Psychology, where there is more integration between teaching and tutoring, with very regular interaction with personal tutors. Personal tutoring and academic support have been strengthened by a student dashboard (introduced in 2017-18) that combines academic performance data, with attendance and other engagement data, as well as specific educational needs to provide a more holistic view of each student's success profile. Use increased from around 35K dashboard sessions in 2019-20, to 71K in 2021-22, with around 750 unique users, indicating

effectively full take-up by academic and professional services staff. It is routinely used by personal tutors but is also used to undertake systematic engagement reviews.

This combined approach to academic support is, overall, successful, with RHUL having a strong institutional measure for academic support, of 1.4% above benchmark. Academic support student characteristic split metrics are broadly consistent with the institutional measure, although there is a weaker score for the small group of students over 31. In all four years, our institutional score for academic support is above benchmark, with the disability reported score at 1.3% above benchmark. However, the gap closes from 2.1% above in Year 1 to 0.6% in Year 4.

A key pandemic strategy was to ensure students continue to meet with university staff when needed, through greater online availability. CeDAS and the School/departments provided online opportunities for personalised support and group tutorials. NSS scores for staff availability (NSS Q12) reflect this strategy, with consistently above sector average scores between 2018-22, remaining above benchmark in all four TEF years. Although our NSS Q13 and Q14 scores are also above benchmark, there is a dip in the most recent survey, and improving course choice advice, supported in increased personal tutor support, is now in several School NSS action plans.

We acknowledge there is more work within academic support to ensure a consistent student experience. There is subject variability, with scores over 2.5% above benchmark, and likely materially over benchmark, in Engineering, Geography and Earth Sciences, History, Physics, Psychology, and Philosophy. There are weaker scores for Business and Management and Combined and General Studies. SBM and CeDAS have worked together closely to enhance support. In 2021-22 approximately 20% of Year 1 SBM students signed up for mini-writing retreats, with around half of those going onto focused 1:1 reviews. During the pandemic, CeDAS developed online guides for student self-study and are also used for teaching. One of the motivations for the introduction of Schools, and particularly DUGEs has been to provide stronger management and academic support for joint and combined honours degrees, as most are in cognate disciplines in individual Schools. There have also been improvements in central timetabling arrangements and advice on option choice to support joint students.

## **SE6. Physical and virtual learning resources**

The TEF measures indicate an important and decisive change in the university's physical and digital learning resources for students. In Year 1, our institutional score for learning resources was 1.4% below benchmark. This has improved each year through the TEF period, and by Year 4 was 1.3% above benchmark. The benchmarked scores for 2021-22 for individual questions also indicate relative success and improvement, with Q17 (IT resources), Q19 (Library) and Q20 (specialist resources) all above benchmark, with Q19 1.6% above benchmark. We have made substantial investment in physical and digital learning support over the TEF period and seen development of a suite of centrally available teaching resources with supporting training. The overall measure is firmly in line with benchmark, but we have reason to expect continued and sustained improvements.

The most obvious change since the last TEF is the opening of a major new Library and Student Services building, the Emily Wilding Davison Building (EWD). The EWD was opened in 2017 at a cost of around £60m. This was a fundamental transformation of the university's physical learning resources, consolidating a previously dispersed collection and limited learning spaces. The new library creates a central space on campus, with café, gallery, art store and special collections reading rooms, Careers Service and Student Service Centre; it has quickly become a focus for student study and interaction, enhancing our learning community. In 2016-17 RHUL had around 825 study places which increased to 1,000 places upon opening of EWD. The reopening of the historic Founders' Library brought dedicated student space to over 1,400 by 2021-22. Study



spaces have increased by 70% since 2016-17 to around 1 space per 8 students. Our study space ratio for 2019-20 of 7.7 compares favourably with most other London and SE universities.

Other physical infrastructure investments include the construction of the Shilling Building, home to Electronic Engineering and the StoryFutures project, part-funded by HEFCE to support increased academic engagement by women into STEM subjects. The Shilling Building has a 250-seat lecture theatre, and a 'Harvard-style' 120-seat space to facilitate combinations of lectures, group and hybrid learning. There has also been a comprehensive transformation of teaching spaces, with all teaching spaces (130+) now fitted with high-quality audio-visual equipment, new social learning spaces, and dedicated hubs for commuting students. Investment in equipment also directly supported student inclusion. All study bedrooms have fast broadband. Digital poverty was addressed until 2020 through a laptop loan scheme (used disproportionately by IMD Q1/ Q2 students – 42% of all loans.) This was replaced by a generous package of grants and Getech vouchers, enabling digitally disadvantaged students to buy equipment. 484 awards were made between 2020 and the end of academic year 2021-22, averaging £500 per student.

The library has a 'digital first' approach reviewing e-journal and e-textbooks. All reading lists are integrated into Moodle through Talis Aspire, allowing click-through from the VLE. Undergraduate core resources are prioritised, and systems are in place that automatically extend or buy new licences in response to demand, particularly for synchronous access of texts; Student 'turn-aways' because of licence limits have dropped from 37% to less than 1%. Student use of resources is monitored, with SCONUL data showing students in 2020-21 made on average 280 e-book selection requests, which compares with around 125 for reporting Russell Group universities.

There has been a step-change in the digital resources supporting student learning. This was underway before the pandemic, driven in part by strong student voice, particularly through SU research and representation. We responded to an SU campaign on lecture recording in 2018. We adopted Panopto which was fully integrated into Moodle, with an automatic scheduling system recording all timetabled sessions, and an opt-out policy, which produced dramatic change. In 2018-19, there were 2,417 published recordings; the following year this had increased to 11,472, around 95% of eligible sessions. This progress was given additional impetus by the pandemic. The pandemic years saw further increase in recordings, as staff produced shorter resources to supplement or replace 50-minute recorded lectures in hybrid learning. By 2020-21 there were 42,873 recordings. All recordings are automatically captioned.

A central change has been in the use of the VLE, Moodle. Prior to 2019 there were efforts to improve the standardisation and creative use of Moodle, but despite excellent practice in some areas, for many modules Moodle was used primarily as a resource repository. Over the TEF period, it has been transformed to an engaging and more consistent educational platform. Hosting and support for Moodle was outsourced, solving an ongoing reliability problem, and giving 24/7 support (outages were effectively eliminated from 2019). There was standardisation of Moodle pages, with clear guidance over required minimum content and consistent design. Moodle also became the integrating hub pulling together all aspects of teaching and learning. Reading lists and library resources work through full integration of Talis Aspire. Almost all student assessment and feedback works through a Turnitin Portal accessed through Moodle. Moodle was integrated with MSTeams, with dedicated MS Class Teams created and updated automatically for every Moodle module. Finally, the widespread use of plugin Moodle and 3rd party applications has enriched the VLE, including H5P that enables educators to create interactive HTML5 content, Vevox an online polling service, Talis Elevate that works with Talis Aspire resource lists to allow collaborative student annotation and interaction of digital sources, and Coderunner, STACK and LearnSci Smart Worksheets enabling the embedding of mathematical and programming exercises in assessments.

Since 2021, all Moodle content is checked and graded using Ally, an inclusivity and accessibility tool. The overall institutional accessibility score for content created in Moodle was 98% for 2021-22. Ally offers on demand alternative formats for Moodle course content, which include options such as Electronic Braille, Audio versions of text documents, and the Beeline Reader. Ally is used to generate accessibility reports that are reviewed by Schools. Moodle usage has grown significantly: log-ins increased by over 16% to reach over 2.6m between 2018-19 and 2021-22. The 'richness' of Moodle can be measured by the number of discrete embedded active elements. There were 201K activities in 2018-19 rising to 335K in 2021-22.

### **SE7. Engagement with our students**

RHUL has strongly embedded student engagement through a well-developed system of formal representation, detailed feedback mechanisms, a deep partnership with the SU, a distinctive institutional focus group (RH100), and a commitment to co-design. The TEF measure for Student Voice is strong at 1.7% above benchmark. Our Year 1 score was materially (3.5%) above benchmark, and strong in Years 2 and 3, while Year 4 is at benchmark. 15 of 20 CAH2 subject are above benchmark, with 11 more than 2.5% above; performance against benchmark is weakest in Business and Management, and Computing.

Our comprehensive student representation, governed by a Partnership Agreement between the SU and university, mirrors institutional structures at all levels, leading to clear lines of communication and governance. The four levels (course reps, senior course reps, School reps and VP Education) allow us to map roles onto relevant committees ensuring student voice is at the heart of decision-making. Course Reps sit on student staff committees (SSCs); Senior Course Reps chair SSCs, compile annual Student Voice reports, and contribute to annual quality reviews, cyclical reviews, and programme development. Elected School reps sit on School level Boards. Elected student leaders are members of the Academic Board and Council, as well as Education and Quality committees, and a joint Executive Committee, chaired alternately by the Principal and SU President, steers the relationship. Over 350 reps across the institution are trained and supported to deliver this system. The SU is also introducing (in response to research on representation effectiveness) course reps with specialisms (for example, ethnic diversity or commuting) and piloting issue-focused action meetings to replace SSCs.

Variability in our NSS Student Voice scores indicates differing levels of awareness of the representation system. For example, scores for Business and Management and Computing are weakest for NSS Q25 ('It is clear how feedback has been acted upon'). This is being addressed by NSS action plans focused on improving the visibility of responses. For example, when SBM ran an intensive 'You said, We did' awareness campaign (2019) this resulted in a sector top quartile response for Q25. SBM is one of the Schools piloting action meetings, and has also introduced termly open student meetings with its senior management team.

The SU is an active partner in the development of policy, having a distinctive role in surveying student opinion, undertaking regular Policy Inquiries and Insight Reports and making proposals for change. These in-depth research-informed processes generate detailed Student Voice reports, which feed into policy-making structures, and contribute to co-design of policies. Key reports in the TEF period include: BGM student experience that shaped the design of the Inclusive Education Board (SE1); Careers Journey and Services which informed our approach to employability support and education (3.2).

In spring 2020, sabbatical officers and representatives played a key role in our pandemic response, with the SU President and VP Education members of the top-level rapid-response team chaired by the Principal. They were involved in decisions about revised arrangements for online assessment, adjustments to the degree classification algorithm, and support for digital poverty. There was detailed discussion the following year (2020-21) of the Fairness and Assurance Policy

put into place for degree classifications, and the duration of open book examinations. SU research has been central to our digital education approach. *Digital Education I* looked at the implementation of digital learning during the initial pandemic period. The report (published July 2020) fed directly into the development of the flexible learning strategy and validations that summer. *Digital Education II* investigated student academic experience of digital and hybrid learning in autumn 2020, evaluating the success of elements put in place.

Student voice is embedded into our quality and review systems. Alongside SSC reports, student surveys are crucial in the identification of issues and development of rapid responses. Detailed benchmarked analysis of NSS is supplemented by Year 1 and continuing student surveys. End of Module Evaluation questionnaires are reviewed by DUGEs with Departmental Education leads and used to inform modifications and development. Staff are encouraged to use mid-module feedback.

We recognise that alongside formal academic representation, there is a need to gain further qualitative opinion and creative input on issues and initiatives. Since 2016 we have run RH100, a focus group made up of 100 student panellists, who represent different student bodies in terms of social characteristics and commuting status. The system is developmental for students: panellists are trained and paid, with 3-5 themed panel sessions per year on significant plans or issues around academic and wider student experience. During the TEF period the panels included: academic representation; learning spaces; employability; rethinking feedback; digital futures; synergies between teaching and research; online library provision; personal tutoring; student academic engagement post-pandemic. At the end of the panel session a detailed report is produced that feeds into university committees and informs new project development. For example, outcomes from the engagement panel shaped our of the student dashboard identifying key metrics. It has also resulted in a new project (as part of the Inclusive Education Board) where we are working in partnership with students to better understand their engagement with their studies and the university. RH100 was cited by Wonkhe as an example of sectoral good practice, and has been emulated across the sector.<sup>11</sup>

Our students are also involved in the design, review and validation of courses. For example, students were involved in the development of new degrees in Environment and Social Change, with workshops to evaluate content and assessment strategies. A recent curriculum review in Psychology to strengthen employability, was co-designed through dedicated SSC sessions, followed by focus groups and surveys returned by around 250 students.

### **3. Student Outcomes**

#### **3.1 Positive outcomes (SO1-SO3)**

##### **SO1. Ensuring our students succeed in and progress beyond their studies.**

Royal Holloway gives strong support to ensure that students make a successful transition to university, complete their studies, and progress to fulfilling careers or further study. Our internal evaluation of strong performances in continuation and completion (SO2), our benchmark performance in progression (SO3), and our changing demographic has encouraged us to enhance our approach to progression. We have developed a more holistic approach to the relationship between progression and wider educational gains (addressed in section 3.2).

**Transition to university.** During the TEF period we have strengthened and deepened our approach to transition to university, to ensure all our students are provided with the same key knowledge and support as they settle into university. In 2019, pre-arrival arrangements were standardised into departmental web-based activity hubs containing short videos and activities, suggested readings, degree introductions, etc. Welcome Week activities include introductions to key learning resources, degree programmes, meetings with personal tutors, and community

building events. We are now consolidating our activities into an Academic Transition Framework, requiring each department to identify and develop activities focused on Belonging (onboarding and induction); Confidence-Building (academic support in subject content in Term 1); Reinforcement (opportunities for reflection, personal development and goal-setting in Term 2).

To reflect our changing demographic we have also tailored support. For example, in 2020-21 we launched Headstart to University. This two-day course (prior the start of Year 1) targets students with contextual offers; these students have increased from 380 (2019) to 610 (2022). They were identified as those most likely to need additional support, so the course unpacks the hidden curriculum of university life and study, equalising knowledge through advice and training to build confidence and create belonging. 70 contextual offer students took Headstart in 2021; that group had a higher continuation rate and Year 1 average than the general cohort. We are now developing an online course translating the Headstart programme to a broader audience, to support transition for all students who have accepted a place at RHUL.

In 2022, recognising the importance of re-establishing a strong sense of belonging and university community, we invested £60K into a new initiative, Big Read. A novel (*The Gravity of Us*) and welcome pack was sent to new starters, with the book used as a transitional object, collapsing distance between home and university and create a shared experience to facilitate peer interactions and engagement with support services. Induction activities and events took place in the first month at university from the SU, Archives & Collections, Careers, and Wellbeing. Schools embedded activities related to the book in early skills and tutorial contact. This project provided a common experience and point of connection for our diverse study body, with survey data indicating its success in helping students feel part of RHUL.

A substantial change to aid student transition, has been the creation of integrated foundation degrees (IFD) that commenced in 2019-20 (first graduates will be 2022-23). These degrees have a strong skills-based curriculum, focussing on development of core academic competencies, and supportive personalised tutoring. Initially centred in STEM subjects (particularly Computer Science), and Humanities, numbers have climbed to over 380 (2022-23 entry) following the addition of Law and Biosciences. IFDs have been very successful for increasing access, in 2020-21, 64% of IFD students were BGM, compared with 49% for direct entry to Year 1, with increased gender inclusion in STEM and have altered the socio-economic mix (38% IMD 1 and 2, against 27% direct entry). The inclusive educational design has also positively influenced success, with interim results indicating that average performance of IFD students was similar to direct entry peers; in Year 1 these IFD students outperformed direct entry students in 3 of 4 of our Schools, and in Year 2, were above in Humanities and within 2% in EPMS and LSS. Royal Holloway's partnership with Study Group supports transition for international students, and includes a specific International Foundation Year and the International Year One. The programmes include activities and special sessions led by RHUL staff to ensure effective transition into our degrees, and promote a sense of belonging. In September 2022, 219 students from Study Group programmes joined Royal Holloway undergraduate courses. We monitor continuation, completion and attainment for these students; retention rates are high (above 90%), and academic performance exceeds international students from external pathway providers. We are also committed to pre-application work that helps students from our region to join us and succeed, most notably through collaboration in Feltham, one of the most deprived areas of west London, where we have been working through the Reach Academy to prepare Y13 students for university.

**Completion.** How we successfully support our students with their academic studies has been described in SE5. To ensure responsiveness to student changing needs, Schools monitor student engagement using the student dashboard to identify issues associated with attendance, prompt submission of work, changes in performance etc. School Engagement Panels meet 2-3 times/term,



and rigorously follow up student disengagement, putting personalised action plans in place through departments, personal tutors, and relevant professional services including CeDAS and Wellbeing. Wider support in students' lives is critical to ensure successful completion, and is structured through an integrated Wellbeing Service where students access support relating to mental health, disability, international, and money and funding issues, with access to 1-to-1 sessions with professional advisors. Our dedicated Counselling Service offers both rapid response 'One at a Time' sessions and longer-term support. Our DSA funded Mental Health Practitioners provide mental healthcare to students who require support in primary care. We participate in Together All, a safe and clinically managed online community to improve mental health and wellbeing. Around 1 in 7 students have a reported disability (2021 entry) and are supported by our Disability and Neurodiversity team who work closely with departments and Schools. Students with reported disabilities are supported through agreed packages of reasonable adjustments, including early access to lecture materials, additional time in assessments and to respond in classes, marking guidelines for academic staff for specific learning disabilities, alternative formats including audio, braille, large print etc., and a dedicated assistive technology suite. Student well-being and stress has also been addressed through changes to the extension and extenuating circumstances systems, making them more flexible and responsive, with an instant online response for short extensions, and rules that give students more control over their time. Although pressures on our Wellbeing services have increased through the TEF period, continuation and completion rates for students with reported disabilities remain well over 90% and in line with benchmark; we are aware that supporting the needs of these students post-pandemic is an ongoing challenge.

**Employability support and progression.** Sustained improvement of progression into graduate level employment and further study is a priority for RHUL. During this TEF period, we have significantly strengthened our employability support, drawing upon external research on the inclusivity of approaches such as the Sutton Trust's *The University of Life* report.<sup>12</sup> Our Careers Service delivers support to students, and co-ordinates wider employability activity, with a close relationship between the Careers Service, Schools and departments. All degrees have employability activities, and 90% of our students are on degrees that have embedded content formalised through partnership agreements with the Careers Service. There has been expansion of employability skills as an integral element of degrees, particularly through authentic assessment (2.1) and work to enable students to recognise the skills that they have and are gaining. We recently introduced an initiative ensuring students have meaningful work experience before Year 2, building on the 67% students who indicated that they had significant work experience by the start of Year 2 in 2018-19.

The Careers Service offers personalised support, with one-to-one discussions with professional careers consultants, helping students evaluate their skills, explore careers, and make plans. They also check job applications, CVs, LinkedIn profiles, interview techniques, cover letters and personal statements. In 2018-19, 23% of final year students had at least one appointment. It is offered for two years after graduation, with graduates from widening participation backgrounds contacted by careers consultants offering further support. The Careers Service also organises an extensive programme of events, careers fairs, and a broad suite of online resources. Students who are aspiring entrepreneurs are supported by the Careers Service, through tailored advice and workshops. A specialist Enterprise Hub provides a structured training course, covering ideation, business models, taxation issues and sources of investment.

RHUL has specific APP targets for progression for Black students and students reporting mental health conditions, but supporting diversity also includes tailored career support for other groups. During this TEF period we have strengthened support for groups that may have difficulty accessing professional level outcomes. Our Careers Service runs an annual diversity fair, inviting employers



committed to diversity in recruitment, and a wider range of tailored networking events. We partner with EmployAbility, a third-sector organisation empowering neurodivergent and disabled graduates to build their careers. This delivers individualised advice and support including information about rights, application support, and includes advocacy for adjustments for successful applicants.

RHUL has run a placement scheme for over a decade. Up to 2021, these were targeted to subject areas with lower progression rates, in a competitive process with around 500 applicants for 100 yearly placements of 2 to 4 weeks of work-experience. The placements were embedded in a training and application process, enabling all applicants to improve CVs and interview techniques. Review of the approach indicated significant impact. An internal analysis of 520 students who had completed placements by 2017 showed that they were more likely to be in graduate-level employment or further study sixth months after completion, with a subject-weighted average of 85.5% compared with an overall rate of 70.6% for DHLE returns.<sup>13</sup> However the scheme was marked by under-representation from key inclusion student groups.

The scheme was relaunched (2020) as the Summer Skills Placement Programme (SSPP). This is open to students of: Black heritage; financially supported backgrounds; care-leavers; those registered with the Disability and Neurodiversity team; or first generation at university (in total around each 30% of cohort.) SSPP has a similar placements structure, with training and around 100 placements/year, but is supported by enhanced resources, including £650 stipends for 4-week placements. In 2020-21 and 2021-22 sponsorship from Santander facilitated a targeted 'Open Minds' placement scheme for students with mental health conditions or social communication impairment. 19 students benefitted, and the initiative was a finalist for Best Widening Participation Initiative at the National Undergraduate Employability Awards. There is also encouragement of under-represented groups to strengthen the progression pipeline into research (a key feature of our successful Athena-Swan awards).

We are extending our provision of Years in Industry and similar year-long opportunities. There are well-established pathways in SBM and Computer Science. Pre-pandemic around 60 students a year used these pathways, this increased to around 120 in 2021-22 after a dip because of pandemic restrictions. We recognise the importance of these initiatives for successful progression, and expanding provision is a key priority. We have extended this approach both with new pathways in Economics, Biology, Law and other disciplines, and have also introduced from 2021 Optional Placement Years open to all students. This distinctive initiative allows students to undertake a year focused on volunteering, as well as work experience, adding to our existing Study Abroad options.

**Volunteering and Holloway Global.** Beyond direct employability support, students are supported to succeed and progress in other ways that add to their educational gains. RHUL has an extensive and multi-award-winning volunteering programme, with volunteering opportunities in five areas: Community Action, Community Research, Social Action, Sports Volunteering and Volunteering Abroad. For student led project students receive extensive in-house training as well as CPD training provided by external company Mobile Team Challenge. All students are supported in applying for funding for their projects or liaising with community partners. A Festival of Volunteering is held during Welcome Week bringing together all five streams of volunteering. This was first introduced in 2018, and in 2022 over 3,000 students and staff attended, an important element in community building and transition work. The volunteering programmes have exceptional take-up rates. Over the five years between 2017-18 and 2021-22, 4,916 students engaged in some form of volunteering.

Our volunteering opportunities enable students to work with a range of stakeholders. For example, in Community Research, students are partnered with non-profit organisations, such as The Brain Tumour Charity, Runnymede & Spelthorne Citizens Advice, and Age UK Surrey, supporting these

organisations with their research needs. In 2017-18, in a Social Action project to mark the Suffrage Centenary, student volunteers ran sessions at local Youth Centres teaching young people about politics and democracy. In 2019, a student-led legal advice centre was established, supported by professional solicitors, offering free legal advice. RHUL's developing approach to the recognition of educational gains (SO4) is further assisting students to recognise the richness and range of skills that are developed by these opportunities.

Volunteering has received external funding and recognition. In 2019, Voluntary Support helped fund a public facing community research hub led by our students, with HEIF (2020) continuing this funding for another three years. The scheme was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2017 (a unique award to a university scheme). In 2020 our Holloway Notes project, community singing in care settings, won the National Societies and Volunteering Awards Judge's Choice Award.

The strength of the volunteering provision was a key element in securing Turing Scheme funding for RHUL. International Volunteering is a key component of RHUL's international offering for students, with Challenges Abroad, Think Pacific and East African Playgrounds. International student opportunities are co-ordinated by Holloway Global. As well as volunteering opportunities, Turing Funds support Study Abroad years and international summer schools. In 2021-22, RHUL secured Turing Scheme funding of £266,000 for 222 students. This financially supported 75 students to undertake yearlong study with International Exchange partners in Australia, Canada, America and Japan, and for the first time, students received funding to attend Summer Schools in Korea and California. This has been extended to £900,000 in 2022-23, supporting around 350 students. Holloway Global is committed to RHUL's inclusion agenda; while all students can apply for Turing funding priority is given to students with contextual offer eligibility. There are additional funds for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (including Mental Health conditions) and financially disadvantaged/historically under-represented students.

Although we are already offering a diverse range of progression-focused support, we recognise that we can improve even further the support of our students' skills and professional development. There is an ambitious move to align careers support with a systematic and clearly articulated approach to education gains, to give students the knowledge and skills required to meet the challenges of contemporary work and life (see 3.2).

## **SO2. Continuation and completion rates**

In our focus on more inclusive education, enhanced student support, and more experiential learning to aid success in our changing student demographics, we monitor outcomes and this is reflected in our metrics. Continuation rates at RHUL are generally at or above benchmark, with an overall institutional figure just above benchmark. There is a very strong score for Year 4, some 2% above benchmark at 96.1%, and while we aspire to ensure that all students continue in their studies, rates above 96% are close to a limiting case. These figures are backed by internal data for continuation to Year 2 in 2021 and 2022, that indicate consistently high rates. The continuation score is broadly consistent across most split metrics; there is a strong score, 3.9% above benchmark for ABCS Q1. While other measures of deprivation are not as clearly above benchmark, this is evidence of successful transition support for students from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Benchmarked continuation rates are higher for all BGM categories than white students, but all are very close to benchmark. In absolute terms, rather than benchmarked scores, our internal data (2017 to 2021) indicates that withdrawal rates before year 1 for Black students, particularly those from Black African and 'Other Black' categories are higher than average (by around 6%). Initiatives including peer-mentoring are being used to support these groups alongside our transition approaches. The IFD is an area of continuation success and is a key element of our inclusion approach, with continuation into our degrees at 96.5%, 6.6% above benchmark.

The benchmarked completion scores also are mainly at or above benchmark, with an overall institutional figure just above benchmark. This is broadly consistent across split metrics. There is a low score for mature students 31 and over and we recognise the need for more targeted support for this group. However this is a very small group of students (around 20 entrants per year), spread across different disciplines, and we note that continuation and completion metrics for the much larger group of entrants (over 200 per year) between 21 and 30 are above benchmark.

The data for subjects indicate particularly strong performances for Engineering in continuation (2.5% above benchmark) and Media Arts for completion (split across two CAH categories, both around +2.5%), but also issues for the Department of Law and Criminology, where continuation metrics are materially below benchmark. The first entry to Law degrees took place in 2015, and there were retention issues in the first three years of the degree course. We have recognised this issue and have taken steps to strengthen transition responding to the particular needs of students who were disproportionately first-in-family, BGM backgrounds, and commuting. Law now has a developed transition approach, that includes the pre-arrival Activity Hub, more effective Welcome Week activities, including enhanced extra-curricular law and social events, a tailored introductory English Legal System module, and intensive study skills in the first three weeks. In 2022 Law introduced an IFD, with a focus on readiness to undertake LLB study. Initiatives have also been put in place to support progress to completion, with additional study skills and well-being support for all students resitting/repeating modules (around 100 students in 2021-22). The School engagement panel also triggers personal tutor follow-ups and further interventions. Internal data indicates significant progress: withdrawal rates to year 2 was 16% for 2017 entry, which decreased to 8% (2019 and 2020). These are still higher than most other departments, indicating both progress and need for continuing action.

In recent years, Maths and Physics have both identified the importance of additional Mathematical transitional support early in the academic year to improve continuation and completion rates. In Physics, Maths teaching has been increased from 3 hours per week to 4 or 5 hours per week, with additional tailored sessions for struggling students. The Maths department introduced regular micro-assessment points in year 1, to give closer support on key mathematical skills (SE1).

**Part-time students.** Continuation and completion scores for part-time undergraduates are shown as being considerably below benchmark. We have very low numbers of part-time students (provider context) but previously offered specialist courses in Social Work on a part-time basis (0.25 FTE). The courses covered by these metrics were Diplomas in Work with Adults or Children & Families, with around 150 students/year enrolled between 2013-16. These courses aimed at employed social workers, allowed students to dip in over several years and complete courses at other institutions, where they were then awarded qualifications. These courses are not suited to conventional continuation and completion metrics. The last intake for these courses was in 2016.

### **SO3. Rates of successful progression for students and courses.**

Overall progression rates at RHUL are closely in line with benchmark (just 0.1% below). There is, however, considerable variation, the year 3 benchmarked metric is 3.3% below benchmark, but this follows a year 2 outcome 1.9% above benchmark. Some of the volatility within our Graduate Outcome (GO) survey metrics reflect the impact of the pandemic on our graduates graduating in July 2020 and career choices. As noted above our take-up of further study is higher than the sector average (around 24% to 16%), and in Year 3 6% of negative outcomes (or around 2% of all respondents) had just completed significant interim study. This effect is particularly marked for Politics, which has a below benchmark score, where over 11.5% of negative responses were from interim study graduates (Politics sector average = 6.8%).

However, the most recent GO survey emphasises the importance of the measures we are taking on employability to strengthen this area. In addition to the work at institutional level (SO1), departments and Schools have undertaken tailored initiatives to support and improve progression. For example, the Politics and Philosophy Department has embedded 'careers in politics' workshops and has a 'Politics in Action' module allowing students to do an accredited placement for 1 day per week during term time. Students from widening participation groups receive extra support in the form of sourced placements. Media Arts has expanded available placements to include work with SMEs such as Spun Gold Halo and Little Gem in TV, and Focal Point in VR. These opportunities include both shorter summer skills placements, and longer-term year in industry placements. The assessment requirements for Years Abroad on our Languages degrees now require reflection on professional and employability skills in the target language.

Our most recent APP committed to equalise the absolute progression gap between Black and White students and between students with a mental health disability and students with no declared disability (both had 15% gap at start of APP). The TEF data shows excellent performance for Black students, some 5% above benchmark, and performance of students reporting disability slightly above those with no reported disability, reflecting the impact of some of our tailored support initiatives (SO1). While most split measures are broadly in line with institutional performance, there is a score for mixed ethnicity students that requires further monitoring and action.

Career structures in the creative and performing arts are not always picked up straightforwardly in the GO Survey, and the OfS's own data on graduate prospects indicates significant falls nationally in areas such as music, drama and media production associated with the pandemic. The latest Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data for the 2019-20 tax year indicates long-term RHUL student success: students in our Media Arts Department classified as Creative Arts and Design students had average salaries above both the CAH code average for the sector and for London HEIs, for 1, 3 and 5 years after graduation. Five years after graduation, RHUL Creative Arts and Design graduates were earning £28.4K compared to £24.0K (London HEIs) and £22.7 (sector average.) For each of these years RHUL was in the top 10% of the sector. There is a similar earnings advantage for our students in Performing Arts and for other Media students.

<b>Longitudinal Education Outcomes Tax Year 2019-20</b> Number of RHUL CAH2 subject areas at or above median salaries for London and sector HEIs			
From Graduation	1 year	3 years	5 years
Sector HEIs	14/16	13/16	15/16
London HEIs	10/16	9/16	12/16

Overall, the LEO data shows the strength of progression for RHUL students, and that this is not just a reflection of the London labour market. We benchmark LEO data against other London HEIs for

CAH categories as well as the sector average. Figure 5 summarises our position against London and the sector. Computer Studies (around 8% of RHUL students) has a particular premium with 3 year salaries 56% above the London HEI median, at £46.1K.

### 3.2 Educational Gains (SO4-SO6)

At Royal Holloway, our vision is that all our students have the opportunity to access and succeed in higher education, bringing educational gains that benefit them personally, economically and socially. We aim to prepare our students not just for a changing world of work, but also to become active members of their communities and societies. Our approach is now to pursue a holistic approach to educational gains, integrating academic, employment-related and extracurricular dimensions of the student experience.

**Academic educational gains.** Over the past twenty years, the university has strongly embedded educational gains into our degrees through clear learning outcomes for courses and individual modules. Course and module validation processes focus on learning outcomes, as does the process of cyclical review. These learning outcomes are aligned to QAA subject benchmarks, and



are validated using student input, external experts and other stakeholders. Central to our approach has been widening of learning outcomes beyond subject knowledge, research and discipline specific skills, to include explicit recognition of skills such as critical thinking, numeracy, and communication. The initiatives set out in this submission in relation to the diversification of teaching, learning and assessment relate directly to these extended educational gains. These academic educational gains are monitored and evaluated primarily through analysis of degree results at departmental, School and university levels. Prior to the pandemic, improving degree results were a measure of student success in achieving this wider set of educational gains. Our 2020 Degree Outcome Statement indicated a measured improvement in degree outcomes from 76% 'good degrees' in 2015 to 82% in 2019; this pattern reflected improvements in teaching and assessment, and support for students to achieve academic educational gains.<sup>14</sup> During the pandemic, even though safety net measures changed the overall pattern of award, our External Examiners gave detailed assurance that learning outcomes were being met through the changing forms of teaching and assessment.

We work with detailed data on award patterns to address issues of fairness and inclusion in educational gains and are committed to reducing gaps in degree awards and academic educational gains. The latest OfS data shows very encouraging progress on 2 of our 3 awarding gaps, for students from low-participation neighbourhoods and the most deprived areas, having both reduced ahead of our milestone targets. We have been less successful in reducing the awarding gap for students from black ethnic backgrounds. This is a relatively small group of students (70 graduating 2019-20), but is increasing rapidly with our wider changes in recruitment pattern, and is a focus for the interventions of the Inclusive Education Board. The awarding gap for Asian students has narrowed from 11% (2017-18) to 4% in 2020-21. Furthermore, outcomes for disabled students are consistently high, with a higher proportion of 'good honours' than students with no known disability in 2020-21.

**Educational gains: beyond the classroom.** Alongside the measurement and evaluate of academic educational gains RHUL also identifies wider educational gains, primarily in relation to future employment. In 2016 our employability strategy 'Evaluate, Explore, Enact' (3Es) introduced staged, structured and required engagement that built upon our yearly survey of student career-readiness, seeking to increase the number of students evaluating their career opportunities and then engaging with specific opportunities, before enacting career decisions in their final year. We monitored this through data on students engaging with activities at each phase of this system. Running alongside this, extra-curricular activity was incentivised through a scheme (RHUL 'Passport' award) that gave students points (and certificated awards) for achievements and service, such as volunteering, outreach work, and student societies/clubs leadership.

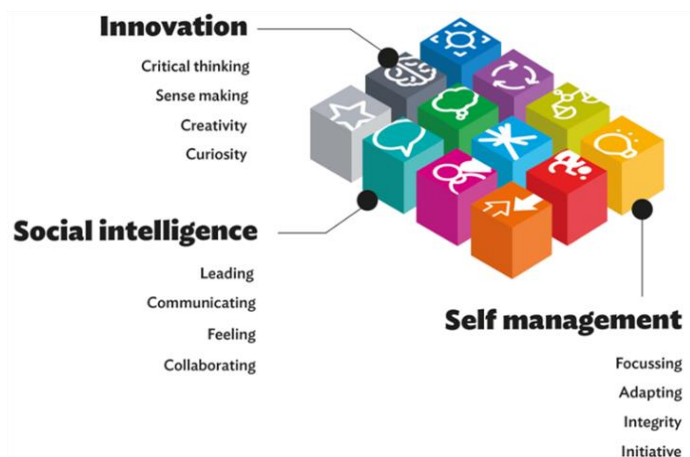
**A new holistic approach to educational gain – CVstac.** Work with students, particularly through a collaborative inquiry by Careers and the SU, and an RH100 panel on employability (2019) indicated how we might improve our approach, showing that students found it difficult to identify and articulate their broader educational gains in both academic and extra-curricular contexts, with little integration between the two. Students suggested that they struggled to articulate their educational gains in CVs and applications. The Passport award, while incentivising participation, was highly uneven in take-up, with BGM students and Polar 1 quintile students 40% and 30% respectively less likely to gain awards (2017). Our new integrated framework, co-designed with students, eliminates disjunctions between educational gains in academic and extra-curricular activities. To ensure we are enabling our students to be successful in future challenges, we have used an evidence-based approach outlined in the *Skills 4.0 – a skills model to drive Scotland's future* paper to help us address and articulate the complex futures of work which face modern graduates, and to define the technology-resilient skills that our students need for life-long career



success.<sup>15</sup> The approach was driven by the prospect of wider technological change, and the challenges of uncertainty and disruption.

Our integrated framework is called **CVstac Skills Translated, Achievements Connected** and is a clear and visible articulation of the educational gains we want our students to achieve. CVstac is built around 12 'meta-skills', grouped into three categories, and is designed to surface skills already included in our degrees and other activities (Figure 6). CVstac has been designed to ensure a clear expression of the meta-skills, adopting a consistent design language used across RHUL. Our learning outcomes are now much more visible to students, and readily translate understanding and expression of their wider educational gains.

The first phase (Summer 2021) mapped all degree learning outcomes against the meta-skills. Central student activities, for example volunteering and the library, as well as the SU, have also mapped their skills into CVstac. This will enable students to understand how to combine academic achievements with skills gained through our innovative extra-curricular activity and work experience, translating these into a skills stack. Students engage with support within departments and from the Careers Service to develop their CVstac skills and translate academic achievement into qualities understood by employers. In 2022-23 we are piloting the integration of CVstac into student support and personal tutoring, alongside an e-portfolio that students use to build a personal database and produce excellent CVs and applications. The deployment of the e-portfolio also allows institutional monitoring of these holistic educational gains. It will inform curriculum development and enable us to address the inclusivity of educational gains in the round.



#### 4. Reflections and Prospects

Royal Holloway demonstrates educational excellence. All the TEF Student Experience measures are above benchmark at institutional level, with a long-term record of excellent scores for learning community and overall satisfaction. Student Outcomes measures are strong for continuation and completion, with Progression almost exactly at benchmark.

To sustain this excellence, we are looking to the future. In particular, this submission identifies important initiatives from the past two years that have aimed to reshape our approach. These reflect both the substantial changes in teaching and assessment approaches that were central to our successful pandemic response, but also an awareness of the changing nature of our student body. Student voice has been fully involved in these developments. These initiatives include: CVstac and Skills 4.0, Assessment Futures, Headstart and our strengthened transition programmes, the Inclusive Education Board and its associated projects, and our wider engagement with our region, notably with Feltham Reach Academy (Hounslow) and interaction with regional Schools. These have been important in our approach to educational excellence in the second half of the TEF period, but, of course, have limited sustained evidence of impact as yet.

Improving progression and graduate outcomes is a priority. The moves towards Skills 4.0 and CVstac as a holistic approach to employability and educational gains started at the time of the strong TEF Year 2 Graduate Outcomes. Those results were not treated complaisantly, and the significantly lower Year 3 outcomes highlight the importance of addressing student support and preparation. Our aim is not only to improve progression relative to benchmark, but to bring absolute rates up towards those of similar institutions with more favourable subject mixes. The TEF

exercise has demonstrated the need for closer long-term evaluation of our educational strengths. We need to make more sophisticated use of data to measure the impacts of initiatives, and particularly to connect initiatives on employability and educational gains to graduate outcomes. Finally, we are committed to access, inclusion, and the remaking of a learning community – and will lean into the future positively – continuing to promote the value of higher education by producing graduates who embody the distinctive educational gains of degree level study in academic achievements, in high-quality employment outcomes, and in civic engagement. We will build innovative, imaginative and challenging educational, creative, and critical responses to issues that our students face as global and local citizens, in sustainability, health and wellbeing, and the implementation and impact of technology. In so doing, we will meet our founding aspiration to offer ‘studies and sciences ... best adapted to meet the intellectual and social requirements of [our] students’

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