



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 panel statement**

**The University of Leeds**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at The University of Leeds and the outcomes it leads to are very high quality.

### Student experience: Bronze

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

Very high quality features include:

- teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting students' learning, progression, and attainment
- course content and delivery effectively encourage students to engage in their learning, and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills
- the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience
- very high quality support for staff professional development, and promotion of excellent academic practice.

### Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- effective support for students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies
- very high rates of successful progression for students and courses
- the educational gains it intends its students to achieve are articulated, as well as why these gains are relevant to students
- the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these educational gains.

One outstanding feature:

- outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses.

# About the assessment

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

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

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

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

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

The panel reviewed the following evidence:

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

The panel applied its expert judgement to:

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

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

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

# Summary of panel assessment

## Information about this provider

The University of Leeds is a large, multidisciplinary university with over 39,000 students, including 13,400 international students from 137 countries. It offers degree apprenticeships, life-long learning, and online education with international reach. It aims to provide a transformative, research-based educational experience for students from diverse backgrounds.

The largest subjects offered are: Nursing, Allied Health and Psychology; Engineering, Technology and Computing; Law and Social Sciences; Humanities and Languages; and Natural and Mathematical Sciences.

Ethnicity indicators show that around 67 per cent of undergraduate students are white, around 8 per cent are Asian, 4-5 per cent are of mixed ethnic origin and 2 per cent are black. Slightly less than 60 per cent of students are female. The majority (around 92 per cent) of students enter at 21 or less, and only 7 per cent are mature students.

The vast majority of part-time students (95 per cent) are mature, and most are in either Education and Teaching, or Health and Social care.

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

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

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

## **Student experience: Bronze**

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

The panel judged that the student experience was typically high quality with some very high quality features. The panel found:

- the majority of features to be very high quality
- no features clearly below the level of very high quality, or that may be of concern
- compelling evidence that the very high quality features apply to most of the provider's groups of students.

The panel considered the best fit rating to be 'Bronze'. This is because most features are very high quality for some groups of students. The panel did not think that 'Silver' would be the best fit because the evidence demonstrates that the very high quality features do not apply to all groups of students.

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

### **Teaching, assessment, and feedback and Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch**

The panel considered these features together, and rated them both as very high quality.

The overall 'teaching on my course' and 'assessment and feedback' indicators provide some initial evidence of very high quality for full-time students, for most, not all, of the student and subject mix.

The provider submission:

- describes teaching, assessment and feedback approaches that are tailored to the provider's students and its subjects
- notes that the Leeds Curriculum has underpinned the university's educational success for the past decade
- articulates its overall approach to the curriculum through a 'Capabilities Framework' based on three key literacies: academic, digital, and professional
- describes a ten-year programme to create a new framework for learning and skills in the future, which represents a £100m investment in education
- indicates that the university aims to actively engage students in their learning and stretch them to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential
- references Access to Leeds (A2L), the contextual admissions programme that guarantees special consideration for those applicants whose personal circumstances may have affected their ability to demonstrate their potential through grades alone.

The panel considered that the provider has embedded very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment. The panel also found that course content and delivery effectively encourage the provider's students to engage in their learning, and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills. Therefore, the panel determined that both of these features are very high quality.

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

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider submission indicates that there is embedding of research, innovation and stakeholder engagement to contribute to the academic experience.

The provider's courses are centred around its research and innovation strengths. The provider notes that this disciplinary strength impacts on the teaching and learning opportunities for all students. Learning activities and assessments are designed to be authentic, with real-world examples and experiences based on the discipline, research-based learning and activities that address global challenges.

Research-based learning is promoted, providing grounding and skills for effective learning. For example, many undergraduate programmes offer students the option to engage in research as part of their final year project, and graduates are encouraged to pursue postgraduate research degrees.

The provider promotes active engagement with important and emerging areas of societal and global concern, equipping students to become active global citizens. It also promotes scholarship of teaching and learning, through the Institute for Teaching Excellence which brings research, innovation and practice into cross-institution discussion and practice. The provider also has extensive engagement with employers and global higher education partners to support the academic experience.

The panel judged that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students. They concluded that this is a very high quality feature.

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

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

The provider submission describes many examples of how staff are supported with their professional development, including:

- the work of the Leeds Institute for Teaching Excellence, Organisational Development & Professional Learning, and the Digital Education Service to support staff and effective practice
- new lecturers have professional development aligned to the UK professional standards framework

- the central role of the Leeds Institute of Education across teaching, learning, and assessment activities
- support for staff to achieve professional qualifications and recognition for their teaching through the Advance HE Fellowship schemes
- training for tutors to develop skills such as listening, questioning, and making appropriate referrals
- peer-to-peer personal tutor mentoring amongst staff with monthly meetings to share best practice.

The panel considered that there is very high quality support for staff professional development, and excellent academic practice is promoted. They concluded that this is a very high quality feature.

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

The panel considered this is a very high quality feature.

The academic support indicator for full-time students does not provide evidence of a very high quality feature and this is not discussed in the provider submission.

Evidence in the provider submission demonstrates an understanding of the support and wellbeing needs of its students. The submission includes examples of the embedding of a range of appropriate activities across its provision, such as:

- personal tutoring and the training for tutors
- a lifelong Learning Centre for mature and part-time learners
- a 12-week Lifestyle and Wellbeing programme tailored to the individual student
- aims to minimise digital poverty via laptop loans
- bursaries and scholarships.

The provider submission also cites an annual intake of over 1,000 undergraduate students automatically progressing to the Plus Programme, and that the Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service supports around 3,000 students a year with easily accessible wellbeing drop-ins, 1-1 counselling, and ongoing support for students with mental health conditions.

The panel considered these indicator values and the provider and student submission and concluded that, in the round, there is evidence that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support. They concluded overall that this is a very high quality feature.

### **Learning resources**

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The overall 'learning resources' indicator for full-time students provides initial evidence of a very high quality feature.

The provider submission describes:

- the role played by the provider's five libraries in supporting students' learning and the investments in its operation
- around 5,000 study spaces, with a range of individual and group spaces, bookable study rooms, breakout areas, and IT clusters
- students have access to StREAM@Leeds, a learning analytics platform providing individual student dashboards with up-to-date learning engagement information
- how the Learning Development Team offers academic skills support for students
- the prevalence of international student support activities
- the provider's commitment to digital resources and technology which is a key pillar of its educational approach.

The panel considered that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning, and that this is a very high quality feature across the student and subject mix.

### **Student engagement in improvement**

The panel considered that this is a very high quality feature.

The overall 'student voice' indicator is insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature. The provider submission acknowledges that the low 'student voice' indicator is a response from students not feeling that feedback has been listened to, and indicates future work to address this including strengthening academic representation.

Further evidence from the provider and student submissions includes:

- the provider has a culture of including students as leaders and decision-makers, with student voices heard at every level of academic governance
- the students' union recruits student representatives who provide evidence gathering and inform the provider of potential difficulties
- the provider has implemented a university-wide Assessment Strategy that takes into account student voices and lessons learned from the coronavirus pandemic years
- how student feedback is collected and cites the partnership with the students' union
- indications of how student voice is included in the annual Student Education Conference
- citation of the university's Report & Support system to help students achieve change
- how student representation enables feedback from module level through to annual quality assurance cycles.



The panel considered that the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students, and that this is a very high quality feature across the student and subject mix.

## **Student outcomes: Silver**

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

The panel judged that student outcomes are typically very high quality.

The panel found:

- the majority of features to be very high quality
- one outstanding feature
- no features clearly below the level of very high quality, or that may be of concern
- compelling evidence that the very high quality and outstanding features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel considered the best fit rating to be 'Silver', because most features are very high quality for all groups of students and courses. The panel did not think that 'Gold' would be the best fit because the evidence demonstrates that 'some' rather than 'most' of the student outcomes features are of outstanding quality.

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

## **Approaches to supporting student success**

The panel considered that this is a very high quality feature.

Overall, the provider submission demonstrates a clear understanding of its students, and describes approaches that are tailored and personalised, particularly addressing inequalities in student outcomes. It includes evidence of effectiveness as follows:

- students can explore possible futures and practise professional literacies, digital and critical thinking skills
- a Student Research Experience Placement Scheme provides valuable research experience for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students
- the Leeds Internship Programme creates exclusive opportunities for students to work within the local economy.
- the use of learning analytics to foster a sense of belonging for all and accommodating students from diverse backgrounds

- the importance of the provider's Access and Student Success Strategy
- an embedded ethos of creating opportunities for students to gain experience, and complement and reinforce their subject
- the 'Leeds for Life' framework to support students and prepare them for their futures.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. Considering the evidence in the round, the panel considered this a very high-quality feature.

### **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel considered this an outstanding quality feature.

The overall 'continuation' and 'completion' indicators for full-time students both provide initial evidence of outstanding quality.

Other evidence includes:

- Industrial Advisory Boards ensure alignment with industrial and economic challenges, improving student employability
- a Global Leadership Forum engages over 500 students in leadership development.
- graduate data shows a 10.5 per cent increase in employment for graduates who worked or studied abroad
- enterprise and entrepreneurship programming is distinctive and open to all students
- spark-supported businesses generated over £25m, created more than 600 jobs, and secured external investment of £8m.
- a 'My Career' portal, offering around 36,000 opportunities over the past five years.

Overall, the panel concluded that there are outstanding rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses. Considering the evidence in the round, the panel considered this an outstanding quality feature.

### **Progression rates**

The panel considered this a very high-quality feature.

The overall 'progression' indicator provides initial evidence of very high quality for full-time students. Further evidence includes:

- the provider states that its students are sought-after globally and that it is highly ranked for employability
- global partnerships with 320 higher education partners and hundreds of employers across all sectors

- graduate data shows a 10.5 per cent increase in graduate-level employment for those who worked or studied abroad
- 80 new businesses are formed each year (by current and recent graduates accessing the University's Business Start-up support service), with around 87 per cent still in business after three years.

Overall, the panel concluded there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses. Considering the evidence in the round, the panel considered this a very high-quality feature.

### **Intended educational gains, Approaches to supporting educational gains and Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains**

The panel examined the evidence in the provider submission in relation to educational gains. It found the 'Intended educational gains and 'Approaches to supporting educational gains' were both very high quality features. However, there was insufficient evidence to suggest that 'Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains' was very high quality.

The provider has articulated its approaches to educational gains, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions. The approach is twofold: student qualifications and obtaining their degree; and personalised and tailored opportunities to develop their work readiness.

The long-standing Access to Leeds programme and the Plus Programme both support students who have personal circumstances that might affect their ability to demonstrate their potential. Data indicates these students' degree outcomes are comparable with the university average.

In 2011, the provider launched a sector-leading career readiness project. Students are asked annually to summarise their career thinking, using one of 19 'career readiness' statements. This data set is based in careers guidance theory and has evolved and progressed in the decade since the work began. Results have been shared across the world, and this survey has, over time, become best practice in the sector with over 90 UK universities now using the same methodology, along with institutions in Canada, United States, Australia, New Zealand and parts of Europe. The work on career readiness was highlighted in a case study in the HEFCE-commissioned Rand report on defining different types of learning gain in 2015.

The resulting data shows that the student's journey and their final year statement are the key predictors of whether the graduate will go on to have a meaningful future, including graduate-level employment. Career readiness data is also used to help demonstrate educational gain in students' career planning whilst studying at the provider.

The provider submission reported that, over the TEF assessment period, 90 per cent of students on its undergraduate programmes either gained in their career planning journey or began and left in a positive category. For students with widening participation characteristics, this number increases to 95 per cent. However, the 'distance travelled' was not reported in the provider submission, which makes it difficult to tell how much educational gains in terms of career readiness is gained between students starting their study and their graduation.

Overall, the panel concluded there is sufficient evidence that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, why these are relevant to its students, and that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains. Considering the evidence in the round, the panel considered that 'Intended educational gains' and 'Approaches to supporting educational gains' were both very high quality features. However, there was insufficient evidence to suggest that 'Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains' was very high quality.

## **Overall: Silver**

The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Bronze' and the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Silver'. The panel weighted these two aspects equally and considered all the evidence across all features and across all the provider's student groups, subjects and courses to come to an overall 'best fit' of 'Silver'.

The panel found most student experience features to be of very high quality for most groups of students and courses, and most student outcomes features to be of very high quality for all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups, and courses. The panel also found there to be an outstanding quality student outcomes feature.

When determining whether the overall rating should be 'Bronze' or 'Silver', the panel judged the evidence to show, on the whole, there to be typically very high-quality provision for all groups of students and courses, rather than typically high quality with some very high quality features. In judging 'Silver' to be a better fit than 'Bronze' the panel noted:

- whilst it considered most student outcomes features to be very high quality for all groups of students, there is also an outstanding quality student outcome feature
- across the aspects, the provider has presented compelling evidence to show that its approaches are embedded across the provider, although tailoring of approaches does not apply to all students, for example, Assessment and feedback.

Therefore, the best fit rating for this provider is 'Silver'.