



Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

Summary TEF 2023 panel statement

The University of Salford

Summary of Outcomes

Overall: Silver

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

Student experience: Silver

The student academic experience is typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- course content and delivery that effectively encourages the provider's students to engage in their learning and stretches students to develop their knowledge and skills
- employer engagement and professional practice that contributes to a very high quality academic experience for students
- the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, where students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support
- physical and virtual learning resources that are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning
- how the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

There are also some outstanding quality features including:

- embedded outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment
- outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider.

Student outcomes: Silver

Student outcomes are typically very high quality.

Very high quality features include:

- very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses
- very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses
- how the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students
- how the provider effectively supports its students to achieve educational gains.
- How the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

There is also one outstanding quality feature:

- tailored approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

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 Salford's strategic aim is to lead 'the way in real world experiences preparing students for life' through 'pioneering exceptional industry partnerships.'

The provider has two main campuses and four schools which are the school of arts, media, and creative technology, school of health and society, school of science, engineering and environment and Salford business school.

There are approximately 17,000 undergraduate students. There has been a 13 per cent growth in its undergraduate full-time equivalent numbers over the TEF period. Over 70 per cent of the population are from underrepresented backgrounds.

Nursing and Midwifery and Creative Arts and Design are popular courses with full-time students and the majority of part-time students study either Architecture or Building and Planning.

The assessment considered information about the provider's undergraduate courses and students on those courses. This includes apprenticeships at undergraduate level.

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

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

Student experience: Silver

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

The panel found the student experience is typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student experience aspect, the panel found:

- five features are very high quality
- two outstanding quality features
- one feature where there is not enough evidence of very high quality
- no features clearly below the level of 'very high quality' or that may be of concern
- evidence of at least very high quality across all groups of students and for all courses and subjects, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel applied the criteria and found the best fit rating to be 'Silver'. This is because most features were very high quality for most groups of students. The panel did not think that 'Gold' would be the best fit because the evidence demonstrates that 'some' rather than 'most' of the student experience features are of outstanding quality. The panel did not consider 'Bronze' to be the best fit because the panel assessed 'most' of the features to be very high quality, rather than 'some' of the features.

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

Teaching, assessment, and feedback

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The indicators provided initial evidence of:

- very high quality 'teaching on my course' for full time students
- very high quality 'assessment and feedback' for full time students.

The provider submission provides further evidence of an outstanding quality feature, including:

- a coherent and comprehensive strategic approach to ensuring excellent teaching and learning is provided whilst focusing on immersive learning opportunities, with support available for students at risk of non-engagement to continue and complete their studies
- revised academic calendar and assessment approaches to support learning which has led to improved pass rates
- a range of policies and posts introduced to support students learning and assessment
- targeted interventions to support students in submitting assignments on time which has led to reduction in the percentages of students failing to submit an assessment.

Considering the indicator evidence and provider submission in the round, the panel concluded that the provider has embedded outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are highly effective and tailored to supporting its students' learning, progression, and attainment and is therefore an outstanding quality feature.

Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch

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

The provider submission provides evidence of a very high quality feature, describing how they work with live briefs and authentic assessments to provide students with real world experiences required by employer. For example, Creative Arts and Design students worked with Selfridges 'to deliver an annual live brief, providing students with the opportunity to contribute content, promoting fashion in an annual sustainability project.'

The panel considered the provider submission demonstrates that the course content and delivery effectively encourage the provider's students to engage in their learning and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills and therefore concluded this is a very high quality feature.

Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement

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

The provider's strengths in professional practice and industry engagement are shown through their industry collaboration strategy which is 'focused on working collaboratively with students and industry for shared benefit.' Additionally, the curriculum is reviewed by the Industry Advisory Board.

The panel noted how the provider submission references that there are over 220 programmes accredited by over 50 Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies and they collaborate with a range of industry partners.

The submission provides evidence that the provider uses employer engagement and professional practice to contribute to a very high quality academic experience for its students and therefore the panel concluded this was a very high quality feature

Staff professional development and academic practice

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The provider submission provides evidence of outstanding quality, including:

- a careers framework that centres teaching and learning alongside research, enterprise, and industry collaboration
- a high percentage of staff that hold professional qualifications – 66 per cent possess teaching qualifications, and 72 per cent have Fellow of the Higher Education Academy fellowship which is significantly above the sector average
- that there is a requirement for new academic staff to complete the accredited PgCert in Academic Practice
- details of an annual learning and teaching festival alongside spotlight sessions to showcase innovation and good practice.

Considering the evidence, the panel considered there was outstanding support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is embedded across the provider.

They therefore concluded that this is an outstanding quality feature.

Learning environment and academic support

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

The 'academic support' indicator provides compelling initial evidence of academic support that is very high quality for full-time students, and outstanding for part-time students.

The provider submission provides further evidence of a very high quality feature including:

- a comprehensive range of academic support services readily available to all students
- personalised feedback through online or on-campus workshops and one-to-ones with increased evening delivery, drop-ins and exam stress packs, and high quality interactive eLearning resources accessible 24/7 via the library website
- interventions to support students learning engagement through student progression administrators who direct students to relevant academic support

The panel noted how the provider submission describes how some services are tailored to its students' needs such as specialist support provided for students with disabilities through the disability inclusion service. However, there is a lack of evidence provided in the submission about the impact.

Considering the evidence from the submissions and indicators, the panel found that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and its students have access to a readily available range of very high quality academic support, and therefore concluded this to be very high quality.

Learning resources

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

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

The provider submission provides further evidence of a very high quality feature, including:

- students have access to virtual learning through LinkedIn Learning and Microsoft Office Specialist enabling students to develop a range of skills
- access to Salford Education Technology Fund which provides 'support for students at risk of experiencing digital poverty.' Through this scheme over 1,500 students have been supported to purchase a laptop during the TEF period and have benefited from discounted broadband access
- significant financial investments into providing physical and digital resources such as refurbishment of bioscience teaching lab and a new Science and Engineering faculty.

Overall, the panel concluded that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning which apply to most students (including students from

underrepresented groups) and courses at the provider. The panel therefore considered this to be a very high quality feature.

Student engagement in improvement

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

The indicators provide initial evidence that the 'student voice' is not very high quality for full time students, but is outstanding for part-time students and apprentices.

The provider gave further evidence of very high quality, including:

- monthly meetings between the associate deans, student experience and course representatives
- introduction of 'commuter student lounge' following feedback from commuting students.

The panel noted that the student submission provides information about very high quality student engagement which has led to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students. It describes comprehensive and tailored actions the provider is adopting to address the experience of students falling below benchmark. For example, the provider collaborates with students through the course representative system and students' union officers are members of university committees and working groups. The impact of this is evidenced in a survey they carried out in which 89 per cent of students said, 'it had been easy or extremely easy to meet with their course director to discuss wider feedback.'

The panel considered the indicators and the evidence from the student and provider submission, which both reference the low student voice indicator, and the actions that are focused on mitigating this. Considering the evidence, the panel considered the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students and concluded this a very high quality feature.

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 found the student outcomes are typically very high quality for the provider's mix of students and courses. Across the student outcomes aspect, the panel found:

- five features are very high quality
- one outstanding quality feature
- evidence of at least very high quality across all groups of students and for all courses and subjects, including students from underrepresented groups.

The panel applied the criteria and found the best fit rating to be 'Silver'. This is because most features were very high quality for most groups of students. The panel did not think that 'Gold' would be the best fit because the evidence demonstrates that 'some' rather than 'most' of the student experience features are of outstanding quality. The panel did not consider 'Bronze' to be the best fit because the panel assessed 'most' of the features to be very high quality, rather than 'some' of the features.

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

Approaches to supporting student success

The panel considered this to be an outstanding quality feature.

The panel noted that the provider has a strategic programme to enhance student outcomes, bringing together initiatives and interventions with data review and analysis.

The provider submission provides evidence of an outstanding quality feature, including:

- nine interventions to improve retention and continuation for Level 3 and 4 students
- early reassessment for students closer to point of delivery to support student progression
- targeted intervention through learner analytics to support students at risk of non-completion and evidence of impact is provided which the panel considered to be outstanding quality
- online careers registration helps staff to target intervention and create personalised support.

The panel considered that the provider submission describes its approaches to supporting students to succeed and that the provider deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies. The panel therefore concluded that this was an outstanding quality feature.

Continuation and completion rates

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

The indicators provided initial evidence of very high quality 'continuation' for full-time students and outstanding rates for part-time and apprenticeship students. Black students had particularly high rates of continuation, due to targeted mentoring and support in Grassroots programme as mentioned in the provider submission.

The indicators for provided initial evidence of not very high quality 'completion' for full-time students and outstanding for part-time students.

The panel considered the full-time continuation indicator to provide initial evidence of outstanding quality continuation rates, however the full-time completion indicator was not considered to be very high quality.

The panel concluded that there is sufficient evidence of very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses as evidenced in the provider submission and indicators and the panel considered this a very high quality feature.

Progression rates

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

The indicators provided evidence of very high quality 'progression' for full-time students and outstanding 'progression' for part-time students.

Further evidence of very high quality in the provider submission includes:

- identifying progression challenges and responding to these challenges across its subjects. For example, Law students have credit bearing pro-bono modules that provide them with transferable skills
- uses an all-systems approach to supporting students into employment, including leadership programmes, alumni mentoring, careers advice, interview readiness training, enterprise support and festivals.

The panel notes how the student submission highlights that students have access to funding enabling students to participate in extracurricular activities and develop new skills. Additionally, students also have the opportunity to gain experience by volunteering for the peer listening service.

In summary, the panel considered the indicators and submissions to show evidence of very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses and considered this to demonstrate a very high quality feature.

Intended educational gains

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

The panel noted that the provider has clearly articulated the educational gains it wants its students to achieve. These are defined as the knowledge, graduate skills, attitudes, competencies, attributes, experience, social capital, civic engagement, confidence, and resilience to improve their lives and those of local and global communities.

Overall, the panel concluded that this was sufficient evidence that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students. Thus, this feature is very high quality.

Approaches to supporting educational gains

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

Evidence in the submission includes:

- financial support via advantage scholarship
- academic progress reviews with personal tutors to provide advice/support throughout the student journey and identify gains.

The panel considered that the provider operates a distinctive set of curriculum design principles to embed industry readiness. Its focus on participatory learning, combined with authentic assessment and personal development, enables students to achieve the intended educational gains. Academic progress is supported holistically, predicated on five enablers of student success: belonging, sense of purpose, self-efficacy, resilience, and engagement.

Overall, the panel considered that the evidence demonstrates how the provider effectively supports its students to achieve educational gains, and that this is a very high quality feature.

Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

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

The panel noted that the evaluation of educational gains is securely embedded in the enabling student success programme. The provider submission on educational gains points to the use of technologies and engagement with authentic assessment but measures are not currently available.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

Overall: Silver

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgment, the panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Silver'. The panel considered both the student experience and outcomes aspect rating to be 'Silver'.

In reaching this decision, the panel considered there to be compelling evidence that the outstanding and very high quality features apply to most of the provider's groups of students. When determining whether the overall rating should be 'Silver', the panel considered all the evidence across all the features and judged the evidence to show there to be typically very high quality features for most groups of students.