



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

## **Summary TEF 2023 provisional panel statement**

**Birmingham Newman University**

# Summary of outcomes

## Overall: Silver

Typically, the experience students have at Birmingham Newman University 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:

- highly effective teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting its students' learning progression and attainment
- highly effective course content and delivery practices across the provider that support students' engagement with their learning
- support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted
- a supportive learning environment
- physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high quality teaching and learning.

There is also an outstanding quality feature:

- embedding engagement with students, leading to continuous improvement to the experience and outcomes of its students.

### 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
- high rates of successful progression for students and courses
- successful articulation of the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students
- effective support for students to achieve these gains.

# About the assessment

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

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

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

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

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

The panel reviewed the following evidence:

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

The panel applied its expert judgement to:

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

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

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

# Summary of panel assessment

## Information about this provider

Birmingham Newman University is a small, single campus university in the centre of Birmingham. It aims to encourage social mobility, personal development and public service, with strong links to local community and workforce. A large number of students are local and continue to live and work regionally after graduation.

Birmingham Newman University had 1,870 full-time and 250 part-time undergraduate students in 2020-21, with the majority of full time students studying education, health and social care and psychology. 91 per cent of students live off campus and 40 per cent have caring responsibilities.

Both the provider and student submissions emphasise pride in student diversity, and a student body with characteristics which are not typical of the sector.

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

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

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

## **Student experience: 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.

Across the student experience aspect the panel found:

- most features to be very high quality
- one outstanding quality feature
- one feature did not provide sufficient evidence of very high quality
- the very high quality and outstanding features broadly apply to all the provider's groups of students.

The panel applied the criteria and considered the rating with the best fit is 'Silver'. This is because most features are very high quality across all groups of students and courses.

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 to be very high quality.

The indicators provide strong initial evidence of:

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

The provider and student submissions gave evidence of a very high quality feature, with a commitment to tailoring teaching and support to the demographics of students. For example:

- a commitment to a curriculum which celebrates the diversity of students
- small class sizes with a focus on interactive teaching and learning
- modern, purpose-built teaching and study spaces.

The panel considered that the provider submission included evidence of outstanding practice, such as:

- co-creative approach to assessment
- flexible timetables designed to support a variety of student needs.

The panel concluded that the provider has embedded very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices that are effective in supporting students' learning, progression and attainment; and that course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage

in and commit to their learning, and stretch students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential. The panel also recognised that there were some elements within these features which evidence outstanding practice.

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

The panel considered that there was insufficient evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

The panel identified limited references to research, innovation and professional practice in the provider and student submission, which include:

- students engaging with real-world problems through research
- a research project exploring the use of data to enhance engagement and inform practice across the provider
- meeting the needs of the local workforce and developing skills for the region.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider submission does not describe the use of research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice or employer engagement in detail and therefore there was insufficient evidence of very high or outstanding quality for this feature.

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

The panel considered this a very high quality feature.

The provider submission gave strong evidence of a very high quality feature, such as:

- a research-based approach to understanding student needs
- professional development courses for both teaching staff and external examiners
- Continuing Professional Development and Post Graduate Certificate courses available to staff

The panel also found some outstanding elements within this feature, with compelling evidence that staff professional development is a priority to the provider and is resourced accordingly. However, there was not enough evidence that the provider is among the best in the sector at embedding academic practice.

The panel concluded that this feature is very high quality. The submission included evidence of very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice.

### **Learning environment and academic support; and Learning resources**

The panel considered these features to be very high quality.

The indicators provide compelling evidence of:

- very high quality 'academic support' for full-time students and part-time students

- very high quality 'learning resources' for full-time students, and outstanding for part-time students

The provider and student submissions gave further evidence of very high quality features. For example:

- making adjustments to improve accessibility such as installing hearing loops, large print signage and gender neutral toilets
- providing family days on campus for student parents
- financial support offered to assist students with cost of living and travel
- a range of facilities available for students such as seven day library access, lockers, quiet rooms and kitchens.

The student submission highlighted very high levels of satisfaction around student support, especially for disabled people and commuter students. The panel considered there was some evidence of outstanding provision supporting disabled students and supporting students' transition into higher education.

The panel concluded that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, its students have access to very high quality academic support, and physical and virtual learning resources are used to support very high quality teaching and learning.

### **Student engagement in improvement**

The panel considered this an outstanding feature.

The 'student voice' indicator provides strong evidence of outstanding quality for full-time students, and very high quality for part-time students.

The provider and student submissions gave evidence of an outstanding feature, with a culture of co-creation where the provider aims to learn from and with students, benefiting from their lived experiences. For example:

- a 'strong and respectful' working relationship between the students' union and the university, leading to improvements in accessibility for disabled students and help with the cost of living
- annual funding for Student-Staff Partnership Projects, which lead to change in practice
- student representatives sitting on all strategic committees.

Overall the panel concluded that the provider embeds engagement with its students, leading to continuous improvement to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

## **Student outcomes: Silver**

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

Across the student outcomes aspect the panel found:

- most features are very high quality
- one feature where there was insufficient evidence to give a rating
- one feature which the panel did not consider 'very high quality' overall but with some evidence of very high quality practices.

The panel applied the criteria and considered the rating with the best fit is 'Silver'. This is because the panel's assessment best fits the description: 'most features of the aspect are very high quality for all groups of students'.

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

### **Approaches to supporting student success**

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

The provider and student submissions gave evidence of a very high quality feature, including:

- a retention task group
- detailed action plans to improve subjects that are below benchmark
- an employability strategy including compulsory work placement, a good practice guide and specific work readiness activity to support underrepresented groups.

The panel considered that the provider's tailored approach to student support and confidence building as central to student success is an outstanding element of this feature, However, there was not sufficient evidence of impact for this feature to be rated outstanding overall.

The panel concluded that this feature is very high quality. There was strong evidence that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

### **Continuation and completion rates**

The panel considered there to be insufficient evidence that this is a very high quality feature.

The indicators provide compelling evidence that:

- 'continuation' is very high quality for full-time students, and outstanding for part-time students



- 'completion' is below the level of very high quality for full-time students, but is outstanding for part-time students.

There is a mixed picture for continuation and completion rates across student groups, with initial evidence of outstanding and very high quality provision for some, but less positive scores for others. The provider submission sets out some actions in place to address this:

- a monitored action plan for subjects with continuation rates below 92 per cent
- student support aimed at wellbeing, disability and hardship
- continual analysis to understand the reasons students withdraw.

It was noted by the provider that many of the students 'lead complex lives' and therefore it suggests that achieving continuation rates in line with the benchmark is 'arguably commendable'.

Overall, while the panel recognised that for continuation the overall indicator evidence is positive, it concluded that there is insufficient evidence of very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses, noting below benchmark performance for some students which are not addressed in the provider submission and below benchmark 'completion' for the majority of full-time students.

## **Progression rates**

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

The 'progression rates' indicator for full-time students provides evidence of very high quality.

The provider submission outlines its approach to achieving high rates of progression, which includes:

- compulsory work placements across all subjects
- employability and careers embedded into all curricula
- funded progression development programme for local students including tailored activity for underrepresented groups.

The panel concluded this feature to be very high quality with strong evidence of high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses.

## **Intended educational gains; and Approaches to supporting educational gains**

The panel considered these to be very high quality features.

The provider defines educational gain as 'the change in life opportunities given to students who might not normally be able to access higher education'. The provider submission highlights how it has been ranked strongly in the sector for social mobility, with comparably high salary levels for its graduates. The panel noted that the provider's social mobility approach to educational gain was echoed in the student submission, which defines the provider as 'an institution which enables not just academic growth, but pivotal personal development'.

The panel concluded that these were very high quality features with evidence that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students as well as effectively supporting its students to achieve these gains.

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

There was not enough evidence for the panel to rate this feature.

### **Overall: Silver**

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

The panel found that most student experience features and most student outcomes features are of very high quality for most of the provider's groups of students and courses. The panel took into account the diversity of the student body and the tailored approach to student experience and progression in order to agree these ratings.

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