

# Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

## TEF panel statement

<b>Provider name:</b>	Weston College of Further and Higher Education
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### Overall rating

The TEF panel considered the overall rating to be Gold.

### Aspect ratings

The TEF panel considered the aspect ratings to be as follows:

Student experience	Gold
Student outcomes	Silver

## Rationale for rating decisions

### Context

Weston College of Further and Higher Education is a College Based Higher Education (CBHE) provider, with multiple awarding organisations including Bath Spa University, University of the West of England, Hartpury University and Pearson for HNC/Ds. The provider is in close proximity to deprived areas, the provider delivers its provision to FT and PT students and delivers higher and degree apprenticeships. The College's mission is 'creating brighter futures' (p.1)

There were approximately 700 full time (FT) students, ~100 part time (PT) and ~300 Apprenticeship (increased from 150 in Y1) undergraduate students in 2020-21. During the TEF assessment period approximately half the FT provision was subcontracted in and only taught by the provider. Main subject areas for FT are Performing Arts, Creative Arts and Design, Computing and Education & Training. The main subject areas for PT are Engineering, Education & Training and Business & Management. For Apprenticeships the main areas are Engineering, Computing and Health & Social Care.

Approximately 60% of FT students are female, and students are predominantly male for PT and Apprenticeships. There are high levels of reported disability (>30% FT, 15-20% for PT and Apprenticeships), over half are aged 21+, ~5% are from ethnic minority groups and almost all are UK domiciled. Approximately one third of students are in IMD Q1&2. 50-60% of FT and PT students are local, as are approximately a quarter of Apprenticeships and the apprenticeship provision continues to grow. There are a range of entry qualification types, but mainly entrants have non A-level qualifications.

The provider leads the West of England Institute of Technology in collaboration with UWE, three FE colleges, and thirteen anchor employers to increase the number of people in local communities

accessing higher technical skills (p.2). The provider is one of 3 National SEND Centres of Excellence. The student submission sets out clearly the range of evidence used and the independence of their submission.

## **Scope of assessment**

As per paragraph 69 of RA22, the following student groups are within the scope of this TEF assessment and evidence was sought that addressed these groups in the provider's submission. They are included in the TEF indicators:

- Any higher education course at undergraduate level (whether that course is recognised for OfS funding or not), and with any volume of learning, that leads to a qualification.
- Students taught by a provider, as well as students registered by the provider but taught by another provider through a sub-contractual arrangement.
- International students taught within the UK.

There was no explicit statement about which of the optional courses set out in paragraph 70 of RA22 the provider wished to include within the scope of its assessment. However, as evidence was provided throughout the submission in relation to apprenticeships, these were considered within the scope of the panel's assessment. None of the other optional courses set out in paragraph 70 of RA22 have been highlighted as being included by the provider, so have not been considered within the scope of assessment by the panel.

The evidence considered in the assessment includes:

- The provider submission
- The student submission
- The TEF indicators and accompanying 'size and shape' data.

## **Approach to assessment**

In reaching the decision on ratings, the panel members applied their expert judgement, within the framework of principles and guidelines set out in RA22, and followed the approach to assessment set out at paragraph 231 of RA22 by:

- 1) identifying excellent features within each aspect;
- 2) considering a rating for each aspect; and
- 3) considering the overall rating (taking account of the provider's context at each step of the assessment).

The reasoning for the panel's rating decisions is set out below.

## **Student experience**

### **Student experience: aspect rating**

The TEF panel weighed up all the evidence in the indicators and the submissions relating to the student experience aspect as a whole and determined the student experience aspect rating to be 'Gold'.

In accordance with the guidance, the TEF panel considered all the evidence available in the submissions and the indicators and weighed up this evidence to identify very high quality and outstanding quality features (further detail set out below), noting that the indicators contributed no more than half of the evidence of excellence. The panel then considered the extent to which there are very high quality and outstanding quality features across the aspect as a whole, rather than treating the features as a checklist, and considered how far the outstanding and very high quality features apply across all the provider's student groups and the range of its courses and subjects. To determine the student experience aspect rating, the panel applied the ratings criteria set out in Annex B of RA22.

The paragraphs below explain the extent to which the panel found very high quality and outstanding quality features across the aspect as a whole.

The TEF panel considered and weighed up the evidence in the provider submission, student submission and indicators to identify outstanding and very high quality features. It considered the majority of features to be outstanding, and one of the features to be very high quality and one feature on the borderline between very high quality and outstanding quality. The panel's assessment of these outstanding and very high quality features is below. The TEF panel did not find any features of the student experience that may be of concern. The panel found evidence across the aspect that the provider embeds effective approaches and tailors its approaches to its students. Considering the outstanding and very high quality features holistically, the panel judged there to be evidence of typically outstanding quality across the aspect as a whole.

The panel judged there to be compelling evidence in the provider and student submissions and the indicators that the outstanding and very high quality features apply to most of the provider's groups of students, including mature students and those reporting a disability. The panel weighted more positively the evidence that demonstrates the outstanding and very high quality features apply to most groups of students. The panel found the indicator evidence to be supplemented by further evidence of excellence in the provider and student submissions and, in accordance with the guidance, the indicators contributed no more than half of the evidence of excellence for the student experience aspect. Considering the evidence holistically, the panel considered there to be outstanding quality across almost all groups of students, courses and subjects. The panel applied the ratings criteria set out in Annex B of RA22 and considered its assessment of the aspect to be a 'best fit' for the 'Gold' descriptor which states that 'most features are outstanding for all groups of students'.

The rationale for the panel's assessment of each feature is below.

## **Student experience: features of excellence**

### **SE1: Teaching, assessment and feedback**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and in the indicators. The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The overall FT indicator for 'teaching on my course' is 87.5% and 2.8 ppt above benchmark. 40.6% of the statistical uncertainty distribution is broadly in line with benchmark and 59.4% is materially above benchmark. Applying the guidance on statistical uncertainty, the panel considered the indicator to provide evidence that the provider's performance is either broadly in line with, or materially above its benchmark, without providing certainty as to which applies. The split indicators suggest that this evidence applies to most of the provider's groups of students. There is reasonable consistency across all split indicators, although the indicator is lower for creative arts and design which is materially below benchmark, with 97.6% confidence for 100 students.

For apprenticeship students, the 'teaching on my course' indicator is 82.2% and 3.3ppt above benchmark, but with a wider statistical uncertainty distribution, 8.3% of which is below benchmark, 34.2% is in line with benchmark, and 57.5% is above benchmark.

Taking this into consideration, overall, the panel interpreted the teaching on my course indicators to be initial evidence of at least a very high quality feature.

The overall FT 'Assessment and Feedback' indicator is 85.3% and 6.6 ppt above benchmark providing compelling statistical evidence (with 99.5% confidence) that performance is materially above benchmark.. All split indicators are materially above benchmark. With apprenticeship students, the indicator is 1.9 ppt above benchmark but with a wider spread in the statistical uncertainty distribution, (17.2% below benchmark, 38.1% in line with benchmark, and 44.7% above benchmark).

Taking this into consideration, overall, the panel interpreted the assessment and feedback indicators to be initial evidence of an outstanding feature.

No indicators were available for PT students.

The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence by providing further evidence of an outstanding feature, including:

- The HE Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy which was developed with reference to the OfS conditions B1 and B2, the Expectations and Core practices for the UK Quality Code, and in partnership with staff and students, with associated KPIs that are monitored and action based on.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework to ensure an inclusive approach throughout teaching, learning, and assessment with student-facing resources. This results in a personalised approach to learning, and the design of assessment strategies that are bespoke to individual courses. Guaranteed Levels of Information Policy and Procedure which aim to ensure students are provided with information to excel with their learning and equipping staff with guidance for complete and accessible student resources.
- Examples of providing a personalised academic experience by developing content that is targeted towards students learning needs, reflecting on their starting points and scaffolding their learning. One-to-one module tutorials provide opportunity for personalised feedback and discussions on progression, skills development, and areas for improvement.
- A Course Enhancement Budget for enriching the course and student learning experience with opportunities.
- Additional data (drawn from module evaluations) to show excellence in teaching, learning and assessment.

- A data-informed approach to driving enhancement – for example through strong monitoring for continuous improvement in areas such as assessment, recognised by external examiners as good practice

Overall, the panel concluded that the submissions and indicators evidence that effective teaching, assessment, and feedback practices that support students' learning, progression, and attainment are embedded across the provider, noting the indicators for Creative Arts and Design (and noting that the indicators contributed no more than half of the evidence of excellence). Considering the evidence in the round, the TEF panel considered the evidence to demonstrate an outstanding feature.

## **SE2: Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions. The panel considered this to be on the borderline between a very high quality and outstanding feature.

The provider submission and indicators described above were used by the panel to make a judgement on the course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch feature.

Evidence of this from the provider and student submission includes:

- A robust approach to course design as new courses must meet all aspects of UCW's internal quality processes along with adhering to awarding body requirements. This ensures a coherent development of knowledge and skills at all levels.
- Staff, students, employers and key stakeholders collaborate to design and create courses that are industry relevant, valid, and enable students to develop the skills required for success and future employment.
- Employability and entrepreneurship are embedded in the course content to encourage engagement and support retention and progression. External examiner reports support the robust approach, identifying course content as inspiring, engaging and stretching students development.
- Small class sizes which offer more opportunity for hands on experience, and students expressed this was vital in preparing them for industries as part of their evidence in the student submission. The panel considered this to be one of the more compelling examples of course delivery inspiring student engagement, and therefore an element of outstanding practice.

The provider submission includes evidence on how they stretch their students to develop their knowledge and skills, which apply to the mix of students and courses at the provider.

The panel identified some evidence of outstanding practice for the feature but considered there to be insufficient evidence that course content and delivery overall best fit the outstanding descriptor in annex A of RA22, by inspiring students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretching them to their fullest potential. The panel therefore considered this to be on the borderline between a very high quality and outstanding feature.

## **SE3: Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and the panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The academic experience is underpinned by research and scholarly activity and this is included in the UCW strategic plan.

The provider submission offers further examples:

- Engaging in this allows staff to remain current with their subject knowledge, ensure continued engagement with industry practice, and develops academic pedagogy. The student submission emphasised the value of this to their learning.
- HE Staff Development Policy and Procedure ensures all HE teaching staff undertake research and scholarly activity that is designed to have a positive impact on the learning and teaching. The impact and effectiveness of this is reported to Academic Quality and Standards Committee. This has allowed enhancements, for example, moving from fixed allocations for staff to a model of course allocation.
- The policy enables staff to engage in a range of opportunities to develop professional practice and pedagogy.
- Further examples of the positive impact of research and scholarly activity include more inclusive practice, undertaking the Advance HE Fellowship programme, improvements to performance, work with PSRBs.
- The student submission notes degree apprenticeship students were well supported by the employer, but needed help with the employer work/university work balance

Overall, the panel concluded the evidence from the submissions shows that the provider uses research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience for its students. The TEF panel considered the evidence to demonstrate an outstanding feature.

#### **SE4: Staff professional development and academic practice**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions. The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature.

The provider and student submissions provide the following evidence of a very high quality feature:

- Events under HE Continuing Professional Development such as the organised CPD days and an end of year academic conference with guest speakers on teaching strategies and developing a range of learning styles.
- Recruitment and support of staff to achieve strategic aims, e.g. industry practitioners (p.4)
- Remission for staff, and/or support the funding of accessing scholarly opportunities (p.8)
- Support group for staff working towards Advance HE fellowships (p.9)

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider and student submission evidence that there is very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted across the provider. The TEF panel considered the evidence to demonstrate a very high quality feature.

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

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and in the indicators. The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The overall FT 'academic support' indicator is 87.0% which is, +4.9ppt above the benchmark. Applying the guidance on statistical uncertainty, the panel considered the indicator to provide strong statistical evidence that the provider's performance is materially above benchmark, providing initial evidence of an outstanding feature. The split indicators mainly align with the overall indicator, with the exception of Creative Arts and Design which is materially below benchmark (with 85.4% confidence).

For apprenticeships, the indicator is 12.1ppt above the benchmark (with 98.9% confidence) providing very strong statistical evidence of outstanding quality.

No indicators were available for PT students.

Taking all of this into consideration, the panel interpreted the Academic support indicators to be compelling initial evidence of an outstanding feature. The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence by providing further evidence of an outstanding feature, including:

- High levels of disability among students supported by UDL Framework p.3, 4-5 and central teams e.g. HEART (p.10), with evidence of effectiveness (p.5)
- Recognition of high levels of disability through use of initial diagnostic screening and tailored approaches (e.g. Apprenticeships p.10), also recognised in student submission p.2
- Monitoring of student satisfaction with support provided – for example, of the Academic Development Team via module evals p.11, example of external examiner recognition p.12, and Apprenticeship monitoring p.15
- Example of enhancement (resilience workshops) noted in student submission (p.3)

Overall, the panel interpreted this as evidence of an outstanding feature, noting that the provider ensures a supportive learning environment and its students have access to a wide and readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs.

## **SE6: Learning resources**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and in the indicators. The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The overall FT 'Learning Resources' is 82% and +6.3ppt above the benchmark. There is compelling evidence (99.5% confidence) that the provider's performance is materially above benchmark. The split indicators mainly align with the overall indicator. For apprenticeships the indicator is also materially above benchmark (with 96.9% confidence) with very strong statistical evidence, and providing initial evidence of outstanding quality. The split indicators align with the overall indicator.

No indicators were available for PT students.

The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence by providing further evidence of an outstanding feature:

Evidence in the providers submission includes:

- For physical resources, UCW has made significant investment in the learning environment across all its campuses including health simulation wards, Winter Gardens, library,

performing arts spaces, hair and prosthetics studios to ensure they meet the needs of the student body.

- Views of staff and students were taken into account, for example, for the University Centre in the Winter Gardens, staff and students helped shape the design to encourage a blended approach to learning.
- Virtual learning resources include the use of MS Teams as a digital learning community with a site per course with module specific channels within to ensure accessibility to module content, assessments, plagiarism checking, and digital learning tools. Teams also allows for remote access to sessions which enables students with potential barriers to learning to access it easily.
- A digital pedagogy HECPD session has helped enhance practice across the institution resulting in new courses being designed with blended and remote delivery options.

The student submission noted examples of relevant facilities to support learning (p.5-6) although it also noted some mixed views on online learning facilities, including during the pandemic.

The panel interpreted this as evidence of outstanding quality, noting that physical and virtual learning resources are tailored and used effectively to support outstanding teaching and learning.

The panel considered the learning resources indicators to provide initial evidence of outstanding quality learning resources. The provider submission includes evidence regarding the effectiveness of learning resources which apply to the mix of students and courses at the provider. Considering the evidence in the round, the TEF panel considered the evidence to demonstrate an outstanding feature.

### **SE7: Student engagement in improvement**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and in the indicators. The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The overall FT 'student voice' indicator is 81.6% and +6.6ppt above the benchmark. There is compelling evidence (with 99.4% confidence) that the provider's performance is materially above benchmark. For apprenticeship students the indicator is also materially above benchmark with 89.8% confidence. Overall, the indicators provide initial evidence of an outstanding feature. There is reasonable consistency across all split indicators.

No indicators were available for PT students.

The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence by providing further evidence of an outstanding feature, including:

- A Student Engagement Strategy whereby all students are recognised and treated as equal partners in their own learning and are given the opportunity to contribute to quality enhancement. Supported by evidence of student-informed developments e.g. infrastructure, course design and approvals, academic support p.14, with external examiner recognition of good practice and impact on outcomes.
- Student representation at all levels of the organisation's management and decision-making structures
- Dedicated Student Engagement Manager role which leads on all aspects of student engagement, demonstrating commitment to partnership with students



- SSLCs held three times per academic year and open to all students to attend
- Course Development Policy and Procedure outlines how students are involved in many stages of course design alongside staff, employers, and alumni.
- Strong endorsement in the student submission of the provider's engagement with students to drive improvements p.4

The panel interpreted this as evidence of an outstanding feature, noting that student voice leads to continuous improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students.

The panel considered the student voice indicators to provide initial evidence of outstanding quality. The provider submission include evidence regarding the effectiveness in how it engages with its students which apply to the mix of students and courses at the provider.

Considering the evidence in the round, the TEF panel considered the evidence to demonstrate an outstanding feature.

## **Student outcomes**

### **Student outcomes: aspect rating**

The TEF panel weighed up all the evidence in the indicators and the submissions relating to the student outcomes aspect as a whole and determined the student outcomes aspect rating to be 'Silver'.

As above, in accordance with the guidance, the TEF panel considered all the evidence available in the submissions and the indicators and weighed up this evidence to identify very high quality and outstanding quality features (further detail below). The panel then considered the extent to which there are very high quality and outstanding quality features across the aspect as a whole, rather than treating the features as a checklist, and considered how far the outstanding and very high quality features apply across all the provider's student groups and the range of its courses and subjects. To determine the student outcomes aspect rating, the panel applied the ratings criteria set out at Annex B of RA22.

The TEF panel considered and weighed up the evidence in the provider submission, student submission and indicators to identify outstanding and very high quality features. It considered the majority of features to be very high quality, with some outstanding features. The panel's assessment of these features is below. Considering the features holistically, the panel judged there to be evidence of typically very high quality student outcomes across the aspect as a whole.

The paragraph below explains how far the very high quality and outstanding features apply across all the provider's student groups and the range of its courses and subjects; and how the different sources of evidence were weighted.

The panel judged there to be compelling evidence in the provider and student submissions and the indicators that the very high quality and outstanding features apply to most of the provider's groups of students. The panel weighed up the evidence in the submissions and the indicator evidence. The guidance sets out that the outcome indicators provide more direct measures of some of the student outcomes features (SO2 and SO3) and these student outcomes features could be

identified without necessarily requiring further evidence in the submission. However, the panel noted that, where these indicators are below benchmark, this should not be determinative that the associated feature is 'not very high quality'. In this case, the panel considered the evidence in the provider submission to be important to the panel's assessment of the indicator evidence and features, such as contextual evidence regarding educational gains. Considering the evidence holistically and the provider context, the panel considered there to be evidence of very high quality provision across most groups of students and for most courses and subjects.

The panel applied the ratings criteria set out in Annex B of RA22 and considered the best fit rating to be 'Silver'. This is because most features are at least very high quality for most groups of students and courses. The panel did not consider that 'Gold' would be the best fit because although some features were considered to be outstanding, this did not meet the 'Gold' criterion that 'most features were outstanding quality for all groups of students'.

The rationale for the panel's assessment of each feature is below.

## **Student outcomes: features of excellence**

### **SO1: Approaches to supporting student success**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submission. The panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

Approaches are embedded to ensure pre-programme support, on-programme support and development, and preparation for transition to managerial or professional employment or further study. These include:

- The Universal Design for Learning Framework, the Guaranteed Tutorial Entitlement, the Academic Development Team, the Retention Strategy, and the Careers Coaching Service, all of which complement the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and ensure an inclusive and tailored approach to student learning.
- Before enrolment, a range of support sessions are offered to raise awareness of the type of academic and pastoral support that will be available including the Headstart Study Skills programme and the Supporting Your Success booklet.
- On-programme, there is an extensive induction period with diagnostic screening using QuickScan to indicate if a student has any additional learning needs and identifies preferred learning styles. A copy of their screening outcome is shared with the student, their personal tutor, and the additional support team to ensure the appropriate support is offered.
- Attendance monitoring is central to the approach to retention as it identifies students at risk of leaving early, enabling intervention and support led by HEART. When attendance drops below 75% an automated email is sent, which if it doesn't improve a joint tutorial is organised between teaching and support staff and the student
- For those with barriers to learning, additional targeted activities have been implemented to support engagement, a sense of belonging, continuation and achievement. These include reasonable adjustments, the process of which has been streamlined. Students with autism regularly meet with specialist support and welfare staff to discuss academic challenges and identify potential strategies for success, as well as engaging with peer support which in turn strengthens community

- At-risk reports are presented monthly at management meeting so that staff are aware of issues arising.
- In recognition of the background of students, the institution has partnered with UWE to offer a Careers service to all students, with a Careers Consultant seconded to UCW to support this
- Careers support is embedded within the curriculum and offered through individual advice session, events such as a careers week and careers development month, and sessions on graduate schemes, further study or self-employment to cover a range of possibilities. Many of these sessions are led by external professionals in recruitment
- Work-based learning activities and industry practitioners are a feature of all courses allowing students to engage with current professional practice developments relevant to their discipline. This work is complemented with guest lecturers or workshops and modules related to work-based learning or professional development for placements or projects
- Students engaging in external professional activity such as musical theatre students performing in theatres in London or graphic design student exhibiting at new designers

The panel interpreted this as evidence of an outstanding feature, noting that the provider deploys and tailors approaches that are highly effective in ensuring its students succeed in and progress beyond their studies. The provider submission includes evidence on how they effectively support students and approaches used apply to the mix of students and courses at the provider. The TEF panel considered the evidence to demonstrate an outstanding feature.

## **SO2: Continuation and completion rates**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and in the indicators. The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature with outstanding elements

The overall FT continuation indicator (N=1310) is 84.6% and is 1.4ppt above the benchmark. Applying the guidance on statistical uncertainty, the panel considered the indicator to provide strong statistical evidence (with 90.9% confidence) that the provider's performance is in line with benchmark. This is supported by the split indicators for sub-groups, the majority of which are in line with benchmark with the exception of 'other undergraduate level 4' which is materially below benchmark (99.2% confidence). Three subject areas have indicators materially above benchmark (Business and management, Performing Arts and Computing) while three have indicators materially below benchmark (Education and teaching, Agriculture, food and related studies, and Allied health)

The overall PT continuation indicator (N=240) is 63.0% and is 10.9 ppts below the benchmark. Applying the guidance on statistical uncertainty, the panel considered the indicator to provide compelling statistical evidence (with 99.8% confidence) that the provider's performance is materially below benchmark. The split indicators show a move towards benchmark across the TEF period with the Year 4 indicator 5.4 ppts above benchmark. The other splits mainly align with the overall indicator, noting small sub-group denominators.

With apprenticeship students (N=470), continuation is 2.8ppt above benchmark. 42.1% of the statistical uncertainty distribution is in line with benchmark and 57.9% is above benchmark.

The panel, considering the numbers and profile across the different study modes, interpreted the continuation indicators as providing initial evidence of a very high quality feature.

The overall FT completion indicator (N=1450) is 81.4% and 2.7ppts above benchmark. The statistical uncertainty distribution is split between broadly in line with benchmark (41.4%) and materially above benchmark (58.6%). The split indicators also show as in-line with or materially above benchmarks.

The overall PT completion indicator (N=360) is 65.2% and 7.9 ppts below benchmark. Applying the guidance on statistical uncertainty, the panel considered the indicator to provide very strong statistical evidence (with 98.9% confidence) that the provider's performance is materially below benchmark. The Year split indicators show a move towards benchmark by Year 4, most other splits align with the overall indicator, although Business and management is materially above benchmark.

For apprenticeship students (N=150), completion is 5.2ppts above benchmark, with 78.3% confidence that it is materially above benchmark. The split indicators mainly align with the overall indicator, noting the small sub-group denominators.

The panel, considering the numbers and profile across the different study modes, interpreted the completion indicators as providing initial evidence of a very high quality feature.

The provider submission presents explanations and actions taken where continuation or completion rates are lower, including with respect to PT students where it is noted that some students experiencing difficulties with their studies move to PT from FT (also noted in student submission p.7). The TEF panel noted the actions being taken to address issues and the indications of effectiveness shown in the Year split indicators and in the submission.

The provider submission also presents data on degree classification rates, including for underrepresented groups such as those reporting a disability, suggesting impact of the Universal Design for Learning Framework.

In summary, the panel interpreted the continuation and completion indicators, together with the actions taken for specific sub-groups and the evidence noted under SO1 in support of student success, as providing sufficient evidence of a very high quality feature with some outstanding elements.

### **SO3: Progression rates**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider and student submissions and in the indicators. The panel considered this to be a very high quality feature.

The overall FT progression indicator (N=540) is 61.2% and 0.4ppts above benchmark. There is probable statistical evidence (with 83.7% confidence) that the provider's performance is broadly in line with benchmark. The split indicators suggest a decline against benchmark over the TEF period, most other splits show as in-line with, or materially above, benchmark.

The overall PT progression indicator (N=40) is 83.4% and 2.2ppts above benchmark, but due to small numbers (N=40) the statistical uncertainty distribution is widely spread (17.5% is materially below benchmark, 34.9% is in line with benchmark and 47.6% is materially above benchmark).

For apprenticeship students the indicator is 2.7ppts below benchmark, but due to small numbers (N=40) the statistical uncertainty distribution is widely spread (51.5% is materially below benchmark, 37% is in line with benchmark and 11.5% is materially above benchmark).

The split indicators for PT and Apprenticeships are aligned with the overall indicators but are based on very small denominators and thus provide limited additional evidence.

Considering the evidence in the round, the TEF panel considered the evidence to demonstrate a very high quality feature.

#### **SO4: Intended educational gains**

The provider articulates educational gains (p.22), based on its strategic aim “To provide outstanding support and a vibrant and enriching student experience which nurtures and develops skills, resilience, wellbeing and personal development supporting the long-term success of students and apprentices”. The provider expresses its wish for “all its students to achieve outstanding outcomes and is committed to ensuring students remain on course and complete their studies and they develop the skills, strategies and resilience to pursue a rewarding career, develop personally, building their skills towards an enriching career or further study”, has recently developed an Educational Gains Policy and Procedure and articulates the skills it is seeking to develop in its students, grounded in relevance to its students:

- Academic development: Academic writing, referencing skills, written and verbal communication skills, including effective presentation skills.
- Personal development: Resilience, motivation, time management, and confidence
- Employability skills: Teamworking, digital literacy, problem solving, communication and interpersonal skills.

The student submission notes the input of student representatives to the development of educational gain (p.8)

This articulation of educational gain was based on the local labour market priority skills, the impact of lost learning through COVID-19, and the provider’s student population.

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider submission articulated their intended learning gains, and why these are relevant to their students. Noting some outstanding elements such as the engagement of students in this articulation and understanding of educational gain, considering the evidence across the TEF period the panel concluded that overall this was a very high quality feature with some outstanding elements.

#### **SO5: Approaches to supporting educational gains**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider submission and the panel considered this to be an outstanding feature.

The provider submission included the following evidence of an outstanding feature:

- A provider-wide strategic approach which is grounded in its long-term focus on employability and skills and is now being further evolved to align with the new educational gain policy, drawing on external practice p.22-3. It is mostly too early to see effectiveness although a recent example is given)
- Example of drawing on learning from pandemic response to support students better p.23
- The student submission notes examples of support for educational gain p.8
- The extensive and tailored support for student to succeed in, and progress beyond, their studies noted under SO1

Overall, the panel concluded that the provider supports its students in achieving their intended educational gains, and its approaches are highly effective and tailored to its students and their different starting points, and that this was an outstanding feature.

### **SO6: Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains**

The TEF panel examined the evidence in the provider submission and noted that it indicates a development journey in terms of evaluating educational gains with some elements already available and others to be developed. The provider intends to produce a regular educational gain Impact Report (p.23-4)

The TEF panel recognised that although evaluation of educational gains cannot yet be demonstrated, this framework will evolve. The panel therefore did not apply a rating to this feature but noted the guidance set out in Regulatory advice 22 (RA22) paragraph 244 that assessment of the student outcomes aspect 'should not prevent a provider from being awarded higher TEF ratings solely based on an absence of its own developed measures of educational gains'.

## **Overall rating**

Applying the guidance and the panel members' expert judgment, the panel considered the overall 'best fit' rating to be 'Gold'. The panel noted the guidance set out in Regulatory advice 22 (RA22) that the overall rating should not be higher than the highest aspect rating and should be no more than one rating higher than the lowest aspect rating. The panel considered the student experience aspect rating to be 'Gold' 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 a 'best fit' decision regarding the overall rating for the provider.

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, including students from underrepresented groups such as those reporting a disability, which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students. The panel considered this contextual factor throughout its assessment of all of the evidence.

The panel found most student experience features to be of outstanding quality for most groups of students and courses and, most student outcomes features were at least very high quality for most of the provider's groups of students. The panel also found there to be some outstanding quality student outcomes features (SO1 and SO5) and some very high quality features with outstanding elements.

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

- Whilst it considered most student outcomes features to be very high quality for most groups of students, there are also some outstanding quality student outcomes features ( SO1 and SO5) and some very high quality features with outstanding elements; and

- Across the aspects, the provider has presented strong evidence to show that the provider's approaches are effective across the provider, as well as evidence demonstrating that the provider tailors provision and succeeds in its aim of supporting underrepresented groups of students from its region to achieve in their studies.

## **General duties and Public Sector Equality Duty.**

The panel initially considered the OfS's approach to the consideration of the general duties and PSED set out in the 'OfS Consultation on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF): Analysis of consultation responses and decisions' document.

The panel had regard to all the evidence and considered the general duties and PSED. Based on the panel's assessment of the evidence, the panel considered it appropriate to place the same weight on the general duties and PSED as set out in the TEF consultation decisions document.