The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework

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TEF Project Officer, The Office for Students

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The UK context
A changing landscape
The last 25 years

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)

- Created by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, primarily to allocate public funds for teaching and research
A new independent regulator for HE in England

The Office for Students

• Created by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017

• Replaced HEFCE as a new market regulator, with the following aims:
  o Helping students to get into and succeed in higher education
  o Helping students stay informed
  o Making sure that students get a high-quality education that prepares them for the future
  o Protecting students’ interests
A diverse higher education sector

As of 31 March 2017, **804 providers** were listed on the HEFCE Register, including:

- **338 providers** who receive HEFCE funding directly
- **115 alternative providers** with specific course designation
- **241 further education or sixth form colleges** that deliver higher education
- **108 providers** with university or university college title
- **139 providers** that can award degrees
- **247 providers** accredited for initial teacher training

(Some providers appear in more than one category.)
## Student fees – the last 20 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For students starting at university....</th>
<th>Fees</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Other rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1998</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>RPI minus 1.6%</td>
<td>Mortgage-style loans, alternative to grants. Currently repayable above threshold of £29,126. Earners below this can defer. Only a few hundred thousand outstanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-2006</td>
<td>£1,000 p.a.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Fee paid upfront, no loan or interest. Maintenance loans also introduced, to be paid back at 9% of graduate's income above £21,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2012</td>
<td>£3,000 p.a. cap</td>
<td>Lower of either RPI or 1% above Bank Rate - currently 1.25%</td>
<td>Top-up’ fee’. Now income-based loan repayments, starting at earnings of £15,000 p.a., rising to £17,495 p.a. by 2016. Fee rose to £3225 in 2009 because of inflation. Interest introduced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2015</td>
<td>£9,000 p.a. cap</td>
<td>RPI plus up to 3% dependent on income</td>
<td>This amount now intended to cover entire cost of teaching (although HEFCE ‘top-up’ for high cost subjects – STEM etc.). Income threshold rose to £21,000 p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>£9,250 p.a. cap</td>
<td>RPI plus up to 3% dependent on income</td>
<td>Maintenance grants abolished and replaced by loans. Maximum fee rose to £9,250 from 2018 entry (dependent on TEF).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching related income (real terms)

- 2009-10 to 2013-14: actual income
- 2014-15 to 2017-18: forecast income

Legend:
- Blue: HEFCE Teaching grant
- Green: Overseas fee income (non EU)
- Red: Full time UG fee income (Home & EU)
- Orange: Other fee income
- Light blue: Dept of Health fee income (Home & EU)
- Yellow: Other funding body grants

Graph details:
- Y-axis: £millions
- X-axis: Years 2009-10 to 2017-18
The Research Excellence Framework

They made 1,911 submissions including:
- 52,061 academic staff
- 191,150 research outputs
- 6,975 impact case studies

The overall quality of submissions was judged, on average to be:
- ★★★★★ 30% world-leading (4*)
- ★★★★★ 46% internationally excellent (3*)
- ★★★★ 20% recognised internationally (2*)
- ★★★ 3% recognised nationally (1*)

- The quality of research is assessed every 6 or 7 years - next REF in 2021
- Research funding is proportional to volume x type x quality
“Some rebalancing of the pull between teaching and research is undoubtedly required. It is striking that while we have a set of measures to reward high quality research, backed by substantial funding (the Research Excellence Framework), for too long there has been nothing equivalent to drive up standards in teaching.”

Jo Johnson - Minister of State for Universities and Science, 2015
The Teaching Excellence Framework
Purpose of TEF

- Better inform students’ choices about what and where to study
- Raise esteem for teaching
- Recognise and reward excellent teaching
- Better meet the needs of employers, business, industry and the professions
The assessment framework

An independent panel of experts carried out the assessment against criteria that matter to students

**Teaching quality:** teaching that stimulates and challenges students, and maximises engagement with their studies

**Learning environment:** resources and activities to support learning and improve retention, progression and attainment

**Student outcomes:** the extent to which all students achieve their educational and professional goals, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds
The assessment criteria

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<tr>
<th>Teaching Quality</th>
<th>Learning Environment</th>
<th>Student Outcomes and Learning Gain</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Employment and Further Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuing Teaching</td>
<td>Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice</td>
<td>Employability and Transferable Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigour and Stretch</td>
<td>Personalised Learning</td>
<td>Positive Outcomes for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
The evidence

**Metrics:** Measures of how well the provider performs for its students

**Submission:** The provider’s approach and how this impacts on its students
TEF Metrics (1)
The National Student Survey (NSS)

The teaching on my course
Q1: Staff are good at explaining things.
Q2: Staff have made the subject interesting.
Q3: The course is intellectually stimulating.
Q4: My course has challenged me to achieve my best work.

Assessment and Feedback
Q8: The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
Q9: Marking and assessment has been fair.
Q10: Feedback on my work has been timely.
Q11: I have received helpful comments on my work.

Academic support
Q12: I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.
Q13: I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course.
Q14: Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course.
Based on data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) annually
Measures the proportion of students who continue their studies from one year to the next, or gain a qualification.
TEF Metrics (3)

The Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) Survey

Employment survey of all graduates 12 months after graduation
Measures:
• The proportion of students in employment or further study
• The proportion of students in highly skilled employment
Benchmarking metrics

For each provider, each metric is compared to a ‘benchmark’ which:
- shows ‘expected’ outcomes for each metric based on a provider’s students and subjects
- takes into account factors beyond the providers control
- is used to determine statistically whether a provider’s performance is significantly above or below expectations
## The assessment framework

### Aspects of quality:
- **Teaching Quality**
- **Learning Environment**
- **Student Outcomes and Learning Gain**

### Criteria:
- **Teaching quality criteria**
- **Learning environment criteria**
- **Student outcomes and learning gain criteria**

### Evidence:
- **Teaching, assessment and feedback (NSS results)**
- **Academic support & continuation (NSS results and HESA)**
- **Employment / further study, including highly skilled (DLHE)**

### Metric splits

### Submission
- Provider submission (additional evidence)

### Outcome:
- **TEF rating & Statement of findings**
Assessment method

Step 1: Initial hypothesis based on metrics
Step 2: Review provider submission
Step 3: Holistic judgement

Contextual data
Outcomes

**Rating**
- TEF Gold
- TEF Silver
- TEF Bronze

**Statement**
A brief statement on why the rating was awarded, highlighting strong features.

**Duration**
Valid for up to three years (if provider continues to be eligible).

**Communication**
Published on Unistats, UCAS and HEFCE websites
Metrics and submissions will also be published.
What do the awards mean?

**Consistently outstanding** and the highest quality found in the UK, consistently outstanding outcomes for its students from all backgrounds, outstanding levels of stretch that ensure all students are significantly challenged to achieve their full potential.

**Consistently exceeds** rigorous national quality requirements for UK higher education, excellent outcomes for students, high levels of stretch that ensure all students are significantly challenged.

**Meets** rigorous national quality requirements for UK higher education, most students achieve good outcomes, sufficient stretch that ensures most students make progress.

Meets rigorous national quality requirements but **does not yet have sufficient data** to be fully assessed.
How is the TEF being implemented

A phased approach

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment level</td>
<td>Provider level ‘meets expectations’ awards</td>
<td>Provider level trial</td>
<td>Provider level + Subject level pilots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuous improvement</td>
<td>Lessons learned exercise</td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent review</td>
<td>Subject level (ratings at provider and subject level)</td>
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Subject-level TEF
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**Purpose**

Better inform students

Ratings at both subject-level and provider-level

Reflect variation between subjects

Drive up teaching standards across all subjects

**Policy development**

Collaborative design

Pilots

Consultation

Student research

→ Expect full implementation in TEF Year 5
The Year 3 subject-level pilot

**Specification**

- Based on provider-level TEF
- 2 models
- 35 subjects based on CAH2
- Provider and subject level ratings
- Also piloting a teaching intensity measure

**Our aim**

- Test and evaluate the models
- Inform second year of pilots
- Input into the independent review
- Refine subject-level policy prior to full implementation in TEF Year 5
Model A – By exception

1. Provider-level assessment

Provider metrics + Provider submission → TEF Silver

2. Subject-level assessment

Exception subjects - different IH

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<th>Subject 1</th>
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<th>TEF Gold</th>
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Non exceptions - same IH

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<tr>
<th>Subj. 4</th>
<th>Subj. 5</th>
<th>Subj. 6</th>
<th>…</th>
<th>Subj. 35</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEF Silver</td>
<td>TEF Silver</td>
<td>TEF Silver</td>
<td>...</td>
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Subject 1 Subj. 2 Subj. 3 ... Subj. 35
Model B – Bottom up

1. Subject-level assessment

Subject 1 Subject metrics + Subject 2 Subject metrics + Subject 3 Subject metrics + Subject 4 Subject metrics + Subject 5 Subject metrics + … + Subj. 35 Subject metrics

1. Subject group submission

2. Provider-level assessment

Provider metrics + Provider submission + Subject-based IH → TEF Silver
Timeline

- Application deadline
- Selected providers notified
- Guidance for teaching intensity and costing information
- Teaching intensity deadline
- Metrics and guidance released
- Submission window
- Submission deadline
- Receive teaching intensity and grade inflation metrics
- Panel assessments
- Costing information collection
- Results shared with participating providers
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| **Lessons learned exercise** | **Independent review** | **Provider level + Subject level pilots** | **Provider level + Subject level pilots** | **Subject level (ratings at provider and subject level)***

Informed by independent review
Teaching Intensity

**Exploratory data collections**

- A *provider declaration* of the contact hours it is providing, weighted by staff-student ratios.
- A *survey of the provider’s students* on number of contact hours, self-directed study and whether they consider the contact hours are sufficient to fulfil their learning needs.
- Differentiated by year

**Subjects**

- Nursing
- Engineering
- Creative arts and design
- History and archaeology
- Business and Management
Gross Teaching Quotient

• The GTQ model is intended to value each of these at the same level:
  – 2 hours spent in a group of 10 students with one member of staff
  – 2 hours spent in a group of 20 with 2 members of staff

• Provider supplies:
  – data at course/module level on the contact hours provided, weighted by staff-student ratios (using weighting bands)
  – information about external visits, work-based learning and online teaching

• The calculation has no view on teaching method
How to find out more

DfE website: www.gov.uk/government/collections/teaching-excellence-framework
DfE enquiries: tef.queries@education.gov.uk

OfS website: www.officeforstudents.org.uk
OfS enquiries: tef@officeforstudents.org.uk
Thank you for listening