

# Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

## Provisional TEF panel statement

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| <b>Provider name:</b> | <b>University of Portsmouth Higher Education Corporation</b> |
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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 provisional rating decisions

### Context

The provider has five Faculties, with 29 Schools, which deliver a range of academic disciplines to support regional, national and global employer needs. The provider's academic policy frameworks, including Curriculum 2019, Personal Tutoring & Development Framework and Blended & Connected (B&C) learning & teaching, apply University-wide. The provider enables subject-specific adaptations and personalised support for student needs.

The provider is a relatively large-scale University with 24,800 full-time (FT) undergraduate (UG) students and 4,070 part-time (PT) UG. There were 690 apprenticeship students in 2020-21. It states that it 'offers the life-changing benefits of outstanding higher education to all our students...we deliver outstanding educational gain for our students' (p.1).

The 'size and shape' data for FT UG students in 2020-21 shows:

- A larger proportion enter with A 'levels CDD or higher (17.1%), Access, foundation etc. (15.6%) and A-levels BCC or higher (15.45%).
- 12.9 % are local prior to entry.
- 25.5% are in IMD quintiles 1 and 2.
- 24.8% are BAME.
- 16.1% are mature.

- 17.1% have a reported disability.

A large proportion of students study Business and Management (14.1%).

## Scope of assessment

According to paragraph 69 of RA22, the scope of the assessment covers all of provider's undergraduates. The panel placed more weight on full-time campus-based students, and less weight on part-time students, because the latter are a very small proportion of the total. In line with paragraph 70 of RA22, the provider excludes optional elements: apprenticeships, validated-only partnerships, TNE courses and credit-bearing modules/courses at undergraduate level that do not lead to the award of a qualification.

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 provisional decision on ratings, the panel members applied their expert judgement, within the framework of principles and guidelines set out in Regulatory advice 22 (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 provisional ratings 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 available evidence in the provider and student submissions and the indicators and weighed up this evidence to identify very high quality and outstanding quality features (as shown below). 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 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 five

of the features to be outstanding, and two of the features to be very high 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 it considered to be clearly below the level of 'very high quality' or 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 very high quality and outstanding features apply to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups (which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students). The panel considered the contextual information regarding the proportion of students from underrepresented groups to be relevant to this assessment, noting that the split indicators across all measures indicate outstanding quality for underrepresented groups (25.5% IMD Q1 and 2, and 24.8% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students). The TEF panel observed a difference in indicators for PT students but did not place considerable weight on this evidence due to the small denominators and statistical uncertainty. The panel weighted more highly the evidence that demonstrates that the outstanding and very high quality features apply to all 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 evidence of outstanding quality across all groups of students and for all courses and subjects.

The panel applied the ratings criteria set out in Annex B of RA22 and considered the best fit rating to be 'Gold'. This is because most features are outstanding for all groups of students and courses. The panel did not think that 'Silver' would be the best fit because the evidence demonstrates that 'most' rather than 'some' of the student experience features are of outstanding quality and the outstanding quality features apply to 'all' rather than 'most' students.

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

The TEF panel examined whether there is sufficient evidence to suggest any features of the student experience indicated at Annex A of RA22 are of outstanding quality or very high quality. The panel also considered whether any information in the submission(s) beyond these features is relevant to the quality of the student educational experience.

The panel's assessment is as follows.

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

In relation to SE1, information in the provider's submission about 'outstanding teaching, feedback and assessment' was found by the panel to evidence an outstanding quality feature.

The overall FT teaching on my course indicator is 81.1%, which is 0.7pp above the benchmark.

Applying the guidance on statistical uncertainty, the panel considered the indicator to provide compelling statistical evidence (100% certainty) that the provider's performance is broadly in line with benchmark. The split indicator shows that this applies to all provider's FT students on the

undergraduate courses, including students from the underrepresented group. Exceptions are material and technology courses where the number of students in the denominator is low (n=40 from overall n=14,660); less weight is placed on this evidence by the panel. Consequently, the panel considers there to be compelling initial evidence of a very high quality feature regarding FT teaching on my course indicator.

The overall FT assessment and feedback indicator is 71.7%, which is 2.9pp above benchmark. The panel considered the indicator to provide probable statistical evidence (88.8% certainty) that the provider's performance is materially above benchmark. The panel considered that the split indicators suggest that this evidence applies to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. Consequently, the panel considers there to be compelling initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature in relation to the FT assessment and feedback indicator.

The overall PT teaching on my course is 85.7%, which is 0.6pp above benchmark while for PT assessment and feedback it is 77.5%, which is 4.8pp below benchmark. The number of PT students in the denominator is low (n=280), therefore, less weight is placed on the evidence by the panel.

The provider and student submissions supplement the indicator evidence by providing further evidence of outstanding provision in relation to this feature:

- Innovative blended and connected pedagogy promotes student engagement and success (p1).
- Culture promotes and celebrates outstanding innovative learning and teaching (p1).
- Tailored approach (research-informed) to learning and teaching during the pandemic, for students with low income and widening participation background (p.3), have been detailed.
- Evidence of the external and internal student feedback which saw an increase of 4.7% points indicates a very high quality feature. For example, the provider's submission states that there was an 88% satisfaction score in 2022 for NSS Q1 'staff are good at explaining things' (84% sector average), which "confirms that ... students value this aspect of teaching which is key to their success".
- The introduction of 'Blended & Connected (B&C) Learning'. According to the provider's submission, "B&C is our distinctive approach to learning and teaching, defined as a student-centred pedagogic approach that prioritises active student engagement, in line with the principles of Active Blended Learning (ABL). This is based on sector best practice, supported by technology and refined in partnership with our students, responding to their priorities to ensure all students benefit from a consistent, high-quality experience. This encompasses purposeful and aligned synchronous and asynchronous work and promotes the development and application of subject knowledge, professional and digital skills".
- The use of a team-based (enABLE) approach to course and module design and cocreation with students, based on extensive pedagogic research led by the Dean of Digital & Distributed Learning. In 2021/22, 25% of academic staff contributed to enABLE in

partnership with students and employers. The provider redesigned 10 priority courses and 40 modules for long-term B&C learning along with 8 subject-level enABLE workshops.

- The provider's submission further states that "Changes co-created through enABLE meant cases of plagiarism were eliminated, 100% of students submitted on time, with a 22% increase in students passing the module. Engagement measured through our student engagement dashboards increased markedly & student feedback on the module was excellent, particularly for feedback and support".

Overall, the panel concluded that the submissions and indicators combined evidence that highly effective teaching, assessment, and feedback practices that support students' learning, progression, and attainment are embedded across the provider (noting that the indicators contributed no more than half of the evidence of excellence). The TEF panel therefore considered SE1 to be an outstanding quality feature.

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

In addition to the teaching, assessment and feedback indicators above (SE1), information in the provider's submission about 'Inspirational and stretching course content & delivery' indicates that students are encouraged to engage in their learning and are stretched to develop their knowledge and skills. Greater weight is placed on the evidence in the submission, which the panel found to be of outstanding quality. This includes the following:

- The Digital Success Plan.
- Workplace simulation on courses.
- Real-life practice incorporated into course content and delivery. For example, the provider submission states that "students treat NHS patients in our Dental Academy; Law and Accounting students run legal & debt clinics for the public; our School of Architecture runs an architectural practice with students; placement year students can set up and run small businesses".
- All faculty members offer relevant co-curricular activities.
- Students are stretched through real-life and simulated practice across provider courses (p.7), evidenced with case studies.
- Students are stretched through research-informed curriculum/learning (p.9) evidenced with case studies.
- This is further supported in the student submission, which states that: "practical elements of courses in the faculties of Creative and Cultural Industries and Science and Health received high praise from students where the university had invested in high-quality simulated learning environments, providing students with real life opportunities to put their learning into practice".

Overall, in relation to SE2, the panel considered that the provider's 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 therefore judges SE2 to be an outstanding quality feature.

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

Relating to SE3, information in the provider's submission about 'contribution of research, innovation and employer engagement' indicates that courses are embedded with research, innovation and employer engagement through a tailored approach to subject requirements, employer skills needs and the career aspirations of their students, including those wanting to progress into postgraduate study. The panel found that these principles and practices have impacted all groups of the provider's students, so placed greater weight on this feature. The panel found these to be evidence of an outstanding quality feature. Evidence in the provider's submission includes:

- All undergraduate courses include a research-focused dissertation or professional practice-focused project. For example, the School of Psychology supports 40% of students to contribute to research activity in addition to dissertations which are expected to be of publishable standard; 20% of undergraduates elect to participate in a level 5 Research Based Learning module where students and staff co-create and publish some shared publications; students gain additional experience through Project Support Assistant (PSA) paid roles, Summer Bursary Schemes and additional voluntary engagement; and a number of students contributed to published research including papers submitted to REF21.
- The provider also embeds employer networks into course and curriculum development, to ensure it prepares its graduates with skills and knowledge required in the national and global economy. For example, the significant redesign of School of Sport, Health & Exercise Science courses reflected feedback from their employer network, including alumni, and improved progression to professional employment by 6 percentage points by 2019-20.
- Bids submitted in September 2021 and July 2022 received £7.8 million OfS funding based on strong employer partnerships in health science, with the NHS, and engineering re 'Engineering the future'. (p.10).
- Tailored approaches in learning and teaching which are research informed (p.9).
- Other contributions to high quality research include students presenting posters in Parliament via the 'British Conference of Undergraduate Research', undergraduate summer research bursaries and involvement in the University's own pedagogic research (p.9).
- Student input to employer-led projects develops essential 'Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate' (p.9).
- Cutting edge research on all UG programmes – research-focused dissertations (p.9) which are evidenced with case studies.
- The provider's team of 30 experienced 'Entrepreneurs in Residence' use their expertise to help students plan, develop, network and market their new business. Building on this, 42 graduates have signed licence agreements to run their new business in one of the provider's incubation and innovation centres.
- Five courses in the provider's School of Creative Technologies culminate with Real-time Interactive Group Projects for 120 students annually, e.g. students developed a training simulator for Royal Navy Special Forces pilots.

- The provider's approach received several awards from the PSRB, The Industry Games Association (TIGA): Education Institution of the Year 2021; Outstanding Graduate of the Year for Enterprise / Production 2021; Outstanding Graduate of the Year for Enterprise / Production 2022 (p.10).
- The provider has been rated as third for research power of all UK modern universities, by Times Higher Education (p.9).

Overall, in relation to SE3, the panel considered that the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience for its students. The panel therefore judges SE3 to be an outstanding quality feature.

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

Evidence in the provider's submission in relation to 'outstanding staff development and academic practice' indicates that there is support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice across the provider. Weight was placed on the information about championing excellent academic practice, promoting innovation in teaching practice, internal recognition of excellent academic practice, and supporting teaching excellence. The panel judged this to be a very high quality feature.

Evidence in the provider's submission includes the following:

- Staff who teach and support students are actively encouraged to gain appropriate levels of Fellowship from AdvanceHE.
- 48% of the provider's 1,360 academic staff have Fellowships awarded through an AdvanceHE accredited CPD scheme, which is above the sector average. The Fellowships include 6 National Teaching Fellows (NTF), 14 Principal Fellows (PFHEA) and 67 Senior Fellows (SFHEA).
- In 2022 the provider was shortlisted for an 'Excellence in Practice' Award by the AdvanceHE Staff Development Forum.
- Innovative work by staff to support the provider's B&C approach in response to Covid-19 through 'Project Phoenix' was recognised through a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) by AdvanceHE in 2022.
- A number of dissemination channels, working groups and co-creation activities with students prompting excellence in learning and teaching (p.11) have outcomes which are quantified in case studies.
- Education specific pathways for academic promotion (p.11) are detailed.

In relation to SE4, the panel considered that there is very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted. Consequently, the panel judged that SE4 is a very high quality feature.

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

The overall FT academic support indicator is 78.5%, which is 2.9pp above benchmark. The panel considered the indicator to provide probable statistical evidence (85.6% certainty) that the provider's performance is materially above benchmark. The panel considered that the split indicators suggest that this evidence applies to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. Consequently, the panel considers there to be initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature regarding FT academic support indicator.

The overall PT academic support is 76.4%, which is 3.7pp below benchmark. The number of PT students in the denominator is low (n=280), therefore, less weight is placed on the evidence by the panel. The panel identified that in the indicator splits, the majority do not vary for FT UG and are tailored to academic support requirements but there is variation for PT UG.

The panel found that the provider fosters a supportive learning environment, and ensures its students have access to a readily available range of outstanding quality academic support. Greater weight was placed on the evidence in the provider's submission. The panel therefore judges in relation to SE5 there to be sufficient evidence of an outstanding quality feature.

Evidence in the provider's submission includes the following:

- The Additional Support & Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC) works closely with disabled students and their course teams to deliver bespoke adjustments and independent learning plans.
- Personal Tutors are critical to supporting academic progress, helping students understand assessments, guiding decisions about options and course mobility plus career planning. They deploy a variety of resources, such as the 'Value Me' toolkit to support students to define their personal brand for career success and employ solution-focused coaching.
- Understanding mathematics is a crucial skill for many of the provider's courses, and the School of Mathematics and Physics' Maths Cafe offer support to all students via flexible drop-in or online sessions.
- The use of the Jisc Discovery Tool by students and staff since 2019 has supported self-assessment and skills development, which strengthened the approach taken during the pandemic (p14).
- Innovative academic support by the University Library: Student feedback and SCONUL data confirms that the provider's library provides outstanding academic support and extensive online resources (p.13).
- In-Sessional English provides open access support on skills and knowledge which may present challenges for international and EU students. Digital technologies such as DeepL Translate, YouGlish and Quillbot are integrated into teaching. In 2021-22 enrolments doubled to 860 (p12).
- Investment in students' sport to promote belonging within the 'Being, Belonging and Becoming' framework.

- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK) team develops students' academic literacy through individual and group sessions on academic writing, coursework planning and dissertation bootcamps centrally. Over 90% of users rated tutor support at the highest rating in 2021-22 ASK user feedback. Learning Support Tutors provide tailored, individual academic skills development at subject-level and integrate with course teams (p12).

Evidence in the student submission includes:

- Proactive opportunities have co-created and embedded good practices through targeted and localised activity.
- Course Reps Periodic Programme Reviewers have enabled the systemic, university-wide engagement in creating lasting improvements.
- Initiatives such as the pre-arrival module have been critical in addressing student needs
- High levels of support from staff and adaptations made at pace were available during the pandemic.
- Weekly catch-ups are offered prior to deadlines.
- A disparity in levels of support is experienced between part-time and full-time students (addressed on p5).

In relation to SE5, the panel considered 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. Consequently, the panel judges that SE5 is an outstanding quality feature.

### **SE6: Learning resources**

The overall FT learning resources indicator is 83.9%, which is 2.6pp above benchmark. The panel considered the indicator to provide some statistical evidence (65.2% certainty) that the provider's performance is materially above benchmark. The panel considered that the split indicators suggest that this evidence applies to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. Consequently, the panel considers there to be initial evidence of an outstanding quality feature regarding FT learning resources indicator.

The overall PT learning resources indicator is 79%, which is 1.9pp above benchmark. The number of PT students in the denominator is low (n=280), therefore less weight is placed on the evidence by the panel. The panel identified that in the indicator splits, the majority do not vary for FT UG and are tailored to learning resources requirements, but there is variation for PT UG.

Considering the indicators and the evidence in the submissions (as below), the panel found that the provider understands its students and has tailored its resources to its mix of students and courses. The panel judges that there is sufficient evidence of very high quality in relation to SE6.

Evidence in the provider's submission includes:

- Online Course Developers and specialist Learning Designers support the interactive VLE and its best use. They provide 2,000 open access PCs and Macs, 3,000 teaching terminals

and 800 high-spec specialist PCs across campus, plus 1,000 loanable laptops. In 2021/22 they upgraded 750 PCs, 200 Laptops and installed 1,200 4K widescreen monitors in response to student feedback on their priorities.

- Simulated learning builds skills and confidence: examples include the Dental Academy, the Crown Court Room and the Bloomberg Suite.
- Case studies: 2000 healthcare students benefiting from the interprofessional simulated learning hub; 500 students at the Centre for Creative and Immersive Extended Reality (p15).
- The Forensic Innovation Centre, developed with Hampshire Constabulary combines police forensic science and digital crime investigators with facilities for students, researchers and serving police staff. Students have internship opportunities, access to professional mentors and are taught by active Officers.
- Training opportunities, including digital learning “Minifests” and the ‘EXPLORE’ tool showcasing software, ensure that staff can confidently embed digital skills and inspire students using high-quality digital resources.
- As noted above, digital technologies such as DeepL Translate, YouGlish and Quillbot are integrated into teaching.

In relation to SE6, the panel considered that physical and virtual learning resources are used effectively to support very high-quality teaching and learning by the provider. The panel therefore judged SE6 to be a very high quality feature.

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

The overall FT student voice indicator is 71.9%, which is 2.2pp above benchmark. The panel considered the indicator to provide probable statistical evidence (82.2% certainty) that the provider’s performance is broadly in line with benchmark. The panel considered that the split indicators suggest that this evidence applies to all the provider’s groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. Consequently, the panel considers there to be initial evidence of a very high quality feature from the FT student voice indicator.

The overall PT academic support is 67.3%, which is 1.8pp above benchmark. The number of PT students in the denominator is low (n=280), therefore less weight is placed on the evidence by the panel.

Relating to SE7, the panel considered that there is sufficient evidence in the provider’s submission to indicate that the provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements in their experiences and outcomes. Formal representation at academic council and different committees, contribution to relevant policy developments, the implementation of the student voice policy and the course representatives’ structure are all considered to be outstanding quality features of the students’ experience. Further evidence in the provider submission includes:

- A co-created research project on early interventions for placements (p.17) with detail and initiation of seven steps to success for employability.

- Formal representation and student charter (p.16) with case studies and improvements in particular to awarding gaps.
- 1000+ course reps to ensure student voice informs decision making.
- Implementation of the new 'Student Voice Policy' with a focus on three aspects; (i) student surveys; (ii) student participation in quality assurance & enhancement; (iii) student representation.
- Students contributing to relevant policy developments (p.16).
- Formal representation reinforced by regular informal meetings between members of the University's Executive Board and senior managers, elected officers and senior UPSU staff, ensuring that any issues are addressed quickly and effectively.
- Students from the BAME network developed and delivered training for staff to share their authentic experience.

The student submission provides evidence of the piloting of a scheme that facilitated course reps' integration as remunerated Periodic Programme Reviewers. The student submission explains that: "The university committed at faculty, school and course level to engage with the SU-led team of part-time student staff (Student Voice Assistants), assigned per school, to work with Course Reps on feedback collection, training, meeting support and co-creation activity". This was considered to be a very high quality feature. Additional examples include:

- BAME Ambassador initiative developed by UPSU and BAME student reps.
- Partnership with Academic Development include EDI into the TESTA process.
- Ensuring student voice and leadership in key aspects of decision-making innovating solutions during the pandemic.
- The provider actively shared the data to enable Course Reps, the pilot Course Rep Assistants and the wider SU to engage with the improvement innovations and identify co-creation and collaborative opportunities.
- The Student Voice Assistants were involved in co-creation sessions with the Department of Curriculum and Quality Enhancement, looking at feedback mechanisms for module and course level feedback.

The panel placed greater weight on the provider's submission because its evidence is relevant to student experience and it is corroborated in the student submission. The panel, therefore, judges that there is sufficient evidence that SE7 is an outstanding quality 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'.

In accordance with the guidance, the TEF panel considered all the available evidence in the provider and student submissions and the indicators and weighed up this evidence to identify very high quality and outstanding quality features (as shown below). 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 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 two outstanding quality features and one feature which the panel considers to provide insufficient evidence to reach the level of 'very high quality'. 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 features apply broadly to all of the provider's groups of students, including those from underrepresented groups, and apply across the range of subjects. The evidence in the submissions and the indicators were weighed by the panel.

The panel applied the ratings criteria set out in Annex B of RA22 and considered the best fit rating to be 'Silver'.

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

## **Student outcomes: Features of excellence**

The panel has considered whether there is sufficient evidence to suggest any of the student outcomes features indicated at Annex A of RA22 are of outstanding quality or very high quality. The panel also considered whether any information in the submissions beyond these features is relevant to the quality of student outcomes.

The panel's assessment is as follows.

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

In relation to SO1, information in the provider's submission indicates that the provider effectively supports its students to succeed and progress beyond their studies. The panel considers that the evidence in the provider submission indicates that its support approach is outstanding.

Evidence in the provider's submission includes the following:

- Outlines in the provider submission of the community and belonging themes, Personal Tutoring and Development Framework (PTDF), the use of data to enhance learner engagement, and the assessment for learning policy, indicate features of very high and outstanding quality.
- 'Community and belonging' evidence-based interventions which target underrepresented groups (p.18) are described.

- ‘Arrive and Thrive’ led by Being, Belonging, Becoming staff-student working group with pre-arrival resources on preparation for HE used by 3,000 students in 2020/21.
- 43% increase in students with disabilities; ASDC critical.
- International Orientation Week supports 1,300 new undergraduates with tailored information about studying in the UK, transitioning to a new culture and student life.
- Careers and Employability support for 5 years after graduation – sustained progress in long-term careers (p.1).
- The provider states that “Evidence drives continuous enhancement” and explains that it “maintain[s] excellence and rigour through an annual risk-based, enhancement-driven approach to annual monitoring at School, course and module level, underpinned by metrics. Smart actions and best practice are captured in Excellence and Quality Improvement Plans (EQUIP), informing course, School and Faculty action plans that are monitored by our Quality Assurance Committee. Courses with metrics below expectations are required to develop Priority Improvement Plans, with regular progress review. In 2021/22, 16 undergraduate courses of over 300 total, completed a Priority Improvement Plan”.

The panel considered that, in relation to SO1, there is sufficient evidence 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 judges SO1 to be an outstanding quality feature.

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

The overall indicator for **continuation** for the 26,750 FT students is 1.6pp above benchmark (with an indicator value of 93%). The values are distributed broadly in line with benchmark (100% certainty). The panel considered that the split indicators suggest that this evidence applies to all the provider’s groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. Consequently, the panel considers there to be compelling initial evidence of a very high quality feature regarding the FT continuation indicator.

**Completion** for the 23,850 FT students is 0.2pp above benchmark (with an indicator value of 88.9%) and 100% certainty broadly in line with benchmark. The panel considered that the split indicators suggest that this evidence applies to all the provider’s groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups. Consequently, the panel considers there to be compelling initial evidence of a very high quality feature from the FT completion indicator.

For the 1,890 PT students, continuation is 4.3pp above benchmark at 72% indicator value, materially above benchmark (with 96.3% certainty). The overall indicator for completion for PT students (1,770 students) is 9.1pp above benchmark, with 100% certainty that this is materially above benchmark.

Information in the provider’s submission indicates that the provider’s students attain very high quality rates of continuation and completion. Evidence in the provider’s submission includes:

- Case study: the physics and astronomy subject area had lower than expected completion rates. Changes to support application for Institute of Physics (IoP) accreditation resulted in

improvements in completion rates from 64% to 88%, and 240 students gained IoP accreditation in 2021.

- Every course and module uses learner data analytics on student engagement and performance, including differential outcomes for students with protected characteristics.
- Outcomes-informed entry requirements.
- Redevelopment of the Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring policy supported by investment in Student Engagement Officers and Learning Support Tutors who actively identify students in need of support and arrange a tailored package of academic and non-academic support.
- An 'Assessment for Learning Policy' promotes flexibility in assessment types to ensure assessment is tailored to reflect subject requirements, PSRBs and employer needs.
- Tailored course approaches are detailed through case studies (p.19).
- Student engagement intervention for 'at risk groups' are detailed (p.20).

In relation to SO2, the panel considered that there are very high rates of continuation and completion for the provider's students and courses. The panel therefore judges SO2 to be a very high quality feature.

### **SO3: Progression rates**

The overall indicator for progression for the (7,920) FT students is 0.6pp below benchmark (with an indicator value of 70.9%). The values are distributed broadly in line with benchmark (100% certainty). The panel considered that the split indicators suggest that this evidence applies to all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups, except for other undergraduate level 5+' (70), students studying performing arts (90), education and teaching (160), and mathematical sciences (170)., The panel weighed these split indicators less heavily because of low denominators. Consequently, the panel considers there to be compelling initial evidence of a very high quality feature regarding FT progression indicator.

For the (730) PT students, continuation is 5.2pp above benchmark at 89.1% indicator value, materially above benchmark (with 99% certainty).

Evidence in the provider's submission includes significant action to address five subject areas materially below benchmark, for example agreements between Schools and the Careers Employability Service to prioritise interventions; targeted support for final year students; and the closing of some courses. Additional evidence includes:

- LEO data demonstrates that after five years both Education and Teaching and Mathematical Sciences are ranked in the top-third.
- Improving progression to professional employment measures (p.22) are evidenced with case studies.
- Alumni engagement is described in detail (p.22)
- For the large majority of courses and groups of students, there is no variation.

The panel considered that there is sufficient evidence that there are very high rates of successful progression for the provider's students and courses. The panel therefore judges SO3 to be a very high quality feature.

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

In relation to SO4, the panel considered that the information in the provider's submission gives sufficient evidence that the provider articulates the educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are relevant to its students. Evidence includes:

- The provider's mission is "To create, share and apply knowledge to make a difference to individuals and society", and its strategy is to "Engage every student in a life-changing experience" (p.24).
- Educational gain is defined as 'the distance travelled or the improvement in knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development demonstrated by students at two points in time'.
- The submission includes evidence that effective approaches are tailored throughout the student lifecycle to ensure every student has the opportunity for educational gain by improving both their subject knowledge and broader 'Hallmarks'; that is, soft skills, personal skills and cultural competencies.
- The provider has tailored its approach to meet the unique needs of each student by considering the following factors: (i) they provide extensive support before students arrive and during their induction period to ensure a smooth transition into higher education, taking into account their individual starting points. (ii) Throughout their course, the provider caters to the specific needs of each student, offering opportunities that challenge and inspire them. The provider also prioritises supporting students with protected characteristics. (iii) The provider actively engages all students in exciting development opportunities, both within and beyond the curriculum, to help them achieve their individual career ambitions. The provider stated that its goal is to promote its students' long-term success in the global economy and their meaningful contribution to society.

The panel considered that in relation to SO4, there is sufficient evidence that the provider clearly articulates the range educational gains it intends its students to achieve, and why these are highly relevant to its students and their future ambitions. The panel therefore judges SO4 to be an outstanding quality feature.

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

In relation to SO5, the panel considered that the information in the provider submission indicates that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve these gains.

Evidence includes:

- Embedding progression to professional employment or further study including Curriculum 2019 and the Hallmarks.
- Systemic, institution-wide support of hub and spoke model at Portsmouth distributes support through embedded interventions in courses.

- 'Seven Steps to Success' professional development programme is tailor-made for each disciplinary area, embedded with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The panel considered that in relation to SO5, there is sufficient evidence that the provider effectively supports its students to achieve its educational gains. The panel therefore judges SO5 to be a very high quality feature.

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

In relation to SO6, the panel considered whether the provider evaluates the gains made by its students.

- The provider defines the educational gains it wants for its students and supports them to attain these gains while using the NSS report to evaluate success.
- Start point: low tariff provider, diverse students.
- End point: levels of continuation, completion, progression.
- Personalised approach: individual starting points to promote effective transition into HE; a focus on individual needs throughout, with opportunities that stretch and challenge; emphasis on individual career ambitions, engaging all students in development opportunities, within and beyond the curriculum.

The panel considered that in relation to SO6, there is insufficient evidence that this is an outstanding or very high quality feature, because there is no systematic evaluation of the provider's students' educational gains as defined in SO4, but noted the guidance in RA22 that a lack of systematic evaluation of educational gains should be no barrier to the award of a higher TEF rating.

## **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 all the provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups which comprise a high proportion of the provider's students. (The provider's internal data shows that 25.5% of their undergraduate students have two or more attributes of intersectional disadvantage.) 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 all groups of students and courses and most student outcomes features to be of very high quality for all the

provider's groups of students, including students from underrepresented groups, and courses. The panel also found there to be some outstanding quality student outcomes features.

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 quality provision for all 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 all groups of students, there are also some outstanding quality student outcomes features (in particular SO1 and SO4); and
- Across the aspects, the provider has presented compelling evidence to show that the provider's approaches are embedded across the provider, as well as evidence demonstrating that the provider tailors its approaches to its students, including to the significant proportion of students who have multiple attributes of intersectional disadvantage.

## **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.