

Teaching Excellence Framework: year two specification

September 2016

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Introduction

1.1 This document provides a specification for the **TEF in Year Two** of its operation. It reflects the decisions made by the Government in response to the Technical Consultation. A related document is available which summarises responses received to the questions asked in the consultation. A Glossary of technical terms used in this document is in **Annex A**.

Purpose of the TEF

- 1.2 The Government has introduced the TEF as a way of:
- Better informing students' choices about what and where to study
 - Raising esteem for teaching
 - Recognising and rewarding excellent teaching
 - Better meeting the needs of employers, business, industry and the professions

Implementation

- 1.3 The Department for Education (DfE) has asked the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), working with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), to implement Year Two of the TEF.
- 1.4 Applications for Year Two are due in by the end of January 2017 (delivery timetable in **Annex B**). Outcomes will be announced in spring 2017 in time to inform the decisions of students applying in the same year. Any fee uplift will apply from autumn 2018. This, and the operative timings for the TEF in years one to four, are outlined in **table one below**. As noted in the Government's White Paper, the TEF Year Two award will be valid for up to three years (with a few notable exceptions – for further information, see the **Eligibility, pre-requisites and provisional TEF awards section** and the **Outcomes section**).

Table 1: TEF timings

TEF Year	Assessment results announced	To inform students applying in...	...and entering in ...	Affects fees from...
1	2016	Autumn 2016	Autumn 2017	Autumn 2017
2	2017	Autumn 2017	Autumn 2018	Autumn 2018
3	2018	Autumn 2018	Autumn 2019	Autumn 2019
4	2019	Autumn 2019	Autumn 2020	Autumn 2020

Funding applications

1.5 No provider will be required to pay a fee to enter the TEF.

Future development

1.6 Outcomes in Year Two will not be associated with differential fee uplifts for providers in England – rather, all those achieving a rating of Bronze, Silver and Gold will receive the full inflationary uplift (see the **TEF descriptors section** for more information about the different ratings). However, these awards will be used from Year Three onwards to inform differentiated fees, unless a provider chooses to re-enter TEF in Year Three or future years to obtain a new award, in which case the latest TEF award will be used (see the **Beyond Year Two section** for further information). We will conduct a lessons learned exercise at the end of Year Two activity (see **Lessons learned section**).

1.7 The results of the lessons learned exercise will inform the implementation of Year Three, which will be a further opportunity for providers to apply before the TEF moves to subject level in Year Four.

1.8 The move to subject level will be informed by a series of pilots in Year Three to test the assessment framework and process at subject level. The assessment framework and process will be designed using a collaborative approach involving the Department for Education working with stakeholder groups and the existing TEF Delivery Group, taking the current approach as the starting point. As outlined later in the document, the devolved nations will be invited to participate in this development activity.

1.9 As outlined in the White Paper, postgraduate taught provision will be included in the TEF from Year Four at the earliest. As outlined below, we will also work with the Scottish Government and stakeholder bodies as the quality system in Scotland evolves to consider the relationship between the Quality Enhancement Framework and the TEF.

Relationship between quality assessment and the TEF

1.10 Quality assessment and the TEF form a coherent system but play distinctive roles. Quality assessment provides a foundation that ensures providers offer a high-quality student academic experience, deliver good student outcomes, and protect the interests of their students. It also delivers assurances about the integrity of degree standards to ensure that the value and reputation of UK degrees is safeguarded.

1.11 The TEF will incentivise excellent teaching and provide better information for students to support them in making informed choices. Quality assessment and the TEF will therefore work together to promote, support and reward

continuous improvement and better student outcomes (see **figure one** for a simplified diagram).

- 1.12 There is currently a common understanding across the UK of the baseline quality required of higher education provision, defined by the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications¹. However, implementation of the new approach to quality assessment will vary in different parts of the UK. In England and Northern Ireland, Annual Provider Review (APR) will be the primary mechanism for assuring quality for higher education institutions and further education colleges that receive direct and indirect funding from HEFCE or Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland (DfE –NI). All providers in England and Northern Ireland will transition to the APR arrangements² in 2016/17. For Year Two, a small number of providers will not have transitioned to the APR system. In their case, their previous quality assessment review will determine their eligibility for TEF.
- 1.13 Alternative providers in England, who do not receive funding directly from a funding council are reviewed by the QAA and are currently transitioning to Higher Education Review (HER APs)³.
- 1.14 In Scotland, providers take part in Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR), which forms part of an overarching Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF). ELIR includes an emphasis on enhancement alongside assurance - it includes a review visit where peers engage directly with the institution being reviewed⁴.
- 1.15 Wales has a quality assurance framework that aligns with England and Northern Ireland. For Year Two, in the majority of cases, providers' previous quality assessment review will determine their eligibility for TEF. However, some providers may be assessed under the new external quality assessment review process.⁵
- 1.16 In all cases, quality assessment provides a pre-requisite for the TEF. Quality assessment reviews (whether in the form of APR, ELIR, HER AP or an earlier form of review) typically look at a broader range of areas than solely teaching quality. While they can, and do, recognise achievement above the baseline, they are primarily aimed at ensuring quality and standards meet common thresholds.

¹ For more information on the Quality Code including the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications, see the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#).

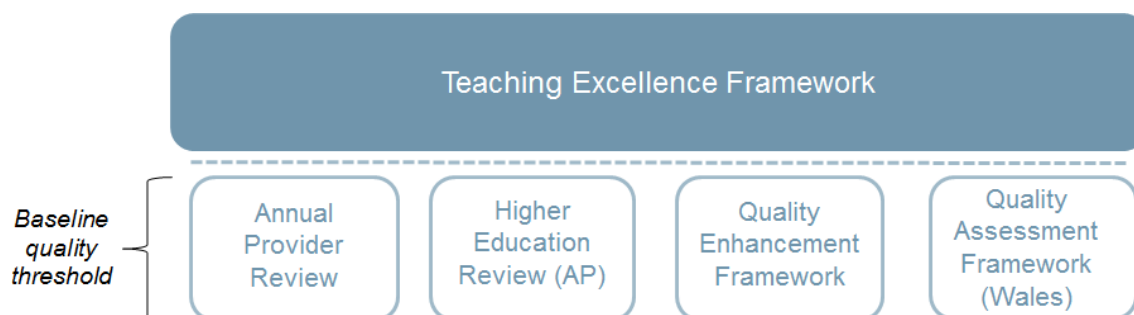
² For more information on APR, see the [Review of Quality Assessment](#).

³ For more information on HER (AP), see the [Education Oversight Reviews documentation](#).

⁴ For more information on ELIR and the Quality Enhancement Framework, see the [Enhancement Themes](#) webpage.

⁵ For more information on the external quality assessment review process, see the [Outcomes of the consultation carried out on the Quality Assessment Framework for Wales](#).

Figure 1: Relationship between TEF & Quality



1.17 The TEF will build on this, providing an additional judgement on performance above the baseline, in the area of teaching and learning quality. Teaching excellence is defined broadly to include teaching quality, the learning environment, and student outcomes and learning gain.

1.18 For providers in England undergoing APR, some of the same data that will be used to monitor quality as part of the APR process will be used to assess performance in the TEF. As these data sets are collected centrally, providers taking part in the TEF will not need to complete additional returns, thus reducing the administrative burden on institutions.

1.19 TEF assessors will not retest providers against baseline quality and standards. Rather, they will focus on performance above the baseline. A concern or risk to quality and standards identified through quality assessment has the potential to impact on a provider's TEF award. Should a concern be substantiated, a provider may lose its award (see **Outcomes section**).

1.20 In England, quality assessment and TEF outcomes will feature on the Register of HE Providers and in official sources of information for students.

Scope

Level of provision and mode of study

- 2.1 In Year Two, the TEF will cover **undergraduate provision** at levels 4, 5 and/or 6⁶, which includes higher and degree apprenticeships. In Scotland, higher education institutions offering awards at levels 7, 8, 9 and 10 are in scope.
- 2.2 All **modes of** delivery, including full and part-time and distance, work-based and blended learning are in scope for the TEF.
- 2.3 **Postgraduate provision** will not be in scope for the TEF until Year Four at the earliest.

The devolved administrations

- 2.4 Higher education providers across the UK took part in the TEF in Year One. The Devolved Administrations have confirmed they are content for providers in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland to take part in Year Two, should they wish to do so.
- 2.5 We have made a number of changes to ensure that providers in these nations can be assessed fairly and on a level playing field with providers in England. These variations are summarised below and reflected in relevant parts of the document.
- 2.6 First, guidance and support for the TEF Panel and assessors, both of which will include representation from the devolved nations, will include:
- training on the operating context of higher education in each nation, including Welsh medium provision in Wales; and
 - a brief statement setting out the national context for assessors to review (produced by the respective funding bodies for England, Wales and Scotland or the Northern Ireland Executive, in consultation with their sector bodies).
- 2.7 This will allow assessors to understand the operating context for higher education as they assess TEF applications from each nation.
- 2.8 Second, we have adapted the TEF eligibility requirements to recognise different approaches to quality assessment and access and participation across the UK:
- the TEF will recognise Fee and Access Plans in Wales, Widening Access and Participation Plans in Northern Ireland, and Outcome Agreements in

⁶ [The Framework for HE Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies.](#)

Scotland as equivalent to Access Agreements in England for TEF purposes;

- all higher education providers will be able to use excerpts from their quality assessment review findings within the TEF provider submission, to support their case for teaching excellence (if they feel it is appropriate to do so), thereby minimising any additional burden. Any findings included in the TEF provider submission should be timely, demonstrate performance above the baseline and be clearly related to the TEF assessment criteria;
- when assessing institutional performance for specific student groups, particularly disadvantaged students, we will split TEF core metrics by the different Indices of Multiple Deprivation used in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland;
- guidance to Panel members and assessors will explicitly set out that where providers in Wales are delivering Welsh-medium provision, this should be considered as positive evidence towards the TEF assessment criterion concerned with students' academic experiences (LE3)⁷; and
- guidance will also explicitly recognise that providers in Scotland typically have slightly lower retention rates, due to different structure, and that this should be taken into account by assessors in judging performance against the core and split metrics.

2.9 Third, devolved nations will have greater involvement in the design and implementation of the TEF:

- Devolved Administrations will be invited to sit on the DfE-chaired TEF Delivery Group, which oversees the future design of the TEF;
- Devolved Funding Councils (or a nominated body) will be invited to sit on the HEFCE-chaired TEF Project Board, which oversees implementation and will ensure they are fully integrated into the lessons-learned exercise that will review year two of TEF;
- A provider from each devolved nation will be invited to sit on the DfE-chaired TEF User Group, which provides a 'user' perspective on how the TEF will work in practice, thus allowing Government to work through policy problems and proposals in collaboration with the sector;
- Providers from the devolved nations will be invited to take part in the Year Three pilots that we will use to test our approach to TEF assessments at subject level; and
- We will work with the Scottish Government, funding council, representative bodies and providers as the quality system in Scotland evolves – in particular to see whether, should a future iteration of ELIR or the broader Quality Enhancement Framework within which it sits provide genuinely differentiated results, there could be a direct mapping between ELIR and the TEF.

⁷ See the **Assessment Criteria** section for further detail

Franchised provision

2.10 For the purpose of TEF, the quality of provision will be assessed at the provider that delivers the teaching. This may not be the provider that awards the qualification or registers the student. Franchised provision taught by a partner of a degree-awarding body will be included in the teaching provider's TEF assessment, not in the degree-awarding body's TEF assessment, because we want to assess teaching where it takes place. A provider offering **franchised provision** on behalf of a degree-awarding body will be in scope for the TEF provided it is quality-assured in its own right and meets the additional eligibility requirements set out in the next section.

Transnational education

2.11 Delivery of UK awards by overseas HE providers, or by overseas campuses of UK providers are outside the scope of the TEF in Year Two. The quality of transnational education is assured through the quality assessment system.

Eligibility, pre-requisites and provisional TEF awards

3.1 Eligibility and pre-requisite requirements set out below reflect our ambition to **integrate a commitment to widening access and participation**, and that the **TEF should build on quality and standards** assured through broader arrangements.

Eligibility and pre-requisites

3.2 To be eligible for TEF Year Two, a provider must meet the following eligibility requirements set out in the chapter. A provider must also offer provision that meets the definition described above for the **Level of provision and modes of study in scope** for TEF.

Designation for student support

3.3 To receive a TEF rating a provider must deliver eligible HE provision that is designated for student support purposes. This includes:

A) Courses that are designated by the student support regulations⁸ of the relevant administration, including those that are wholly provided by authority funded institutions.^{9,10}

OR

B) Providers that are defined as a 'fundable body' by the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended)

OR

C) Courses that are specifically designated, that is:

- developed and delivered by an alternative provider (the teaching organisation) often in partnership/collaboration with another provider. These courses must be specifically designated for 2017/18 by the Secretary of State (or designated by the relevant devolved

⁸ Education (Student Support) Regulations 2011 (as amended); Education (Student Support) (no. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009, Education (Student Support) (Wales) Regulations 2015 (as amended).

⁹ 'Authority-funded' means: (a) in relation to educational institutions in England, maintained or assisted by recurrent grants from the Higher Education Funding Council for England; (b) in relation to educational institutions in Wales, maintained or assisted by recurrent grants from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales; and (c) in relation to educational institutions in Northern Ireland, maintained or assisted by recurrent grants from the Department for the Economy or the Department of Agriculture, the Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland.

¹⁰ Further Education Colleges who are automatically designated as part of a franchise arrangement will be considered as eligible. We have made an exception for this particular group of providers because they already undergo additional financial monitoring checks.

administration) and registered on the Student Loans Company HEI course database in the name of the teaching organisation.

3.4 Providers in Wales should note that the Welsh Government's requirements for both automatic and specific course designation are subject to change for 2017/18 academic year. Therefore, these providers should make themselves aware of the latest developments to ensure that they are in a position to meet the TEF designation requirements by 1st May 2017.

Widening access and participation

3.5 Reflecting the Government's commitment to widening access and participation, **all providers wishing to take part in the TEF must have either an approved Access Agreement (or equivalent in Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland – see below) or, for English providers, publish a short statement setting out their commitment to widening participation and fair access (referred to here as an Access and Participation Statement).**

3.6 In the case of providers with an Access Agreement, the Agreement for 2017/18 will be used to determine eligibility for the TEF in Year Two. Providers required to publish an Access and Participation Statement will need to do so by the deadline for TEF applications in January 2017.

3.7 English providers must publish an Access and Participation Statement, if they do not have an approved Access Agreement, if they wish to be eligible to participate in the TEF. The content of this Statement will be at the provider's discretion; however we anticipate that it would comprise a brief statement stating what the provider is doing to widen participation. The provider will also be required to publish data on application, acceptance and progression rates of their students, broken down by gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background.

3.8 These statements will not need to be approved by the Director of Fair Access to Higher Education or by any other authority. They will however be a visible outward statement and will need to be published and available in the public domain by the time the application window for TEF Year Two closes. This ensures that all providers taking part in the TEF clearly demonstrate their commitment to widening access and participation. HEFCE will publish further guidance on how to produce and submit these statements and DfE will work with HEFCE for future TEF years as we continue to develop Access and Participation Statements.

3.9 We will recognise the following as equivalent to Access Agreements for TEF purposes:

- Fee and Access Plans for providers in Wales
- Widening Access and Participation Plans for providers in Northern Ireland
- Outcome Agreements for providers in Scotland.

Suitable metrics

- 3.10 Given the key role of metrics in informing TEF assessment, providers must have a minimum set of reportable metrics in order to apply for a TEF rating higher than Bronze. This is one year of reportable, benchmarked data for each of the core metrics, for either full or part-time students, whichever forms the majority taught at the provider (for further detail see **Contextual data and metrics section**).
- 3.11 The minimum requirement to have a “full” set of metrics is three years of reportable, benchmarked data for each of the core metrics, for either full or part-time provision, whichever forms the majority. For a provider that has only one or two years of data for any of the core metrics, the duration of the TEF award will be reduced to reflect the number of complete years of data (i.e. if the provider only has one year of data, it will receive an award that is valid for one year and if it has two years of complete data, it will receive an award that is valid for two years – see **Outcomes section**).
- 3.12 A provider that does not possess suitable metrics can opt to receive a **provisional TEF award** (see below).

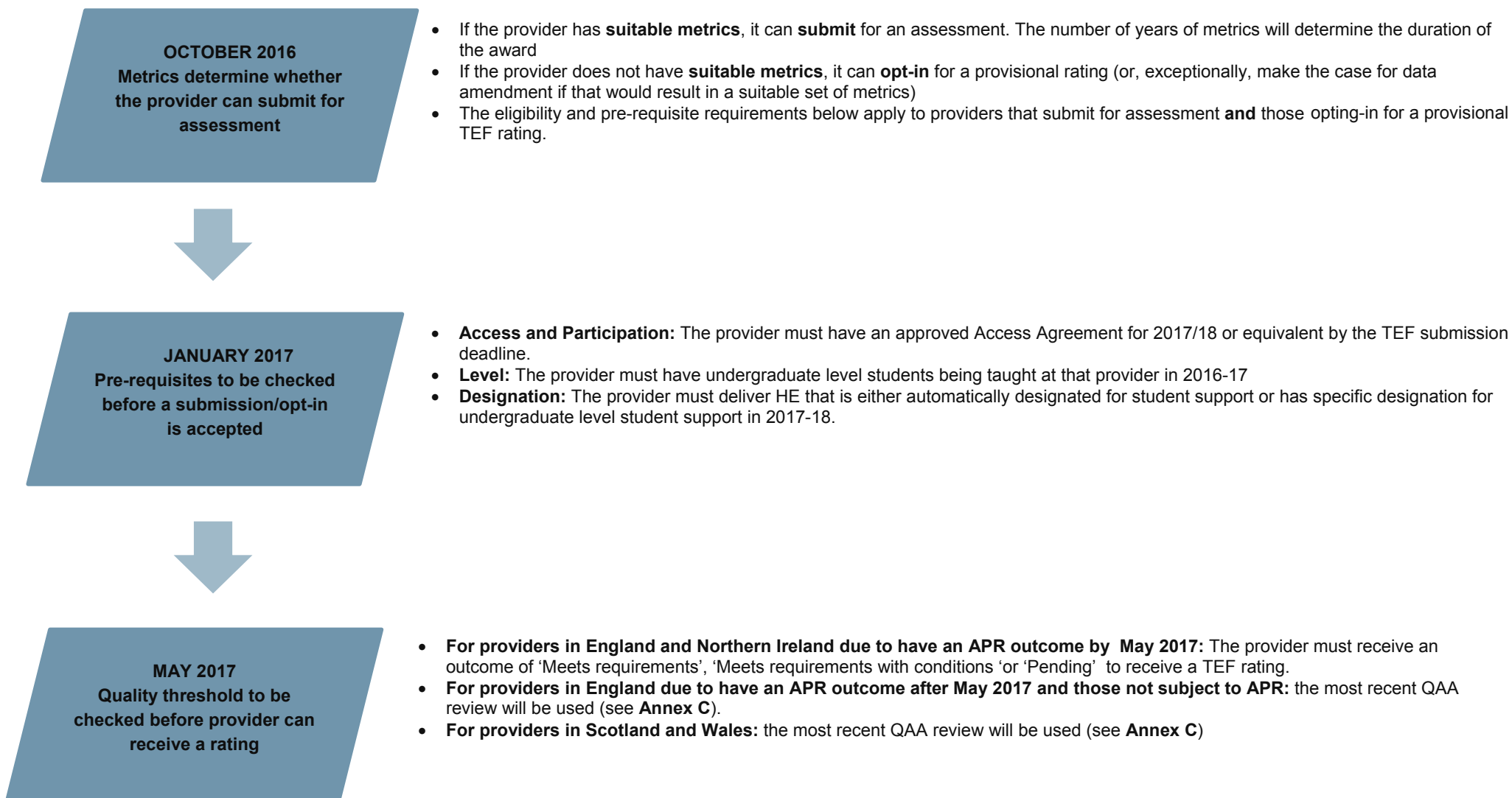
Quality requirement

- 3.13 To receive a TEF rating, providers must meet the requirements of the quality assessment system in their home nation. For providers in England and Northern Ireland, reference will be made to the new arrangements for quality assessment put in place by HEFCE and DfE - NI, with the exception of those that will not yet have confirmed outcomes under the new arrangements at the point of determining eligibility.
- 3.14 For providers in England and Northern Ireland that have confirmed outcomes under the new quality arrangements, we will take an outcome in the new Annual Provider Review (APR) of ‘Meets requirements’, ‘Meets requirements with conditions’ or ‘Pending’ as satisfying the quality requirement for the TEF¹¹. Providers that are subsequently investigated under the Unsatisfactory Quality Scheme and judged as having “serious issues found”, will lose their TEF award (see **Withdrawal of a TEF award section** for further detail).
- 3.15 For alternative providers in England and for providers in England and Northern Ireland who do not have an APR outcome by May 2017, we will continue to use the most recent QAA review as the quality requirement for the TEF, as defined in **Annex C**.

¹¹ More detail on the outcomes of APR can be found on HEFCE's [Revised Operating model for Quality Assessment](#).

- 3.16 For providers in Wales, which will not yet have transitioned to new arrangements in 2016/17, we will continue to use the most recent QAA review as the quality requirement for the TEF, as defined in **Annex C**.
- 3.17 For providers in Scotland, we will continue to use the most recent QAA review as the quality requirement for the TEF, as defined in **Annex C**.
- 3.18 In all cases, the provider must meet the relevant quality requirements in its own right.
- 3.19 Eligibility and pre-requisites checks are depicted diagrammatically in **figure two**.

Figure Two: TEF Eligibility and pre-requisite checks



Provisional TEF awards

- 3.20 Higher education providers that do not have **suitable metrics** to inform the assessment and which are therefore prevented from achieving a rating above the first level on procedural grounds can opt to receive a **provisional TEF award**.
- 3.21 The provisional TEF award will make clear that the provider has met the baseline quality expectations required for TEF eligibility, but is unable to apply for TEF assessment (and therefore the higher ratings) on procedural grounds. Provisional TEF awards are not available to providers that have suitable metrics.
- 3.22 A provider wishing to receive a provisional TEF award does not need to prepare a submission but must meet the Access and Participation requirements for TEF and must opt in to HEFCE by the TEF application deadline.
Provisional TEF awards will last for one year.

Mergers and divisions

- 3.23 Providers who are merging or de-merging can still apply for TEF. A merged provider will receive a single TEF award, where deemed eligible. De-merged providers will receive separate awards, where each is deemed eligible.
- 3.24 Where a provider has merged **before** the submission deadline, the newly formed provider should if possible make a single submission, and will need to meet the eligibility criteria set out above and in **Annex C**.
- 3.25 HEFCE guidance will set out how decisions on eligibility will be reached where a newly merged provider does make a single submission, or the merger takes place after the submission deadline¹². The Government's principle is that, as with the eligibility criteria above, HEFCE must be satisfied that the newly formed provider meets the baseline quality assurance expectations and other eligibility requirements for TEF.

HEFCE will follow the same principles described above for providers who de-merge.

¹² Including where a provider merges between applications closing in January and ratings being announced in May.

The assessment framework

4.1 The assessment framework has been designed to enable **diverse forms of teaching and learning excellence** to be identified. Assessment will be made against a set of common criteria, covering different aspects of teaching and learning. Assessment will be holistic, based on both core and split metrics supplemented by additional evidence, and carried out by peers comprised of experts in teaching and learning as well as student representatives, employer representatives and widening participation experts.

4.2 **Table two** provides a model of the assessment framework¹³.

Table 2: Assessment Framework

Aspect of Quality <i>Areas of teaching and learning quality</i>	Teaching Quality (TQ)	Learning Environment (LE)	Student Outcomes and Learning Gain (SO)
Criteria <i>Statements against which assessors will make judgements</i>	Teaching Quality criteria	Learning Environment criteria	Student Outcomes and Learning Gain criteria
Evidence	Core metrics		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching on my course (NSS scale 1) • Assessment and feedback (NSS scale 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support (NSS scale 3) • Non-continuation (HESA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment/further study (DLHE) • Highly-skilled employment/further study (DLHE)
	Split metrics		
	Additional evidence (provider submission)		
Statement of findings <i>Why a particular rating was awarded</i>	Brief description of why a particular rating was awarded including particular strengths		
Overall outcome <i>TEF rating</i>	The level awarded		

¹³ In the TEF Year Two Technical Consultation we consulted on the proposal to include commendations as part of TEF awards. The allied response document outlines feedback received in response to this proposal and Government's decision not to include Commendations in Year Two of the TEF. We will keep this aspect of TEF design under review, with possible introduction of Commendations in a later year.

Aspects of quality

- 4.3 Teaching quality is **best considered in the context of students' learning**. The outcomes of students' learning are determined by the quality of teaching they experience, the additional support for learning that is available and what the students themselves put into their studies, supported and facilitated by the provider.
- 4.4 The assessment framework therefore considers teaching excellence across three main aspects: **Teaching Quality (TQ)**, **Learning Environment (LE)**, and **Student Outcomes and Learning Gain (SO)**. An explanation of each **aspect of quality** is set out below. Together the three aspects make up a balanced view of learning and teaching quality.
- 4.5 **Teaching Quality** includes different forms of structured learning that can involve teachers and academic or specialist support staff. This includes seminars, tutorials, project supervision, laboratory sessions, studio time, placements, supervised on-line learning, workshops, fieldwork and site visits. The emphasis is on teaching that provides an appropriate level of contact, stimulation and challenge, and which encourages student engagement and effort. The effectiveness of course design, and assessment and feedback, in developing students' knowledge, skills and understanding are also considered. The extent to which a provider recognises, encourages and rewards excellent teaching is also included within this aspect.
- 4.6 **Learning Environment** includes the effectiveness of resources such as libraries, laboratories and design studios, work experience, opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction and extra-curricular activities in supporting students' learning and the development of independent study and research skills. The emphasis is on a personalised academic experience which maximises retention, progression and attainment. The extent to which beneficial linkages are made for students between teaching and learning, and scholarship, research or professional practice (one or more of these) is also considered.
- 4.7 **Student Outcomes and Learning Gain** is focused on the achievement of positive outcomes. Positive outcomes are taken to include:
- acquisition of attributes such as lifelong learning skills and others that allow a graduate to make a strong contribution to society, economy and the environment,
 - progression to further study, acquisition of knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to compete for a graduate level job that requires the high level of skills arising from higher education
- 4.8 The extent to which positive outcomes are achieved for all students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, is a key feature. The distance travelled by students ('learning gain') is included (see below).

4.9 Work across the sector to develop new measures of **learning gain** is in progress¹⁴. Until new measures become available and are robust and applicable for all types of providers and students, we anticipate providers will refer to their own approaches to identifying and assessing students' learning gain - this aspect is not prescriptive about what those measures might be.

Assessment criteria

4.10 The **assessment criteria** are set out in table **three**. Assessors will use evidence from the core and split metrics, supplemented by additional evidence, to assess performance against the criteria to determine a provider's TEF rating. The criteria have been **designed to allow recognition of diverse forms of excellence** and to avoid constraining innovation.

¹⁴ For further information on HEFCE learning gain pilots, see HEFCE's [learning gain site](#).

Table 3: TEF Assessment Criteria

Aspect of Quality <i>Areas of teaching and learning quality</i>	Reference	Criterion
<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching Quality</p>	Student Engagement (TQ1)	Teaching provides effective stimulation, challenge and contact time that encourages students to engage and actively commit to their studies
	Valuing Teaching (TQ2)	Institutional culture facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching
	Rigour and Stretch (TQ3)	Course design, development, standards and assessment are effective in stretching students to develop independence, knowledge, understanding and skills that reflect their full potential
	Feedback (TQ4)	Assessment and feedback are used effectively in supporting students' development, progression and attainment
<p style="text-align: center;">Learning Environment</p>	Resources (LE1)	Physical and digital resources are used effectively to aid students' learning and the development of independent study and research skills
	Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice (LE2)	The learning environment is enriched by student exposure to and involvement in provision at the forefront of scholarship, research and/or professional practice
	Personalised Learning (LE3)	Students' academic experiences are tailored to the individual, maximising rates of retention, attainment and progression

Aspect of Quality <i>Areas of teaching and learning quality</i>	Reference	Criterion
Student Outcomes and Learning Gain	Employment and Further Study (SO1)	Students achieve their educational and professional goals, in particular progression to further study or highly skilled employment
	Employability and Transferrable Skills (SO2)	Students acquire knowledge, skills and attributes that are valued by employers and that enhance their personal and/or professional lives
	Positive Outcomes for All (SO3)	Positive outcomes are achieved by its students from all backgrounds, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who are at greater risk of not achieving positive outcomes

Supporting the needs and attainment of all students

4.11 The Government has been clear on the importance it places on **supporting the aspirations and achievement of students** from a diversity of backgrounds. The assessment framework includes a specific criterion on the outcomes achieved by students from disadvantaged backgrounds and we expect that in making the case against the other criteria, a provider will show how the experiences, development, progression and attainment of all students is supported, including identifying and addressing any differences in the outcomes achieved by specific groups.

TEF ratings

4.12 A provider that applies for the TEF in Year Two will attain one of three possible levels of excellence: **Bronze, Silver or Gold**.

4.13 Guidance on performance at each level is in the **Outcomes section**.

Contextual data and metrics

Contextual data

5.1 Assessors will be supplied with **contextual data** on each provider, which allows them to understand their **nature** and **operating context** (including size, location and student population), as well as aiding the **interpretation of core and split metrics**. Providers will also receive a copy.

5.2 Contextual data allows assessors to take into account the specific context in which the provider is operating - for example, considering employment/destination outcomes in the context of employment statistics for the geographical area or widening participation in the context of the student population studying at the provider. **Table four** sets out the contextual data that will be provided. Data will be shown as an average of the last three years.

Table 4: Contextual data

Contextual Data	Category Definition	Sub-groups
Level of study	Level of the programme a student is registered on	First degree, other UG
Age	Age at start of study	Under 21, 21 to 30, over 30
POLAR	Providers in England only. Applies to young students only. Participation of Local Areas is used as a proxy for social disadvantage in HE in England.	Quintiles 1,2,3,4,5
SIMD	Providers in Scotland only. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way.	Quintiles 1,2,3,4,5
NI IMD	Providers in Northern Ireland only. The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Northern Ireland.	Quintiles 1,2,3,4,5

Contextual Data	Category Definition	Sub-groups
WIMD	Providers in Wales only. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. It is designed to identify those small areas where there are the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation.	Quintiles 1,2,3,4,5
Communities First	Providers in Wales only. Communities First is the Welsh Government's Community Focussed Tackling Poverty Programme.	Communities First Not Communities First
Welsh medium	Providers in Wales only. This measure identifies students who have accessed all or some of their provision delivered through the medium of Welsh.	At least 5 credits through the medium of Welsh for the relevant year Less than 5 credits through the medium of Welsh
Ethnicity	Ethnicity as self-declared on HESA record.	White, Black, Asian, Other and Unknown
Sex	Sex as self-declared on HESA record.	Male, female, neither male or female
Disability	Disability as self-declared on HESA record.	Disabled and not disabled
Entry Qualifications	Detailed qualifications on entry from HESA record	High (Over 390), medium (280 to 390) or low tariff (Under 280), non-tariff
Subject of Study	Based on high level JACS codes	18 subject groups
Domicile	Domicile as self-declared on HESA record.	UK, Other EU, non-EU
Local students	Students whose home address is within the same Travel to Work Area (TTWA) as their location of study.	Local and distance learning Not local

5.3 There will be four maps to support the interpretation of employment/destination measures (see examples in **Annex G**):

- a. For each provider – where students who study at the provider were based before study
- b. Common to all providers – The proportion of employed graduates in highly skilled employment (using DLHE responses).
- c. For each provider – where students who study at the provider found employment (using DLHE responses).
- d. Not illustrated - common to all providers – the population employment rate (using DLHE responses).

5.4 Not illustrated - Common to all providers – The population employment rate. HEFCE will make the contextual data available to providers, along with their metrics, at the beginning of the application period. Providers will be free to include additional contextual information in their submissions, such as details about their mission. See the **Provider submission** section for further details.

5.5 In addition to contextual data that is specific to an individual provider, assessors will also be provided with **sector level contextual information** that sets out the broader operating context for higher education in the nation in question. This will allow assessors to understand fully any differences and for providers to feel assured that their national operating context is understood. This information will be drafted by the relevant funding body, in collaboration with representatives of the sector.

5.6 Contextual data is used to support interpretation of performance but does not itself form the basis of any judgement.

Metrics

5.7 The **TEF will draw on currently available, nationally collected data, to provide assessors with a common set of metrics that relate to each of the aspects of teaching excellence.** These metrics will be considered by assessors alongside the evidence contained in a provider submission to inform their judgements. There are two TEF metrics aligned to each of the three aspects of the TEF (**table five**). As far as possible, the metrics for Year Two are modelled on measures that will be familiar to large parts of the sector. Providers are encouraged to supplement the core and split metrics with further data in their provider submission. The six metrics are summarised in **Annex D**.

Table 5: TEF metrics aligned with aspects of quality

Aspect	Metric	Source
Teaching Quality	Teaching on my course	NSS Q1-4
Teaching Quality	Assessment and feedback	NSS Q5-9
Learning Environment	Academic support	NSS Q10-12

Aspect	Metric	Source
Learning Environment	Non-Continuation	HESA and ILR data
Student Outcomes and Learning Gain	Employment or further study	DLHE declared activity 6 months after graduation
Student Outcomes and Learning Gain	Highly skilled employment or further study	DLHE declared activity 6 months after graduation

Metric Definitions

5.8 There is a full technical description of each metric in **Annex E**.

Student satisfaction

5.9 These metrics are based on student responses to questions from the National Student Survey (NSS). The NSS runs in the spring of each academic year and is targeted at all final year undergraduates in participating providers. Students indicate their level of agreement to a range of statements. For the TEF, the questions from three areas, or scales, are aggregated to form an agreement score for each student. These scores are then averaged to give the provider's score.

Non-continuation

5.10 This metric is the proportion of students who start but do not continue their studies. Students are counted between their first and second year of study (see **Annex E** for the part time definition). Students who continue studying at HE level at the same or at another provider are deemed to have continued, all other students are deemed non-continuers.

Employment/destinations including highly skilled employment

5.11 These metrics are based on the Destination of Leavers Survey from Higher Education (DLHE) which asks leavers to indicate their activity six months after gaining their qualification. The survey collects detailed data about employment and further study. Job titles and descriptions of duties are coded into the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC).

5.12 The employment or further study metric is the proportion of leavers (responding to the DLHE) who report that they are in employment or further study. The Highly skilled employment or further study metric is the proportion of leavers (responding to the DLHE) who report that they are in highly skilled employment or further study, where highly skilled employment is those jobs matched to SOC groups 1-3 (managerial and professional).

Calculation of metrics

- 5.13 Each core and split metric will be calculated using three years of student data. No weighting is used when aggregating the data. Not all providers will have a full set of metrics for Year Two. A full set of metrics is three years of reportable, benchmarked data for each of the core metrics for either full time or part time students (whichever forms the majority for students taught at the provider). A **suitable set of metrics** (which is required for a full TEF assessment) is one year of reportable, benchmarked data for each of the core metrics, again, for either full or part time students, whichever forms the majority¹⁵¹⁶. Providers that do not have suitable metrics may receive a provisional TEF award (see **Eligibility, pre-requisites and provisional TEF awards section**). Reportable core and split metrics must refer to at least ten students, and in the case of survey data, have met the response rate threshold¹⁷ and have sufficient data to form the benchmarks¹⁸.
- 5.14 For each metric, for each provider, full time and part time students will be reported separately. Further, **'splits'** will be produced showing performance within a number of sub groups (e.g. Full time Males or Part Time UK domiciled students). The full list of splits is given in the **Contextual data and metrics section**.
- 5.15 In order to aid the TEF assessors, core and split metrics will be **flagged** if they are significantly and materially above or below a weighted sector average (**benchmark**). The way in which assessors will use the core and split metrics to make their decisions is set out in the **Assessment: decision-making section**.
- 5.16 The base data for all the metrics is the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) student record (for HEIs, APs and some FECs) and the Individual Learner Record (ILR) for FECs. These provide data about the characteristics of students and the courses and providers they are registered with. Some metrics use responses to the NSS and the DLHE survey. NSS data is collected by a third party and any data supplied to providers will be at a sufficiently aggregate level to prevent disclosure.
- 5.17 HEFCE will calculate the metric data and create an individual TEF metrics set for each provider an illustration is provided in **Annex H** (published separately).

¹⁵ For both a full and a suitable set of metrics, in some providers, the offer means that the majority of students are on part-time other undergraduate programmes which are excluded from the non-continuation metric. Where this is the case providers may still be considered to have suitable or full metrics as appropriate, although this would be a gap which should be addressed in the provider submission.

¹⁶ For both a full and a suitable set of metrics, this must be a majority of all students taught by the provider that are in scope for TEF.

¹⁷ For the NSS, this is 50%. For the DLHE, this is 85% of the target which is equivalent to 68% for full time students and 59.5% for part time students.

¹⁸ Sufficient benchmarking data would be at least 50% coverage for each factor (for example where entry qualifications are used as a benchmarking factor, at least 50% of the provider's students included in the core or split metric must have appropriately recorded entry qualifications.)

Providers will have the opportunity to view this data, along with technical documentation at the beginning of the application period. During this period, HEFCE will consider requests to amend student or DLHE data in exceptional cases. Once the application window is closed, final provider level TEF metrics sets will be issued to TEF assessors for consideration. Assessor guidance will include sector level metrics data to contextualise the provider level data.

- 5.18 Unless otherwise stated, calculations are based on student **headcount**. Where there is a difference, students will be included in the data for the **teaching provider** rather than the registering provider. Normally, the teaching provider is the provider where the student spends the majority of their first year.
- 5.19 For each metric, all providers and students in scope (see **Scope section**) for the TEF and for that metric are selected from the datasets. Where the data source has a wider scope than the TEF (for example the DLHE includes post graduate students), those outside the scope of the TEF are excluded from the metrics.

Benchmarking

- 5.20 Benchmarks are used to allow meaningful comparisons between providers by taking into account the different mix of students at each provider. A unique benchmark is calculated for each provider's core and split metrics. **The benchmark is a weighted sector average where weightings are based on the characteristics of the students at the provider.** This means that the provider is not being compared to a pre-set group of providers. Each provider will therefore have its own benchmark for each core and split metric. The UK Performance Indicators and NSS outcomes already use this methodology. A full explanation of the methodology, including an explanation of how student characteristics (benchmarking factors) were selected for inclusion, please visit the [HESA website](#).
- 5.21 For the purpose of calculating benchmarks, 'the sector' is made up of all providers in scope for the TEF, regardless of whether they have met the eligibility criteria or have chosen to enter the TEF.
- 5.22 An example is given at **Annex F**. This methodology is designed to ensure that the factors that have the most impact on the results are selected and that the comparison group is as wide as possible. Benchmarking factors are selected and combined to minimise the level of self-benchmarking. Self-benchmarking can occur when a large proportion of the students in the comparison group are from the provider itself.
- 5.23 The benchmarking factors used for each metric are covered by **table six**.

Table 6: Benchmarking factors

Factor	Description (no. categories)	NSS	Non-continuation	Employment or Further Study	Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study
Subject of study	High level JACS codes. Joint honours are split on an FTE basis (variable)	✓	✓ (18, 14 for part time)	✓ (18)	✓ (18)
Entry qualifications	Described on the HESA website (variable)		✓ (26)	✓ (11)	✓ (11)
Age on entry	Young, Mature, Unknown (3) Unless otherwise stated, Young is defined as under 21, and Mature is 21 and over.	✓	✓ (full time only, Young is under 31, Mature is 31 and over)	✓	✓
Ethnicity	Asian, Black, White, Other, Unknown (5)	✓		✓	✓
Sex	Male, Female, Other (3)	✓		✓	✓
Disability	Disabled, Not Disabled (2)	✓			✓
Social disadvantage (measured by POLAR)	POLAR 1 or 2, Not POLAR 1 or 2 (2)				✓
Total distinct benchmarking groups		1,620	1,404	8,910	35,640

Significance flagging

5.24 Once the core and split metrics are calculated and benchmarked, those results that are significantly and materially different from benchmark are highlighted. This is referred to as **flagging**. TEF assessors will primarily use these flags to form an initial judgement of the provider (see section on **Assessment: Decision-making**).

Significant differences

5.25 It is not automatically clear whether an indicator is significantly different from its benchmark. To identify whether it is significant, we need to establish statistical confidence that the difference is greater than variances that would be expected due to chance alone. TEF metrics have adopted a variation on the [UKPI method](#) for testing for that difference. The method is explained in full on the HESA website. The method calculates the standard deviations of the differences between the indicators and their benchmarks¹⁹. **In TEF metrics the number of standard deviations that the indicator is from the benchmark is given as the Z-score.** Metrics with a Z-score ± 1.96 ²⁰ will be considered significantly different. This is equivalent to a 95% confidence interval (that is, we can have 95% confidence that the difference is not due to chance).

Material differences

5.26 In some cases the difference may be significant but due to the narrow distribution of the metric the difference is not material. **Differences of less than 2 percentage points are not considered material.**

5.27 Exceptionally, the materiality test will not be applied. **Where the benchmark is above 97% (or below 3% in the case of the non-continuation metric) and the provider's indicator is above the benchmark, the materiality test will not apply and core and split metrics will only have to meet the significance test in order to be flagged.** This is because it would otherwise be impossible for some providers to receive a flag of ++ (see below), as it is not possible to achieve a result of over 100% (or below 0% in the case of non-continuation).

Flags

5.28 **Flags will be applied where the indicator is at least +/-2 percentage points from the benchmark AND the Z-score is at least +/-2 (1.96).** A positive flag will be labelled '+' and a negative flag will be labelled '-'. Further, where the

¹⁹ More details of the statistical model used can be found in 'Statistical analysis of performance indicators in UK higher education' by D. Draper and M. Gittoes, in JRSS Series A, volume 167, part 3, 2004.

²⁰ The threshold is 1.96 standard deviations although this is usually rounded to 2 when quoted.

indicator is at least +/-3 percentage points from the benchmark AND the Z-score is at least +/-3, the flags will be labelled ‘++’ or ‘--’.

Splits

5.29 **Each core metric will be presented for all the provider’s students (separately for full time and part time) and then for a series of sub groups (called splits) reflecting widening participation priorities.** Assessors will be particularly interested where the split metric receives a flag but that flag is different from the same core metric. Providers may wish to explicitly address these differences in their submission.

5.30 For each split, the benchmark is recalculated to include only students within the split. That is, only mature students are included when calculating the benchmark for split metrics in the mature category of the Age split. Note that this means, for the split metrics specific to providers in the Devolved Administrations, they will only be benchmarked against students in providers within their Administration. The categories and their definitions that will be used for producing the splits are in **table seven**.

Table 7: Categories and their definitions for metric splits

Split	Category Definition	Sub-groups
Level of study	Level of the programme a student is registered on.	First degree Other undergraduate qualifications
Age	Age at start of study.	Young Mature
Sex	Sex as self-declared on HESA record.	Male Female
Participation groups	Providers in England only. Applies to young students only. Participation of Local Areas is used as a proxy for social disadvantage in HE.	POLAR quintiles 1-2 POLAR quintiles 3-5
SIMD	Providers in Scotland only. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way.	SIMD quintiles 1-2 SIMD quintiles 3-5
NI-IMD	Providers in Northern Ireland only.	NI-IMD quintiles 1-2 NI-IMD quintiles 3-5

Split	Category Definition	Sub-groups
	The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) 2010 identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across Northern Ireland.	
WIMD/ Communities first	Providers in Wales only. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. It is designed to identify those small areas where there are the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation. Communities First is the Welsh Government's Community Focused Tackling Poverty Programme ²¹ .	WIMD quintile 1 OR Communities First area WIMD quintiles 2 to 5 (excluding Communities First)
Welsh medium	Providers in Wales only. This split identifies students who have accessed all or some of their provision delivered through the medium of Welsh.	At least 5 credits through the medium of Welsh for the relevant year Less than 5 credits through the medium of Welsh
Disability	Disability as self-declared and recorded on HESA record.	Disability No disability
Ethnicity	Ethnicity as self-declared on HESA record.	White background Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background. Where there are significant differences (i.e. different flags) within the BME group, these will also be reported
Domicile	NSS based metrics only.	UK other EU non-EU students

²¹ [Communities First](#)

Treatment of mergers and divisions

- 5.31 Long term, where providers merge HEFCE will treat all data from the original providers as if they had always been a single provider. For TEF Year Two, where two or more providers merge before the submission deadline, the newly formed provider should if possible make a single submission and HEFCE will seek to merge the core and split metrics data. Where this is not practicable, or where the providers merge during the assessment process, the assessors will review their core and split metrics and provider submission alongside one another and the TEF panel will reach a single judgement. See the **Outcomes** section for further detail.
- 5.32 HEFCE will follow the same principles described above for providers that divide.

Presentation of metrics data

- 5.33 The assessors will be presented with headline data showing the core metrics and key contextual data (provider size, split between full time and part time students).
- 5.34 Beyond that worksheets will provide further detail including the full contextual data and maps. For each metric (and split) TEF assessors will see:
- Indicator (as a percentage)
 - Benchmark (as a percentage)
 - % provider contribution to benchmark
 - Difference between benchmark and indicator
 - Z-score (the number of standard deviations from the benchmark)
 - Flag (either -/+ or ++/--)
 - The flags for each of the individual years that have contributed to the indicator (provider level only)
- 5.35 Any data point that does not meet the reporting threshold will be replaced with an 'n'. Any data point that is empty because the provider did not participate in the survey or submit learner records will be replaced with an 'n/a'.
- 5.36 An exemplar of the full TEF metrics, splits and contextual data contextual maps is at **Annex H** (published separately). The **Assessment: decision-making section** of this document describes how the data will be interpreted by the assessors.

Provider submissions

Purpose, format and length

- 6.1 Providers will submit evidence to support their case for excellence that will be used by assessors alongside performance against the core and split metrics. Submissions will be **no longer than 15 pages** each and there will be no minimum length. HEFCE will issue guidance on style, format and coverage, but providers will not be obliged to follow a prescribed template.
- 6.2 The purpose of the provider submission is to enable a provider to:
- A. add **additional context further to the standard contextual data**, such as details of its mission (previous chapter)
 - B. support or **explain its performance against the core and split metrics**, particularly where performance is not strong (this chapter)
 - C. put forward **evidence against the assessment criteria** which will be used alongside performance against the core and split metrics (this chapter)
 - D. further explore **performance for specific student groups** based on split metrics (this chapter).

A. Additional context further to the standard contextual data

- 6.3 This is an opportunity for a provider to add any additional context that explains its mission and characteristics that is not fully captured by the standardised contextual data outlined in the **Contextual data and metrics section**. This could include aspects such as mission, collaborative provision or knowledge exchange activity.

B. Contextualising performance against the core and split metrics

- 6.4 Contextual factors can be those that have adversely affected performance against the core metrics which are not under the control of a provider. They can also be factors that have affected performance which are under the control of the provider, but which reflect decisions that have been made for good reason. Assessors will take this information into account when reaching their assessment of performance. Further guidance will be included in technical guidance from HEFCE.

C. Evidence against the assessment criteria

- 6.5 The provider submission should put forward any **additional evidence** that a provider feels best supports its case for excellence against the assessment criteria. This evidence can be qualitative and/or quantitative. Evidence should be current, within the time period covered by the core and split metrics.
- 6.6 A provider is **not required to address each criterion** or to use them as a checklist. Rather, they may wish to **focus on areas of strength** and **areas where there are weaknesses in performance against the core and split**

metrics. Additional evidence should allow an assessor to form a view on how a provider has performed in respect of each of the three aspects, particularly where performance against the core and split metrics is not clear cut (see **Assessment; decision making section**).

- 6.7 Assessors will carry out their assessment with the assurance that the high baseline quality eligibility requirements are met and will instead focus on identifying evidence of excellence above the baseline. As such, while the submission **may refer to and build upon evidence explored as part of broader quality assurance arrangements**, it should not duplicate it. Any findings from QA review included in the submission should be timely, demonstrate performance above the baseline and be clearly related to the TEF assessment criteria. The emphasis in the provider submission should be on demonstrating the **impact and effectiveness of teaching on the student experience and outcomes they achieve**. The submission should therefore avoid focusing on descriptions of strategies or approach but instead should focus on impact. Wherever possible, impact should be demonstrated empirically. Assessors and panellists will base their decisions on only the metrics and provider submission available, taking into account the contextual information they have been provided with. HEFCE guidance and TEF assessor and panel training will stress that no prior knowledge or additional external evidence can be taken into account when reaching a judgement.
- 6.8 Copies of, or links to, primary evidence – for example, strategy documents, policies or committee minutes - should not be included. Assessors may seek clarification or verification of the information and evidence covered in the submission (through TEF officers) if it is needed but will not otherwise engage with the provider. HEFCE guidance will reflect our expectation that verification should only be sought to clarify something the provider has included that is unclear or that an assessor considers may be untrue. It should not be used as a way of introducing new evidence into the assessment process.
- 6.9 Assessors will be looking for evidence of how far a provider demonstrates teaching and learning excellence **across its entire provision**. The submission should therefore avoid focusing on successful but highly localised practices that affect a relatively small number of students studying on particular courses or in particular departments.
- 6.10 **Indicative guidance on the sorts of evidence** a provider may wish to use to support its case is in **table eight**. This is **not** intended to be a checklist and it is **not** exhaustive. Providers are **not** expected to submit all of this evidence. Rather, a provider should make its case using the strongest available evidence, using the examples in the table **and/or** others.

D. Further explore performance for specific student groups

- 6.11 A provider may use the provider submission as an opportunity to further explore the contextual factors that adversely affected performance against their split metrics for specific student groups. Providers can also use their provider submission as an opportunity to explore the particularly positive actions they

have taken for specific student groups. Assessors will take this information into account when reaching their assessment of performance, comparing it with their initial assessment of the provider's performance against the split metrics.

- 6.12 All **submissions will be published**. They will therefore be available for providers and stakeholders to learn from each other and freely available for researchers wishing to understand more about the basis of high quality learning and teaching in UK HE.

Student engagement

- 6.13 Recognising the additional insight that direct information from students can provide, providers are encouraged to **show how they have involved students in preparing the submission**. Additional evidence provided by a provider's students will be given the same weight as the other forms of "additional" evidence referred to in **table eight**.
- 6.14 This could take a variety of forms, including, but not limited to, use of surveys, representative structures, focus groups, student membership of relevant committees, consultation events, online discussion fora, or facilitating the Student Union or other representative body to draft a section of the provider submission.
- 6.15 Students can only provide input via their provider's submission. Separate student submissions will not be accepted.
- 6.16 No provider will be disadvantaged in the event of non-cooperation by their students or Student Union.

Table 8: Possible examples of evidence for each aspect

Aspect	Possible examples of evidence
Teaching Quality (TQ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact and effectiveness of involving students in teaching evaluation e.g. collecting and acting on their feedback • Impact and effectiveness of schemes focused on monitoring and maximising students' engagement with their studies such as the UK Engagement Survey (UKES) and others • Recognition of courses by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) • How the provider is achieving positive outcomes for students, whilst also successfully identifying, addressing and preventing grade inflation • Quantitative information on teaching intensity, such as weighted contact hours²² • Impact and effectiveness of external examining • Impact and effectiveness of teaching observation schemes • Impact and effectiveness of innovative approaches, new technology or educational research • Recognition and reward schemes, and their impact and effectiveness, including progression and promotion opportunities for staff based on teaching commitment and performance • Quantitative information relating to the qualification, experience and contractual basis of staff who teach • Impact and effectiveness of feedback initiatives aimed at supporting students' development, progression and achievement
Learning Environment (LE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact and effectiveness of initiatives aimed at supporting the transition into and through a higher education course • Quantitative information demonstrating proportional investment in teaching and learning infrastructure • Use and effectiveness of learner analytics in tracking and monitoring progress and development • Extent, nature and impact of employer engagement in course design and/or delivery, including degree apprenticeships • Extent and impact of student involvement in or exposure to the latest developments in research, scholarship or professional practice (one or more) • (For relevant providers) Evidence of Welsh medium provision contributing to students' academic experiences • Impact and effectiveness of initiatives aimed at understanding, assessing and improving retention and completion

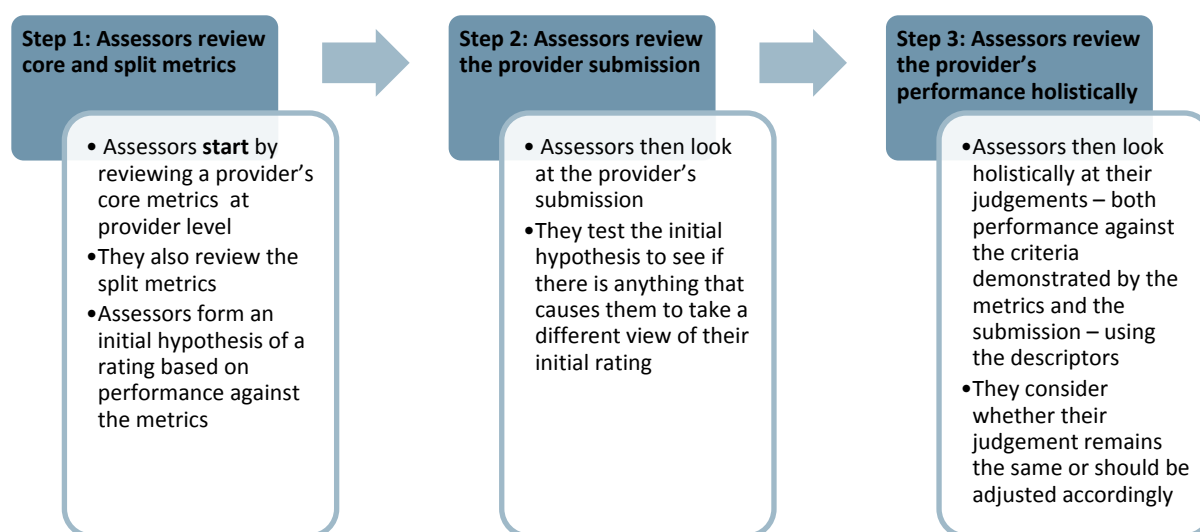
²² A weighted contact hours measure allows comparison between providers that deliver courses in different ways – for example, those that have high amounts of contact time with large class sizes and those that offer lower contact time and smaller class sizes.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain (SO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning gain and distance-travelled by all students including those entering higher education part-way through their professional lives• Career enhancement and progression for mature students• Evidence of longer-term employment outcomes and progression of graduates including into highly-skilled employment• Evidence and impact of initiatives aimed at preparing students for further study and research• Evidence and impact of initiatives aimed at graduate employability• Extent of student involvement in enterprise and entrepreneurship• Number, impact and success of graduate start-ups• Use and effectiveness of initiatives used to help measure and record student progress, such as Grade Point Average (GPA)• Impact of initiatives aimed at closing gaps in development, attainment and progression for students from different backgrounds, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who are at greater risk of not achieving positive outcomes.
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Assessment: decision-making

- 7.1 This section provides a summary of **the approach to decision-making against the assessment framework**. The design of the TEF is underpinned by metrics and the TEF core and split metrics provide the starting point for assessment. The assessment process is in stages:
- Review of core metrics
 - Review of performance based on split metrics
 - Review of the provider submission
 - Overall judgement of teaching quality
- 7.2 Further detail on the processes involved to reach a judgement is dealt with later in the chapter.
- 7.3 Before and, if necessary, during each stage, assessors will use the standard **contextual information** supplied to aid understanding of the provider and its operating context, as well as interpretation of performance against the core and split metrics. Contextual information should not, in itself, be a factor in determining a provider's TEF rating, as size, mission, location or admissions and access profile are not measures of teaching quality. It may, however, provide useful context for assessors when interpreting the core and split metrics and/or additional evidence.
- 7.4 Assessors will look at **performance against the core metrics** to form an initial hypothesis on the likely rating. This will be based on distance from benchmarks using the system of significance flagging outlined in the **Contextual data and metrics section**. The initial hypothesis will also **take account of performance based on split metrics** (see **Contextual data and metrics section**). The number and direction of flags, whether or not there is a mixture of positive and negative flags and whether there are any contrary flags on split metrics, will determine not just the position of the initial hypothesis but the degree of confidence in which it is held.
- 7.5 The **provider submission** will be used to determine whether the initial hypothesis should remain unchanged, particularly in circumstances where the evidence from the core and split metrics is mixed or unclear, before an overall judgement is recommended.
- 7.6 For a provider that has fewer than three years of core metrics, for very small providers or for providers where there are conflicting core and split metric flags, particular care will need to be taken in interpreting performance solely based on core and split metrics. In such cases assessors should consider the initial hypothesis to be only lightly held, and may need to rely more heavily on additional evidence in the submission in reaching their final view.
- 7.7 The decision-making process is displayed diagrammatically in **figure three**.

Figure 3: Summary of approach to decision-making



Review of core metrics

7.8 Assessors will form an initial hypothesis about the provider rating based on performance against the core metrics. Proportionately more weight will be given to core metrics in the delivery mode in which providers teach the most students (i.e. full or part-time).

7.9 A range of possible scenarios exist, with providers having a mixture of positive or negative flags, no flags at all, or a set of either all positive or all negative flags. The following general principles will be used to develop the initial hypothesis for subsequent testing using the additional evidence and contextual factors in the submission.

7.10 When looking at the delivery mode in which providers teach the most students:

- A provider with three or more positive flags (either + or ++) and no negative flags (either – or - -) should be considered initially as **Gold**.
- A provider with two or more negative flags should be considered initially as **Bronze**, regardless of the number of positive flags. Given the focus of the TEF on excellence above the baseline, it would not be reasonable to assign an initial rating above Bronze to a provider that is below benchmark in two or more areas.
- All other providers, including those with no flags at all, should be considered initially as **Silver**.

7.11 In all cases, the initial hypothesis will be subject to greater scrutiny and in the next steps, and may change in the light of additional evidence. This is particularly so for providers that have a mix of positive and negative flags.

- 7.12 Assessors will be provided with further guidance on the development of initial hypotheses and **the initial hypotheses will be tested against the additional evidence** as set out below.
- 7.13 The likelihood of the initial hypotheses being maintained after the additional evidence in the provider submission is considered will increase commensurately with the number of positive or negative flags on core metrics. That is, **the more clear-cut performance is against the core metrics, the less likely it is that the initial hypothesis will change** in either direction in light of the further evidence.
- 7.14 In the unusual case of a provider having six positive flags, we anticipate it will be highly unlikely that an initial hypothesis of Gold would not be maintained, regardless of the content of the additional evidence. Similarly, in the unusual case of a provider having six negative flags, it would be highly unlikely that an initial hypothesis of Bronze would not be maintained, regardless of the content of the additional evidence.

Review of split metrics

- 7.15 Before settling on an initial hypothesis based on the metrics, assessors should test the hypothesis by considering **how a provider performs with respect to different student groups**. This includes considering the performance of the provider in the delivery mode in which the provider does not teach the most students (i.e. full time or part time). This is particularly relevant to criterion SO3 (see **Assessment Framework section**).
- 7.16 Performance with respect to certain student groups, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, must be taken into account in determining a provider's rating. It could lead to an adjustment of the initial hypothesis, either to a different rating or to a more borderline position within a rating, and/or to a reduction in the confidence with which the hypothesis is held – which would lead to the assessor needing to seek further information in the additional evidence. Assessors may alter their initial hypothesis in the light of evidence from the splits, particularly when considering providers for the highest rating of Gold.
- 7.17 Due to small sample sizes, split metrics are less likely to result in a significance flag than for the core metric. Therefore, no weight should be assigned to a split metric that does not display a flag. Assessor training will make clear that **assessors should not allow splits that do not display flags to affect their hypothesis**.
- 7.18 Assessors should focus on those split metrics that do display flags, in particular where these flags differ from the core metric. A number of possible variations exist.
- a. A positive flag in a split metric, where the core metric is neutral or negatively flagged

- b. A negative flag in a split metric, where the core metric is neutral or positively flagged.

7.19 The presence of these combinations should lead assessors to consider reassessing the provider upwards or downwards from the initial assessment, either to a higher/lower position within the current category or to a higher/lower category, or to weakening the strength with which they hold their hypothesis.

7.20 After interpreting splits, we would **expect assessors to look at the additional evidence for further information before reaching a final view**. Assessors should also be alert to patterns across all three aspects based on split metrics.

Additional factors in reviewing performance against the core and split metrics

7.21 Assessors will consider a number of **additional factors** related to the interpretation of the core and split metrics in order to refine the initial judgement outlined above. These are:

- a. In addition to the number of flags, assessors will consider **how the flags are distributed across the three aspects of quality**. If positive or negative flags are concentrated – or absent from – one or more aspect, that may influence the judgement.
- b. Assessors should be careful **not to overweight information coming from the NSS**, which provides three separate metrics in two out of three aspects, and ensure that positive performance on these metrics is triangulated against performance against the other metrics and additional evidence. They should also bear in mind that it has been suggested that, in some cases, stretching and rigorous course design, standards and assessment (features of criterion TQ3²³), could adversely affect NSS scores.
- c. Assessors should give particular weight to the core and split metrics on retention and highly skilled employment since students should expect to be supported to complete their studies and attain a job appropriate to their qualification and skills.
- d. Particularly in borderline cases, and where there are no or few flags, assessors will need to take particular account of **Z scores**, to consider by **how much a provider exceeded a benchmark**, or how close it was to the boundary.
- e. Assessors should account for the fact that providers in Scotland typically have slightly lower retention rates, due to the HE landscape and funding model that prevails in Scotland and that this should be taken into account when the assessors judge performance against these metrics.

7.22 The process outlined above will allow assessors to arrive at their initial assessment based on the core and split metrics. More information on this process will be available in HEFCE's TEF guidance.

²³ See the **Assessment Criteria** section for further detail

Provider submission

- 7.23 In looking at the provider submission, assessors will be looking for evidence of **factors that could have affected performance against the core and split metrics**. These factors might lead assessors to adjust their initial hypothesis based on performance against the core and split metrics.
- 7.24 Assessors will also be looking for **evidence of excellence against the criteria** that core and split metrics alone may not have fully demonstrated.
- 7.25 The purpose of the provider submission is to enable a provider to:
- A. add additional context further to the standard contextual data, such as details of its mission.
 - B. support or explain its performance against the core and split metrics, particularly where performance is not strong.
 - C. put forward evidence against the assessment criteria which will be used alongside performance against the core and split metrics.
 - D. further explore performance for specific student groups based on split metrics.
- 7.26 It is possible that:
- a provider with a negative core flag could have their rating adjusted to Gold if all or most of the other flags were positive. Similarly, a provider with two negative core flags could have their rating adjusted to Silver, if all or most of the other flags were positive. In both cases, though, assessors should expect to see further corroborating evidence and a strong and convincing justification for the negative flag in the provider's additional evidence.
 - a provider with one or more positive core flags could receive a rating of Bronze if it also had core negative flags.
- 7.27 The core and split metrics are considered to provide evidence of performance against all three aspects of teaching excellence. Furthermore, since all providers taking part in the TEF will already have met the high baseline quality threshold for the sector, assessors should not take the absence of evidence to be 'evidence of absence' i.e. a de facto reason to adjust their initial hypothesis in either direction, unless negative performance in the core and split metrics, has given them previous cause for concern.
- 7.28 For additional evidence to alter the initial hypothesis, **assessors should expect to see clear, significant and well supported evidence of performance above the baseline, directly relevant to the criteria**. In particular, for providers to achieve the highest TEF rating, assessors should look to see clear evidence, from the core and split metrics, usually in combination with the additional evidence, of outstanding performance against all three aspects of teaching excellence.
- 7.29 Assessors should give no weight to evidence that is not relevant to the criteria.

- 7.30 Providers can, if they wish, re-use existing excerpts from their quality assessment review (e.g. HER or ELIR) results within their TEF submission. Where these reviews are timely and report excellence above the baseline that is directly relevant to the TEF assessment criteria, assessors will consider these to be strong evidence against the criteria. This may, in some cases, lessen the burden on some providers when they are putting together their provider submissions. However, providers will need to consider strongly the relationship of the excerpt to the TEF criteria and the need to demonstrate performance above the baseline.
- 7.31 The additional evidence is likely to be particularly important when a provider:
- has a mixture of positive and negative significance flags
 - has no or few significance flags
 - has fewer than three years of core metrics
 - is very small, meaning that significance flags are less likely
 - displays a core metric and split metric with a contrary flag
 - has a concentration of positive or negative flags in one or more aspects that are not replicated in other aspects.
- 7.32 Should a provider include very little additional evidence in its submission, proportionately more weight will be placed on the core and split metrics in making decisions. **In the extreme case where a provider submission contains no substantive additional evidence, assessors will be required to make a judgement based on the core and split metrics alone**, according to the following rules:
- Five or six positive flags in the core metrics for the mode of delivery in which it teaches the most students and no negative flags in either mode of delivery or split metrics confers a rating of Gold
 - No flags, one, two, three or four positive flags in the core metrics for the mode of delivery in which it teaches the most students and no negative flags in either mode of delivery or split metrics confers a rating of Silver.
 - Any negative flags in either mode of delivery for any core or split metric confers a rating of Bronze.
- 7.33 These rules are more stringent than those set out regarding the formation of an initial hypothesis due to the fact that, where evidence of excellence derives solely from core and split metrics, this evidence must be particularly strong and unambiguous for assessors to have confidence in awarding the higher ratings. The difficulty of achieving a Gold rating on the basis of core and split metrics alone reflects this need for certainty and consistency, which is essential in a sector where many providers have specific strengths.

Final judgement

- 7.34 In reaching their final holistic judgement, **assessors will look at each application against the rating descriptors below to confirm that the rating arrived at by the process outlined above corresponds with the best fit to the relevant descriptor**. If assessors conclude it does not, they should revisit the process above to consider whether the rating should be revised.

7.35 Providers will not need to meet all components of a descriptor and assessors should not have to prove that a provider satisfies the requirements of a lower level before proceeding to consider a higher level. Instead, assessors should make a judgement about best fit based on the evidence from core and split metrics supported by the provider submission.

TEF descriptors

7.36 The descriptors in **figure four** set out **typical characteristics** of a provider at each level of excellence, related to the criteria. Assessors will use the descriptors to confirm or adjust their assessment.

7.37 In all cases, assessors will make their assessment based on the criteria, using as evidence either performance against the core and split metrics, where these provide clear cut and unambiguous evidence, or, more usually, through a combination of the core and split metrics and the provider submission, to determine a best fit against the criteria using the generic descriptors below. It will not be necessary for providers to meet all components of a descriptor; assessors will need to make a judgement about 'best fit' based on the evidence from core and split metrics supported by the provider submission.

Figure 4: TEF Descriptors

Gold: The Panel will award a provider a rating of Gold if it appears likely, based on the evidence available to the Panel, that provision is consistently outstanding and of the highest quality found in the UK Higher Education sector; that is:

The provider achieves consistently outstanding outcomes for its students from all backgrounds, in particular with regards to retention and progression to highly skilled employment and further study. Course design and assessment practices provide scope for outstanding levels of stretch that ensures all students are significantly challenged to achieve their full potential, and acquire knowledge, skills and understanding that are most highly valued by employers. Optimum levels of contact time, including outstanding personalised provision secures the highest levels of engagement and active commitment to learning and study from students.

Outstanding physical and digital resources are actively and consistently used by students to enhance learning. Students are consistently and frequently engaged with developments from the forefront of research, scholarship or practice, and are consistently and frequently involved in these activities. An institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching is embedded across the provider.

Silver: The Panel will award a provider a rating of Silver if it appears likely, based on the evidence available to the Panel, that provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education; that is:

The provider achieves excellent outcomes for its students, in particular with regards to retention and progression to highly skilled employment and further study. Course design and assessment practices provide scope for high levels of stretch that ensures all students are significantly challenged, and acquire knowledge, skills and understanding that are highly valued by employers. Appropriate levels of contact time, including personalised provision secures high levels of engagement and commitment to learning and study from students.

High quality physical and digital resources are used by students to enhance learning. Students are engaged with developments from the forefront of research, scholarship or practice, and are sometimes involved in these activities. An institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching has been implemented at the provider.

Bronze: The Panel will award a provider a rating of Bronze if it appears likely, based on the evidence available to the Panel, that provision is of satisfactory quality; that is:

Most students achieve good outcomes; however, the provider is likely to be significantly below benchmark in one or more areas, in particular with regards to retention and progression to highly skilled employment and further study. Course design and assessment practices provide sufficient stretch that ensures most students make progress, and acquire knowledge, skills and understanding that are valued by employers. Sufficient levels of contact time, including personalised provision secures good engagement and commitment to learning and study from most students.

Physical and digital resources are used by students to further learning. Students are occasionally engaged with developments from the forefront of research, scholarship or practice, and are occasionally involved in these activities. An institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching has been introduced at the provider.

7.38 In addition, providers at all levels will have met baseline quality thresholds for UK higher education providers. This means²⁴:

- Degree standards are reliable, meet UK expectations, and are reasonably comparable to those set and maintained across the UK sector
- The quality of the student academic experience meets baseline requirements

²⁴ In the section on quality assessment and the TEF in the **Introduction**, we outlined the different approaches to quality assessment in different parts of the UK and over time. Some review methods will include different emphases on these three elements and some will include additional elements.

- The provider has in place an effective approach to continuously improve the student academic experience and student outcomes.

Anticipated distribution

- 7.39 In the Technical Consultation, we indicated a likely distribution based on performance against the core metrics where approximately 20% of participating providers would receive the lowest rating, approximately 20-30% would receive the highest rating and the remaining 50-60% would receive the intermediate rating.
- 7.40 This distribution is **not** a quota. That is, the panel will not be expected to force an allocation of providers to categories based on these proportions. Rather, their assessment will be based on evidence as outlined in the **Assessment process section**. HEFCE will use the indicative distribution as a guide in assessor training to calibrate individual standards of assessment.
- 7.41 The decision of the TEF Panel will be the final determinant of a provider's rating. The Panel will be under no obligation to comply with a quota or guided distribution when determining ratings.

Assessment process

- 8.1 TEF assessment is a **desk-based process**. TEF assessors will make recommendations to the TEF Panel about the rating to be awarded. The TEF Panel will make the final judgements.
- 8.2 The assessment process is in **three stages**, which are outlined in the overview below. The process has been designed to allow a rigorous and fair assessment. It has academic judgement at its heart with appropriate checks and balances built in to ensure transparency and consistency.

Preparation and training

- 8.3 It is important that students, providers and other stakeholders, in the UK and overseas, can have confidence that the TEF is a robust assessment exercise and have confidence in the outcomes. The process of ensuring assessments are robust begins with a transparent assessment framework. It continues with the selection and appointment of assessors and Panel members who are suitably qualified and prepared to carry out the role.
- 8.4 In this section we outline in brief how assessors will be **prepared and supported**.
- 8.5 Once initially selected, assessors will take part in training that includes mock assessment exercises and briefing. The TEF Panel and assessors will also receive training on the operating context of higher education in each of the devolved nations, including on the different quality systems and the role of Welsh medium provision in Wales.
- 8.6 TEF officers will assess performance throughout the training period. Preferred assessors will be identified to take part in actual assessments.
- 8.7 At the start of the assessment, a small selection of real applications will be used to allow assessors and Panel members to discuss the assessment process, clarifying uncertainties and developing a common understanding of standards to be applied.
- 8.8 HEFCE will publish further information about the training and preparation of TEF assessors in its guidance.

Stage one – individual assessment

- 8.9 Stage one involves **individual assessment** of a set of provider applications by assessors and Panel members. In allocating applications, care will be taken to ensure there are no conflicts of interest between assessors and Panel members and the provider being assessed. Details about how conflicts of interest will be managed will be made clear in guidance from HEFCE.
- 8.10 The guidance will also set out any additional considerations HEFCE intend to make, for example, around matching of assessor expertise and experience to the provider being assessed.
- 8.11 Each teaching and learning ('academic') assessor and Panel member, and each student assessor and Panel member, will be allocated a set of applications. Each application will be looked at by at least two academics and at least one student.
- 8.12 TEF officers will be present to support and facilitate the assessment process, ensure the guidance is followed, and address any requests for **clarification or verification** from the provider.

Stage two – agreement of provisional outcomes

- 8.13 TEF officers will continue to address any **clarification or verification requests** from the provider.
- 8.14 Assessors and Panel members will attend a conference-style meeting to **agree provisional outcomes**.
- 8.15 At the meeting, assessors and Panel members will discuss cross-cutting issues that affect judgements and establish consistency in grade boundaries and treatment of borderline cases.
- 8.16 The employer and widening participation expert Panel members will contribute to the discussions and be available to provide specific advice on request.
- 8.17 HEFCE analysts will be available to provide advice or clarification on interpreting the metrics.
- 8.18 TEF officers will compile the recommendations and check the statements of findings for consistency, including appropriate coverage and level of detail, ready for presentation to the Panel.

Stage three – decisions on final outcomes

- 8.19 A meeting of the full TEF Panel will take place to **agree the outcomes**. The Panel will consider borderline cases or cases assessors have flagged as particularly challenging, as well as a selection of other cases. The Panel may

consider any case it chooses. Its decision on the ultimate rating to be awarded will be final.

- 8.20 Decisions will be taken collectively by the Panel, with the expectation that any member who is conflicted with a provider will leave the room while that application is discussed. Technical guidance will make clear the steps to be taken should the Panel not reach consensus on a decision.

Appeals

- 8.21 Providers will be able to **appeal their TEF outcome on the basis of a significant procedural** irregularity in the consideration of their TEF application. A provider will not be able to appeal or challenge the academic judgement of the Panel or any founding principle of the TEF.
- 8.22 HEFCE will publish details of the appeals process, including further guidance on the grounds for appeal and the timetable and process to be followed. As noted in **Annex B**, TEF results will be published in May to inform student choices in a timely fashion. Appeals will be heard subsequently.

TEF assessors and TEF Panel members

- 8.23 Assessment will be carried out by peers and experts. A pool of appropriately qualified TEF assessors and TEF Panel members has been appointed which includes representatives from all four parts of the UK. TEF assessors include experts in teaching and learning ('academic'), students or their representatives, employers or their representatives, and widening participation experts.
- 8.24 The **TEF Panel will be chaired by Professor Chris Husbands, Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield Hallam University**. The **TEF Chair** was appointed by the Secretary of State and HEFCE, after open competition.
- 8.25 The role of TEF assessors, TEF Panel members and the TEF Chair is set out in **table nine**. Also included is a description of the role of TEF officers and other support officers who are members of staff from HEFCE and the QAA.

Table 9: TEF roles

Actor	Description of role
TEF assessor	TEF assessors are either experts in teaching and learning in a higher education setting, or students. Their role is to assess TEF applications and agree provisional outcomes.
TEF officer	TEF officers are staff from HEFCE and QAA. Their role is to ensure the process runs smoothly and that technical guidance for assessors is followed correctly but not to take part in actual assessment. Analyst officers provide technical assistance to assessors to aid their interpretation of the core and split metrics but do not take part in actual assessment.
Employer and WP expert Panel members	Their role is to provide specialist input to the assessment process, further to that which may already be available through existing expertise of assessors, and to contribute to the final decision-making as members of the TEF Panel.
TEF Panel	The TEF Panel is the decision-making body. Its members will be made up of experts in teaching and learning and students (who will also act as assessors) and employer and WP experts. The role of the TEF Panel is to make the final decision on TEF ratings by moderating and confirming provisional outcomes recommended by assessors. The TEF Panel will be chaired by the TEF Chair.

Outcomes

- 9.1 TEF outcomes will include the overall **rating** and a brief **statement of findings** setting out the high level reason for the rating. Both will be published in official sources of information for students as part of the TEF award.

Award duration

- 9.2 TEF awards given in Year Two will be **valid for three years** (subject to a provider continuing to meet eligibility requirements), unless a provider does not have the requisite three years of core metrics to inform the assessment. For a provider that has only one or two years of core metrics, the award granted will last for one or two years respectively (see **Eligibility, pre-requisites and provisional TEF awards section**). A provisional TEF award given to a provider that does not have suitable metrics will last for one year (see **Eligibility, pre-requisites and provisional TEF awards section**).
- 9.3 If two (or more) providers have merged before the application cut-off date, these providers will receive a single TEF award, which reflects their new status as a single entity.
- 9.4 If two (or more) providers merge after the application cut-off date for TEF, they will initially receive separate awards. Once the providers have merged they will then receive a single award. HEFCE will be providing further guidance on the merger of awards process in their guidance (see the **Eligibility, pre-requisites and provisional TEF awards section** for further information).
- 9.5 **TEF descriptors** were described in the **Assessment: decision-making section**.
- 9.6 The **statement of findings** will include the TEF Panel's summary view on why the rating was awarded, including areas of particular strength. It is intended to provide useful information to students and employers as well as to the provider itself. HEFCE will issue more detailed guidance for assessors on producing statements of findings, including on length, format and coverage.

Communication of TEF outcomes

- 9.7 TEF outcomes from Year Two assessments will be published by HEFCE. They will also be available on the UCAS website and on Unistats (or equivalent) in time to inform the decisions of students applying for courses starting in 2018/19.
- 9.8 A copy of a provider's core and split metrics and their submission will be published, linked to from the UCAS and Unistats pages (or equivalent) and hosted by HEFCE.

- 9.9 TEF outcomes for providers in England will also feature on the Register of Higher Education Providers²⁵. The Register contains information about how providers of higher education are regulated in England. It is not aimed specifically at prospective students but it is of interest to them and of interest to regulators and Government agencies, in the UK and internationally.
- 9.10 These official sources of information for students will be updated at least annually so that they remain up-to-date.
- 9.11 Providers are also encouraged to include TEF outcomes on their own websites, prospectuses and other sources of information for students.

Withdrawal of a TEF award

- 9.12 A TEF award given in Year Two will be withdrawn if a provider:
- ceases to meet the quality threshold and other eligibility requirements, including for course designation, set out in the **Scope and Eligibility sections**.
 - is discovered post facto to have included substantive factual inaccuracies in their TEF application.
- 9.13 If a TEF award is withdrawn, HEFCE will notify the provider. The award will not feature in the next officially updated UCAS, Register and Unistats entries and the provider will be obligated to cease advertising or claiming that it has the award. These sanctions will apply to all providers across the UK that have applied for and received a TEF award.
- 9.14 Any fee uplift associated with the award will cease to apply from the start of the academic year immediately following the date on which the award is withdrawn.
- 9.15 In some exceptional circumstances, a provider may have its TEF award withdrawn because it ceases to meet the quality threshold or other eligibility requirements and then, through the course of the year succeed in addressing the causal issues and have this judgement overturned. In these instances, the provider will not be able to 'reclaim' the TEF award that had been withdrawn, as we expect those with a TEF award to be offering consistently high quality provision to their students. The provider would need to make a submission to the subsequent year of the TEF in order to regain a TEF award.

²⁵ [HEFCE Register](#)

TEF logo and conditions of usage

9.16 TEF awards will bear a protected logo that comes with conditions of usage. Providers will be expected to adhere to these conditions of usage or face consequences should a breach of conditions be reported or uncovered. Conditions of usage will seek to prevent fraudulent use, for example in the case of a provider that has not attained the advertised rating or which continues to advertise an expired TEF award.

Lessons learned for Year 2

- 10.1 We intend to carry out a lessons learned review of Year Two. DfE will seek advice from HEFCE, QAA and the TEF Panel, as well as representatives of the sector, about potential improvements for Year Three.
- 10.2 We will also draw upon the outcomes of other reviews and programmes of work that impact the design and delivery of the TEF - for example, the results of the review of the DHLE and interim findings from HEFCE learning gain pilots – so that the TEF reflects and makes use of available evidence.

Longer-term evaluation of the impact of the TEF

- 10.3 Longer-term, in accordance with standard government practice for new initiatives, we intend to conduct an evaluation of the extent to which the TEF has impacted students' choices and teaching practices in higher education.

Beyond Year Two

- 11.1 The assessment process in Year Three will, as with Year Two, be at provider-level and is expected to follow the same broad framework as in Year Two, modified and adjusted where necessary as a result of **the lessons-learned exercise. As a standard TEF award given in Year Two lasts for three years, providers who continue to have a valid TEF award will not have to reapply for the TEF** in Year Three, though they will be free to do so if they wish to – for example if they believe they are in a position to improve their rating.
- 11.2 Providers whose TEF Year Two award remains valid will still be eligible for a fee uplift. However, from Year Three onwards, we will introduce differentiated fee cap and loan cap increases. All providers with a Bronze rating in Year Three, whether awarded in Year Two or Year Three, will therefore only be eligible for 50% of the inflationary uplift in that year. Providers with a Silver or Gold rating will still be eligible to receive 100% of the inflationary uplift.
- 11.3 As set out in the White Paper: *Success as a Knowledge Economy*, providers that opt not to reapply after their TEF award expires or that do not reapply after their TEF award is withdrawn, will not be able to 'bank' previous inflationary fee uplifts.
- 11.4 Providers that opt not to apply to the TEF in Year Two will be able to apply for assessment in Year Three provided they meet the eligibility requirements and prerequisites. Providers who were able to claim a provisional award for TEF Year Two, but who now have a full set of metrics will need to apply for the full assessment if they wish to retain their TEF award. Providers who were able to claim a provisional award in TEF Year Two, but who still do not have suitable of metrics will be able to opt in for a provisional award in TEF Year Three.
- 11.5 A provider may also choose to apply for assessment in Year Three should it wish to seek an award at a higher level than it achieved in Year Two.
- 11.6 Further information on the application and assessment process for Year Three will be published following the conclusion of the lessons-learned exercise.

Annex A: Glossary

Access and Participation Statement

A statement published by a provider that sets out their commitment to widening participation and fair access. Providers in England that do not have an Access Agreement approved by the Director of Fair Access are required to publish an Access and Participation Statement to be eligible for a TEF Year Two rating.

Access Agreement

An Access Agreement (providers in England) sets out how an institution will sustain or improve access and student success, which includes retention, attainment and employability. Access Agreements are approved by the Director for Fair Access.

Additional evidence

Evidence on teaching and learning quality included in the provider submission. Additional evidence can be quantitative or qualitative and should address the criteria.

Aspects of quality

Areas of teaching and learning quality in which criteria are articulated against which providers will be assessed. These are: Teaching Quality, Learning Environment, and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain.

Assessment framework

The assessment framework sets out how judgements about excellence will be made. It refers to the aspects of quality, the criteria, the nature of the evidence and how the evidence will be assessed against the criteria to determine the ratings.

Benchmark

The benchmark is a weighted sector average where weightings are based on the characteristics of the students at the provider. A unique benchmark is calculated for each provider, metric and split: it is calculated solely from the data returns informing the metric derivations.

Contextual data

Data on the nature and operating context of a provider, such as their size, location and student population, which is used by assessors in interpreting performance against the core metrics and additional evidence but does not itself form the basis of any judgement about excellence.

Core metrics

Measures deriving from national surveys and data returns which have been defined, benchmarked and reported as a key part of the evidence used in TEF assessments.

For each provider, there are six core metrics, reported separately for the provider's full-time and part-time students, and averaged over three years.

Criteria

Statements against which assessors will make judgements.

Eligibility

The requirements that must be met in order for providers to be eligible to receive a TEF rating.

Flag

Metrics include flags when the difference between the indicator and the benchmark is significant and material (see other definitions). Flags denote either a positive or a negative difference.

Higher education provider

A higher education provider (or provider) is an organisation that delivers higher education. A provider can be an awarding body or deliver higher education on behalf of another awarding body. The term encompasses higher education institutions, further education colleges and alternative providers.

Indicator

The provider's value for a particular metric, expressed as a proportion, such as the percentage of students that indicated they were satisfied with teaching and learning.

Initial hypothesis

The TEF rating initially assigned to a provider by TEF assessors, based on their metrics only. This initial hypothesis may be modified by the additional evidence.

Learning Environment

One of the aspects of quality (see other definition). Learning Environment is described in the main text.

Material difference

In relation to the metrics, a provider's indicator is considered to be materially different from the benchmark if the difference is at least two percentage points.

Provider submission

The provider submission is prepared and submitted by a provider and used by assessors to inform their TEF judgement. A provider submission can contain information on a provider's mission and characteristics, contextual information that explains performance against the metrics and additional evidence to support the

case for excellence. The additional evidence should address the criteria and can be qualitative or quantitative.

Provisional TEF award

A TEF rating given to a provider that opts into the TEF but who does not have suitable metrics to inform assessment. These providers meet all other eligibility requirements and are prevented from achieving a rating above the first level on procedural grounds.

Significant difference

In relation to the metrics, a provider's indicator is considered to be significantly different from the benchmark if the Z-score (see other definition) is +/-1.96. This is a measure of statistical significance.

Splits

Categories by which core metrics are sub-divided in order to show how a provider performs with respect to different student groups and/or in different years.

Statement of findings

A brief, high level written statement that outlines the reason for the rating awarded to a particular provider.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

One of the aspects of quality (see other definition). Student Outcomes and Learning Gain is described in the main text.

Suitable metrics

The minimum set of core metrics required to be eligible to make a provider submission and receive a TEF rating of Bronze, Silver or Gold.

Teaching provider

The provider where a student spends the majority of their first year. For franchised provision, students are included in the metrics of the teaching provider.

Teaching Quality

One of the aspects of quality (see other definition). Teaching Quality is described in the main text.

TEF assessor

TEF assessors consider the evidence available to them and make a provisional judgement about the TEF rating a provider should receive. The provisional outcome

is recommended to the TEF Panel. Assessors are experts in teaching and learning or students.

TEF award

A TEF award is made up of the TEF rating (see other definition) and a brief statement of findings. TEF Year Two awards are valid for up to three years.

TEF Panel

The TEF Panel is the decision-making body for TEF assessments. It will be responsible for reviewing the judgements made by TEF assessors and deciding the final rating a provider will receive.

TEF ratings

A TEF rating is the level of excellence achieved by a provider under the TEF. There are three possible ratings: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

Transnational education

Awards of UK degree-awarding bodies delivered overseas. Transnational education is out-of-scope for the TEF in Year Two.

Quality assessment

Quality assessment is a collective term used to refer to arrangements for ensuring higher education providers meet baseline expectations for academic quality and standards. There are different arrangements in operation in different parts of the UK and, in some parts, for different types of providers but in all cases, expectations are underpinned by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Z-score

In relation to the metrics, the Z-score denotes the number of standard deviations that a provider's indicator is from the benchmark and is used as a measure of statistical difference.

Annex B: TEF delivery timetable

Activity	Date
Response to Technical Consultation is published	Sept 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for providers is published • Providers' core and split metrics are made available for them to preview • Applications window opens 	Late Oct 2016
Provider briefing events	Mid Nov – early Dec 2016
Application window closes	Late Jan 2017
Assessment takes place	Feb – May 2017
TEF ratings are announced	End of May 2017
Appeals window opens	June 2017
Appeals window closes	June 2017
Results of appeals published	July 2017

Annex C: Eligibility for the TEF in Year Two

This Annex provides further detail on the acceptable forms of Quality Assurance review for TEF Year Two. This builds on the eligibility requirements set out in the **Eligibility, pre-requisites and provisional TEF awards section**.

Quality requirement

For TEF Year Two, providers in England and Northern Ireland who are subject to the new Annual Provider Review (APR) process will have their eligibility for TEF determined by their review outcome.

Providers who receive one of the following review outcomes by May 2017 will be eligible to receive a TEF award:

- a. **Meets requirements**
- b. **Meets requirements with conditions**
- c. **Pending**

We have included “pending” as an acceptable outcome for TEF Year Two purposes, in recognition that the APR is a new framework and therefore we may expect to see providers classed as “pending” who may subsequently prove, after further investigation, to have no substantive issues. However, as noted in the section covering withdrawals, any provider who is subsequently investigated under the Unsatisfactory Quality Scheme with an outcome of “Serious issues found” will have their previous TEF award removed.

Some providers in England will have an APR in mid to late 2017. To ensure that these providers are not unfairly excluded from TEF Year Two, providers in this category will be initially judged based on their previous quality review result to determine whether or not they are eligible for TEF. By the time TEF Year Three results are announced we expect these providers will have an outcome of “Meets Requirements”, “Meets requirements with conditions” or will remain in the “development” category. Those who remain in the development category will have their previous TEF award withdrawn (see the **Withdrawal of a TEF award section for further details**).

For providers in England and Northern Ireland who do not have an APR outcome by May 2017, for Alternative Providers and for providers in Scotland and Wales, the following quality assurance reviews will be accepted for TEF:

In England:

- Higher Education Review (HER) (2013 – 2016)
- Higher Education Review Plus (HER Plus) (2014-2015)
- Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) (HER AP) (2015-ongoing)

- Institutional Audit (2007 to 2011)
- Institutional Review of higher education institutions in England and Northern Ireland (IRENI) (2011-13)
- Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER) (2007-2012)
- Review of College Higher Education for further education colleges (RCHE) (2012-13)
- Review for Educational Oversight (REO) (2012-2015)
- Review for Specific Course Designation (RSCD) (2013-2015)
- Review for Specific Course Designation (Adapted) (RSCD Adapted) (2013-2015)
- General Osteopathic Council Review

Providers must also demonstrate that their most recent interaction to assess their quality was positive. Therefore, for providers who are subject to them, positive outcomes from the following types of annual quality monitoring will be necessary in order to be eligible for the TEF:

- HER (AP) Annual Monitoring
- REO Annual Monitoring
- RSCD Annual Monitoring
- SCD Annual Monitoring

In Wales:

- External quality assessment review undertaken by an organisation on the European Quality Assurance Register (2017-18 onwards)
- Higher Education Review Wales (HER -W) (2015-2016)
- Institutional Review Wales (IR Wales) (2007-2014)
- Review for Educational Oversight (REO) (2012-2015)
- Review for Specific Course Designation (RSCD) (2013-2015)

In Northern Ireland:

- Higher Education Review Northern Ireland (HER NI) (2015)
- Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review Northern Ireland (IQER NI) (Developmental engagement 2010-2012; Summative Review 2013-2015)
- Institutional Audit (2007 to 2011)

In Scotland:

- Enhancement-led institutional review (ELIR) (2012-2016)

Providers with a 'requires improvement to meet UK expectations' or 'does not meet UK expectations' quality assurance judgement for HER, HER Plus, HERW, IRENI and RCHE will not be eligible for the TEF unless the provider has effectively addressed recommendations arising from the review and has a judgment amended to a positive through the relevant procedures, specific for each method on or before 1 May 2017.

The same is true for providers who received a 'limited confidence', 'no confidence' or 'reliance cannot be placed' judgement in their IQER, IRW, REO, RSCD and RSCD (adapted).

Providers must also demonstrate that they are continuing to maintain high quality standards of teaching and learning. Therefore, if cause for concern is found within a provider's annual monitoring processes or if a concern investigation is upheld, then the provider will not be eligible for TEF. This includes:

- Providers with published negative judgements (“serious issues found”) as an outcome of HEFCE’s Unsatisfactory Quality Scheme.
- Providers who received a conclusion of “making progress but further improvement is required” or “not making acceptable progress” following annual monitoring for educational oversight and/or specific course designation purposes will not be eligible for TEF until they have completed QA follow up activity which results in a published satisfactory outcome on or before 1 May 2017.

Annex D: Metrics quick reference table

Aspect	Metric	Source	Target Group	Int'l Stud	Data years (part time)			Benchmark Factors						
					1	2	3	Subject of study	Entry qual.	Age on entry	Ethnicity	Sex	Disability	POLAR
Teaching Quality	Teaching on my course	NSS	Final year HE students	Yes	2014	2015	2016	yes		yes	yes	yes	yes	
Teaching Quality	Assessment and feedback	NSS	Final year HE students	Yes	2014	2015	2016	yes		yes	yes	yes	yes	
Learning Environment	Academic support	NSS	Final year HE students	Yes	2014	2015	2016	yes		yes	yes	yes	yes	
Learning Environment	Non-Continuation	HESA ILR	First year HE students	No	2011/12 (2010/11)	2012/13 (2011/12)	2013/14 (2012/13)	yes	yes	Yes (full time only)				
Student Outcomes and Learning Gain	Employment or further study	DLHE	HE leavers	No	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes		
Student Outcomes and Learning Gain	Highly skilled employment or further study	DLHE	HE leavers	No	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Annex E: Full metrics descriptions

Teaching Quality	Teaching on My Course	NSS																																							
<p>This metric is based on student's responses to NSS questions 1 to 4 which cover the NSS scale 'Teaching on my course'.</p> <p>1 - Staff are good at explaining things.</p> <p>2 - Staff have made the subject interesting.</p> <p>3 - Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.</p> <p>4 - The course is intellectually stimulating.</p> <p>Students indicate their agreement with each statement on a 5 point scale. Across the 4 questions, total agreement by each student is calculated as the percentage of responses that are 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. Questions marked with N/A or not answered are ignored.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Example Data</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Student</th> <th>Q1</th> <th>Q2</th> <th>Q3</th> <th>Q4</th> <th>Percentage Agree</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Neither</td> <td>75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>50</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In this example, the total percentage agreement for the provider would be 70% (the sum of percentages divided by the number of students).</p>						Student	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Percentage Agree	A	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	75	B	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	N/A	100	C	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree	75	D	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	50	E	Agree	Disagree	N/A	N/A	50
Student	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Percentage Agree																																				
A	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	75																																				
B	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	N/A	100																																				
C	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree	75																																				
D	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	50																																				
E	Agree	Disagree	N/A	N/A	50																																				
<p>Coverage</p> <p>The NSS is targeted at all final year undergraduates, students on flexible provision or who change their study plans are included in other years in participating providers. The response rate in 2016 was 72%.</p> <p>The NSS covers UK, other EU and non-EU students</p>																																									
<p>Exclusions</p> <p>Students who do not reach the final year of their course Students whose programmes are less than or equal to 1 FTE</p>																																									
Year 1 (students surveyed in...)	Year 2		Year 3																																						
2014	2015		2016																																						
<p>Benchmark factors: Subject of Study, Age on Entry, Ethnicity, Sex, Disability</p>																																									

Teaching Quality	Assessment and Feedback	NSS																																										
<p>This metric is based on student's responses to NSS questions 5 to 9 which cover the NSS scale 'Assessment and Feedback'.</p> <p>5 - The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.</p> <p>6 - Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.</p> <p>7 - Feedback on my work has been prompt.</p> <p>8 - I have received detailed comments on my work.</p> <p>9 - Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand.</p> <p>Students indicate their agreement with each statement on a 5 point scale. Across the 5 questions, total agreement by each student is calculated as the percentage of responses that are 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. Questions marked with N/A or not answered are ignored.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Example Data</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="274 880 1299 1106"> <thead> <tr> <th>Student</th> <th>Q5</th> <th>Q6</th> <th>Q7</th> <th>Q8</th> <th>Q9</th> <th>Percentage Agree</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Neither</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>67</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In this example, the total percentage agreement for the provider would be 71% (the sum of percentages divided by the number of students).</p>			Student	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Percentage Agree	A	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Agree	100	B	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	N/A	Disagree	75	C	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree	N/A	75	D	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	60	E	Agree	Disagree	N/A	N/A	Agree	67
Student	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Percentage Agree																																						
A	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Agree	100																																						
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<p>Year 1 (students surveyed in...)</p> <p>2014</p>	<p>Year 2</p> <p>2015</p>	<p>Year 3</p> <p>2016</p>																																										
<p>Benchmark factors: Subject of Study, Age on Entry, Ethnicity, Sex, Disability</p>																																												

Learning Environment	Academic Support	NSS																															
<p>This metric is based on student's responses to NSS questions 10 to 12 which cover the NSS scale "Academic Support".</p> <p>10 - I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.</p> <p>11 - I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.</p> <p>12 - Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.</p> <p>Students indicate their agreement with each statement on a 5 point scale. Across the 3 questions, total agreement by each student is calculated as the percentage of responses that are "agree" or "strongly agree". Questions marked with N/A or not answered are ignored.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Example Data</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="413 743 1174 976"> <thead> <tr> <th>Student</th> <th>Q10</th> <th>Q11</th> <th>Q12</th> <th>Percentage Agree</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>67</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>Agree</td> <td>Disagree</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>50</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In this example, the total percentage agreement for the provider would be 83% (the sum of percentages divided by the number of students).</p>				Student	Q10	Q11	Q12	Percentage Agree	A	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	100	B	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	100	C	Strongly Agree	Agree	Agree	100	D	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	67	E	Agree	Disagree	N/A	50
Student	Q10	Q11	Q12	Percentage Agree																													
A	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree	100																													
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<p>Year 1 (students surveyed in...)</p> <p>2014</p>	<p>Year 2</p> <p>2015</p>	<p>Year 3</p> <p>2016</p>																															
<p>Benchmark factors: Subject of Study, Age on Entry, Ethnicity, Sex, Disability</p>																																	

Learning Environment	Non-Continuation	HESA/ILR
<p>This metric tracks students from the year they enter an HE provider to the following year (for full-time students) or the following two years (for part-time students). Students who continue at the same HE provider or who are studying at HE level at another provider are deemed to have continued, all other students deemed non-continuers.</p> <p>In order to be counted as continuing, the student must appear with a qualifying activity on the relevant HESA/ILR dataset. Students who transfer to a provider who does not submit data to HESA /ILR will be counted as non-continuers.</p> <p>Further detail can be found on the HESA website.</p>		
<p>Coverage</p> <p>This metric includes all UK-domiciled students who are included in the relevant HESA/ILR datasets and registered on HE Level 4, 5 and 6 programmes (Level 6 only for Part Time).</p> <p>Exclusions</p> <p>EU and Non-EU international students</p> <p>Part time students who are studying at less than 30% intensity or at Level 4 or 5.</p>		
<p>Year 1 students entering HE in FT 2011/12 PT 2010/11</p>	<p>Year 2 FT 2012/13 PT 2011/12</p>	<p>Year 3 FT 2013/14 PT 2012/13</p>
<p>Benchmark factors: Subject of Study, Age on Entry (full time only), Entry Qualifications</p>		

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain	Employment or Further Study	DLHE
------------------------------------	-----------------------------	------

This employment indicator is based on the Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) survey and expresses the number of UK domiciled leavers who say they are working or studying (or both) as a percentage of all those who are working or studying or seeking work at 6 months after leaving. All other categories are excluded from this indicator.

Leavers are asked to indicate their current activity, selecting from 8 categories. They are then asked to indicate the most important activity. In the table below (adapted from [HESA](#)) the responses that are included in the 'Employment or Further Study' metric are highlighted (those in white or blue are included in the denominator; those in blue are included in the numerator). The responses that are excluded from the indicator are shaded in grey. The indicator is therefore those leavers in categories 1 to 6 divided by those leavers in categories 1 to 8.

Most important activity (MIMPACT)	If any other activity includes (ALLACT)	Derived activity category
		XX Ineligibility or explicit refusal
Working full-time	Engaged in full-time study, training or research OR Engaged in part-time further study, training or research	03 Primarily in work and also studying
	Otherwise	01 Full-time work
Working part-time	Engaged in full-time study, training or research OR Engaged in part-time further study, training or research	03 Primarily in work and also studying
	Otherwise	02 Part-time work
Unemployed and looking for work		08 Unemployed
Due to start a job in the next month	Working full-time	01 Full-time work
	Engaged in full-time further study, training or research, provided that Working full-time has not been selected.	05 Full-time study
	Working part-time, provided that Working full-time AND Engaged in full-time further study, training or research have not been selected.	02 Part-time work
	Otherwise	07 Due to start work
Engaged in full-time further study, training or research	Working full-time OR Working part-time	04 Primarily studying and also in work
	Otherwise	05 Full-time study
Engaged in part-time further study, training	Working full-time OR Working part-time	04 Primarily studying and also in work

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain		Employment or Further Study	DLHE
	or research	Otherwise	06 Part-time study
	Taking time out in order to travel		09 Other
	Something else		09 Other
Further detail can be found on the HESA website .			
<p>Coverage</p> <p>This metric includes all UK-domiciled leavers who are included in the relevant HESA/ILR datasets and have been awarded full Level 4, 5 or 6 qualifications.</p>			
<p>Exclusions</p> <p>EU and Non-EU international students</p> <p>Students who did not gain a HE qualification</p>			
Year 1 Students leaving in...	Year 2	Year 3	
2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	
Benchmark factors: Subject of Study, Entry Qualifications, Age on Entry, Ethnicity, Sex			

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain	Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study	DLHE
------------------------------------	--	------

This employment indicator is based on the Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) survey and expresses the number of UK domiciled leavers who say they are in highly skilled employment or studying (or both) as a percentage of all those who are working or studying or seeking work at approximately 6 months after leaving. All other categories are excluded from this indicator.

Leavers are asked to indicate their current activity, selecting from 8 categories. They are then asked to indicate the most important activity. In the table below (adapted from [HESA](#)) the responses that are included in the 'Employment or Further Study' metric are highlighted (those in white blue are included in the denominator; those in blue are included in the numerator). The responses that are excluded from the indicator are shaded in grey.

Those who indicate they are in employment are asked to provide further detail about that employment including a Job title. That job title is mapped to the [Standard Occupational Classification](#) (SOC). For this metric, jobs that are coded in SOC groups 1-3 are counted as highly skilled.

The indicator is therefore those leavers in categories 1 to 6 (where employment is in SOC 1-3) divided by those leavers in categories 1 to 8

Most important activity (MIMPACT)	If any other activity includes (ALLACT)	Derived activity category	SOC group
		XX Ineligibility or explicit refusal	
Working full-time	Engaged in full-time study, training or research OR Engaged in part-time further study, training or research	03 Primarily in work and also studying	SOC 1-3
			Other
	Otherwise	01 Full-time work	SOC 1-3
Working part-time	Engaged in full-time study, training or research OR Engaged in part-time further study, training or research	03 Primarily in work and also studying	SOC 1-3
			Other
	Otherwise	02 Part-time work	SOC 1-3
Unemployed and looking for work		08 Unemployed	
Due to start a job in the next month	Working full-time	01 Full-time work	SOC 1-3
			Other
	Engaged in full-time further study, training or research, provided that Working full-time has not been selected.	05 Full-time study	
	Working part-time, provided that Working full-time AND Engaged in full-time further study, training	02 Part-time work	SOC 1-3

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain		Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study		DLHE	
		or research have not been selected.		Other	
		Otherwise	07 Due to start work		
Engaged in full-time further study, training or research	Working full-time OR Working part-time	04 Primarily studying and also in work			
	Otherwise	05 Full-time study			
Engaged in part-time further study, training or research	Working full-time OR Working part-time	04 Primarily studying and also in work			
	Otherwise	06 Part-time study			
Taking time out in order to travel		09 Other			
Something else		09 Other			
Coverage					
This metric includes all UK-domiciled leavers who are included in the relevant HESA/ILR datasets and have awarded full Level 4, 5 or 6 qualifications.					
Exclusions					
EU and Non-EU international students					
Students who did not gain a HE qualification					
Year 1 Students leaving in...	Year 2		Year 3		
2012/13	2013/14		2014/15		
Benchmark factors: Subject of Study, Entry Qualifications, Age on Entry, Ethnicity, Sex, Disability, POLAR.					

Annex F: Example of benchmarking

Calculating Benchmarks

In this fictional example, benchmarks for the non-continuation metrics are calculated using 2 benchmarking factors, Age (Young and Not Young) and Subject of Study (Agriculture, Maths and History). That means that for this indicator, there are 6 possible distinct benchmarking groups, set out in the table below.

Step One – The Provider

This provider has 1,090 full time students studying Agriculture and Maths. The table below shows the provider's students, split across the 6 benchmarking groups. Overall the provider has a non-continuation rate of 5.7%. This is effectively a weighted average of the rates for each category. Note that the rate for Young Maths students is particularly high but is outweighed by the greater number of students in categories with a lower rate, such as Young Agriculture.

Provider			
Age Category	Subject Category	No. Students	% Non-Continuation
Young	Agriculture	500	5.0%
Young	History	0	N/A
Young	Maths	150	8.0%
Not Young	Agriculture	400	6.0%
Not Young	History	0	N/A
Not Young	Maths	40	2.0%
Total		1,090	Provider indicator 5.7%

Step Two – The Sector

There are 210,500 full time students across the whole sector. The table below shows all students, split across the 6 benchmarking categories. Overall the sector has a non-continuation rate of 3.4%. This is driven by the low rates for Young History students, and the small student numbers for the higher rate Agriculture.

Sector			
Age Category	Subject Category	No. Students	% Non-Continuation
Young	Agriculture	20,000	5.0%
Young	History	80,000	1.0%
Young	Maths	95,000	5.0%
Not Young	Agriculture	5,000	6.0%
Not Young	History	6,500	2.0%
Not Young	Maths	4,000	2.0%
Total		210,500	Sector Indicator 3.4%

Step Three – Calculating the provider specific benchmark

So far the sector’s non-continuation rates are weighted against the numbers of students in the sector in each category. In the table below, the sector’s non-continuation rates are weighted to reflect the students in the provider. This results in a weighted sector benchmark of 5.3% for this provider. This is higher than the sector original since it no longer reflects the rates for History students (because the provider has no History students) and has given Agriculture a much higher weighting (reflecting that the provider has a higher proportion of Agriculture students than the sector as a whole).

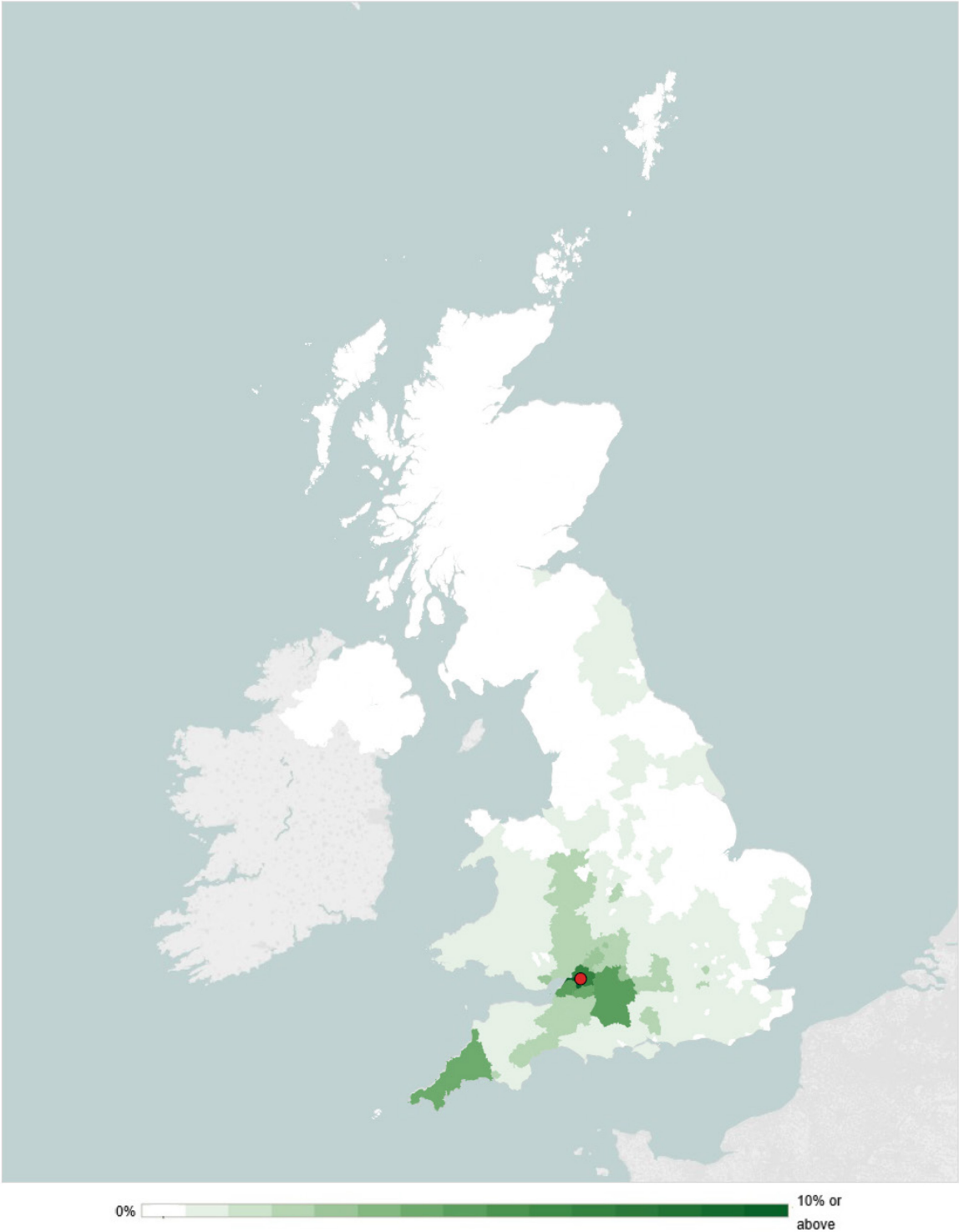
Age Category	Subject Category	Provider	Sector	Weighted Sector
		% students (a)	% Non-Continuation (b)	a*b
Young	Agriculture	45.9%	5.0%	2.3%
Young	History	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%
Young	Maths	13.8%	5.0%	0.7%
Not Young	Agriculture	36.7%	6.0%	2.2%
Not Young	History	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%
Not Young	Maths	3.7%	2.0%	0.1%
Total		100%	Sector Indicator 3.4%	Benchmark 5.3%

Step Four – Significance Flagging

The provider’s indicator (5.7%) can now be compared with the weighted sector benchmark (5.3%). The provider’s rate is still higher than the rate observed for students with similar characteristics across the sector. The next step is to establish if this difference is significant and material (see **Contextual data and metrics section**).

Annex G: Example Contextual Maps

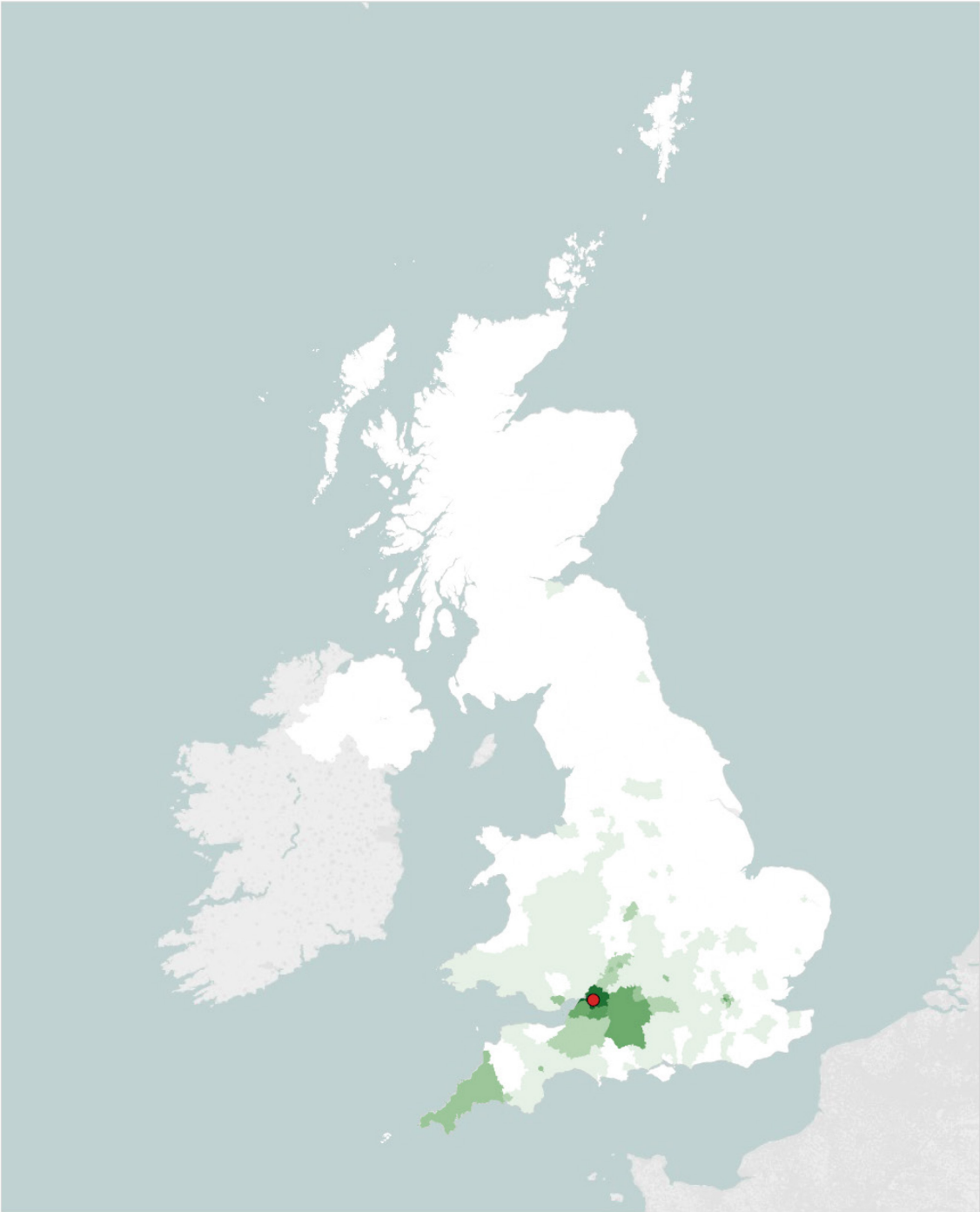
University of North Bristol
Student domicile prior to entry



Boundaries based on Local Administrative Units (Level 1) of the UK.

University of North Bristol

Graduate employment locations

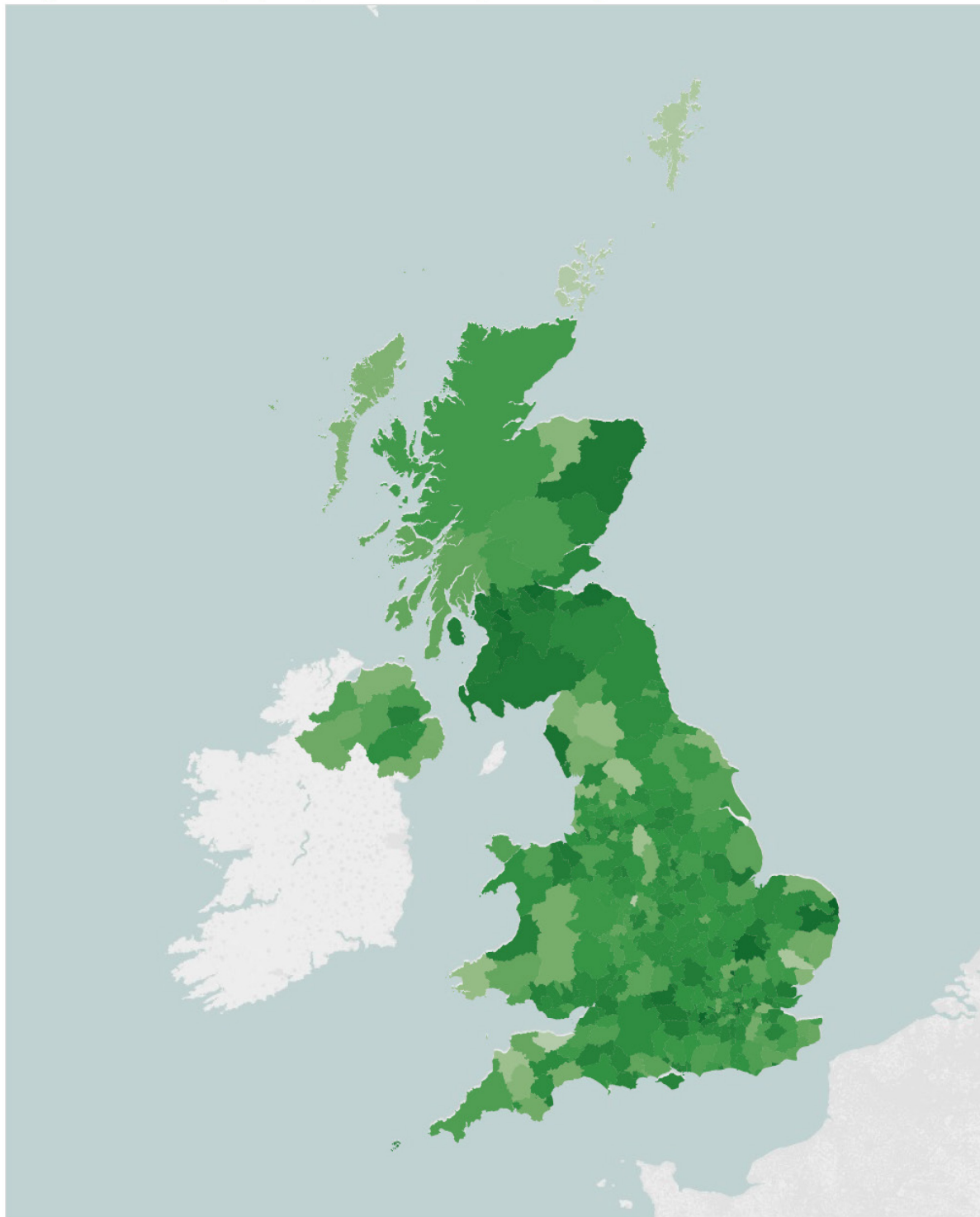


0%  10% or above

Boundaries based on Local Administrative Units (Level 1) of the UK.

Sector wide

Proportions of employed graduates in high-skilled jobs



55.0%  90.0%

Boundaries based on Local Administrative Units (Level 1) of the UK.



Department
for Education

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