Name of Provider: University of East London (UEL)
UKPRN: 10007144

TEF Year Four provider submission

1. Institutional Context, Mission and Vision

1.1. The University of East London (UEL) is a modern university with a heritage of being the 'people's university': an institution committed to the civic mission. This heritage is being taken forward with our new Vision 2028 to pioneer Future Careers & Innovation for the 4.0 Economy, increasing accessibility to diverse talent and realising potential wherever and whenever it is found. The three-Campus site is exclusively based in the London borough of Newham located in East London: historically one of the most deprived boroughs in England (in 2010, Newham was the ranked 14th most deprived local authority in England and in 2015 was the 25th most deprived according to the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation)[1]. Today, it is one of the youngest, most diverse and fastest growing boroughs not only in London but across the UK. Our role as an anchor institution is in part reflected in the vibrant and diverse student population: 76% of our students come from the greater London area; 69% of students are from BAME backgrounds; and 73% of our students are from the lowest two quintiles measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

1.2. We champion the transformative effect of Higher Education (HE), with over half of our students' parents not holding a HE qualification. We advance the cause of fairness in education for all, supporting the increase in accessibility of a more diverse talent pipeline as our students should not be barred from graduate opportunities when their talent warrants outstanding roles. The Social Mobility Commissions' annual report (2016) highlighted that graduates with our students' backgrounds are often excluded from graduate-level opportunities. This remains a reality, with difficulties in converting academic achievement to improved job prospects more poignant for Black and Asian-female graduates (who comprise 25.8% and 15.3% of our DLHE populations respectively in 2016/17). Our graduates attest to these employment challenges, and our mission is tailored to propelling their prospects beyond the societal norm.

1.3. We have made important strides in addressing the challenges of social mobility through our current Corporate Strategy (2015-2020) which focused our efforts to connect, influence and shape the future of our student population in ways that make a difference not just to their own lives but also to the communities in which they, and we, are based. In full-time graduate employment, over the three years in TEF, our improvement has outpaced silver ranked institutions by 6.3%pts. In the Times League Table, moreover, we are the fifth most improved institution in the entire sector over the same three-year period. We fully recognise that there is still significant work to be done to continue to improve graduate employment and the establishment of Vision 2028 has placed student outcomes at the heart of our mission.

1.4. Since the second round of TEF, **tremendous strides have been made in our three-year indicators,** driven by improvements in renewed strategies focussed on our students' outcomes, and continuing to enhance our performance in the following areas:

- **For full-time (FT) and part-time (PT) highly skilled employment, indicators have increased by 9.5%pts and 3.9%pts respectively.**
- For FT and PT Employment or Further Study, indicators have increased by 2.5%pts and 1.5% pts.
- **From the HESA Performance Indicator on Overall Employment improvement over the last three years, UEL is ranked 23rd out of 150 institutions.**
- All three full-time NSS metrics have continued to rise by at least 1.5% pts while the metrics' benchmarks have declined. **Notably, we are ranked 13th out of 120 institutions in the rate of improvement in Overall Satisfaction over the last three TEF years too.**
- Both FT and PT continuation remain **above our benchmarks** by 1.4% pts and 13.7%pts respectively, maintaining a double positive flag in p/t continuation.

[1]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6871/1871208.pdf

2. Ethos & Social Mobility

2.1. Our university is an **anchor institution** for the community, with 40.1% of our students coming from the East London area, and 76% of our undergraduate student population originating from London and Greater London. Such figures should be viewed through the lens of 73% of our students in the eligible TEF population are from the two lowest quintiles on the IMD, a measure that provides a clearer indication of students' backgrounds if they are from London than POLAR. For the three years, our student population was 69% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), 62% female, 49% mature and 13% having a registered disability. Our students, furthermore, represent over 130 nationalities and 96.3% arrive here from state schooling. Our social inclusion agenda and drive for social mobility can be viewed in The Times' Social Inclusion Ranking (2019) where we are ranked 7th in the entire sector and have an Overall Social Inclusion Score that is 251.7pts above the average score of current Silver TEF institutions (maximum score 1000).

2.2. Our passion of continuing to energise social mobility in our locality and further widen participation can be exhibited in initiatives such as our **New Beginnings** programme**.** The programme, designed for mature students, converts their experience and knowledge gained from life and work into academic skills. It epitomises UEL's ethos in ensuring academically-capable individuals are not left behind, and typically, retention, progression, completion and achievement for this student cohort has exceeded the UEL average. Over the last four years, an average of 71% of the students that come through New Beginnings obtain a First or Upper Second-Class degree, compared with the 65% who achieve a 'good honours' degree in the general cohort. The success of New Beginnings has also achieved sector recognition, when in 2018, the programme won the '**Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year' at the Times Higher Education awards**. Judges described it as addressing "many of the barriers to access experienced by mature students and has been sustained over many years" with "what sets New Beginnings apart is the evidence of impact on enrolment in university courses and subsequent success."

2.3. We invest in getting to know students as individuals, and seek to cultivate a strong sense of partnership. Our **personalised approach to the student learning experience**, starting from an enriched six-week induction programme all the way through to graduation, is based on the foundational principles of inclusion, solid support and the strive for excellence. As a BA Psychosocial Studies student stated: '*UEL is a place where I have always felt understood, respected and appreciated. Even now that I have graduated I feel a part of the UEL family*'. We are proud to be a student-centred university which empowers our students to make an impact on our East London community and beyond to the wider world. For example, our Year 3 students transformed the physical landscape through research projects with Studio Bark Architectural Practice and Newham Council, facilitating case studies of existing and new buildings in London Borough of Newham. Our students also enhance the cultural landscape through school weekend programmes culminating in local exhibitions and other public outreach activities.

2.4. We are a **centre of teaching excellence** as we are ranked 38th out of the 132 institutions across the sector increasing 18%pts (2016 & 2017) and 8%pts (2018) as noted in the Times League Tables for services' spend and are immensely proud of the journey we are undertaking. The cultural richness of our student body provides students with some of the most important opportunities and benefits that time spent in HE can offer. The experiences, connections that they make, and networks they build with one another are among the most valuable skills they take with them from their time at UEL. In addition to our culture's intellectual stimulation (ranked 65th in NSS, 2018) inspired by 296 of our staff who currently hold Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowships status and our boundary-crossing curriculum (in terms of opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics, UEL is ranked 10th nationally, NSS, 2018), UEL is making significant progress in addressing critical skills gaps and embedding applied thinking into its curriculum in support of the employability preparedness of its graduates (ranked 20th nationally for providing opportunities to apply what has been learnt, NSS, 2018).

2.5. Our strategic flagship collaboration with the East London Skills and Employment Federation "reflects our renewed commitment and ambitions" for our students and locality. The collaboration,

launched in 2017, brings together UEL, Newham College and Sixth Form College, Barking and Dagenham College, Havering College of Further and Higher Education, Havering Sixth Form College and New City College, to work collaboratively on shared strategic goals, developing progression pathways for our locality reflective of local skills priorities and aiding our students into graduate employment.

2.6. Our continual drive towards significant improvements in our students' highly-skilled employment scores has improved our students' outcomes by over 18%pts from 2013/14. The improvement demonstrates a focused but multi-faceted strategic approach, ensuring that we have embedded crucial technical and baseline transferable skills throughout our curriculum as explained by one BA in Events Management student: '*Studying at UEL I gained the knowledge and confidence required to enter industry. The experiences offered and assignments set have been extremely beneficial in helping me develop transferable and practical skills to use within a career*'. As we will demonstrate throughout this submission, we have created many initiatives through our Centre for Student Success (CfSS) which are either embedded into our student academic cycle through placements or offered as extra- and co-curricular activities. These initiatives include: the Career Coaches scheme that offers over 150 workshops annually on employability and job readiness; the Professional Mentoring scheme, established in partnership with industry to improve student achievement; and the Employer Engagement section, which hosts annual Career Fairs attended by over 100 employers and funds over 70 internships annually to enrich students' career progression.

3. Impact

3.1. As a result of our practices and policies there has been significant impact and success as evidenced by our ranking in the Guardian league table, rising by twenty-seven places to 88th against 121 institutions in their 2019 publication, NSS results and other comments from external examiners and professional bodies. Over the last three academic years, we have implemented a renewed Academic Strategy, Learning and Teaching Framework (ALT Framework), and created the Centre for Student Success (CfSS), designed to focus on improved graduate employability in response to underwhelming performance, from which we can clearly see positive results. As detailed throughout, our TEF core metrics prove us to be an institution that is serious about our students' and graduates' HE experience, and evidence of our responsiveness to meet our students' expectations.

3.2. We continue to maximise the impact of our academic advisor scheme, working with the HEA to share best practice and as a result we created an Academic Advising Moodle toolkit comprising FAQs and all the information students need to ensure they are fully utilising their time with their Academic Advisors. The toolkit also includes resources and online surveys to help students realise their aspirations for employability, academic progress and goals for personal management. Our records show 8,615 students engaged in the scheme. We collate the feedback on an action grid and respond at a local level through targeted training and support.

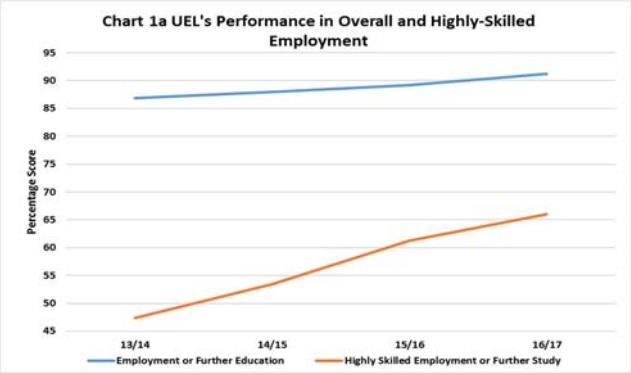
3.3. As a result of introducing our ALT Framework and other institutional strategies outlined, our Academic Support metric rose 1.2%pts, now 0.7%pt above benchmark in split year three (previously 0.7%pt below in split year two). Further improvements in our continuation and student outcomes scores are anticipated as we continue to further embed these policies in our learning environment.

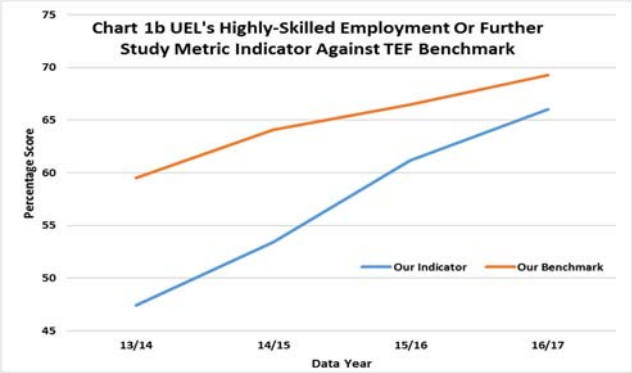
3.4. We are proud that for all our NSS TEF metrics we are not only above our split year three benchmarks, but are ranked first amongst post-92 London institutions. In the sector, we are ranked 62nd, 48th and 76th against all 148 institutions for Teaching on My Course, Assessment and Feedback, and Academic Support respectively. We are also delighted that we are ranked first among post-92 London institutions for Overall Satisfaction, a metric included in the Annual Provider Review (OfS). For Overall Satisfaction of our students, we improved by 1%pt placing us 64th out of 148 institutions.

3.5. We strive to ensure positive outcomes for all our students after graduation as we believe their journey with UEL does not end upon receiving a degree. It was clear from our year one majority mode indicator (highly skilled employment or further study) in TEF3 that as we scored 47.4% and were 12.1%pts below our benchmark, this was unacceptable, and significant improvements have

been made for our students and graduates, the results of which can now be seen in the metrics. In our year three metric for this round of TEF, we scored 66% for highly-skilled employability, representing an 18.6%pt increase over the last four years as shown on the Charts 1a & 1b below.

3.6. Our benchmark for year 3 is now 69.3% - 9%pts higher than the benchmark for TEF3 year, representing a difference now of just 3.3%pts to our indicator (Chart 1b). We are aware more needs to be done and believe that the strategies we have initiated over the last three years alongside Vision 2028 will continue the **upwards trajectory** of improvement. Such improvements underscore our effective strategic approach and continued cycle of portfolio alignment to quality outcomes for our students; furthermore, the improvement over the course of a four-year period strongly indicates that our strategies are long-term endeavours, and not designed to be short-term fixes.





4. Contextual Information on the Metrics

4.1. The comments below relate to the TEF contextual metrics in the workbook and particularly provide important contextual information relevant to the employment metrics in paragraphs 4.9 - 4.11. Details of the interventions undertaken to achieve the results are provided under the relevant measures of teaching excellence.

4.2. Our major teaching delivery mode is **FT** with around 89% of our students studying in this mode. The commentary that follows will therefore focus primarily on our full-time provision, drawing on the position overall where relevant.

4.3. Our NSS metrics for FT, Assessment and Feedback and Teaching on my Course are 1.6%pts and 0.5%pt above benchmark respectively, and Academic Support is 0.2%pt below benchmark.

4.4 For the NSS metrics for **PT** mode of delivery (11% of our students' population), we can only see our third year of data due to a low response rate in previous years. We are in line with the sector-benchmark for Teaching on my Course, but have a negative flag for Assessment and Feedback and a double negative flag for Academic Support. We have a double positive flag for our part-time students in the continuation metric, however, we have a double negative flag in the highly skilled employment/further study metric.

4.5 Our three-year average for continuation for the majority FT mode students is 1.4%pts ahead of our final benchmark.

4.6 This provides some structural explanation for the eternal factors impacting on the metric for employment in both modes of study which shows single negative flags and overall employment is in the bottom 10% of absolute performance together with double negative flags in graduate employment for both FT and PT modes of study. We are working closely with Borough Councils and employers (Microsoft, Amazon and Google) to address this and in particular how to support industry to access a more diverse talent pipeline. As stated above, our students are often from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly evident in our IMD metrics. Although we have a particular strength in supporting such students to maximise their potential, both through attainment at University and in the labour market, they are often inherently disadvantaged in the labour market due to their lack of mobility. Most 'choose' to seek local employment, with an average of 55.6% of our graduates

remaining in the East London due to social and family ties. Data from the ONS reveals that the area we reside in within London experiences high levels of unemployment, and this is the market with which we must contend with for our local student population.[2]

4.7. Grade inflation data shows that between 2008/09 and 2016/17, our percentage change in students receiving a First Class degree is 13%. The increase over the same period in those receiving a Second Class Upper degree is at 3%; by contrast, those receiving a Second Class Lower and Third or pass degree has declined by 16%. However, it should be noted that from 2014/15 – a year after the introduction of our Academic Framework – we have remained consistent in the percentage of students that received an Upper Second class degree (41%) and our First Class degree increase by only 6%. The Framework encouraged timely completion of degrees and coincided with the first graduating cohort paying the latest fee levels. In addition, it resulted in a major academic portfolio rationalisation carried out in partnership with key employers and professional bodies as will be highlighted in section 16.2.

4.8. With regards to the highly skilled employment (HSE) outcomes, the metrics show double negative flags in graduate employment for both FT and PT modes of study. We have been making a sustained, deliberate employability strategy to further improve graduate employment outcomes. Paying close regard to the demonstrable trend in the data is particularly relevant to institutions such as ours, which show continued improvement in outcomes over a sustained period rather than being in 'steady state'. In 2013/14 less than half of our students were in highly-skilled employment. These underwhelming results meant we needed to make cultural changes as a provider to allow our students to continue their journey as graduates. Over the last three years, we have made significant changes to our portfolio and our support, not only driving improved results (18.6% as demonstrated in the graph above), but providing the foundations for continued improvement.

4.9. We do not shy away from our metrics with absolute performance for FT and PT employment or further study and PT highly-skilled employment being in the bottom 10% of performance. However, we would stress that focus be placed on our continuous and consistent improvement which are characteristics of a **silver** institution. For FT employment or further study, our improvement outpaces other silver institutions by 5%pts. It is noteworthy that our year 3 split for FT employment is only 0.9%pt below the benchmark and therefore not flagged. Moreover, the PT metric for employment or further study has both the year 2 and year 3 split metrics no longer flagged. Such improvement is a testament to the ongoing efforts that undertaken at UEL to improve our graduates' outcomes.

4.10 We have also improved the gap for those who are traditionally most disadvantaged in the labour market. Although the split metrics are not broken down by year in the data presented, when we do this analysis, we see the same positive movement. Specifically, we have seen the following percentage improvements between 2014/15 and 2016/17 in highly-skilled job outcomes for students from FT study by the following characteristics: first degree 12.3%; young 14.3%; male 12%; students with disabilities 9.1%; and students from low IMD areas 14.3%. We are thus supporting many more of our students into graduate-level employment. These improvements coincide with our performance in the supplementary metrics where we are 1.5%pts below our benchmark in median earnings threshold for full-time students, and therefore have no flag.

4.11. In 2016, we established the CfSS, bringing together Academic Tutoring, Student Engagement, Retention, Career Coaching, Mentoring, and Employer Engagement areas under one centralised unit. CfSS is responsible for working across the institution to ensure that the student journey is improved and more outcomes achieved. One of its priorities is to guarantee that all students have the opportunity to secure a work placement or internship during their studies, and invested in a centralized employability system, the UEL Employment Hub. This online Hub serves as the main resource for students to source placements from employers or secure their own opportunity. To date, we have secured over 550 active employers across all industries.

5. Student Voice

[2] Official labour market statistics, July 2015 - June 2016, ONS. Labour Force Survey, Local Area Database 2015, NISRA.

5.1. Our students and UEL Students' Union (UELSU) have been fully engaged with the development of this commentary both through membership of our "TEF-Readiness Group" and through their representatives in our Committee structure. We work in partnership with students to ensure they are the core of our practices, strategies, policies and procedures when designed or revised. We run the Student Sounding Board initiative. This open board-style forum provides students the opportunity to provide their feedback on projects undertaken as OFFA and Centre initiatives. This is open to all students to collect their feedback about the programs, and to facilitate their input into design and implementation. These students also serve as ambassadors to help ensure we reach as many students as possible. This approach allows us to have representation from many student voices in our initiatives to help increase overall student participation.

5.2. The evidence for our strong focus on student voice can be seen in the NSS, which included the metric Student Voice from 2017. In 2017, 72.2% of our students agreed that their voice was valued (3.0%pts above the sector), and placed us 39th in the sector and second among post-92 London institutions. Our responsive initiatives, however, have led this to increase further, by 5.7%pts in 2018, which outpaced the sector's improvement by 1.6%pts and placed us 29th out of 148 institutions as well as top among post-92 London institutions. Student voice in the NSS is evidence of our passion for students' feedback and input into institutional organisation and functionality and evidences our evolving sector leading position in high-level dialogue with our students.

5.3. The student voice, in combination with employer input, is also valued as part of the process for designing our learning and teaching and assessment methods. As one student on our BA in Public Health and Health Promotion puts it: '*I understood that my experiences linked with many topics in university and was able to express these experiences when discussing many health-related topics*'. This is crucial in ensuring that our provision is kept relevant and appropriate for our target audience, and aligns with our Academic Strategy which states: '*We see our relationship with students as a partnership and are committed to working with them in a spirit of mutually productive collaboration*'. Student feedback informs curriculum development. Our validation and revalidation processes incorporate opportunities for students to comment on proposals as well as discuss arrangements for changes to current programmes. For example, in our BA in Fashion Marketing programme, our teaching, assessment and curriculum development is informed by student-led research projects on marketing consultancy and strategies led by Kent Le and industry partners. In addition, the Programme Leader of our BA in Animation & Illustration worked in 2016/17 with 'BlinkInk Studio' to develop a group review/feedback system, based on Pixar's 'Brains Trust' methodology.

5.4. The UEL Students' Union (UELSU) plays a significant role in ensuring the student voice is recognised, heard and acted-upon, by ensuring that its 600 programme representatives are trained, supported and actively involved in the University's decision-making process at programme level and above. Reps are nominated from levels 3 to 8, from their cohort, to represent their peers and have the responsibility of collating feedback from their peers and present it to academic staff at the programme committee meetings held throughout the year.

6. Teaching Quality

6.1. As illustrated by the metrics, for our latest year's split we are above benchmark in all teaching related TEF metrics. This strength is further reflected by our position in the Top 50 institutions for teaching quality according to the Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018 and 2019.

6.2. We believe in the highest levels of teaching delivered to our students throughout their time with us. It fosters enthusiasm and excitement for their subjects, challenges their intellectual curiosity, and prepares them for their transition into the labour market. The sector has continued to decline in the TEF core NSS metrics whilst we have continued to show incremental improvements significantly above silver institution averages.

6.3. Our ALT Framework is a 'living' strategy document, which contains a series of over 28 deliverable interventions aimed at improving student retention and employability, and reducing

attainment gaps. Interventions, such as In-Year-Retrieval – an initiative which brings forward assessment resubmission to avoid end-of-year stress during the traditional resit period – have been running for a number of years, and have had a positive impact on student experience, with Teaching on My Course increasing by 0.2%pt in 2018, while the sector declined by 0.4%pt. We are now 0.8%pt above the sector in this category. The ALT Framework integrates the careful design and delivery of research-informed teaching; learning resources; and the effective engagement of employers and key stakeholders to inform the embedding of employability skills throughout our academic portfolio. It also implements a personalised learning journey and pastoral support to enable students to be actively engaged in their learning.

6.4. Central to our learning and teaching approach is the voice of students at all levels, with students represented on all relevant Committees including the Academic Board, Colleges Boards, Board of Governors, and the Education and Student Success Committee (ESSC). Students are also highly engaged in feeding back directly on the quality of teaching and support through Programme Committees, our Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) (delivered twice per year to our students and seen exceptional engagement). The MEQs will lead to Module Enhancement Plans (MEPs) - with module level action plans - if the MEQ does not meet benchmarks, and our continuous Review and Enhancement Process (REP) brings all of these strands together into an annual summary programme and departmental review, with action planning at the appropriate level. These initiatives are scrutinised at the university's Learning and Teaching Quality Committee (LTQC) before being reported to Academic Board. Our peer enhancement strategy is updated annually to ensure that optimal effectiveness, and has, seen close to 100% engagement from staff with it in the 2016-18 academic years. Mid and end of year programme reviews are conducted with programme and module leaders to analyse performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

6.5. Our student voice is also embedded into our programme approval and validation processes through their membership of our ESSC and the programme validation panel. The student voice, in combination with employer input, is also valued as part of the process for designing our learning and teaching and assessment methods. UELSU plays a significant role in ensuring the student voice is recognised, heard and acted-upon, by ensuring the representatives of our 430 programmes are well trained, supported and actively involved in the University's decision-making process at programme level and above.

6.6. The University also administers an annual Internal Student Survey to gather feedback and suggestions from all of our students. Student feedback has led to extending 24/7 opening of the library; extending the opening of the student hub until midnight, expanding our VLE services to enable students to access lecture recordings; and student feedback informs curriculum development. Our validation and re-validation processes incorporate opportunities for students to comment on proposals as well as discuss arrangements for changes to current programmes.

6.7 Our UELSU Lifestyle Survey also looks at student engagement within the university and has been delivered since 2013. The aim of this survey is to create an understanding of the barriers to engagement faced by our members in some key areas of their life, namely (i) Social life, Health, Safety and Wellbeing; (ii) SU engagement; (iii) Learning and Personal/Professional development; and (iv) Finance, Transport, Accommodation and Work. This data is used to formulate campaigns across the next academic year to support our members in enhancing their experience.

6.8 We are particularly proud of our responsive and flexible teaching model, which takes into account the feedback from our UELSU Lifestyle Survey on matters such as financial and time constraints, travelling times and paid work commitments of our students, acting as barriers to success. Since 43.6% of our respondents reported 'lack of money' (an increase of 5%pts since 2015), 34.4% 'time constraints' (+ 9%pts since 2015) and 'paid work commitments' at 23.5% (+6.5%pts since 2015) as barriers to success, we have sought to develop timetables and schedules to accommodate our diverse range of students.

7. Student Engagement (TQ1) and Rigour and Stretch (TQ3)

7.1. Our Quality Assurance and Enhancement policy on student engagement ensures that we work in a collaborative partnership with the students and students' union: academically, socially, culturally and in decision-making. This includes making their voices heard through the student representation systems and feedback processes available as noted above at 5.5.

7.2. Our academic advising and mentoring system supports students throughout their learning journey with us. Extra help is offered to students who show very low engagement to support their improvement. If these methods do not engage some students, we employ coaching strategies to signpost to relevant services to ensure they are provided with appropriate support for their circumstances.

7.3. We see curriculum design as an integral part of the overall student learning journey. We recognise that there is a critical link between programme, module, design, student engagement and positive graduate outcomes. The institution has put in place a number of robust mechanisms whereby these links can be examined and reviewed during the design phase and subsequent ongoing operation and review of our programmes. We actively seek the input and views of external professional peers to ensure the continued relevance of the content and appropriateness of the structure of programmes. Professional input is sought via our use of industrial/employer advisory boards (IABs) across various subjects. IABs usually meet twice a year, and we use these fora to discuss where professional demand lies, where professional practice is developing and what skills graduates need, and will need, in the future. Since 2016 we have built on this good practice and have developed 7 IABs across the university thus far, with more planned.

7.4. To further ensure the relevance of our modules, the appropriateness of pedagogy and the relevance of assessment, since 2016 we have been working to strengthen the role of professional practitioners within our external examiner teams. By embedding professional practitioners as external examiners across all subject areas, we can further determine whether assessments and assessment strategy level are relevant, appropriate and professionally realistic, enhancing the employability of our students.

7.5. As our Corporate Plan 2015-20 states, our key priority in establishing teaching excellence, is teaching in ways that ignite a love of learning. As a final year BA in Events Management student attests: 'UEL has been one of the best choices I have ever made. I have been supported by amazing lecturers…I believe I have improved and acquired different transferable skills. University has helped me to look at my future in a bright way.' This engagement with transferable skills lies at the heart of our Academic Strategy which specifies an approach of 'Learning by doing', so that our students are fully equipped to enter the workplace.

7.6. Our co-curricular activities, which augment the extra-curricular clubs and societies coordinated by the UELSU, help to solidify our reputation as London's leading university for community engagement. One project saw researchers from the Centre for Narrative Research working with students from our BA in Psychosocial Studies programme and the HIV Psychosocial Network (established jointly by UEL academics and HIV community organisations in 2015) on an Austerity Audit which saw initial finding presented at a World AIDS Day event. Another project in our BA in Journalism programmes saw our students work as a professional newsroom, occupying roles of writers, researchers and editors to produce the online news portal 'Rising East', which services the local community and has to date published over 600 stories.

7.7. Our high standards have also been widely-acknowledged through External Examination, with 72% of examiners identifying commended practices in quality of learning and teaching worthy of dissemination between 2014 and 2017.

8. Valuing Teaching (TQ2)

8.1 We value Learning and Teaching Excellence across UEL, and foster a culture that celebrates excellence in teaching through recognition. During the last two Learning and Teaching Symposia we have held University Learning and Teaching Awards, externally sponsored by Pearson Education, in categories that align to our key vision and mission including: Most Inclusive Teaching Practices; Enhancing First Year Experience, and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The Symposia have been attended by 160 people each year, and the awards promoted to the whole university community to encourage all staff to develop their skills and contribute to the current educational pedagogies.

8.2. Professional recognition for teaching is important to us. We currently have 296 staff with HEA fellowship (associate to principal fellow), and a number of National Teaching Fellows. Both groups support the development of junior staff through structured mentoring programmes. Staff starting the university are required to complete the PGCert in HE and be working toward HEA fellowship.

8.3. Our Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) provides our academics the climate and tools to be innovative in their teaching. CELT specialises in developing innovative pedagogical solutions to support learning and teaching throughout the student journey. The centre provides support and develops a culture in UEL where innovative teaching practices can flourish and excellent teaching is rewarded, with our institutional commitment to excellence in teaching and learning also evidenced by our organising and hosting a wide range of around 920 related-seminars and conferences over the last 20 years.

8.4. Our UELSU has led on the Student Led Teaching Awards for the past six years in partnership with CELT. Students nominate academic and non-academic staff for awards in the following categories: ‘Most innovative teaching’; ‘Best personal tutor/academic advisor’; ‘Best feedback’; Best dissertation/project supervisor’; ‘Most inspirational teaching’; and ‘Best support/non-lecturing staff’. We are delighted with our student engagement with this initiative, when in 2017/18, we received 482 nominations for 306 staff. The awards ceremony is combined with a well-attended and vibrant social event to celebrate the nominees and awardees. We promote the award winners through internal communication channels including newsletters and on the VLE of the university, to celebrate the achievements of our staff to the whole university community.

8.5. Our Teaching Fellowship Scheme (open to all colleagues who hold a full time or part time employment contract with UEL; have worked at UEL for a minimum of one year and are HEA Fellows) rewards an exceptional contribution made to student learning by both colleagues in Academic Schools and those from Services. Reward in the areas of research and knowledge transfer is based on a peer review of published work or business outcomes. Seven current holders of this prestigious title at UEL hold learning and teaching events in Colleges and at University level, receive and provide coaching and mentoring to colleagues and are primary consultants on institutional learning and teaching projects.

8.6. As a policy, we waive the fees for our PGCert Learning & Teaching (HE) programme to all of our academic staff, which is available on either a traditional or distance learning basis. Over 61% of our staff have received this award since 2015, which is accredited against the Higher Education Academy Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

9. Feedback (TQ4)

9.1. The effectiveness of our feedback strategy is evidenced through our TEF metric position for Assessment and Feedback (NSS) over the three-year benchmark. Our performance is 1.6%pts above benchmark and approximately 1.8%pts above the sector average. Our student population rightly implores us to provide meaningful feedback to their work to assist them in reaching their potential, and our inclusive assessment strategy supports our diverse student population to become adept independent learners by providing feedback that steers them on their educational journey.

9.2. We have a personalised learning approach informed by diagnostic testing at the beginning of the academic year to identify individual student needs. Increased attention is given to developing numeracy and literacy to help students understand assessment techniques and expected learning outcomes. We also share examples of previously marked work with students, and offer a comprehensive induction and development session on their overall learning journey with focus on various assessment schemes to build their confidence.

9.3. The students that were identified as under benchmark receive one-to-one and group tutoring from academic tutors within CfSS. The number of sessions varies, however we also deploy two online systems to support students with their feedback. These online systems, MyFeedback and Studiosity, are available at strategic points in time each day, and provides students with academic support on assignments.

9.4. We are, of course, delighted to report that our NSS 'Assessment and Feedback' positive responses are 0.4%pt above the national average and 1%pt above our benchmark, with a three-year average of 75.3%, and 75.4% for 2017-18. We attribute this success to a number of factors: (i) widespread use of rubrics to allow students advance knowledge of the expectations placed upon them; (ii) guidance placed into module handbooks defining 'feedback', explaining to students how to use it as a learning tool; and (iii) CELT working in schools to enhance practice in this area.

9.5. External examiners have not hesitated in commending our approach to assessments; for example, one examiner stated, "The degree has an effective and well-balanced assessment portfolio for all types of learners and the assessments are appropriate for each level of study. The quality of feedback provided to students should be noted as a particular strength. The degree has very clear and concise feedback rubrics for students that, from my experience, are much better quality than other institutions. The team should be commended for their constructive written feedback". Another examiner stated "The clarity of assessment briefs was good. I also liked the exemplars of past work for student. In particular, there are a number of modules that have some very innovative (perhaps pedagogically bold) approaches. I particularly liked the expectations section in the module guide for clearly explaining to students what was expected from them in terms of engagement and aspiration".

10. Learning Environment

10.1. We are a digitally connected campus and invested in technology and resources that provide our students with improved experiences. We provide the physical, digital and personal resources that our students need to thrive throughout their learning journey, learning environments designed in partnership with our students and other key stakeholders.

10.2. CELT supports staff in designing engaging student learning experiences, using the latest research in pedagogy, educational technology and industry in continuing professional development of staff. CELT also provides a one-stop shop of materials and tools on the university VLE, Moodle, where staff members can access guidance for self-study on module design, authentic assessment, and feedback mechanisms, to name a few areas, to augment workshops and one-to-one development sessions. We have introduced industry standard technologies such as Adobe Creative Cloud, Wordpress and social media platforms to produce and create digital portfolios that unleash students' creativity and showcase their work.

10.3. We have two modern Libraries, one on each campus (Docklands and Stratford). Both Libraries are open 24/7 during teaching weeks as well as hand-in and exam periods. Each Library offers zoned spaces for collaborative, quiet and silent study. In 2016/17, UEL Libraries offered a ratio of 1 seat to 8.5 FTE students, compared to 1:13.3 new universities, according 2016/17 SCONUL statistics.

10.4. UEL students (234) took part in the JISC Student Digital Tracker 2016/17 measuring self-reported digital capabilities. 89.4% of UEL students reported access to e-books and e-journals whenever they needed them (compared with a benchmark of 83.6%). UEL students had higher than benchmark use of digital tools, using tools to 1) manage links/references (weekly or more) 70.5%

(benchmark 53.2 %); organise study time (weekly or more) 57.1% (benchmark 53.2%); 3) look for additional resources not recommended by their lecturer (weekly or more) 75.8% (benchmark 69.3%); access learning on the move (weekly or more) 65.0% (benchmark 61.9%).

10.5. In 2014/15, we conducted a major restructuring exercise of student support services which led to the creation of a central Academic Registry and new Student Support Hubs, tasked with providing faster and more responsive services to students and staff. These improvements have enhanced our student continuation as evidenced by TEF metric which shows that we are 1.4%pts above benchmark; moreover, we hold a double positive flag (++) during the first year for FT students and a double positive flag (13.7%pts) for PT mode of study over the TEF three years average. Again the data in TEF and in the sector shows that we are a **silver** institution, evidence of our students engaging with their learning ahead of our benchmarks.

11. Resources (LE1)

11.1. Over the last three years, we have invested £20.5 million on upgrading our IT services to support the student learning journey. A further £14.5 million was spent on our estate infrastructure. Since 2015, our NSS score on learning resources has risen from 82% to 84.56%, demonstrating the positive impacts of these investments which are designed with students to provide the right support.

11.2. We support the development of innovative approaches to teaching and learning that equip our students with competences and soft-skills that help them become well sought after as graduates by employers. These include creative technologies. Over the last four years, we have invested in Moodle, Lynda, Panopto, Alma, Primo, BKSB Study Skills, Canvas (learning management system for virtual learning), Mahara (online portfolio tool), Turnitin (online Assignment Submission), and ProRetention (recording student support interaction). These facilities are commonly used by staff to support students on programmes delivered face-to-face and by blended learning. Our annual audit of the virtual learning environment (Moodle) shows that 91% of our students effectively use it regularly to support their study.

11.3. Health and wellbeing (H&W) is a priority for us and we support students who need this service to ensure their success. None of those students who struggle with H&W challenges are factored into our TEF benchmark, but many face challenges that significantly affect their studies. Our Student Health and Wellbeing Team (SHWT) and Disability and Dyslexia Team (DDT) work together to ensure full support for students with long-term health conditions or disabilities. SHWT provides substantial support to "non-disabled" students as well as helping students with registered disabilities to access support from the DDT, including facilitating access to diagnostic assessments internally and externally. Between 2015 and 2017/18, the SHWT offered an average of 2230 appointments per year. The benefits are clear in the TEF workbook where the split metric for continuation at our institution has **a positive flag for students with disabilities**. This metric stresses that we provide a personalised provision to our students, a key characteristic of a **silver** institution in TEF.

12. Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice (LE2)

12.1. We are a vibrant university that believes that research-informed teaching and teaching-informed research is essential to enrich the learner journey and ensure relevance and currency of our academic portfolio. This practice has been an integral part of our ethos over the last 10 years. We doubled our output of world-leading research in REF 2014, and over 62% of our research was classed as internationally excellent. Our research capacity underpins our commitments to community engagement, by addressing urgent real-world challenges, and delivering student experiences informed by the latest scholarship and professional experience. We offer our students opportunities to learn about, and apply, world-leading scholarship through UG and PG programmes across the institution that are up to date, critically engaged and challenge-driven.

12.2. Research-Informed-teaching is also one of the key commitments we have identified for realising our ambition to be a transformational centre for outstanding research and knowledge transfer that has a profound and lasting impact on its location and its reach into wider global contexts.

Our commitment is underpinned by flagship institution-wide initiatives, including: Research Internship Scheme, London Scholars, Global Scholars, London Leadership Programme (33Sixty, in collaboration with Common Purpose and the Commonwealth Office), Global Leadership Programme, Noon Scholars and the Civic Engagement Programme. CELT and CfSS have also set up a Journal called Community for Impactful Research in Connected Learning Experiences (CIRCLE). These are vehicles to pull in all our research-informed teaching and practice https://www.uel.ac.uk/research/jic.

12.3. The Research Internship Scheme was established in 2011 in response to a need to further support and profile the co-creation of scholarship between staff and students, and recognise the contribution to knowledge generation being made by our students. The Scheme has benefited over 300 students, allowing them to work on an academic-supervised research project for 10 weeks between June and September, with each student receiving a £2000 training bursary. The scheme enables academics and students to work as co-creators of knowledge, offering students rigour and stretch, and the opportunity to test ideas from the forefront of scholarship in real-world and professional contexts. Examples of interns include an Architecture student worked on developing 'A Wellbeing Prison: Design Toolkit'. The student presented her work to MPs in Parliament and won the RIBA Silver Award 2018, gaining a prestige position at a large architectural practice. The above underscores how we ensure our students are engaged with research developments in their respective fields; moreover, our students take part in these activities as is expected at a **silver** institution.

12.4. Our scholarship highlights our drive for civically engagement with our community. In 2016/17, we invested over £89,000 in Community Engagement projects. Students undertook 10,657 hours of volunteering, with over 90% of them reporting a positive experience. The impact of our endeavours can be seen with two prestigious awards at the Guardian University Awards 2017 and the Newham Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Awards in 2017 for our projects.

13. Personalised Learning (LE3)

13.1. Our bespoke learning and teaching framework focuses on delivering a personalised and inclusive learning experience underpinned by working in partnership with individuals as well as small group teaching activities. This suits the very diverse nature of our students, their academic abilities and aspirations. Our academics, UELSU and professional services make concerted effort and investment to ensure students are aware of the supporting resources available to them throughout their learning journey at the University.

13.2. Our enriched personalised induction programme improves early retention levels for new students, by embedding milestones and offering various opportunities during the first six weeks for intervention on students who may not be fully engaging with activities, and potentially be at risk of early withdrawal.

13.3. We have been effectively implementing a Learning Achievement Assistants (LAAs) Scheme since 2013 to provide experience-based advice on study skills, and to assist students to access professional support services. Each School has a team of dedicated LAAs to support students, and, as recent UEL graduates, they provide essential peer support to help students academically and with employability skills throughout the year. The team also worked closely with other teams such as "Peer mentoring" and "Skill-zone" to support students and assist in workshops, sessions or projects, e.g. the annual 'StudyFest' events.

13.4. We support our students to succeed by offering a Peer Mentoring Scheme that enables 150 second and third-year students to support around 500 first-year students and assist their transition into University. The scheme was externally-accredited with Approved Provider Status by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation in May 2013, and has recently been reaccredited in July 2016. These schemes outlined above have been pivotal in enhancing our performance as evidenced in the TEF continuation metric.

13.5. This care and attention towards our students have seen us enjoy excellent NSS responses from our final year undergraduates. For 'The teaching on my course' we enjoy an 85.2% three-year average positive score (85.1% in 2017-18), and this demonstrates that even though our courses have generally become more externally-regulated, validated and employability-focused, as evidenced in our greatly improved most recent DLHE scores, our staff development strategies are proving effective.

13.6. Our core metrics show strong NSS results; however, we can further prove our impact in other metrics within the NSS. When the NSS introduced the Learning Opportunities metric in 2017, we exceeded the sector average in this measure by 2.3%pts with a score of 85.9%, a ranking of 39th in the sector and second in our peer group (post-92 London). In 2018, we continued to improve while the sector decreased, by 0.7%pt ranking 23rd out of 148 universities, and top among our peer group; by contrast, both the sector and post-92 London institutions had fallen by 0.4%pt and 1.3%pts respectively. This metric highlights our exceptional ability in stretching our students through a robust and engaging curriculum. Such success in these metrics adds context to our excellent teaching provision. An external examiner stated that "Students at UEL have produced some excellent written work this year, which is on a par with that at any higher education institution in the country. The main strengths of the essays I read were their good use of close-reading, their sophisticated understanding of historical context, and their willingness to engage with theoretical material. Students have clearly received good training in developing forceful and coherent arguments". Such statements and metrics further highlight how UEL students are engaged with developments in research, and challenged as a result in their work: clear **silver** institution characteristics.

14. Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

14.1. Student outcome and learning gain is at the heart of everything we do at the University. We have a well-established Education and Student Success Committee (ESSC) chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching & Student Experience with membership from UELSU, the academic community and professional services to measure performance across broad range of cohort data analysis on attrition, continuation, completion, attainment gap, degree classification and graduate outcomes. The ESSC then make recommendations and interventions in response to whether the KPIs have met.

14.2. Our ongoing innovative approach to enhancing the overall learning experience of our students is evidenced by providing a clear route-map for students on the management of their courses to build their confidence, we have implemented these investments based on our students' voice, which is in the top 30 across the entire sector in the NSS. Since the investments and initiatives outlined above, as part of a digitally connected campus, we have seen significant improvements in student satisfaction with course organisation, evidenced in our latest NSS results. In NSS 2018, we achieved 78.5% of our students satisfied with course organisation, which represents an increase of 4.5%pts from our 2016 result and a score that is 3.8%pts higher than the sector average, and we are now ranked 21st out of 148 institutions and top among our post-92 London peer group in this category.

15. Employment and Further Study (SO1)

15.1. Our employment strategy has been focussing on preparing our students for life after their degree and providing them pillars of support to develop their confidence in today's highly competitive job market. Between 2015 and 2017, our Personal Development Award (PDA)/Skills Academy offered our students a flexible employability development programme offering certification for their involvement in employability-activities. The award consisted of four streams for which students have to collect evidence: (i) Skills development (including Skills Academy); (ii) Experience; (iii) Networking; (iv) Self-assessment and Self-Marketing.

15.2. Our Career coaching team supports students and graduates in gaining the skills and confidence to achieve their ambitions. We provide careers advice and guidance through workshops, drop-ins, one-to-one coaching appointments, employability talks and events. Additionally, students and graduates can receive 24/7 online careers support and career coaching advice.

15.3. Overall, based on DLHE results between the years 2014/15 and 2016/17, 72.5% of students who were matched with a Professional Mentor within this three-year period achieved highly-skilled employment. Comparatively, the UEL TEF indicator for the three-year period was 60.1% in highly-skilled level employment, suggesting an increase of 12.4%pts. Our Career Coaching scheme saw similar results too. When students accessed the scheme earlier in their degree the outcomes were far more positive; for instance in the 16/17 DLHE cohort 75% of students who accessed Professional Mentoring in 2015/16 (in general, Year Two for this cohort) achieved highly-skilled employment. Meanwhile, 61.5% of students who accessed Professional Mentoring in their final year achieved highly-skilled employment. Our work outlined above is focussed on direct student interaction with the institution; however, part of our strategy motivated us to have our students be collaborating and communicating with employers directly.

15.4. Our Employer Engagement Team works with employers from a range of industries in order to offer UEL students and graduates with employment opportunities including full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary work, internships and graduate opportunities. Overall, based on DLHE results between the years 2014/15 and 2016/17, 71.3% of students who were placed into employment by Employer Engagement within this 3-year period achieved highly-skilled employment.

15.5. In order to inspire our students as future business leaders, we have established the E-Factor competition which is our business ideas competition for current students and recent graduates. UEL's business and innovation centre and is home to over 100 businesses. It also forms an entrepreneurial hub for students and alumni, with UEL's student enterprise team based there. In 2016, Knowledge Dock's partnership with growth experts 'GetSet for Growth' has been nominated for Business Partnership of the Year, part of The Wharf's Innovation in Business Awards. In 2015/6-2017, we provided paid internships for over 300 UG students with positive research outcomes such co-authorship of papers, conference presentations and participation in national research events such as the prestigious House of Commons research poster event.

16. Employability and Transferrable Skills (SO2)

16.1. Our employability strategy is centred on key main areas namely active employer engagement in both curriculum design and delivery through direct teaching as well as supervising real-life projects; Career advice offered by our Centre for Student Success; and Internship.

16.2. Our curriculum design process is fully informed by engagement with our employer advisory boards, professional and statutory bodies (PSRBs). We are currently hold 45 PSRBs accreditation arrangements across 120 programmes, ranging from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), RIBA/ARB, BCS to the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Healthcare and Professional Council in the Cass School of Education & Communities, and the British Psychological Society. These regulators not only specify a competency-mapping exercise towards their own frameworks, keeping our programmes updated and relevant to the workforce and community, but also ensure standards are maintained through a rigorous external examining process.

16.3. Our Employability Hub and Careers Centre supports the employment process for students. The Career Centre has seen over 1000 students complete pre-programmed Career Plans that are developed based on various topics and/or industry. We ensure as part of this strategy that it meets the needs of our students; therefore, we undertake evaluations to maintain a culture of continuous improvement, with student satisfaction of our service currently at 70%.

17. Positive Outcomes for All (SO3)

17.1. As outlined previously, we are a diverse institution with a uniquely global population. We have over 130 nationalities within our community of students, many arriving from disadvantaged backgrounds. We are passionate about fairness in education and ensuring positive outcomes for students from all backgrounds, establishing an environment that is welcoming and non-exclusionary.

17.2. Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy focuses on embedding inclusion across all aspects of our operations and creating a student experience which supports all of our students to succeed. We have an institutional focus on, and commitment to race equality. The Race Equality Charter self-assessment team was established in preparation for an institutional submission for the Race Equality Charter Mark in 2019. The self-assessment process has encompassed detailed analysis of gaps in equality for different ethnic groups and a survey of staff and students.

17.3. We ensure that our support and interventions are fully embedded within the mainstream student learning journey through our inclusive ALT Framework. We also have targeted interventions and financial support for students with financial challenges through our bursaries schemes:(i) Engagement Bursary (Awards ranging from £100-£2,000), for Childcare costs, travel costs, Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) computer equipment contribution, Summer support (students unable to work over the summer period, due to caring responsibilities, disability or long-term sickness); (ii) Progression Bursary (Awards ranging from £100-£2,000), for Travel and adjustment costs, in particular for students with disabilities (for instance attending integral work placements and engaging with study abroad opportunities and co-curricular opportunities), Job interview expenses for final year students, High course related costs for final year students (for instance support with the costs of final year projects and shows for courses such as fashion, art, photography etc.); (iii) Care Leaver and Foyer Bursary (Awards ranging from £1,000-£1,500): This will be a continuation of our current offering of £1,000 per year given to full-time, 'home' students, aged under 25 years, who are care experienced or have lived in a Foyer (up to a year before commencing study at UEL).

18. Conclusion

18.1. Our TEF statement echoes our ethos and strategic objectives as an anchor institution which strives to transform the life chances of our students through learning, engaging in applied research that has high impact and offer solutions to pressing societal challenges.

18.2. The impact of our strategy and practices are clearly demonstrated by the TEF metrics, our FT and PT continuation remain above our benchmarks at 1.4%pts and 13.7%pts respectively; we have increased our FT and PT highly skilled employment by 9.5%pts and 3.9%pts, notably out pacing other silver institutions in FT by 6.3%pts; and our Academic Support metric rose by 1.2%pts and we are now above our benchmark by 0.7%pt in split year three having previously been 0.7%pt below in split year two. We are ranked 62nd, 48th and 76th against all 148 institutions for Teaching on My Course, Assessment and Feedback, and Academic Support respectively. It is also pleasing that we are ranked first within this group for Overall Satisfaction where we are placed 64th out of 148 institutions. We are positioned in the Top 50 institutions for teaching quality according to the Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018 and 2019. In full-time graduate employment, over the three years in TEF, our improvement has outpaced silver ranked institutions by 6.3%pts. In the Times League Table, moreover, we are the fifth most improved institution in the entire sector over the same three-year period.

18.3. We are so proud that we were named by the Times Higher 2018 the "Rising Star" of the HE Sector in recognition of the transformational experience we offer our students which was reflected in the student experience analysis. We are an engine of social mobility and widen participation as demonstrated in our high impact New Beginnings programme, which won the Times Higher Education Award for Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year' this year (December 2018). The impact of our community engagement and social mobility endeavours was recognised by two prestigious awards at the Guardian University Awards 2017 and the Newham Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Awards in 2017.

18.4. We are proud of our achievements in student satisfaction and the part we play in transforming their life chances throughout their learning journey. We are committed to this legacy and will continue to provide personalised and professional education to our very diverse student population to succeed. **The evidence above reflects the distinctive nature of the University of East London, that plays a significant role in increasing life chances and whose improvements in student outcomes are at or above the median of TEF silver institutions.**