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24 June 2021

Dear Accountable Officer

Applications for a provisional Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) award

I am writing to you following the email from Nicola Dandridge today, with information about how to apply for a provisional TEF award.

We wrote to you on 10 June¹ about our decision to allow registered English providers that do not hold a TEF award to apply for a provisional award, which would be valid until the next TEF exercise produces outcomes in 2023.

This is voluntary for eligible providers. Providers without a TEF award do not need to apply for a provisional award in order to comply with registration condition B6.

Provisional TEF awards will be open to applications from providers:

- who are registered with the Office for Students (OfS); and
- who are meeting all ongoing conditions of registration; and
- who deliver undergraduate provision taught at that provider in the academic year the award is granted.²

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/letter-to-providers-tef-update/.

² The definition of provision in scope can be found at section 2 of the TEF specification, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-excellence-and-student-outcomes-framework-specification>.

We have written to all registered providers without a TEF award, regardless of their current eligibility, in case they become eligible at a later date. This letter does not, therefore, mean that your provider is eligible for a provisional award. We will check eligibility on receiving applications.

How to apply for a provisional award

To apply, you as accountable officer should email tef@officeforstudents.org.uk with the subject line 'Provisional TEF award application – [UKPRN and name of your provider]' by 26 August 2021. You do not need to submit any documents as part of your application because we have the evidence needed to determine eligibility. Once we receive an application, we will check your eligibility in relation to the above criteria, and we will write to you in September 2021 to confirm whether we have determined that you should be granted a provisional award.

We will reopen applications in summer 2022 for providers that become eligible after the August 2021 deadline, or decide not to apply this year.

Timeline for applications

Application window opens	24 June 2021
Application window closes	1700 on 26 August 2021
Confirmation of provisional TEF award	September 2021
Next application window for provisional awards	Summer 2022

Other considerations

We have published revised branding guidelines, which advise providers that they should not promote their TEF award from September 2021.³ This also applies to new provisional awards.

If you intend to apply for a provisional award and you wish to charge the inflationary fee uplift,⁴ and you also have an approved access and participation plan (APP), you will need to indicate this in the upcoming annual fee information (AFI) return.⁵ You should also ensure that your intended fees are clear and accessible to prospective students.⁶ If you do not indicate any intended changes to

³ Available at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-branding-2021/.

⁴ The basic and higher fee caps are prescribed by the Secretary of State in regulations made under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA). See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/access-and-participation-plans/fee-limits/ for a summary of the maximum fee caps for 2021-22. It is the responsibility of a provider to ensure that it is aware of the law affecting the fee caps and the student support regulations. Providers may also want to review any relevant guidance published by Student Finance England on eligibility rules for student finance (see <https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/>).

⁵ For previous AFI guidance, see www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/annual-fee-information-collection-guidance/.

⁶ See paragraphs 152-153 at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-notice-1-access-and-participation-plan-guidance/.

fees in the AFI return and you have an approved APP, you may be required to submit an APP variation request to the Director for Fair Access and Participation.⁷ We expect to publish guidance in July 2021 regarding collection of 2022-23 fee levels.

Next steps

If you wish to apply for a provisional award, please follow the steps in the 'How to apply' section. If you have any further questions, please contact us on tef@officeforstudents.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

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⁷ See paragraphs 55-59 at www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-notice-1-access-and-participation-plan-guidance/.