

Office for
Students



OfS consultation on the future approach to quality regulation

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Webinar for providers new to the TEF
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Our approach to regulating quality

We want to ensure that students from all backgrounds benefit from high quality education that enriches their lives and helps them succeed in their future career paths.

We view high quality as:



courses that are well designed and are delivered and assessed effectively



academic support and resources that students need to succeed
effective engagement with students



equipping students to achieve positive outcomes after they complete their course

Current quality assessment

We currently assess quality in two ways:



Targeted assessments if we are concerned a university or college is not meeting our minimum quality requirements



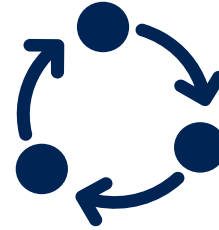
Recognition of excellence through Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) assessments

Background to the consultation



Following the Public Bodies Review and discussions with stakeholders, we propose a more integrated system aimed at:

- ensuring high quality education for all students
- driving continuous improvement across the sector
- providing a clear view to students about the level of quality offered at different institutions
- supporting equality of opportunity.



We are consulting initially on the principles, scope and structure of a revised system.

We plan to run a second consultation in autumn 2026 that will look at how the new system would work in detail.

What are we aiming to improve?

Reach

- to benefit students at all providers
- in time, PGT as well as UG students

Impact

- strengthened incentives and interventions
- strengthened input from students

Integration

- more coherent and integrated system that reduces burden
- clear view of whether providers meet or exceed minimum quality requirements

Responsiveness

- more agile and dynamic system that responds to emerging risks

Overview of the TEF

Desk-based
assessment of a
provider's student
experience and
student outcomes

OfS produces
indicators using
national datasets

Providers and their
students supply
evidence

Context accounted
for through
benchmarking and
information from
providers

Academic and
student assessors
carry out
assessments and
award ratings

Ratings at provider
level, but informed by
data across subjects
and student groups

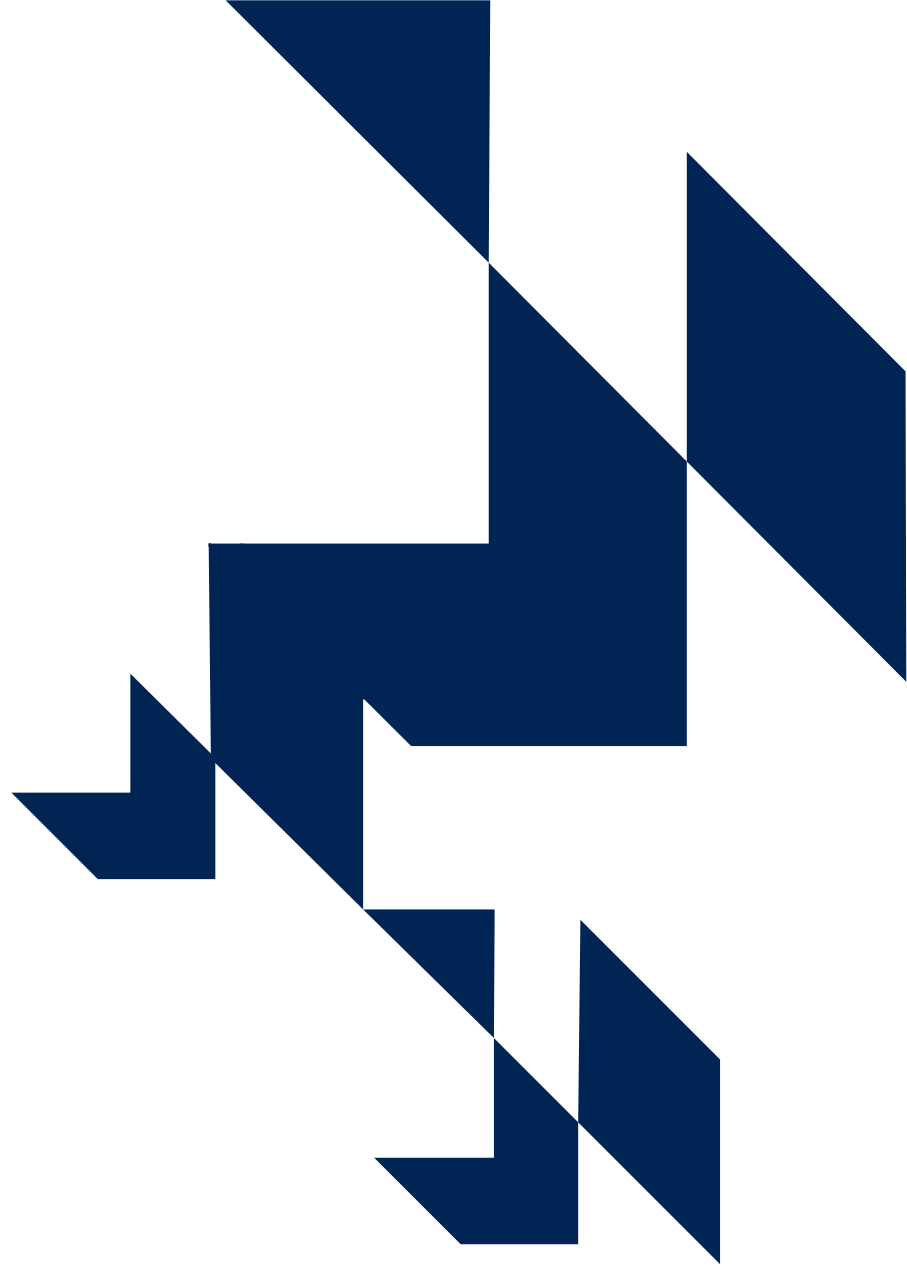
Providers
incentivised to
improve or continue
delivering the highest
levels of quality

Useful information
provided to students

Proposals

The following slides summarise key aspects of our proposals.

We invite views on all our proposals.



TEF: Providers in scope



All OfS-registered providers assessed and rated on a rolling, cyclical basis



Aimed at ensuring students at all providers benefit from high quality and improvements to their experience and outcomes



Also reflects the PBR recommendation that quality activity should apply to all providers



In the first cycle, all registered providers offering undergraduate courses



In the second cycle, also those with only taught postgraduate students.

TEF: Provision in scope

First cycle

- All undergraduate-level courses a provider has responsibility for
- Levels 4 and 5, first degree, undergraduate with postgraduate components
- Taught and partnership provision, and validated-only
- International students
- Question about apprenticeships (given Ofsted's role)

Subsequent cycles

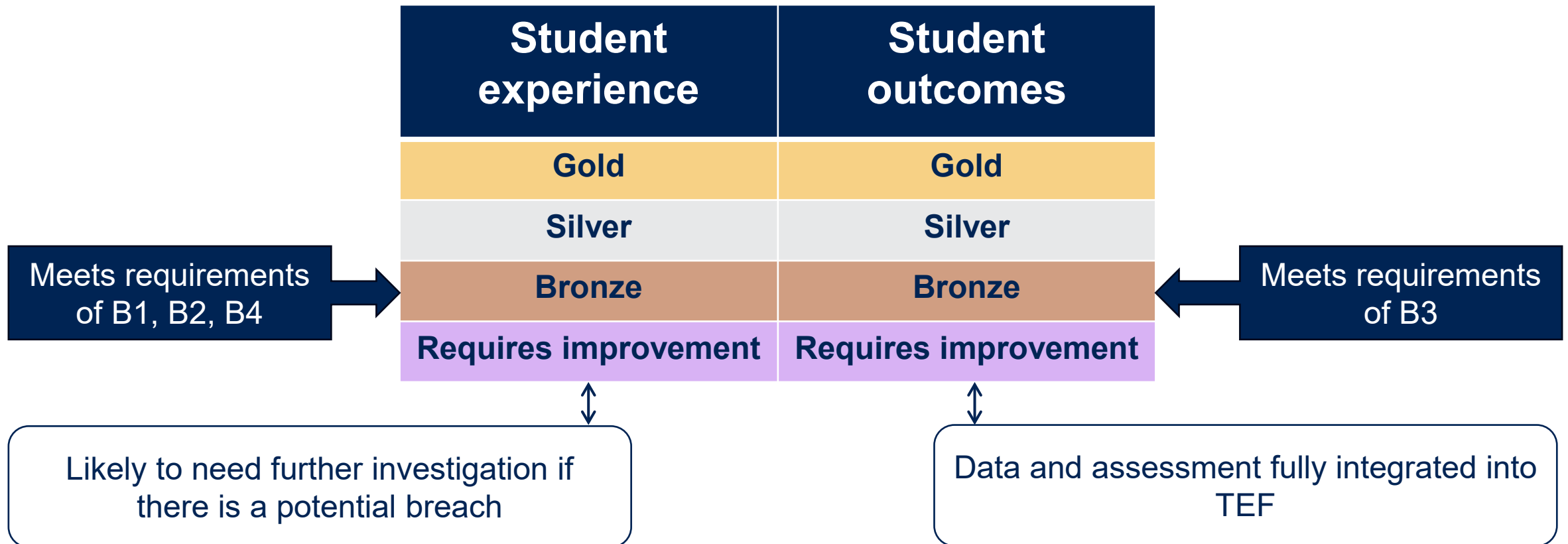
- In second cycle, extend to include PGT and modular provision
- In later cycles, potential to expand further e.g. to include TNE

Enabling smaller providers to take part effectively

Our proposals aim to recognise the diversity of the sector, including through:

- Simplifying the range of information providers would submit to the TEF
- Varying the assessment approach where indicators for a provider are insufficient
- Exploring alternatives to a written student submission
- Assessing most providers without a current TEF rating in later years of the first cycle
- Recruiting more assessors from small, specialist or college-based providers

Aspects and ratings



TEF: The student experience aspect

Scope and criteria aligned with conditions B1, B2 and B4:

- Course content and delivery
- Assessment
- Academic support
- Resources
- Student engagement

Assessment based on:

- Provider submissions
- Benchmarked NSS indicators
- Direct input from students (student submission or an alternative)

Where there is insufficient NSS data for a provider, we would collect student views another way

Student experience ratings criteria: examples

Assessors would interpret and weigh up whether across the NSS, the provider submission and student evidence:

- The provider is meeting the range of criteria for Gold, Silver, or Bronze
- Those criteria apply across the mix of students and courses, and different areas of provision

	Bronze: The student experience is of sufficient quality	Silver: The student experience is consistently of high quality	Gold: The student experience is consistently of outstanding quality
	The student experience typically meets the following:	The student experience meets the following consistently across the provider's mix of students and courses:	The student experience meets the following consistently across the provider's mix of students and courses:
Resources, support and student engagement	4. Academic support is sufficient and appropriate for the provider's students. 5. Physical and digital learning resources are adequate and used effectively to meet the needs of the provider's students.	4. Academic support that is responsive to the provider's students is readily available, and is of high quality. 5. Physical and digital learning resources are of high quality and are used effectively to enhance the teaching and learning experience and meet the needs of the provider's students.	4. Academic support that is tailored, proactive and highly responsive to the provider's students is readily available and is of outstanding quality. 5. Physical and digital learning resources are of outstanding quality, used highly effectively to enrich the teaching and learning experience, and are tailored and responsive to the needs of the provider's students.

TEF: The student outcomes aspect and condition B3

Scope and criteria aligned with a revised B3:

- B3 simplified: minimum thresholds for continuation and completion
- Minimum thresholds to be met, to achieve at least a Bronze rating
- Performance against benchmarks to be assessed for a rating of Bronze or above

Assessment based on:

- Thresholds and benchmarked indicators of continuation and completion
- A wider set of benchmarked post-study indicators
- Contextual information that relates directly to these indicators

Where there is insufficient outcomes data for a provider, we would not rate student outcomes

TEF: assessment where data is limited

If there is insufficient NSS data for a provider:

- We would still assess and rate the 'student experience' aspect, based on student views and the provider submission
- We propose to collect students' views another way
- Options include online meetings or commissioned focus groups
- We would aim to obtain evidence broadly comparable with insights from the NSS

If there is insufficient student outcomes data for a provider:

- We would not assess or rate the student outcomes aspect
- This would have no impact on the provider's 'overall' TEF rating
- Presented neutrally in the publication of outcomes

Provider submissions

- Likely to be a recommended broad structure with optional template

Student experience	• evidence determined by the provider as relevant to its mix of students and courses, that demonstrates how it meets the student experience criteria • evidence could relate broadly to all the provider's students and courses, and to more specific interventions or improvements for particular students and courses • evidence should demonstrate impact and effectiveness • timeframe: either a four-year period, or the period since the last assessment
Student outcomes	• contextual information not already accounted for by benchmarking, to explain the provider's outcomes data

- Page limit would apply – previously 25 pages but potential to reduce this

Student submissions

- Direct and independent student input on behalf of a provider's student body
- Focusing on the student experience aspect
- Page limit would likely apply – previously 10 pages
- May retain the option of submissions in a non-written format (e.g. video, PowerPoint)
- The OfS would provide guidance on preparing student submissions
- Providers also expected to offer support to their students (e.g. sharing data/analysis)
- If students do not make a submission, the OfS would seek student views another way

Assessment cycle

- All providers assessed for the first time over a three year cycle
- Most providers without a current TEF rating assessed in later years of the first cycle

Year	First cycle: providers to be assessed
Year 1 (2027-28)	• All providers with an existing Requires improvement or Bronze TEF rating • Some providers with an existing Silver or Gold TEF rating (prioritising those with a Bronze aspect rating; with concerns raised in a previous assessment of B condition compliance; or with increased risk indicators or declining TEF indicators) • Some providers without an existing TEF rating (prioritising those that want to take part in year 1, and those with increased risk indicators).
Years 2 and 3	• All remaining providers with an existing Silver or Gold TEF rating • All remaining providers without an existing TEF rating.

- Timing of reassessment linked to rating awarded and ongoing risk monitoring:

Gold: 5 years

Silver: 4 years

Bronze: 3 years

RI: case by case

Incentives and interventions

Strengthened incentives and interventions linked to TEF ratings

- Rewards for providers that deliver the highest quality:
 - Reputational benefits
 - Assessed less often
 - Potential eligibility for some kinds of funding in future
- Stronger mechanisms to drive improvement where quality is not rated high:
 - More frequent assessment
 - Potential limits on increasing student numbers
 - Potential restrictions on DAPs applications
 - Potential ineligibility for some kinds of funding in future

Risk-based interventions

- Ongoing monitoring of providers using risk factors and indicators in a new monitoring tool
- Where significant concerns arise, we may investigate them outside a TEF assessment
- Requires improvement ratings: we would consider further investigation (of student experience) or intervention to ensure improvements are made
- Bronze ratings: we may consider (alongside other risk factors) if there is a risk of a future breach and if intervention is appropriate

Timeline

December 2025	First stage consultation closes
Early 2026 – summer 2026	- Analysis and consideration of first stage consultation responses - Ongoing development work
Autumn 2026	Second stage consultation
Early 2027 – summer 2027	- Analysis and consideration of second stage consultation responses - Production of final TEF guidance, data indicators, changes to B3 and B6 - Pilot of a PGT student survey
Spring 2027	Recruitment of TEF assessors begins
Summer 2027	- Publish TEF guidance for providers, students and assessors, data dashboards - Selection of first cohort of providers for assessment
Autumn 2027	Appointment and induction of TEF assessors
Early Spring 2028	Submission deadline for first cohort of providers
Spring – autumn 2028	First cohort of providers assessed
Autumn 2028	First outcomes under new scheme
By autumn 2030	First assessment of all providers completed

Implications for providers new to TEF

- Some could be assessed for the first time in 2027-28 but most would likely be in 2028-29 or 2029-30.
- In all cases would be assessed and rated for 'student experience'. Would need to supply evidence in a submission addressing the assessment criteria for this aspect.
- May or may not be assessed and rated for 'student outcomes', depending on whether there is sufficient statistical confidence in the OfS data for the provider.
- If being assessed for student outcomes, would have the option to supply relevant contextual information in the submission to explain the data.
- Students should be supported to make a student submission if they wish. Where impractical or challenging for students, OfS would seek student input another way.

Consultation feedback

We're keen to hear your views on any of our proposals, including the following areas

How we could help enable smaller providers, including those that haven't taken part in the TEF before, to participate effectively. This might include suggestions for more tailored support and guidance, or more detailed templates for preparing submissions.

How we could help enable more assessors (both academic and student) from small, specialist or college-based providers to take part.

Alternative ways of gathering student input where student submissions are impractical, so that students at all providers can contribute their views.

The proposal to vary the approach to assessing the student experience and student outcomes where providers do not have sufficient indicator data.

The presentation of TEF outcomes for providers that are not rated for the student outcomes aspect.

The proposal to schedule most providers without a current TEF rating for their first assessment in the later years of the first cycle.

Further information

Read the consultation

- A quick guide and the full proposals are at: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/reforms-to-quality-regulation/

Consultation feedback events

- In-person feedback event: Tues 18 November, 1000-1300, Coventry
- Online feedback event for providers new to TEF: Thurs 20 November, 1100-1230
- Register at: www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/events

Keeping in touch

- Further queries can be directed to us at TEF@officeforstudents.org.uk

Thank you for listening

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