

Office for  
Students



# Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

**Publication of TEF outcomes:  
communications and branding guidelines**

**Reference** OfS 2023.41

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# About this document

1. This document provides guidance for higher education providers on communicating their Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023 outcomes. It supplements 'Regulatory advice 22: Guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023' (paragraphs 97-99)<sup>1</sup> and includes information on how to present and describe the ratings, and their duration and scope. It also contains branding guidelines on the use of TEF logos.
2. The guidance is particularly relevant for marketing and communications teams within providers. It is also relevant to others – student representatives, the media, student information organisations – involved in communicating information about the TEF.
3. Providers are not required to publicise their TEF outcomes: the outcomes and associated information will be published by the OfS.<sup>2</sup> Where a provider chooses to publish its TEF outcome on its website or in other materials, it should adhere to this guidance.
4. This guidance aims to ensure a consistent TEF brand and the accurate communication of TEF outcomes to students and the public. It has been produced with the aim of protecting the interests of students, including by seeking to prevent students from being exposed to misleading or inaccurate information about TEF outcomes. We therefore expect providers to adhere to the contents of the guidance and refrain from giving information that is misleading or inaccurate.
5. The OfS is likely to conduct checks to ensure providers are following this guidance. Where we consider that a provider is communicating its TEF outcome in a manner which may be misleading, inaccurate or otherwise harmful to the interests of students, the OfS will consider taking steps to impose a specific condition of registration to address those concerns. We may also consider referring potential concerns to the Competition and Markets Authority, local authority trading standards services or the Advertising Standards Authority<sup>3</sup> with a view to further action being taken under their powers.
6. This guidance replaces all previous guidance in connection with communicating ratings from the previous TEF scheme.

This guidance refers throughout to, and should be read alongside, '[Regulatory advice 22](#)', our guidance on TEF 2023 published in October 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> For the full document, see [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/).

<sup>2</sup> Our general policy on the publication of information about the TEF can be found in the 'Published information' section of 'Regulatory advice 22: Guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023' (OfS 2022.60), available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/).

<sup>3</sup> Providers may also wish to note the Advertising Standards Authority's advice on making comparative claims, available at: <https://www.asa.org.uk/advice-online/universities-comparative-claims.html>

If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact [TEF@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:TEF@officeforstudents.org.uk).

# Communication of TEF outcomes

## Terms used in this document

TEF outcome: the overall rating and the aspect ratings awarded; or that the provider 'requires improvement' to be awarded a TEF rating.

Overall rating: the rating awarded for the provider overall.

Aspect ratings: the ratings awarded for each of the two 'aspects' that are assessed: the 'student experience' and 'student outcomes'.

Summary panel statement: The document that sets out the TEF panel's reasoning for the outcome.

## Publication schedule

7. We intend to publish TEF outcomes from late September 2023.
8. Where a provider has made representations and these are still being considered at that point, we intend to publish the outcome for that provider as 'pending'. We will state in our communications that a pending status means a provider's TEF outcome is still being considered and the outcomes will be published shortly after they are finalised. You do not need to publicise or further clarify a pending status.
9. We have published [further details of the publication timeline](#).
10. You may only publicise your TEF 2023 outcome **after** the outcome has been published by the OfS and **not** before.

## Presentation of overall and aspect ratings

11. Each provider taking part in the TEF 2023 will have an overall rating, and a rating for each of the two 'aspects' assessed in the exercise: the student experience and student outcomes. There are three ratings categories signifying increasing degrees of excellence above the OfS's high quality minimum requirements – Bronze, Silver and Gold. For those providers not demonstrating excellence above the minimum requirements, the outcome will be 'Requires improvement'. A diagram illustrating the relationship between the aspect and overall ratings can be found in Annex B.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See paragraphs 266-280 of 'Regulatory advice 22: Guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023' (OfS 2022.60), available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/).

12. Aspect ratings or content from the summary panel statement should not be published separately from the provider's overall rating. If you wish to publish any aspect ratings or content from the summary panel statement, it must include the overall provider rating.<sup>5</sup>
13. You may publish your overall provider rating without the aspect ratings. However, we encourage you to include the aspect ratings to provide more complete information to students and the public.

## TEF and rating descriptions

14. If you decide to explain or describe the TEF scheme alongside your rating, you may copy and use relevant text from the '[About the TEF](#)' pages of the OfS website. You are encouraged to include a link to these pages. Any explanation you provide should be consistent with the information on these pages.
15. Each rating category, and the Requires improvement category, has a standard description. These are shown below. If you decide to describe the rating on your provider's website or in other materials, you should use the standard description in full, using the wording in this guidance.
16. There is no specific font or style for the descriptions.

Category	Description for overall rating	Description for student experience aspect rating	Description for student outcomes aspect rating
<b>Gold</b>	The student experience and student outcomes are typically outstanding.	The student experience is typically outstanding.	Student outcomes are typically outstanding.
<b>Silver</b>	The student experience and student outcomes are typically very high quality.	The student experience is typically very high quality.	Student outcomes are typically very high quality.
<b>Bronze</b>	The student experience and student outcomes are typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features.	The student experience is typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features.	Student outcomes are typically high quality, and there are some very high quality features.
<b>Requires improvement</b>	The provider was assessed in the TEF and no overall rating was awarded. Improvement is required for a TEF rating.	No rating was awarded for the student experience. Improvement is required for a TEF rating.	No rating was awarded for student outcomes. Improvement is required for a TEF rating.

<sup>5</sup> See paragraph 98c of 'Regulatory advice 22: Guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023' (OfS 2022.60), available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/).

## Date and duration of ratings

17. The outcomes from TEF 2023 will last for four years from September 2023.<sup>6</sup>
18. Where possible, any communication of your provider's TEF outcome should reference the TEF 2023 exercise and the duration of the outcome. This could be included within copy text or as a footnote, but the TEF logos should not be edited to incorporate this information. We recommend using the following form of words for consistency:
- a. Where both the overall and aspect ratings are publicised use:  
'These ratings were awarded in 2023, for four years.'
  - b. Where only the overall rating is publicised use:  
'This rating was awarded in 2023, for four years.'
19. If you wish to display or refer to your provider's TEF ratings in a print publication that may outlast the currency of the ratings, you should **always** include a reference to the TEF 2023 exercise and the duration of the ratings.

## Scope of the ratings

20. The TEF assesses undergraduate courses. There are certain undergraduate courses that are in all cases within the scope of a TEF assessment, and certain courses that were considered in scope only if a provider itself chose to include evidence about them in its submission.<sup>7</sup>
21. To avoid potentially misleading students and the public, you should promote your provider's TEF ratings only in connection with those courses that were within the scope of your TEF assessment. TEF ratings should **not** be included as part of marketing materials (including prospectuses, posters, social media or web content) which relate primarily to:
- a. Postgraduate courses.
  - b. Undergraduate courses that were optionally in scope and which the provider chose not to include.
22. The TEF assesses each provider overall. It is therefore not appropriate for an individual school, faculty, department, or course to claim that it has a TEF rating (as distinct from the provider's TEF rating).
23. Where a provider is involved in partnership arrangements, it should display only its own TEF ratings, not those of its partners.

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<sup>6</sup> The timing of the next TEF exercise and the exact expiry date of the TEF 2023 outcomes will be decided in due course.

<sup>7</sup> See the 'Courses in scope' section of 'Regulatory advice 22: Guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023' (OfS 2022.60), available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/).

## Use of additional TEF information

24. Following publication of the TEF ratings in September 2023 we intend to publish additional information about each provider that has a TEF rating,<sup>8</sup> including:
- A summary panel statement setting out the TEF panel's reasoning for the outcomes.
  - The provider's submission.
  - The provider's student submission (where available).
  - Links to the published TEF indicators and 'size and shape' data.
25. This information will be published on the TEF pages of the OfS website.<sup>9</sup>
26. If you use this information, you should acknowledge that the OfS website is the source of the material, and where possible provide a link to the relevant page. The TEF indicators may not be amended or taken out of context to distort their meaning.
27. A full panel statement made available to each provider will set out the reasons for the panel's decisions. It includes procedural and technical information, and we do not plan to publish these documents. Instead, we intend to publish summary panel statements, that are accessible to students and the public.
28. If you choose to externally publish content from a panel statement, we encourage you to use content from the summary rather than the full panel statement. Any content you publish from a panel statement should be presented alongside your TEF ratings. You should not selectively quote from it in a way that may mislead or misrepresent the TEF panel's overall view.

## Transferred ratings

29. There may be circumstances where the OfS decides that a TEF rating may be transferred from one provider to another, for example following a merger.<sup>10</sup>
30. If a provider wishes to refer to a transferred rating, it should include explanatory text, for example:

Following the [description of merger/division], [name of new/lead provider] holds a [Gold/Silver/Bronze/] TEF rating. This TEF rating was originally awarded to [lead provider/original provider] under the TEF 2023 exercise.

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<sup>8</sup> Our general policy on the publication of information about the TEF can be found in the 'Published information' section of 'Regulatory advice 22: Guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023' (OfS 2022.60), available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/).

<sup>9</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/).

<sup>10</sup> See the 'Mergers and providers reapplying for registration' and 'Published information' sections of 'Regulatory advice 22: Guidance on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023' (OfS 2022.60), available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-22-guidance-on-the-teaching-excellence-framework-2023/).



## Expired ratings

31. If your provider held a TEF rating awarded in 2017, 2018 or 2019 under the previous TEF scheme, or a provisional rating granted in 2021, this rating will expire when the outcomes of TEF 2023 are published.
32. In June 2021 we advised providers that ratings awarded under the previous TEF scheme should not be promoted or used to inform student choice once the 2021 student application cycle was complete because they were increasingly out of date.
33. By now providers should have removed all references to ratings awarded under the previous TEF scheme from websites and in any other promotional or marketing materials. We expect you to check that this is the case.
34. If a provider wishes to retain any references to its previous TEF rating as a historical fact – for example in material that is not aimed directly at prospective students – it should always state alongside the reference that the rating has expired or been replaced by its TEF 2023 rating. You should use a clear form of words when referring to expired ratings, for example:

[Provider name] achieved a [gold/silver/bronze/] TEF rating in June 2017. This rating expired in September 2023.

35. The logos from the old TEF scheme should no longer be used.

# Branding guidelines

## Name of the scheme

36. The full name of the scheme is the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).
37. In written material, the full name should be used at first mention – ‘the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)’ – and the acronym ‘TEF’ subsequently.
38. The scheme should not be referred to by its previous name – ‘the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework’.<sup>11</sup>

## Use of TEF 2023 logos

39. You can promote your provider’s TEF ratings using the standard logos we have provided. Logos are available for overall ratings, and for each of the possible combinations of overall and aspect ratings.
40. We have also provided generic TEF 2023 logos. These are not linked to particular ratings and can be used in general communications about the TEF.
41. You can use the logos we have supplied that correspond with the TEF 2023 ratings your provider has been awarded, as well as the generic TEF 2023 logos. You should not create your own logos or use historical TEF logos to promote your TEF outcome.
42. Providers may use the appropriate logos in any form of media (such as digital and print), provided the guidance in this document is followed. Please ensure that use of the logos is accessible and complies with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.<sup>12</sup>
43. The logos and colours should not be altered in any way. They should not be used within the context of another or larger logo.
44. The TEF 2023 logos are available as both RGB and CMYK files and in JPG, EPS and PNG formats. Reversed-out and black and white versions are also available.
45. Examples of the logos are included below for illustrative purposes only – please do not copy the logos from this document. The logo formats for your use are available to download from the OfS website.<sup>13</sup>

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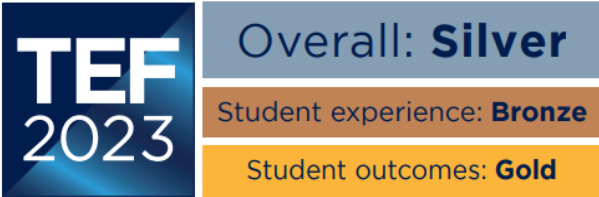
<sup>11</sup> The name of the scheme was changed following our consultation on the TEF in 2022. See ‘Proposal 14: Name of the scheme’ in ‘Consultation on the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF): Analysis of consultation responses and decisions’ (OfS 2022.40), available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/student-outcomes-and-teaching-excellence-consultations/the-tef/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/student-outcomes-and-teaching-excellence-consultations/the-tef/).

<sup>12</sup> See <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>.

<sup>13</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-branding-2023/](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-branding-2023/).

If you need technical or design guidance on using the TEF logos please contact [digitalpublishing@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:digitalpublishing@officeforstudents.org.uk).

### Example TEF 2023 logos

<p>Overall rating logos</p>	  Teaching Excellence Framework  Teaching Excellence Framework  Teaching Excellence Framework  Teaching Excellence Framework
<p>Overall and aspect rating logos</p>	 <p>Teaching Excellence Framework</p>
<p>Generic TEF 2023 logos</p>	 Teaching Excellence Framework



Teaching  
Excellence  
Framework

## Logo technical information

### Size

46. The minimum size for a TEF rating logo is 20mm wide for print or 57 pixels for a digital version. The minimum clear space area that should be left around the logo is defined by the cap height of the letters 'TEF' in the logo.

*Minimum space  
surrounding logo same  
as cap height of 'TEF'*



*Minimum width of TEF square  
20mm or 57 pixels*



Teaching  
Excellence  
Framework



Teaching  
Excellence  
Framework

*Minimum width of TEF square  
20mm or 57 pixels*

### Good contrast

47. We advise good contrast between the logo and its background. If the logo is placed on a dark background we suggest using the reversed-out option. The logo should only be placed over images where there is strong contrast between the logo and the image, and never over an area of detail.

Reversed out logos



## Colours



**TEF Gold award**  
**HEX** #FCB53B  
**CMYK** C0% M32% Y87% K0%  
**RGB** R252 G181 B59

Gold



**TEF Silver award**  
**HEX** #869FB4  
**CMYK** C50% M30% Y20% K0%  
**RGB** R134 G159 B180

Silver



**TEF Bronze award**  
**HEX** #C08357  
**CMYK** C16% M48% Y69 K11%  
**RGB** R192 G131 B87

Bronze



**TEF Requires improvement**  
**HEX** #9D85BE  
**CMYK** C40% M50% Y0% K0%  
**RGB** R157 G133 B190

Requires improvement

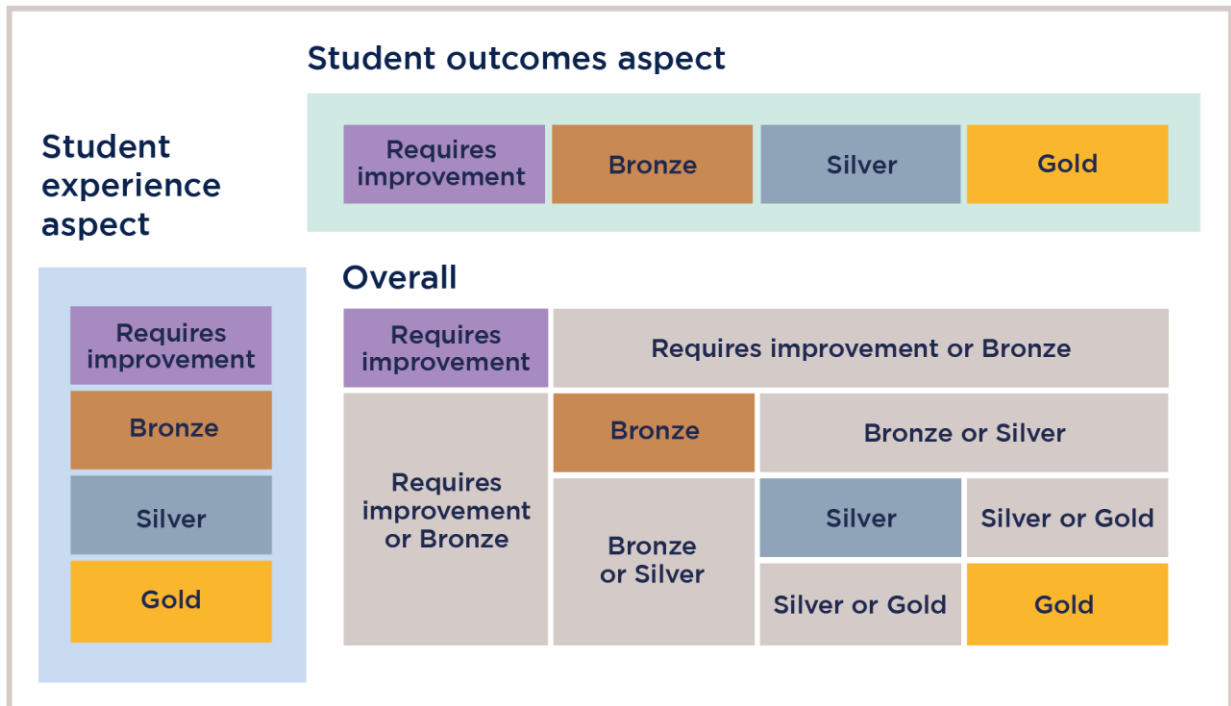
## Annex A: Quick reference checklist

The summary table below lists some of the points covered in this guidance. **This list is not exhaustive, and should not be taken to suggest that other parts of the guidance are less important. It must be read alongside the full communications and branding guidelines and Regulatory advice 22.**

Page	To check
Page 2	If you choose to communicate your provider's TEF outcomes, you should do so clearly and accurately, adhering to the guidance in this document.
Page 4	You may only publicise your TEF 2023 outcomes after the outcomes have been published by the OfS, and not before.
Page 5	If you wish to publish any aspect ratings, or content from the TEF summary panel statement, you must include your provider's overall rating.  You may publish your overall provider rating without the aspect ratings, although we encourage you to include the aspect ratings.
Page 5	Please use the standard wording in the guidance to describe the TEF ratings. The description should be used in full, with no changes to the wording.
Page 6	Where possible, any communication of your provider's TEF outcome should reference the TEF 2023 exercise and the duration of the outcome.
Page 6	To avoid potentially misleading students and the public, you should promote your provider's TEF ratings only in connection with those courses in the scope of the TEF assessment.
Page 6	The TEF assesses each provider overall. It is therefore not appropriate for an individual school, faculty, department or course to claim it has a TEF rating.
Page 6	Where a provider is involved in partnership arrangements, it should display only its own TEF ratings, not those of its partners.
Pages 8-9	The logos from the old TEF scheme should no longer be used.  The current scheme should not be referred to by its previous name – the 'Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework'. The full name of the scheme is the 'Teaching Excellence Framework', and the acronym is 'TEF'.
Page 9	The TEF logos and colours should not be altered in any way.

# Annex B: Relationship between the aspect and overall ratings

This diagram shows what the overall rating for a provider could be, depending on the aspect ratings it is awarded. It shows that it is possible for a provider to be awarded Requires improvement for one aspect, and a Bronze overall rating.





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