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Dear accountable officer,

TEF update

I am writing to update you on:

- The provisional timeline for developing and implementing the new Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) scheme.
- Arrangements for extending current TEF awards until the new TEF scheme is in place.
- Applications for new provisional TEF awards until the new TEF scheme is in place.
- Advice to providers not to use TEF awards in marketing and promotional material from September 2021.

Development and implementation of the new TEF scheme

We are currently developing proposals for a new Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) scheme. The proposals will take account of the recommendations in Dame Shirley Pearce's independent review of the TEF,¹ the government's response to it,² and the findings of the subject-level TEF pilots.

¹ See www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-tef-report

² See www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-independent-review-of-tef

We are doing this alongside our development of a revised approach to regulating quality and standards. This will help to ensure that the TEF forms part of a coherent quality system for English higher education.

We will publish an update on the development of our proposals later in the summer and consult on them in autumn 2021, alongside a consultation on a revised approach to regulating student outcomes. The two consultations will draw on a shared set of proposed indicators which universities, colleges, students and others can consider as part of the consultation process. We will then take account of responses to the consultation before finalising and implementing the new scheme.

Our provisional timeline involves opening the submission window by summer 2022 and announcing outcomes in early 2023, although this timeline will itself be subject to consultation. This provisional timeline is designed to allow the new approach to the TEF to be aligned with the wider review of quality and standards. We also want to minimise the number of consultations at the same time for providers and students, and to enable full consideration to be given to the disruption to higher education resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, both within provider submissions and the TEF assessments.

Extension of current TEF awards

All current TEF awards had been due to expire in summer 2021, with the expectation that awards would be granted under a new scheme in 2021. As we now expect awards within the future scheme to be granted in 2023, we have decided to extend all existing awards. This letter confirms that if your provider currently holds a TEF award, that award is now extended until publication of the outcomes of the next TEF exercise.

Promotion of awards (action required)

As extended TEF awards will become increasingly out of date, we consider that they should no longer be promoted or used to inform student choice once the 2021 student application cycle is complete. **We are therefore advising providers not to use their TEF awards in marketing or promotional materials from September 2021.**

TEF awards will be removed from the Discover Uni website in September and UCAS also intends to remove them from its course pages, at our request. We will continue to publish the extended awards on the OfS website,³ which we will update in September to explain their historical nature.

Revised TEF branding guidelines will be available on the OfS website on 22 June, but **you may wish to start making arrangements now to remove TEF awards from your marketing materials.**

³ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/tef-outcomes/tefoutcomes/

Applications for new provisional TEF awards until the new TEF scheme is in place

Registered English providers that do not hold a TEF award will be able to apply for a provisional award in advance of the next exercise. These awards will also remain valid until the new set of TEF ratings is published in 2023.

The application window for new provisional TEF awards will be open from 22 June 2021 to 26 August 2021. We will write to eligible providers with further details of the process.

Mergers and divisions

During the interim period until the new framework is implemented, we will operate a simplified process to determine TEF awards for providers that merge or divide:

- merged providers will inherit the award of the lead provider
- divided providers will inherit the award of the original provider/entity.

We will review each case individually and write to providers having undergone a merger or division to confirm their TEF award.

Yours sincerely



Chris Millward

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