UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

TEF 2023 Gold

Teaching Excellence Framework

Teaching Excellence Framework 2023 submission and outcome

Contents

1. Executive summary

The University of Portsmouth has been awarded an overall rating of Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF 2023). This is an independent review of teaching quality across higher education providers in England, undertaken by the Office for Students. This rating was awarded in 2023, for four years.

Gold is the highest possible rating. A panel of experts, including academics and students, has judged Portsmouth to be among the very top universities for teaching excellence. The student experience and student outcomes are typically outstanding.

The University also received Gold in the last TEF review in 2017. This renewed accreditation confirms the sustained and consistent nature of our outstanding offer to students.

Our students come from diverse backgrounds. Feedback from the TEF judging panel highlighted the outstanding experience for all of them:

'The panel judged there to be compelling evidence … that the very high quality and outstanding features apply to all the provider's groups of students.'

This TEF rating was based on a range of metrics about our students' experience and outcomes, together with written submissions from both the University and the University of Portsmouth Students' Union (UPSU). The panel recognised our outstanding collaboration with students, noting that the student submission aligned with, and supported, the University's submission.

Overall the panel's feedback commended our innovative approach to learning and teaching, and a culture that celebrates this. The University stretches students to develop to their potential through active learning in real-life and simulated settings, informed by our research strengths and collaborations with employers.

The University recruits students from all backgrounds and successfully tailors our outstanding support in line with their needs. Our comprehensive efforts to support their progression to professional employment begin before they arrive to study with us, and continue throughout their studies and beyond. Alumni can access free advice and guidance from our expert Careers and Employability Service for up to five years after graduation.

Our partnership with USPU ensures that the student voice actively contributes to decision making and quality enhancement. We believe this is instrumental in developing and delivering an approach to teaching which is truly outstanding in its impact.

More detailed information including quotes from the TEF panel feedback

The panel particularly commended these aspects of the University's approach:

Teaching, assessment and feedback: The panel highlighted that 'innovative blended and connected pedagogy promotes student engagement and success', noting that our 'culture promotes and celebrates outstanding innovative learning and teaching.'

Course content and delivery: Panel feedback recognised that through real-life and simulated learning, co-curricular activities and our research-informed curriculum, 'the provider's course content and delivery inspire the provider's students to actively engage in and commit to their learning, and stretch students to develop knowledge and skills to their fullest potential.'

Research and employer engagement: The University's research strength (rated third for research power of all UK modern universities by the Research Excellence Framework) is reflected in outstanding quality of student experience through research opportunities within their courses, including employer focused projects: 'the provider uses research in relevant disciplines, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and employer engagement to contribute to an outstanding academic experience for its students.'

Learning environment and academic support: The University 'ensures its students have access to a readily available range of outstanding quality academic support.' The panel praised support tailored to students' needs, including students with disabilities. It also recognised that 'Personal Tutors are critical to supporting academic progress, helping students understand assessments, guiding decisions about options and course mobility plus career planning.'

Learning resources: The panel found that the University 'understands its students and has tailored its resources to its mix of students and courses.' Highlights noted by the panel include the University's interprofessional simulated learning hub for healthcare students; the Forensic Innovation Centre in partnership with Hampshire Constabulary; and digital resources across campus, including high-spec PCs.

Student engagement in improvement: Our approach to collaboration with students was rated outstanding, with the panel recognising that the University 'effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements in their experiences and outcomes.'

Supporting student success: The panel found that the University's approach is outstanding, ranging from 'Arrive and thrive' pre-arrival support and tailored orientation for students, through to careers support for five years after graduation.

Student continuation and completion: Feedback commended initiatives including Learning Support Tutors, who provide tailored academic and pastoral support for students.

Educational gains: Giving feedback on our outstanding approach, the panel found that 'effective approaches are tailored throughout the student lifecycle to ensure every student has the opportunity for educational gain by improving both their subject knowledge and broader "Hallmarks"; that is, soft skills, personal skills and cultural competencies.'

For information about the Teaching Excellence Framework visit:
officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/about-the-tef

2. Our outcome

TEF panel statement

Provider name:	**University of Portsmouth Higher Education Corporation**

Overall rating

The TEF panel considered the overall rating to be Gold.

Aspect ratings

The TEF panel considered the aspect ratings to be as follows:

Student experience	Gold
Student outcomes	Silver

Duration of this award

This rating was awarded in 2023, for four years.

3. Our submission

3.1. Provider context

The University of Portsmouth offers the life-changing benefits of outstanding higher education (HE) to all our students. Building on our TEF Gold rating awarded in 2017, we deliver **outstanding educational gain** for our students. We do this through genuine partnerships with our students and other stakeholders, taking an evidence-based approach to learning and teaching and investing in targeted and highly-effective support wherever it is required.

Distinctive features of our approach to excellence include:

- Recruiting a very diverse range of students, based on their **potential rather than solely their prior achievement** and tailoring our approach to individual student needs, with a strong emphasis on effective support to transition into HE and curricula that stretch our students;
- Supporting all students to develop the "**Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate**" meaning they graduate as knowledgeable, informed, intellectually curious, responsible, self-aware, self-motivated, independent and set for success in their future careers;
- Delivering **real educational gain** building on these Hallmarks; defined as improvements in subject knowledge, global awareness, personal skills & cultural competences between two points in time;
- **Personalised support for individual students** from induction to graduation through our proactive **personal tutor framework** informed by learner analytics and specialist support roles;
- **Tailored support**, through a range of services and external partners, responds to the needs of individual students, including comprehensive academic support and pastoral support for students with disabilities and other protected student characteristics;
- **Real-world and simulated learning** for all students to enhance their skills for progression to professional-level employment or postgraduate study;
- Innovative **blended and connected pedagogy** promotes student engagement and success;
- Encouraging students to **tailor their learning** to suit their needs and circumstances;
- Outstanding quality, with 75% of undergraduates studying courses accredited by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB), providing **external validation of our quality, standards and employer alignment**;
- **Research-led and research-based** education with curricula and content shaped by world class researchers and research in which students can actively engage, underpinned by our outstanding performance in REF21;
- Individualised and proactive Careers and Employability **support for students for five years after graduation** equips them to make sustained progress in their long-term careers;
- An **organisational culture** that promotes and celebrates outstanding, innovative learning and teaching with staff development and training aligned with our learning and teaching priorities;
- The **strong partnership** with our students, represented by the University of Portsmouth Students' Union (UPSU) and a range of student voice mechanisms, ensures our approach responds to changing student needs.

Impact: The success of this approach is demonstrated through **our outstanding metrics for both student experience and student outcomes throughout the TEF period**, including those years most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. We are proud of this achievement and its impact on the lives and opportunities of our students:

- Our **students reported outstanding levels of satisfaction**, with overall NSS feedback materially above or broadly in line with benchmark throughout the TEF period, including the years most affected by the pandemic, even though this impacted our student demographics so significantly;
- Our **student outcomes measures are consistently either materially above or broadly in line with benchmark, both overall and for protected characteristics**, throughout the TEF period. This achievement is notable given the multiple dimensions of diversity for many of our students, including tariff on entry and prior qualification type, which significantly impact on readiness for HE.

Throughout this Provider Submission this evidence of impact from TEF measures is augmented by additional evidence and case studies to demonstrate the scope and breadth of our impact and the quality and consistency of educational gain for all our students.

Structure of this provider submission: Our five Faculties, with 29 Schools, deliver a range of academic disciplines to support regional, national and global employer needs. Our academic policy frameworks, including Curriculum 2019, Personal Tutoring & Development Framework and Blended & Connected (B&C) learning & teaching apply University-wide. We enable subject-specific adaptations and personalised support for student needs. The student experience section outlines action taken to ensure our students' experience is challenging, engaging and individualised, enabling them to complete their courses successfully and progress to professional employment or postgraduate study. The success of our approach is outlined in the student outcomes section. Case studies demonstrate the benefits and impact of this tailored approach for our students' outcomes. Student experience and outcomes during this TEF period were impacted by Covid-19. We outline our immediate response to support students and positive changes maintained long-term due to benefits for student experience.

Student engagement: We are committed to working in partnership with our students and this Submission has been prepared with the benefit of those partnerships and, particularly, in consultation with UPSU. UPSU representatives were members of our TEF Steering Group and University staff attended theirs, so we could collaboratively work on evidence, putting into practice our shared focus on excellent student experience and outcomes.

Coverage: This Submission covers undergraduates, focusing on full-time campus-based students, as part-time and registered-only students are a very small proportion of the total. It <u>excludes</u> optional elements: apprenticeships, validated-only partnerships, TNE courses & credit-bearing modules. References to performance compared to benchmark are based on statistical certainty criteria of 75%+.

Diversity of our students: Student diversity is a notable feature of the University of Portsmouth. For the last sixteen years we exceeded HESA benchmarks for student recruitment from low-participation neighbourhoods. 16% of undergraduates are International/EU. Disabled students increased by 43% from 2017/18 to 2020/21, particularly students with mental health issues (64% increase):

OfS Size & Shape of Provision Dashboard - Average for FT UK UG entrants 2017/18-2020/21
(* Includes international and EU students)

Black, Asian & minority ethnic (BAME) *	29%	State schools	97%
Mature (21 & over on entry) *	21%	Low/medium tariff new entrants	69%
Disabled *	15%	Non-A level qualifications	45%
Disadvantaged areas (IMD Q1&2)	31%	Eligible for free school meals	15%
Low participation neighbourhoods	38%	Low income households (under £25k)	46%

3.2. Student experience

Measures introduced over this TEF period build on strengths identified in the 2017 TEF Panel's statement of findings on our Gold award. They ensure our students have an outstanding experience, tailored to their needs, including specific measures due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall TEF indicators for student experience during the TEF period were excellent:

Materially above benchmark	(i) Assessment & Feedback (ii) Academic Support
Broadly in line with benchmark	(i) Teaching (ii) Learning Resources (iii) Student Voice

Student experience was harder hit in 2021 than the first year of Covid-19 due to longer-term effects of the pandemic, coupled with a major cyber-attack during the NSS period in 2021. We prioritised, and rapidly reinstated, student-facing systems in recovery from the attack. Appropriate adjustments to assessment deadlines and extenuating circumstances mitigated the impact.

Our response to Covid-19 was comprehensive in its effort to provide seamless access to teaching and learning, and to keep the campus open within government guidelines. We introduced major changes to mitigate the impact and ensured that academic standards were maintained, supported by our PSRB accreditations. Many innovations were welcomed by students, evidenced by improved NSS feedback for all question groups in 2022. We explain below how these have been maintained.

Preliminary sector research shows that **students from low income and widening participation (WP) backgrounds were disproportionately affected by the pandemic**. Dissolution of the physical and social environment of universities raised issues around routine, mental and physical wellbeing, study motivation and feelings of isolation [1]. WP students often found it challenging to fully engage with teaching and learning due to a lack of a quiet study space, appropriate technology or reliable internet connections, with one study finding that just over a quarter of students found it difficult to cope with online learning and assessment due to their home issues [2] [3]. We were acutely aware of such challenges in accelerating our B&C approach to learning and teaching during the pandemic, and included one workstrand to address any differential impact on students. Examples of our response:

B&C learning and IT	Rapid pivot to online delivery in lockdown followed by long-term B&C approach, reinforced by significant take up of digital tools e.g. **content capture**. B&C also supported international and EU student learning at a distance during lockdown. Created a £1m fund, sufficient to meet demand, for long-term laptop loans and internet access, to overcome digital poverty.
Continuation & Completion	Proactive and frequent Personal Tutor contact. Innovation including virtual exchanges and placements. Virtual Faculty showcase in place of year-end shows for creative students to showcase their work to prospective employers.
Broader student support to promote retention	Repatriated exchange students. Supported international students to remain in the UK or return home. Self-isolation support including food parcels. Online sport classes to promote physical & mental health. Some support moved to evenings (e.g. Learning Support Tutors & Mental Health Advisors) to help students working as key workers. New 24/7 multilingual counselling to support dispersed students.

Given the impact of the demographic factors noted above, our students did report slightly lower NSS feedback in TEF year 3 (2021). However, feedback remained broadly in line with benchmark. We have successfully boosted post-pandemic 2022 student experience, with three of five NSS categories for TEF materially above benchmark and with overall satisfaction of 78% in NSS 2022; 7 percentage points higher than 2021. Crucially, our overall continuation, completion and progression metrics remain excellent, with performance in line with benchmark throughout the TEF period, including the years hardest hit by the pandemic, evidencing the benefits of action we took to support our students.

SE1. Outstanding teaching, feedback & assessment practices

Evidence of success

TEF 2017 findings commended Portsmouth's Gold-rated 'optimum levels of student engagement and commitment to learning being secured through excellent and integrated teaching and assessment practices'. External and internal student feedback in this TEF period demonstrates our continued strength with **NSS feedback for the 'teaching on my course' consistently in line with TEF benchmark** throughout. An increase of 4.7 percentage points in 2022 feedback demonstrates the positive impact of enhancements outlined below. **The overall NSS indicator for 'assessment and feedback' is materially above TEF benchmark** and particularly strong in 2022. Strength in this aspect of education is particularly important for our students, given that they are predominantly low to medium tariff on entry, including a proportion who enter through Clearing, who may lack the confidence of higher-achieving peers. Almost half our students enter with qualifications other than solely A levels e.g. BTEC and Access to HE. These students often have little experience of exam-based assessments and require additional support for the successful transition to unfamiliar elements of HE assessment. 88% satisfaction in 2022 for NSS Q1 'staff are good at explaining things' (84% sector average) confirms that our students value this aspect of teaching which is key to their success.

Additional measures to achieve this success

We introduced changes in our approach to learning, teaching and assessment during the TEF period to address the following key objectives:

1. enhancing the transition into HE to support strong continuation and completion rates;
2. further improving student progression to professional employment;
3. further modernising delivery of learning, teaching and assessment to gain maximum benefits from digital technologies;
4. reducing awarding gaps, particularly for our Black students.

Many changes had an impact on all students while some were tailored to individual students or groups of students. This dual approach ensures that all students benefit from core enhancements, such as the Curriculum 2019 including the Personal Tutoring and Development Framework (PTDF), and from extension opportunities, such as skills support, languages, enterprise and extra-curricular activities, as appropriate to their development needs and career aspirations.

Curriculum 2019: Our new curriculum framework was designed to promote innovative course design and assessment and to address the four issues above. It was co-created with students [4], with B&C learning along with a focus on collaborative enhancement through TESTA and enABLe at its heart. Implementing the framework also embedded the 'Hallmarks of the Portsmouth Graduate' in all courses. These Hallmarks cover four dimensions: (i) subject and discipline; (ii) society and citizenship; (iii) personal competencies; and (iv) personal development, equipping graduates with skills required by employers in the UK and globally. Enhancements to improve transition into HE included year-long modules at level 4 and 'consolidation weeks' to enable students to consolidate their learning and engage in self-directed, independent study. Other changes promoted choice for level 5 and 6 students e.g. international exchanges, volunteering, and placements due to their employability benefits.

Curriculum 2019 includes an '**Assessment for Learning Policy**' promoting authentic 'assessment for learning', rather than just assessment of learning; meaning that assessment reinforces skills needed for employment, tailored to the academic subject and PSRB requirements. Changes also promoted consistency of outcomes across all students, in particular, reducing differential educational outcomes and the awarding gap for Black students. For example, through the curriculum-revision process staff undertook workshops to decolonise the curriculum and redesign assessment via TESTA (see below) and Charrettes (see section SE4). We refined curriculum framework changes through extensive

consultation, including open events with staff and students, and student surveys. Crucially, this curriculum redesign, incorporating improvements through Charrettes, has contributed to reducing the awarding gap for our Black students from 26% in 2017/18 to 19% by 2020/21.

TESTA: To support innovation in assessments and promote co-creation with students, we began our 'Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment' (**TESTA**) programme in 2018. TESTA is an internationally-recognised approach through which students and staff generate assessment to foster deeper learning across whole courses. Since 2018, course teams and students on ten courses per annum engaged with TESTA. Typically these courses had high numbers of students with less experience of HE-type assessment methods due to their prior qualifications (e.g. BTEC entrants). Additionally, our Learning Support Tutors provide feedback to course teams about student experience of assessment, feeding into TESTA as appropriate, and leading to innovative assessment redesign.

Student-centered response to Covid-19: We adapted at speed to deliver outstanding experience and outcomes for all students despite the impact of Covid-19. We worked with our students to understand and meet their needs in a proactive, caring and personalised way, recognising many are from low-income families and BAME communities particularly affected by the consequences of Covid-19. We also supported our staff through this difficult period, acknowledging that good student experience starts with good staff experience. For example, through our innovative 'Study Buddy' club, Childhood Studies undergraduates gained vital work experience supporting staff and student parents who were homeschooling their children while working from home in lockdown.

Blended and Connected (B&C) Learning: Our phased introduction of B&C learning started in 2019, alongside other curriculum enhancements outlined above. B&C is our distinctive approach to learning and teaching, defined as a student-centred pedagogic approach that prioritises active student engagement, in line with the principles of Active Blended Learning (ABL) [5]. This is based on sector best practice, supported by technology and refined in partnership with our students, responding to their priorities to ensure all students benefit from a consistent, high quality experience. This encompasses purposeful and aligned synchronous and asynchronous work and promotes the development and application of subject knowledge, professional and digital skills. This approach placed us in a strong position for the challenges of online learning and teaching from March 2020 onwards due to Covid-19.This B&C approach incorporates '**connected**' to emphasise our focus on **building a sense of community** for students with peers, staff and the University. From the outset of Covid-19, we deployed training and resources, a Champions Network and staff Q&A sessions, coupled with a Standard Operating Procedure, to ensure all courses rapidly adopted our B&C pedagogic model. B&C learning has subsequently been refined and adapted to students' needs post-pandemic.

Enabling access to online learning: Our top priority on entering lockdown was to ensure students and staff could still access learning and teaching. We initiated free long-term laptop loans and financial support for home internet access, recognising many students did not have these.

Physical access to campus: We also recognised that some learning could only ever take place in person and therefore we rescheduled some course elements and fast-tracked the reopening of our campus as soon as conditions allowed. This was a priority especially as many of our students had limited home access to appropriate places to study. We also have high numbers of international students, estranged students, care leavers and others who had to remain in student accommodation during the pandemic. Isolation and mental health issues were a concern. Consequently, our campus was continually open within the social distancing parameters of successive government guidelines, with meticulously-planned practical measures to ensure safety. We were the first university to house an NHS symptomatic testing centre on campus and also created a comprehensive asymptomatic testing regime and analytics for staff and students. This enabled us to respond quickly to outbreaks before they escalated and provide targeted welfare support to students in isolation.

Redesigning curricula and assessment for B&C learning: We have committed to build on rapid change introduced in the pandemic and to permanently redesign all on-campus courses for B&C learning & assessment, incorporating the principles of ABL [5] through our 2021 'Digital Success Plan for Learning and Teaching'. During 2021/22 this redesign process progressed rapidly, supported by the appointment of nine Learning Designers and the **institutional embedding of 'enABLe'**. 'enABLe' is a team-based approach to course and module design and co-creation with students, based on extensive pedagogic research led by our Dean of Digital & Distributed Learning. In 2021/22, 25% of academic staff contributed to enABLe in partnership with students and employers. We redesigned 10 priority courses and 40 modules for long-term B&C learning along with 8 subject-level enABLe workshops. Jisc's 'Approaches to Curriculum & Learning Design across UK Higher Education' report highlighted this success [6].

SE2. Inspirational and stretching course content & delivery

Evidence of success

Evidence of outstanding practice in section SE1 also relates to this section, including the 2017 commendation of our gold-rated 'excellent and integrated teaching and assessment practices', and recent strong and improving NSS feedback for overall satisfaction and 'teaching on my course'. The 2017 TEF panel also commended our 'industry-leading physical and digital resources which provide real and simulated learning opportunities, which are actively and consistently used by students to develop their independence and confidence, and enhance learning and progression'. We continue to invest significantly in these resources which are core to inspirational and challenging learning (see section SE6).

Additionally, we value the external validation of quality, standards and employer input signified by PSRB accreditation. We ensure that all courses eligible for PSRB accreditation secure and retain it. In 2021/22 75% of undergraduates were enrolled on courses with PSRB accreditation. This external PSRB accreditation is particularly important to us as a modern university, demonstrating our course content meets stretching professional standards and employer expectations in each subject area.

Additional measures to achieve this success

Through Curriculum 2019, Personal Tutoring and associated frameworks we support every student to achieve their potential; with challenge and stretch through real-life and simulated practice, academic development and wider skills development for employment. Integration of our excellent research and professional practice with education is key to inspirational course content and delivery (see SE3). At the heart of our approach are the tailored, transformational opportunities that we build into our courses and extended opportunities open to students. These **inspirational learning and teaching opportunities** span our five Faculties ensuring all students have meaningful opportunities to develop graduate skills required by employers, e.g.:

- Major investment in **learning environments that simulate the workplace** (see SE6);
- Our **Digital Success Plan** promotes inspirational teaching and transformational learning for all;
- We incorporate **real life practice**; students treat NHS patients in our Dental Academy; Law and Accounting students run legal & debt clinics for the public; our School of Architecture runs an architectural practice with students; placement year students can set up and run small businesses;
- Students learn with **active researchers** and have opportunities to collaborate with them (SE3);
- Embedded **external certification** demonstrates skills to future employers e.g. 55 students gained Emergency First Aid and 40 students gained Mental Health First aid certificates last year;
- **Extended opportunities** through increased take-up of student enterprise, UK and global student placements, e.g. placement years taken by 440 students p.a. on average, and initial enrolment of 35 students on new dual degrees with Edith Cowan University in Australia.

Case study 3: The Social Work Inclusion Group (SWIG) enables people with lived experience of social work and health services to contribute to curriculum developments, skills days, 'Create days' and 'Debate days' with 160 BSc (Hons) Social Work students p.a. SWIG members also contribute to admissions and assessments. These creative and innovative practices were commended in 2021/22 external examiner feedback: *"Overall, I consider the presentations that I watched were of a high standard, performed sensitively and with compassion and conveyed the realities of service users' lived experiences."*

Case study 4: Responding to student co-creation, the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice introduced a TEAL (Technology Enhanced Active Learning) scheme at level 4 replacing lectures for 430 students with small, interactive workshops, reinforced by online learning. This was so successful that it informed our approach to curriculum design and delivery during Covid-19 and beyond.

Bringing subjects to life through co-curricular activities and skills development: Co-curricular initiatives play an important role in reinforcing formal learning and teaching, stretching our students to the fullest and enhancing the sense of community and belonging that contributes to our excellent continuation and completion rates. Every Faculty offers relevant co-curricular activities, for example the popular Formula Student Society, where students design, build and race a racing car, the Psychology Society and the Drone Club. Most initiatives are student-led, and actively supported by academic and technical staff. They provide valuable networking and support for employability skills development, both subject-based and personal skills development. Additionally, our credit-bearing short courses for employers and partners are offered to our students for free. Examples include:

- introduction to teaching, providing students with skills to work in schools;
- probation knowledge modules covering elements of initial training to become a probation officer.

Case study 6: Student volunteering develops a range of graduate skills. In 2021/22 1,810 students delivered 55,000 hours of volunteering. Activities included administering Covid-19 vaccinations to the public, working in a Nightingale hospital, teaching lifesaving CPR skills to the public, and working with local primary schools to support their Reading Schemes and improve literacy levels.

Case study 7: The Institution Wide Languages Programme enables all students to learn a new language alongside their degree, including Arabic, British Sign Language, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin and Spanish. From 2019/20 to 2021/22 enrolments doubled to 2,400.

Reviewing and refreshing our course portfolio and curricula: We operate a regular 'Course Portfolio Review' process, where any courses that fail to meet our stretching internal thresholds for demand, student experience and student outcomes are reviewed and improved, through targeted action-planning, including student co-creation, and, if necessary, modified or closed. Major reviews took place in 2017 and 2021 with external support to provide additional rigour and challenge. A number of courses were phased out as a result and several new courses introduced in response to demand. Through this ongoing strategic focus our high-quality portfolio is proactively aligned with employer skills needs.

Evidence of success

The University submitted 603 academic staff across 16 Units of Assessment to REF21 covering our breadth of subjects; an increase of 100% staff from REF14. 77% of research submitted was judged world-leading and internationally excellent, with highly-rated impact on society, health, culture and the environment. The Times Higher Education ranked Portsmouth as third for research power of all UK modern universities. Our profile as a modern university with excellent research is confirmed by our consistent performance in the top 150 globally in the Times Higher Young University ranking.

Additional measures to achieve this success

Research, innovation and employer engagement are embedded into our courses, through an approach tailored to subject requirements, employer skills needs and students' career aspirations, including progression to postgraduate study. We ensure **REF-active researchers and professional practice experts** contribute their cutting-edge expertise to all of our undergraduate subjects and enable students to contribute to joint research projects. Many staff are experienced practitioners from the professions (e.g. NHS) and many continue as PSRB-accredited working practitioners e.g. the architectural practice in our School of Architecture.

Research based learning is also fundamental to our approach. All undergraduate courses include a research-focused dissertation or professional practice-focused project. Additional opportunities to contribute to high quality research include students presenting posters in Parliament via the 'British Conference of Undergraduate Research', undergraduate summer research bursaries and involvement in the University's own pedagogic research. These opportunities, including contributions to public impact, peer-reviewed and scholarly research papers, enhance skills development and opportunities for progression to MRes and doctoral study. Student input to employer-led projects develops essential 'Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate'. Engagement with employers through projects also develops social and career capital through links to potential future employers & referees. During this TEF period we have expanded our **enterprise programme and Faculty Placement Offices**, targeted at relevant employers, to ensure all students have employer-facing opportunities. Examples include:

Case study 8: Our School of Psychology supports 40% of students to contribute to research activity in addition to dissertations which are expected to be of publishable standard:
- 20% of undergraduates elect to participate in a level 5 Research Based Learning module where students and staff co-create and publish some shared publications.
- Students gain additional experience through Project Support Assistant (PSA) paid roles, Summer Bursary Schemes and additional voluntary engagement. A number contributed to published research including papers submitted to REF21.

Case study 9: Criminology undergraduates have contributed to a Cyber Vulnerabilities Project in collaboration with Hampshire Constabulary, assisting with a European Funded ORPHEUS project and research into COVID vaccines and misinformation, gaining valuable professional experience.

Case study 10: Since 2012, approx 80 students p.a. have participated in the UK's largest annual international live and simulated disaster response exercise (SIMEX). This event, run in collaboration with a global UN-linked task force, creates opportunities for networking, research and student placements, including the annual three-day crisis simulation exercise, with inter-professional learning for paramedic, nursing and drama students.

Case study 11: Five courses in our School of Creative Technologies culminate with Real-time Interactive Group Projects for 120 students annually, e.g. students developed a training simulator for Royal Navy Special Forces pilots. Students gain from employer input, which can lead to prestigious job offers. Our approach received several awards from the PSRB, The Industry Games Association (TIGA): Education Institution of the Year 2021; Outstanding Graduate of the Year for Enterprise / Production 2021; Outstanding Graduate of the Year for Enterprise / Production 2022.

Case study 12: Our growing student enterprise programme, building on the Careers and Employability Service's successful 'Routes to Start Up Programme' for students and graduates, with 180 students in 2021/22, supports students to develop Hallmarks. Also, 80 business students run 20 live business-consultancy projects with SMEs and social enterprises annually. Additionally, a self-employed placement year is an option in most undergraduate courses and 180 students p.a. start up a business or a social enterprise. Our team of 30 experienced 'Entrepreneurs in Residence' use their expertise to help students plan, develop, network and market their new business. Building on this, 42 graduates have signed licence agreements to run their new business in one of our incubation and innovation centres.

We also **embed employer networks into course & curriculum development**, to ensure we prepare graduates with skills and knowledge required in the national and global economy, e.g. significant redesign School of Sport, Health & Exercise Science courses reflected feedback from their employer network including alumni and improved progression to professional employment by 6 percentage points by 2019/20. Success in two competitive OfS teaching capital bids also confirm this strength. Bids submitted in September 2021 and July 2022 received £7.8 million OfS funding based on strong employer partnerships in health science, with the NHS, and engineering re 'Engineering the future'.

SE4. Outstanding staff development and academic practice

Evidence of success

TEF 2017 feedback commended our 'established and embedded institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching', reflecting our commitment to developing staff, promoting AdvanceHE Fellowship and investing in training in learning and teaching innovation. We have built on those Gold-rated foundations in this TEF period, through our focus on recognising and rewarding excellence in learning and teaching, and supporting innovation, including in response to the pandemic. The significant increase in staff entered for REF21 brings benefits for learning & teaching and innovative student opportunities to develop the Hallmarks.

Evidence of excellent academic practice: Staff who teach and support students are actively encouraged to gain appropriate levels of Fellowship from AdvanceHE. 48% of our 1,360 academic staff have Fellowships awarded through an AdvanceHE accredited CPD scheme, which is above sector average. Our Fellowships include 6 National Teaching Fellows (NTF), 14 Principal Fellows (PFHEA) and 67 Senior Fellows (SFHEA). In 2022 we were shortlisted for an 'Excellence in Practice' Award by the AdvanceHE Staff Development Forum. Innovative work by staff to support our B&C approach in response to Covid-19 through 'Project Phoenix' was recognised through a Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence (CATE) by AdvanceHE in 2022.

Additional measures to achieve this success

Championing excellent academic practice: We actively identify good practice through our quality review and enhancement processes, notably our annual course, School and Faculty 'Excellence & Quality Improvement Plans (EQUIP)'. Structured opportunities to disseminate good practice include annual 'Faculty Showcases' and Learning & Teaching conferences. Staff development has evolved reflecting pedagogic research, including the value of co-creation with students, which we have long championed and innovative digital skills development by staff. Our learning & teaching experts (e.g. NTFs, PFHEAs and SFHEAs) actively contribute to working groups to develop academic practice to benefit student experience and were key to delivering our B&C approach to learning and teaching in the pandemic by leading work-strands. These Academic leads also enhance the learning experience, i.e. supporting the facilitation of enABLe at pace and at scale, and the training of new facilitators.

Promoting innovation in teaching excellence: We provide extensive opportunities for staff development throughout their careers and priorities agreed through annual development reviews:

- Modelling practice using **peer observation of teaching** as an enhancement & reflective process;
- **CPD:** CPD is tailored to meet organisational priorities. During the pandemic, a five-day Blended Learning festival supported enhancement in teaching practice, showcased good practice and resources. More than 1,000 staff attended, with subsequent engagement via online resources. This focus will be maintained in future given our long-term B&C approach. We also ran staff development festivals on Wellbeing and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI);

- **Charrettes:** When members of the University Alliance (UA) Teaching Excellence Alliance, we developed and co-facilitated a 'sandpit' for 60 teaching staff in 2017 focused on innovative course design. We redeveloped this model as a 'Charrette' (co-creation collaborative workshop) for Portsmouth, where course teams and students jointly make curriculum changes to address the Black awarding gap: the Charrettes identified barriers and innovations with students, e.g. assessment changes for inclusivity & proactive personal tutoring.

> **Case Study 13:** Innovative new staff development opportunities support our strategic drive to promote social justice and reduce the Black awarding gap. 70 staff and students participated in development with a partner organisation that embeds the voice of social justice & and marginalised communities in all aspects of curriculum design and teaching practice. A suite of internal courses, delivered to 430 staff in 2021, include aspects of EDI, i.e. 'Brave Spaces' that develop staff skills to openly address sensitive issues in the classroom in inclusive ways.

Internal recognition of excellent academic practice: In line with our strategic commitment to promoting a culture that values excellent teaching, we recognise staff excellence in learning and teaching through an education-specific pathway for academic promotion. Successful candidates must demonstrate a track record of excellence and innovation in pedagogy and curriculum development, including a national or international external profile. Ten staff were promoted to Professor or Reader (Associate Professor) via that route from 2018/19 to 2021/22. We introduced Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence to recognise individuals and groups making exceptional contributions, focused on learning, teaching and enhancing student experience.

Supporting teaching excellence: This is the core purpose of key roles such as Online Course Developers, Learning Support Tutors and Learning Designers. We have enhanced support for excellent learning and teaching, with nine new Learning Designers (who facilitate enABLe workshops for course and module redesign with course teams and students) recruited since 2021.

SE5. Supportive learning environment & outstanding, tailored academic support

Evidence of success

The 2017 TEF Gold rating noted our 'strategic and inclusive approach that supports student learning, achievement and welfare effectively throughout the student life cycle', along with our 'clearly defined approach to induction and support arrangements for new students and for student transitions, with targeted support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and care leavers'. **The overall NSS indicator for academic support is materially above benchmark**, demonstrating our continuing success in providing outstanding quality, tailored support, with the 5 percentage point increase in 2022 showing impact of recent enhancements. The real impact of our comprehensive and personalised support is shown through our consistently excellent benchmarked student continuation and completion rates, including those for protected student characteristics.

Additional measures to achieve this success

Tailored and flexible support to meet individual needs: We have enriched the comprehensive academic support that was commended in TEF 2017. The scope of academic support reflects the diversity of our students. Both central and local support, provided through a hub and spoke model, is crucial to supporting students to succeed and develop as confident, independent learners:
- Our Personal Tutoring & Development Framework (PTDF, see SO1) means that every undergraduate's ***Personal Tutor* is their primary source of academic support**, providing structured guidance, referral to additional resources and signposting to specialist services. Personal Tutors are critical to supporting academic progress, helping students understand assessments, guiding decisions about options and course mobility plus career planning. They deploy a variety of resources, such as our 'Value Me' toolkit to support students to define their personal brand for career success [7]. They also employ solution-focused coaching, a distinctive element of our PTDF, to help students help themselves.
- Our **Additional Support & Disability Advice Centre** (ASDAC) works closely with disabled students and their course teams to deliver bespoke adjustments and independent learning plans. Staff and partners offer 1:1 and assistive technology support including a special pre-arrival event for neuro-diverse students and families. Disabled students increased by 980 from 13% in 2017/18 to 17% in 2021/22 (sector average is 13%) meaning this service is vital to student success.

- Our **Academic Skills Unit** (ASK) team develops students' academic literacy through individual and group sessions on academic writing, coursework planning and dissertation bootcamps centrally. Over 90% of users rated tutor support at the highest rating in 2021/22 ASK user feedback. **Learning Support Tutors** provide tailored, individual academic skills development at subject-level and integrate with course teams.
- Understanding mathematics is a crucial skill for many of our courses. Our School of Mathematics and Physics' **Maths Cafe** offers support to all students via flexible drop-in or online sessions.
- **In-Sessional English** provides open access support on skills and knowledge which may present challenges for international and EU students. Digital technologies such as DeepL Translate, YouGlish and Quillbot are integrated into teaching. In 2021/22 enrolments doubled to 860.
- We invest in **student sport** to enhance 'belonging' within our 'Being, Belonging and Becoming' framework. Students gain team and leadership skills, improving communication & problem-solving skills. Sport also encourages students to be flexible, embrace challenges & seek development opportunities, all contributing to the Hallmarks.

Case study 14: We have significantly increased our **Student Engagement Officers** (SEOs) who support curriculum design, deliver study workshops & individual sessions, e.g. neuro-diverse students in the Faculty of Technology are supported by SEOs via customised study strategies to increase engagement and use of specialist software. Students with specific learning difficulties rated course-specific learning resources at 83% in NSS over 4 years vs 77% sector average.

Case study 15: Our student-led **Living Well With Autism** (LWWA) group was shortlisted for THE Awards 2021 recognising outstanding student support tailored for neurodiverse students. The group is supported by a Specialist Clinical Psychologist to guide students on HE life and studying. The students access 1:1 specialist support, and run a Facebook group to reduce isolation. Student feedback is positive, valuing LWWA as a safe and supportive environment.

Enhancing digital provision to meet student expectations: We invest significantly in our digital infrastructure, including our VLE, to support student induction and learning and teaching. Online Course Developers and specialist Learning Designers support the interactive VLE and its best use. We provide 2,000 open access PCs and Macs, 3,000 teaching terminals and 800 high-spec specialist PCs across campus, plus 1,000 loanable laptops. In 2021/22 we upgraded 750 PCs, 200 Laptops and installed 1,200 4K widescreen monitors in response to student feedback on their priorities. Other enhancements include 350 additional seats in flexible social learning locations across campus, to enable individual and group work, plus extended opening hours e.g. evening access to specialist facilities. Physical and digital learning resources were ranked in the top quartile of UK HEIs in the NSS in three of the last four years, despite the challenges of Covid-19 impact plus a cyber-attack.

Student-focused support in the pandemic: Rapidly moving all academic support services to B&C delivery in March 2022 was a priority. For example we provided in-person & online e/counselling, valued by students with social anxiety, on placement or studying off campus. In the pandemic we added out-of-hours Specialist Mental Health Advisors and a 24/7 multilingual service to support our globally dispersed student population. Further initiatives during lockdown included proactive Personal Tutor contact and welfare calls for students in halls of residence & private accommodation. Feedback was very positive from the 90% of students reached in this way by Tutors. During lockdown 'MyPort' hubs moved to virtual support for students' academic queries e.g. assessment, extenuating circumstances, coordinated 'welfare knocks', advised about testing & self-isolation. Once reopened, hubs helped 1,200 students in-person per month providing support and sign-posting other services.

Innovative academic support by the University Library: Student feedback and SCONUL data confirms that our library provides outstanding academic support and extensive online resources. It is our largest study space with 1,500 seats and extended 24/7 term time opening. Bookable rooms are popular for group work, virtual recruitment interviews, hybrid learning & online assessments. Faculty librarians tailor support to discipline requirements, teaching students use of resources for referencing, TALIS reading lists, research and dissertation support. The Library provides an important example of our response to Covid-19 and long-term change as a result. Prior to Covid-19, the Library's academic support was primarily delivered in-person with some digital resources. To support B&C learning in the pandemic we accelerated moves to electronic resources, e.g. eBooks increased from 300k in 2019 to 850k by July 2021, with one significant investment being the SAGE Catalyst e-textbook package with many resources for student use. Popular 'click & collect' and home delivery services introduced in lockdown won an internal VC award and are maintained

post-pandemic. The Library also reopened at the earliest opportunity following lockdown, with UPSU representatives contributing to planning this to help us respond to student needs, e.g. a booking system was introduced to manage social distancing. We have maintained extensive digital resources introduced in the pandemic, including videos, tests and increased use of the NimblyWise learning platform, due to long term benefits in supporting student transition and success. Throughout this TEF period NSS feedback for Q19 'Library Resources' consistently outperformed the sector by between 2.6% and 4.6%. SCONUL benchmarking data places us in the top quartile of 'modern' universities for:

★ Information expenditure per FTE student	★ % of total library expenditure on information
★ Information as % of total institutional expenditure	★ E-book section requests per FTE student

Digital engagement and fluency: Developing digital fluency is essential for academic success and subsequent employment and became increasingly important due to Covid-19. Use of the Jisc Discovery Tool by students and staff since 2019 supported self-assessment and skills development, which strengthened our approach during the pandemic. Student feedback shows flexible access to learning is essential, particularly for mature, commuter students and others balancing study and work. Our Content Capture Policy, developed pre-Covid to supports our B&C approach, promotes flexibility by embedding digital tools e.g. Vevox, Nearpod, Padlet, and Panopto, ensuring that three key interaction types (student-student, student-tutor and student-content) are incorporated in every module. We have achieved a significant culture shift in deploying these resources since 2020, e.g. Panopto videos created rose from 8k to 106k and views rose from 35k to 3m from Sept 2020 to August 2021. We introduced remote access to specialist software and simulated learning so students could continue to access essential specialist learning resources throughout the pandemic. Training opportunities, including digital learning "Minifests" and our 'EXPLORE' tool showcasing software, ensure staff can confidently embed digital skills & inspire students using high-quality digital resources.

SE6. Learning resources contribute to outstanding learning and teaching

Evidence of success

TEF 2017 commended 'industry-leading physical and digital resources which provide real and simulated learning opportunities, which are actively and consistently used by students to develop their independence and confidence, and enhance learning and progression'. We continue to excel in this area. NSS feedback on learning resources is broadly in line with benchmark. Given that a major cyber-attack impacted access to digital learning resources for several weeks during the NSS period in 2021, feedback in line with benchmark was an achievement and recognised how quickly we worked to restore all services to students. Our strength in real and simulated learning resources contributes to student engagement and thus to our positive performance in terms of continuation and completion outcomes.

Additional measures to achieve this success

Preparation for employment at the core of our pedagogic approach: Our commitment to preparing students for professional employment, recognised in our extensive PSRB accreditations, drives our approach to learning resources. We invest in industry-leading physical and digital resources to provide real and simulated learning opportunities and support the active blended learning [5] experience at the heart of our B&C pedagogy. Our physical learning spaces and studios can be booked for self-directed study including project work. Providing these high-level facilities means our students experience real-world environments and work in authentic capacities as part of collaborative teams, as embodied in our 'Hallmarks'. **Highly skilled staff** are integral to these learning environments, with technical staff supporting students as groups and individuals in self-directed work in workshops, labs and studios. Technician-led surgeries support students to refine specialist skills including for final year projects e.g. Engineering technicians run 800 workshops p.a. on manufacturing facilities & Electron Microscopy technicians train students in imaging and sample preparation.

Extensive use of physical and digital simulated work environments: All our Faculties make innovative use of simulated learning, to support student learning in safe environments before real-world practice, thus building skills and confidence for employment, for example:
* **Our Dental Academy** trains dental therapists, dental hygiene & therapists and dental nurses alongside students from King's College Dental School in interprofessional teams and provides NHS dental care to the local community. To support safe and confident practice in the clinic we develop students in high fidelity simulation first, including the use of Phantom Heads.

- **Our mock Crown Court Room** with video recording facilities, video-linked interview rooms and jury retiring room, simulates the professional environment for law students, including student cross-examinations by professional barristers. The Court Room also supports interprofessional learning, e.g. training students from health, social care and criminology as expert witnesses.
- Economics and Business students use a fully functional **Bloomberg suite**; the same facilities as used globally by financial services firms. We incorporate recognised certification in Bloomberg proficiency which is highly-valued by employers.

Collaboration with partners to enhance our learning resources and environment: We are proactive in partnering to achieve synergy and extended opportunities for our students, while integrating research, innovation and professional practice into our curriculum, for example:

- Our **Forensic Innovation Centre**, developed with Hampshire Constabulary, was the UK's first operational police forensic facility on a university campus. It combines police forensic science and digital crime investigators with facilities for students, researchers and serving police staff. Students have internship opportunities, access to professional mentors and are taught by active Officers.
- Developed in partnership with HEFCE and the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the **Future Technology Centre** is an £11 million collaborative and practical learning environment. Used by Faculty of Technology students, it includes specialist facilities for materials research and promotes multidisciplinary teaching in STEM subjects and includes TEAL Spaces.

Case Study 16: Over 2,000 healthcare students in nursing, pharmacy, allied health and dental courses benefit from our longstanding commitment to **innovative use of simulation in healthcare education**. In 2021, £2 million of competitively awarded OfS teaching capital investment extended this interprofessional learning hub, with new tactile anatomical models and body parts for teaching anatomy, physiology and clinical skills, three Anatomage 'high fidelity virtual cadavers' tables & 27 high fidelity manikins. Integrated digital media extends simulation, recording and analysis into and beyond the classroom thus enabling greater flexibility and use of these resources.

Case Study 17: Our £7 million **Centre for Creative and Immersive Extended Reality** (CCIXR) was developed with the Solent LEP. Funded to address future skills, the Centre is the UK's first integrated facility to support teaching, research and innovation in the creative and digital areas of virtual, augmented and mixed reality. 500 students p.a. use state-of-the-art facilities including a Motion Capture studio, an LED Virtual production Smart stage, advanced sound recording studios (including Dolby Atmos) and a PlayStation developer lab.

SE7. Embedded student engagement promotes continuous improvement

Evidence of success:

NSS responses on the student voice were broadly in line with benchmark in 2019 and 2021 and materially above benchmark in both 2020, the first year impacted by the pandemic, and 2022. Performance was particularly strong in 2022, at 70.3% satisfaction; 3.8% above benchmark, showing the success of work to enhance student voice in partnership with UPSU.

Additional measures to achieve this success

In our TEF 2017 submission the UPSU President stated that the University works with UPSU to ensure we have a vibrant, supportive, collegial learning community. During this TEF period, we have built on our commitment to working with students as partners to enhance all aspects of the student experience. Key processes include:

- **Formal representation:** Students are represented in our academic committees at School, Faculty and University level, including Academic Council and the Board of Governors, ensuring their input to decision-making. This formal representation is reinforced by regular informal meetings between members of the University's Executive Board and senior managers, elected officers and senior UPSU staff, ensuring that any issues are addressed quickly and effectively.

- Students contribute to **relevant policy developments** e.g. we developed a new **Student Charter** in 2018 to support transitions to HE by clearly defining what students and staff should expect from each other. This was co-created with students (international, UG, PGT, PGR, part-time, distance, mature) deliberately including those who do not typically engage with the Students' Union. The Charter is now used with our new students and 'Welcome Ambassadors', paid and trained student employees who support the successful transition of new entrants to HE.
- **Student Voice policy:** We implemented our new 'Student Voice Policy – Valuing Students' Views and Opinions' in 2019. The policy highlights three key aspects of the student voice: (i) student surveys; (ii) student participation in quality assurance & enhancement; (iii) student representation. Student feedback includes course and module feedback through EvaSys surveys and requires academic staff to 'close the loop' by responding on good practice and areas for improvement.
- **Course representatives:** UPSU and the University collaboratively run the course representative system, with over 1,000 representatives p.a. This system strengthens communication and ensures the student voice informs decision-making, while developing employability skills in students.

Case study 18: We are committed to tackling the awarding gap for Black students. Students from the BAME network developed and delivered training for staff to share their authentic experience. This included students explaining how the classroom feels to them and how this can affect their learning. Along with other work (e.g. Charrettes, decolonising the curriculum), this contributed to reducing the Black awarding gap from 26% (2017/18) to 19% (2020/21).

Case study 19: The Careers & Employability Service gained Matrix reaccreditation reflecting student feedback, with graduates speaking highly of the service and valuing the careers guidance provided. The University Library gained Customer Service Excellence accreditation in 2017 and annual reaccreditation since based on positive student feedback about the responsive service.

Case study 20: In 2021/22 UPSU undertook a research project to pilot engaging on early interventions with students and course teams. This pilot addressed issues from BN (Hons) Nursing students about practice placements and collaboratively resolved these via co-creation. Following the successful pilot the University allocated £0.5 million to UPSU over 2022-2024 to expand this 'Better Student Outcomes' initiative, which includes a new 'Seven Steps to Success' (7S) professional development programme for students. Collaboratively developed by Jade Underwood (UPSU's Learning Experience Sabbatical Officer) and staff, this supports students to systematically work through seven steps to enhance their employability skills gained at university, within and beyond the curriculum, and relate them to the 'Hallmarks'.

Student voice during the pandemic: Covid-19 created significant challenges for our students, meaning collaboration with UPSU was vital to understanding their practical needs and priorities. At times UPSU challenged us to be more innovative; for example in pushing for a no detriment policy to be adopted in 2020. We did not implement such a policy, but did introduce a raft of no detriment practices. This approach ensured that the nuances of the issues facing different student groups actively informed University policy-making while maintaining academic standards. To structure collaboration during the pandemic, we worked with UPSU to establish a student panel to feed the student voice into our planning. We evaluated our approach to B&C learning through surveys to investigate students' sense of belonging, in addition to using regular course and module surveys. We conducted and wrote up this research with a student [8]. The University also led a QAA-funded collaborative project with three other UK universities: 'Differing Perceptions of Quality of Learning' [9], providing quantitative & qualitative data on students' experience of B&C learning, focused on differences by ethnicity and subject area, which informed refinements of our future approach.

3.3. Student outcomes

Our continuing success in tailoring approaches to the needs of our diverse students is demonstrated by the strength and consistency of students' outcomes overall.

SO1. Tailored approaches to student success & progression

Evidence of success

TEF 2017 findings commended our 'strategic and inclusive approach that supports student learning, achievement and welfare effectively throughout the student life cycle'. **Outcomes for protected student characteristics such as age, disability, ethnicity, sex, ABCS and deprivation show uniform strength and consistency**. This achievement is particularly notable given the multiple dimensions of diversity of many students, including tariff on entry and prior qualification type, which significantly impact readiness for HE learning and assessment.

Additional measures to achieve this success

Welcome, transition, learning environment and belonging: Providing an inclusive and welcoming environment is essential, given that our intake includes many first generation students from deprived communities, along with one in six international/EU students. The majority of our students have low or medium tariff on entry and many enter through Clearing. Effective support for integration into HE is vital, if they are to succeed. Consequently, our **'arrive and thrive' approach** led by our **Being, Belonging, Becoming** staff-student working group starts before students enrol, with pre-arrival resources on preparation for HE used by 3,000 students in 2020/21. New students can join our 'Living Well at Uni' groups, developed to offer peer support and build transition-supporting skills and facilitated by trained student 'Welcome Ambassadors'. This complements wider welcome initiatives that help new students develop supportive peer networks during induction. ASDAC provides tailored support for disabled students to adjust successfully to university life. The 43% increase in students with disabilities from 2017/18 to 2021/22 means this is critical for a growing number of students. Our **community and belonging themes are embedded** in all aspects of learning and teaching. Learning communities are developed using principles of peer-assisted learning, e.g. 'vertical personal tutoring' enabling new students to learn from second and third-year undergraduates. Digital tools (e.g. Discord, Google Currents, Slack) reinforce the sense of community between students. We also work with partner schools & colleges to promote effective transition to HE, e.g. our HE advisors conference in 2022 included sessions on preparing for the transition to University.

> **Case study 21:** International Orientation Week supports 1,300 new undergraduates with tailored information about studying in the UK, transitioning to a new culture and student life. This builds 'belonging' in the community as part of our wider Welcome to Portsmouth Programme. Our 'Global Week' also focused on 'belonging' was a finalist in the PIEoneer Awards 2022 for Student Support.

Personal Tutoring and Development Framework (PTDF): We participated in two OfS-funded 'Addressing barriers to student success' projects in 2017 to 2019, both including students. Enhancements to Personal Tutoring respond to findings from the ***Raising Awareness Raising Aspiration project*** focused on how personal tutoring can support students from minoritised ethnicities. With student input, we launched our integrated PTDF in 2020. Personal Tutors build students' sense of belonging and ensure their engagement and success via community-building through small group and 1:1 tutorials (at least eight p.a.). Students retain the same Personal Tutor throughout their course. Senior Tutors manage the approach in each School and share good practice. The Framework covers:

- **Academic:** Providing advice and support in academic studies, supporting engagement with university life, and reinforcing development of 'Hallmarks of a Portsmouth Graduate', through a personal tutoring curriculum;
- **Professional Development:** Encouraging students' professional development by engagement with course-related activities;
- **Pastoral:** Initial contact and referral to specialist advice & support services. Promoting engagement in extracurricular activities to build skills, networks, social capital and 'Hallmarks'.

Evidence drives continuous enhancement: We maintain excellence and rigour through an annual risk-based, enhancement-driven approach to annual monitoring at School, course and module level, underpinned by metrics. We set challenging thresholds for quality indicators to hold ourselves to high standards. Smart actions and best practice are captured in Excellence and Quality Improvement Plans (EQUIP), informing course, School and Faculty action plans that are monitored by our Quality Assurance Committee. To ensure rapid improvement and accountability, any courses with metrics below expectations are required to develop Priority Improvement Plans, with regular progress review. In 2021/22, 16 undergraduate courses, of over 300 total, completed a Priority Improvement Plan.

Learning from Covid-19 experiences: We have actively sought to learn from this experience. We led a collaborative QAA-funded research project, 'Differing Perceptions of Quality of Learning in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic' with Manchester Metropolitan, Solent and Nottingham [9]. This gathered feedback from 650 students on how perceptions of quality of learning and teaching differ by ethnicity, to ensure that future approaches to blended learning do not adversely affect any student groups. While sector NSS results show lower satisfaction for BAME students than White students, this project reported the opposite, and identified examples of good practice: (i) enhanced personal tutoring programmes; (ii) developing a sense of belonging online and in-person; (iii) building bridges that stretch beyond the boundaries of students' courses; (iv) actively appreciating different learning preferences; and (v) approaching learning transitions with care. We have incorporated this good practice into recent policy and practice enhancements to ensure our feedback has long-term impact.

SO2. Continuation & completion

Evidence of success

TEF 2017 findings commended our Gold-rated 'clearly defined approach to induction and support arrangements for new students and for student transitions, with targeted support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and care leavers'. In this TEF period this targeted support continues, meaning **continuation metrics for full-time students are consistently strong**, with performance 1.9 percentage points above benchmark in the latest year. No areas fall materially below benchmark in the split indicators. The profile of **completion metrics is robust**, with performance across the protected student characteristics broadly in line with, or materially above, benchmark, including those years most impacted by Covid-19.

Additional measures to achieve this success

Using data to enhance learner engagement: Our understanding of individual student needs using learner analytics has significantly matured in this TEF period, supporting our tailored approach by giving all staff access to comprehensive analysis of progress and outcomes for different student groups. Innovation and investment in this field has built on findings from our OfS funded Catalyst project 'Changing Mindsets: Reducing stereotype threat and implicit bias as barriers to student success' [10]. Data analysis has also identified features of modules and courses that were disproportionately affecting the continuation and completion rates of students, including different student groups. We worked to support and challenge module and course leaders to address any such pockets of weaker outcomes, with a particular focus on assessment design through the TESTA co-creation approach.

Case study 22: The physics and astronomy subject area had lower than expected completion rates. Changes to support application for Institute of Physics (IoP) accreditation:

- **2018/19** (i) enhanced formative feedback in the final year (ii) enhanced guidance to students to support option choices (iii) updating dissertation requirements based on IoP feedback to be more inclusive, with more opportunities to undertake research that fits specific interests;
- **2019/20** (i) introducing industry-supported final year research projects to boost engagement and
- (ii) rebalancing assessment between coursework and unseen examinations;
- **2020/21** (i) reduced class sizes for final year tutorials to give more tailored support;
- **2021/22** (i) comprehensive peer review of in-class teaching, VLE support & assessment.

This resulted in positive improvements in completion rates from 64% in 2019/20 to 88% in 2021/22 and all four undergraduate courses, with 240 students, gained IoP accreditation in 2021.

Every course and module uses learner data analytics on student engagement and performance, including differential outcomes between protected student characteristics. Staff identify students at risk of withdrawal or in need of support, with data drawn from sources including attendance, VLE usage, library access, assessment marks, using a bespoke system. Use of analytics has led to changes to improve continuation & completion:

- **Outcomes-informed entry requirements:** We have enhanced our approach using analysis of students' entry qualifications (subject, type & grades) and subsequent continuation and completion rates to ensure we recommend the most appropriate course and entry level to applicants.
- **Redeveloped our Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring (SEAM) policy:** The SEAM policy sets out processes for academics (Personal Tutors, Module Coordinators, Course Leaders, Heads of School) and support staff e.g. SEOs to address student engagement issues. Algorithms that identify student engagement are nuanced to the particular course and modules of study and include all forms of engagement including VLE, Library and in-person sessions.

These changes are supported by **investment in Student Engagement Officers and Learning Support Tutors** (see also section SE5) who actively identify students in need of support, ascertain their individual needs, and arrange a tailored package of academic and non-academic support. They track ongoing student engagement and performance, flagging 'at risk' students to Personal Tutors. Where engagement issues are flagged, these are reviewed with the student and improvement plans agreed. Financial issues are a growing concern given the demographics of our students. We invest over £1 million p.a. in our student support fund, with a team of expert financial advisors to help students manage their expenditure. This Student Finance Centre team recently received a 'Stand Alone Pledge award' recognising their excellent bespoke support for estranged students.

Enhancements in assessment for learning: Our 'Assessment for Learning Policy' promotes flexibility in assessment types to ensure assessment is tailored to reflect subject requirements, PSRBs and employer expectations. Investment in staff development, new posts and new software supports implementation of this policy. Our Student Experience Committee agreed a university focus on assessment & feedback from 2018 to 2020. Practical changes include students engaging with academics to create their assessment rubrics/briefs and marking criteria.

Case study 23: The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences reviewed marking and feedback practices, reviewing external examiner, module and NSS feedback and holding student focus groups. This resulted in new Faculty-wide marking and feedback guidance, marking rubrics and an aggregated marking scheme. The purpose of these, linked back to previous TESTA results, was to promote consistency between modules and courses, with greater emphasis on progressively developing students' understanding of standards. This Faculty-wide development has contributed to our improved NSS results for *"the criteria used in marking have been clear in advance"* from 68% in 2021 to 73% in 2022, which is above the sector average of 69%.

Case study 24: In 2021, in collaboration with AdvanceHE, our central Academic Development Unit and School of Law undertook a series of focus groups to ascertain students' views on assessment and feedback, resulting in guiding principles from which the School of Law developed its own tailored Assessment & Feedback Strategy. The impact is demonstrated in enhanced NSS scores. From 2020 to 2022, NSS feedback for Q8 (criteria) increased from 72% to 82%; Q9 (fair marking) increased from 56% to 66%; and Q11 (helpful comments) increased from 60% to 72%.

Case study 25: Investment in digital technology to improve assessment has led to improved NSS feedback e.g. 5% increase on Q10 (helpful feedback) in 2022. In 2021/22 we piloted the Wiseflow end-to-end assessment platform as part of our systematic enhancement of assessment practices and technologies. Integration between Wiseflow and our student records system (SITS) led to faster turnaround of grades and clearer feedback to students. This development will be maintained.

Student focused changes during the pandemic: We adopted a measured approach to changes to assessments during the pandemic aiming to support students while maintaining the value of our awards. OfS analysis of degree classifications shows we remained close to the median for 143 HEIs:

Proportion of degrees awarded	UoP ranking 2018/19	UoP ranking 2020/21
% first class honours	70th	67th
% first class and upper-second honours	62nd	60th

During the pandemic, we returned to a blend of in-person and virtual learning as soon as government guidance allowed. In some cases in-person classes were repeated up to 20 times in small, socially-distanced groups to maintain laboratory and other practical learning experiences. Intensive use of our real and simulated learning facilities post-lockdown also ensured final year students could graduate on time e.g. an early return to NHS patient treatment in our Dental Academy enabled students to satisfy GDC clinical experience requirements. Since the end of Covid-19 restrictions, we have returned to at least 80% in-person teaching on our courses, maintaining our planned B&C learning for its pedagogic benefits. Additionally, in-person assessments have been reinstated, assuring our students and our accrediting professional bodies of the validity and high quality of our awards and preparing our students for a range of assessment types to improve their resilience.

SO3. Graduate progression

Evidence of success

TEF 2017 findings commended our 'industry-leading physical and digital resources which provide real and simulated learning opportunities, which are actively and consistently used by students to develop their independence and confidence, and enhance learning and progression'. In this TEF period, the vast majority of our 'Graduate Progression' full-time student outcomes are in line with benchmark, including all protected student characteristics, with three subjects (Health & Social Policy, Allied Health, Law) materially above benchmark. Significant action has been taken to address five subject areas that are materially below benchmark (with 75% statistical certainty), including Service Level Agreements between Schools and the Careers and Employability Service (CES) to prioritise interventions, targeted support for final year students on relevant courses, and the closing of a small number of courses via Portfolio Review. CES also supports our Personal Tutors by providing access to careers resources, job vacancies and training so they in turn support students to start job searching before their final year.

Review of graduate progression outcomes: Two subjects are materially below benchmark, at 90%+ statistical certainty. While Graduate Outcomes at 15 months are below benchmark, the latest Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data [11] demonstrates that after five years both subjects are ranked in the top-third of courses nationally in their subject area for the proportion of graduates in sustained employment or further study:

Subject	Percentage in sustained employment, further study or both			Median earnings (Portsmouth / No. of HEIs)		
	Portsmouth ranking 1 year after graduation	Portsmouth ranking 3 years after graduation	Portsmouth ranking 5 years after graduation	Portsmouth ranking 1 year after graduation	Portsmouth ranking 3 years after graduation	Portsmouth ranking 5 years after graduation
Education and teaching	75 / 84	66 / 86	26 / 86	58 / 78	55 / 85	48 / 85
Mathematical sciences	37 / 71	36 / 73	17 / 72	59 / 65	31 / 71	47 / 66

A further three subjects are below benchmark (75%+ statistical certainty). Improved progression for 25 graduates p.a. in total would move all five subjects broadly within benchmark. Significant action has taken place in these subjects including closing a small number of courses through Portfolio Review. The case studies below give more detail. The significant time-lag in Graduate Outcomes data means that this will be apparent in the next data release in July 2023.

Additional measures to achieve this success

Improving progression to professional employment is one of our four University strategic imperatives. This is in the context of research that highlights that "social status impacts either directly or indirectly on perceived employability as well as actual employment outcomes" [12]. Additionally, "graduates from the 'less prestigious' 'new' universities reported lower perceived external employability", while "graduates from working-class backgrounds report poorer perceived employability, are more likely to be working in non-graduate occupations and earn significantly less than their middle-class counterparts" [12]. Earlier sections explained comprehensive work underway to overcome these issues via our approach to learning & teaching excellence. Specific additional action:

Case study 26: Innovations in CES to actively support students and graduates into professional level employment, self-employment & further study:

- A phone campaign targeted at final year students, to help them secure graduate level outcomes prior to completing their courses, by making them aware of available support. This awareness-raising initiative was commended as part of CES's accreditation by AGCAS;
- An annual 'Pulse' Campaign, calling all recent graduates inform them of ongoing CES support, including virtual appointments, resulted in 270 graduates booking 1:1 appointments in 2021/22;
- Targeted events, such as 'Opportunities Week' to inform students about volunteering, full-time & part-time work, and further study including our alumni discount for Masters courses;
- The Service's Graduate Recruitment Consultancy proactively sources and fills local & regional opportunities with large and SME businesses, placing 250 graduates in the last four years;
- Creating a Mentoring Programme with IBM for students from any discipline, which supports 30 students p.a. through in-person mentoring;
- Support for students to undertake Self Employed Placements, as an alternative to a placement year in industry, with 20-25 students choosing this route each academic year;
- Two new tutor toolkits developed for Personal Tutors, with dedicated resources and lesson plans for tutors to deliver employability and enterprise education for students at all levels.

Case study 27: Action in our Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, with 3,660 undergraduates, to improve progression to professional employment by further embedding employability in the curriculum was underpinned by pedagogic research in the Faculty [13]. Measures include:

- identification of core modules where assessment can incorporate an employability artefact including a CV, model covering letter and LinkedIn profile;
- a structured & timetabled Personal Tutor programme with tailored expectations at Level 4 to 6;
- introduction of 'careers corners' where course content is actively linked to employment options;
- further engagement of the Faculty Placement Team with Level 5 students;
- timetabling a half-day simulated Assessment Centre Experience for a large cohort of students.

Case study 28: Exchange years abroad paused due to Covid-19. We introduced new virtual exchanges to ensure our students developed the Hallmarks and gained key skills for employment:

- Virtual exchanges for language students with two partner universities in Spain and Argentina;
- 50 students joined 'Global jams' with Edith Cowan university focused on UN SDGs;
- 37 students participated in the 'Connect Programme' run by Soliya, an international NGO that prepares young people for a global diverse workforce, so they could develop employability skills such as critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, team-work and problem solving.

Student feedback on 'Connect' was very positive, with 96% glad they participated and 100% agreeing that the programme improved their knowledge, teamwork and collaborative skills.

Embedding progression to professional employment or further study: This submission details our extensive support to prepare students for progression to employment including Curriculum 2019 and the Hallmarks. The lagging nature of progression metrics means it will take time for these enhancements to be fully reflected. Year 3 Graduate Outcomes data shows initial benefits with progression of 73.9% compared to 72.3% benchmark; a 5.9 percentage point increase from year 2.

Systemic, institution-wide support of our students and graduates: While all HEIs offer some form of Careers Service, the hub and spoke model at Portsmouth means this support is distributed throughout our Schools through embedded interventions in courses, and all students also have access to information, advice and guidance delivered centrally through our Careers and Employability Service. A distinctive feature of our careers support is that it remains fully available to all graduates of the University for five years after graduation, with around 700 graduates per year taking advantage of this well-received service. Each Faculty has a Placements Office, which provides information, advice and guidance to their students regarding full-year and shorter-term industry placements.

Alumni engagement: Active engagement with our alumni brings many employability benefits. Firstly, in 2021/22 alone, 350 alumni volunteered for initiatives to enrich students' understanding of graduate opportunities, including two events (Women in Economics and a Law Careers Festival), a Black Student Mentoring Pilot, and the development of 46 alumni profiles highlighting early career paths. In addition, 3,000 recent alumni have engaged with the University's 'Grad Connect' Programme since 2019, helping them build resilience and growth mindsets for success to support their early career journey.

SO4-6. Articulating, supporting and evaluating educational gains

Our approach to providing outstanding student experience and outcomes, as detailed throughout this document, is rooted in our fundamental commitment to transforming the lives and opportunities of our students through educational gain. This is at the heart of our University mission **"To create, share and apply knowledge to make a difference to individuals and society"** and our Strategy 2025 which commits us to "Engage every student in a life-changing experience".

We define educational gain as 'the distance travelled or the improvement in knowledge, skills, work-readiness and

personal development demonstrated by students at two points in time' [14]. Evidence in this Submission demonstrates how we tailor our approach at each student lifecycle phase to ensure every student has the maximum opportunity for educational gain by improving both their subject knowledge and broader 'Hallmarks' i.e. soft-skills, personal skills and cultural competencies.

Evidence of success

Evaluating education gain requires review of distance travelled:

- **Start point:** The OfS has recently confirmed our classification as a low tariff provider [15] and data from the OfS Size & Shape of Provision dashboard in section 1 shows the overall start point for our students including protected student characteristics.
- **End point:** TEF metrics confirm that our students achieve outstanding levels of continuation and completion, particularly given the diversity of our intake on so many dimensions. Overall progression to employment metrics are excellent and improving.

Additional measures to achieve this success

As a University that recruits on the basis of potential to succeed it is important to note that: i) we recruit individuals at different points in their development; ii) development does not always occur in a linear fashion, and some students may require further support, over the longer-term. Based on our context and the subsequent needs of our students, our approach to educational gain is to offer personalised support to all undergraduates from pre-registration, throughout their studies, and beyond. This approach is informed by pedagogic research and our distinctive focus on collaboration with our students, with our Dean of Learning and Teaching regularly publishing in this area [16].

Our personalised approach takes account of: (i) individual starting points, for example through extensive pre-arrival and induction support to promote effective transition into HE; (ii) individual needs throughout their course, with opportunities that stretch and challenge our students, while supporting individual requirements including protected student characteristics; (iii) individual career ambitions, engaging all students in exciting development opportunities, within and beyond the curriculum, to promote their long-term success in the global economy and their contribution to society.

We also recognise that the student journey, in terms of educational gain, does not end at graduation. Research cited in section SO3 identified the impact of social status and type of university attended on employability after graduation. To overcome this, we offer: extended practical support to our students after graduation through our Careers and Employability Service; ongoing engagement with alumni and alumni discounts for Masters courses, to encourage and support all our graduates into professional employment in the medium to long term. LEO data for two subjects in section SO3 demonstrates the strength of our graduates' three-to-five year performance. The TEF metrics, taken as a whole for our student body, and for our students with protected characteristics, demonstrate the value and impact of our approach and the long-term benefits of educational gain that we deliver.

3.4. Conclusion

The University of Portsmouth has a distinctive and comprehensive approach to ensuring that our students have an outstanding experience and achieve excellent outcomes. We consistently support and challenge our diverse student population, ensuring that our students acquire knowledge and skills that are highly valued in the knowledge economy locally, nationally and globally. We are proud of our continued success in transforming the lives of students from all backgrounds and of the contribution they make to society.

4. Students' Union (UPSU) submission

A copy of the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023 submission from the University of Portsmouth Students' Union can be accessed at: **upsu.net/double-gold-for-uop**

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