# Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023

## TEF panel statement

| College name: | Bradford College |
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## Overall rating

The TEF Panel (the Panel) considered the overall rating to be Silver.

## Aspect ratings

The Panel considered the aspect ratings to be as follows:

| Student experience | Silver |
|---|---|
| Student outcomes | Bronze |

# Rationale for rating decisions

## Context

The submission and the 'size and shape' data dashboard include information about the context of Bradford College. In summary:

Bradford College is a significant regional (West Yorkshire) provider of post-16 education with provision of higher technical, professional and degree courses ranging from Level 4 to 7.

The data shows that in 2020-21 the College enrolled 1,110 full-time higher education (HE) students, 360 part-time HE students and 240 higher apprenticeship students. In the period 2017-18 to 2020-21 enrolments to the HE programme have reduced. Bradford College enrolled 1,100 higher education students in 2022-23. Students are enrolled to a range of higher education qualifications, foundation and honours degrees, as well as postgraduate courses validated by the University of Bolton and higher national courses awarded by Pearson. Higher education courses are delivered at a large city centre campus.

The College higher education portfolio comprises a wide range of subject areas with the largest proportions in the following areas; Education and Teaching (24.5% - 230 students); Allied Health (16.6% - 160 students); Health and Social Care (13.2% - 120 students); Computing (9.1% - 90 students); Business and Management (8.1% - 80 students)

The College submission describes the County of West Yorkshire as one of a low skills base, with a deficit of people qualified to Level 4 and above. The majority of employed residents work within the local area, but those who travel further afield for their work are more likely to be employed in roles

which require higher levels of skills. The employment rate for those from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than the rate nationally and lower than the local rate for those from white backgrounds.

The College submission describes how students from under-represented groups and disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to have either a want or a requirement, or both, to study at a local HE provider and suggests that provision of local HE is therefore a significant enabler of equality of opportunity to those students from communities characterised by education, skills and training deprivation.

Data shows that Bradford College undergraduate students are more likely to be local (75.2% are local) and 84.8% of the College's full-time students come from the most disadvantaged areas based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintiles 1 and 2. 33% of students were eligible for free school meals and 53% of students are of Asian ethnicity. 19.9% have some form of declared disability or impairment to learning.

26.4% TUNDRA (tracking underrepresentation by area) /MSOA of College HE enrolments are of students from areas of low participation in higher education.

The data also shows that 65.7% of full-time students are female and 34.5% are female. 47.5% of full-time students are under 21, 30.8% are between 21 and 30 and 21.7% are 31 years of age or more.

The College submission describes how full-time undergraduates enrolled to the College are far less likely to arrive with 3 A Levels at grade CDD or higher, compared with the sector average (5.2% compared to 43.5% for the sector) and are more likely to arrive with BTEC qualifications lower than a Distinction, Distinction, Merit (DDM) profile (34.1% compared to 8.4% for the sector)

In this context the College submission sets out its vision 'To Create a Better Future for all through education and training' and a mission of 'working together to transform lives'. The College's student facing strategic objectives are:

- 'To be a truly inclusive college
- To deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of learners, employers and the community
- To deliver an outstanding student experience'

The context of the College, as set out above, has been taken into account throughout this assessment.

## Scope of assessment

All of the College's undergraduate courses and students on those courses, as defined in paragraph 69 of Regulatory Advice 22 (RA22), were considered in scope of the assessment. Although data was available for apprenticeships, the provider submission did not make direct reference to this data nor to apprenticeships per se and so they were not considered in scope of the assessment.

The evidence considered in the assessment includes:

- The College submission
- The student submission, comprising both a written and video submission

- The TEF indicators and accompanying 'size and shape 'data.

## Approach to assessment

In reaching the decision on ratings, panel members applied their expert judgement, within the framework of principles and guidelines set out in RA22 and followed the approach to assessment set out at paragraph 231 of RA22 by: 1) identifying excellent features within each aspect; 2) considering a rating for each aspect; and 3) considering the overall rating (taking account of the College's context at each step of the assessment). The reasoning for the TEF panel's rating decisions is set out below.

# Student experience

## Student experience: Aspect rating

The TEF panel weighed up all the evidence in the indicators and the submissions relating to the student experience aspect as a whole and determined the student experience aspect rating to be 'Silver'.

In accordance with the guidance, the panel considered all the evidence available in the submissions and the indicators to identify very high quality and outstanding quality features (further detail set out below), noting that the indicators contributed no more than half of the evidence of excellence. The panel then considered the extent to which there are very high quality and outstanding quality features across the aspect as a whole. The panel considered how far any outstanding or very high quality features apply across all the College's student groups and the range of its courses and subjects. To determine the student experience aspect rating, the panel applied the ratings criteria set out at Annex B of RA22.

The panel considered 6 of the features to be of very high quality. For 1 feature, SE6, the panel considered that there was insufficient evidence of very high quality. The panel's assessment of these features is set out below. The panel did not find any features of the student experience that it considered to be clearly below the level of 'high quality' or that may be of concern. The panel found evidence across the student experience aspect that the College embeds effective approaches and tailors its approaches to the characteristics of its students. Considering the features holistically, the panel judged there to be evidence of a typically very high quality student experience, where all features of the aspect are of very high quality for most groups of students.

The panel noted these very high quality features of the student experience in the context of the socio-economic characteristics of the region in which the College operates and of the student body that it serves.

The panel judged there to be compelling evidence in the College and student submissions and the indicators that the very high quality features apply to most the College's groups of students, including students from areas of relative low participation in higher education.

The panel found the indicator evidence to be supplemented by further evidence of very high quality in the College and student submissions and in accordance with the guidance, the indicators contributed no more than half of the evidence of excellence for the student experience aspect. The panel observed a variance in some indicators for some student groups and weighed this against the related commentary in the submissions. Considering the evidence holistically, the panel found

there to be evidence of very high quality for most groups of students and for most courses and subjects.

The panel applied the ratings criteria set out in Annex B of RA22 and considered the best fit rating to be 'Silver'. This is because all features are of very high quality for most groups of students and courses.

The rationale for the panel's assessment of each feature is below.

## Student experience: features of excellence

The TEF panel has considered whether there is sufficient evidence to suggest any features of the student experience indicated at Annex A of RA22 are of outstanding quality or very high quality. The panel also considered whether any information in the submissions beyond these features is relevant to the quality of the student educational experience.

### SE1: Teaching, assessment and feedback and SE2: Course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch.

The College submission describes how it delivers teaching, feedback and assessment practises which are inclusive and focused on individual student development; vocationally relevant and employer-engaged; focused on the acquisition of professional competencies.

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes:

- A set of underlying principles for curriculum development and delivery that provides all students with equitable access to learning. The College submission refers to how it uses these principles to address gaps in outcomes for BAME and Low Participation student groups and in curriculum development and re-approval through periodic review

- Internal student survey (June 2022) outcomes which show student perceptions that their programme provided 'a diverse, unbiased and inclusive curriculum'; of the two largest ethnic groups at the College, 96% of BAME students strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, with 94% agreement among white British students

- Productive relationships with key professional, statutory and regulatory bodies which inform portfolio and course development, approval and delivery

- The Future Technologies strategy to ensure that the curriculum meets local skills shortages and the consequent establishment of 6 Sector Hubs, chaired by employers, to inform curriculum design and delivery. This has resulted in the development of new programmes, for example in Construction and Engineering and in Ophthalmic Dispensing

- The mandatory requirement for external industry experts, including employers, to be consulted through programme development and review processes

- The requirement that, by September 2023, all programmes should have employer sponsors to ensure that the pathways to employment linked to the course are explicitly endorsed as appropriate for industry

- The adoption of project-based pedagogy which promotes the engagement of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to engage in study, based on evidence from a pilot project in the School of Art. The submission describes how this approach has led to an increase in student achievement in level 4 and level 5 modules

- A 'scaffolded' approach to teaching and learning, in which the focus at level 4 is on the acquisition of academic skills while at level 5 and 6 the focus is on employability and personal development to prepare students for successful progression into employment, for example, portfolio building, work experience or placement and the acquisition of professional competencies. Aligned with this approach, all validated courses include modules specifically focused on personal and professional development

- Curricula enhanced through exposure to employers in masterclasses, guest speakers, site visits, showcases to employers, placements and the opportunity to acquire additional sector related qualifications

- Endorsements from external examiners with regard to course design and delivery. For example; students are "encouraged to develop their reflective practice, grapple with the many social issues relevant to youth and community work as well as apply their learning in youth work settings; the programme is focussed upon professional practice; this will support students' employability and further study across a range of educational and disciplines"

- Endorsements from external examiners with regard to assessment and feedback. For example; "assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against programme learning outcomes and identifying aspects of good practice"

In their submissions (written and video) students were very positive about their experience of teaching, learning and assessment. Their submission cited the End of Year Student Survey (EYSS), showing, for example, that 94% of students responding to the EYSS agreed that the teaching on their programme was good; 94% of respondents to EYSS said that their tutors challenged them to do their best; 95% agreed that the feedback on assessments told them what they had done well and what they needed to improve; 81% of graduating students responded positively to the statements about the quality of assessment and feedback.

The student submission included multiple student endorsements in respect of these two features. For example; "some modules are more practical and there are different styles for different modules to suit the content. Tutors change their methods of teaching to keep the students engaged; assessments are all written well and are aligned with what is being taught in the lessons. All learning outcomes from module specifications have been covered for both modules; there are strong relationships with employers via placements on relevant programmes. Tutors share new books to ensure currency of knowledge for both the teaching team and students. A range of external speakers, current professionals provide input to the courses".

The overall indicator for full-time students with regard to teaching on my course is materially broadly in line with benchmark while the split indicators are varied, with the majority at or just below benchmark, but often with low materiality. However, some of the subject areas with a high proportion of students are materially below benchmark, for example education and teaching is 5.8ppt below benchmark with strong statistical evidence (92.9% materiality), health and social care

is 8.2ppt below benchmark with strong statistical evidence (92.4% materiality) and business and management is 7.4ppt below benchmark with probable statistical evidence (85.4% materiality).

The overall indicator for part-time students with regard to teaching on my course is materially in line with benchmark with a similar pattern for split indicators.

The overall indicator for full-time students with regard to assessment and feedback is materially in line with benchmark with the most recent year being materially above benchmark. Split indicators are mostly broadly in line with benchmark. However the split indicator for the health and social care subject area is materially 11.2ppt below benchmark.

The overall indicator for the part-time cohort with regard to assessment and feedback is materially 4.9% above benchmark and in the most recent year 7.9% above benchmark. For the part-time allied health subject area cohort the indicator is materially above benchmark 7.3ppt above benchmark.

The panel noted that for the part-time Asian cohort the indicator for Assessment and Feedback is materially (91%) 9.3ppt below benchmark, but this is not a common theme across indicators for other aspects of student experience or for student outcomes.

The teaching on my course and assessment and feedback indicators provide initial evidence of very high quality teaching, assessment and feedback, but the panel noted that for some subject areas with a high proportion of students, indicators were materially below benchmark.

The submissions provide further substantive evidence that the College has embedded very high quality teaching, feedback and assessment practices which are highly effective and tailored to support students' learning, progression and attainment.

In summary for course content and delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch and challenge, the submissions provide substantive evidence of a very high quality feature and that the College's course content and delivery effectively encourage students to engage in their learning and stretch students to develop their knowledge and skills.

Overall the panel consider that there is evidence of a very high quality feature with regard to teaching, feedback and assessment, course content, delivery; student engagement in learning and stretch and challenge.

## SE3: Research, innovation, scholarship, professional practice and/or employer engagement

Much of the evidence with regard to this feature relates to the engagement that the College and its staff have with professional practice and industrial sector bodies and employers.

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes:

- The College submission evidences the ways in which provision is vocationally relevant and employer engaged, for example through the Future Technologies Centre strategy and related Sector Hubs, which seek to ensure that the curriculum meets local skills shortages, with Hubs chaired by employers. This has led to the development of innovative programmes with employers, including online, blended and flexible delivery.

- The College submission describes strong relationships with Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) such as Social Work England and the General Ophthalmic Council which helps to inform course development / approval and delivery.

- Students in their submissions were positive about the extent to which the College tutors use their professional experience / expertise in teaching and learning. For example, in their submission students noted; "tutors also talk about their own personal industrial experience. Some tutors continue to work in practice and clearly apply theory to practice with examples from their own real-life experience; teaching staff are experienced practitioners in their fields. This ensures courses are kept up to date and staff can provide relevant pointers to support students' research; tutors provide opportunities for students to join projects outside College that enrich their learning and give opportunities to understand how practitioners work in the wider community".

- Students were also positive about the opportunities they enjoy with regard to employer engagement through activities such as work placements, guest speakers, and employer masterclasses. One student (submission video) was able to evidence how the skills and confidence they had gained through their studies and employer engagement had led to work promotion. Students also stated that they appreciate and value that staff are experts and practitioners in their field.

- In this context, the College submission also evidences how staff are engaged in professional practice, as current or recent practitioners and / or as members, in some cases senior members of professional bodies, such as the Association of British Dispensing Opticians, The Bradford Cyber Steering Group and for social work, The Bradford Partnership.

- The submission also describes how the College enables some students to gain additional sector related additional qualifications such as 1st Aid in Mental Health and CompTIA and Cisco for computing students.

- The submission includes external examiner endorsements of the extent to which employability is embedded in the curricula, for example; "innovative teaching tools and assessment approaches which model high expectations and enhance key digital skills needed for teaching in the sector; (students are) encouraged to develop their reflective practice, grapple with the many social issues relevant to youth and community work as well as apply their learning in youth work settings".

- The submission also includes endorsements from sector bodies, for example; "professional relevance is embedded at all levels through professional development and professional practice modules".

The panel considered that the evidence set out above demonstrates that the curriculum content and delivery is informed by professional practice and employer engagement and that students enjoy extensive engagement with professional practice through staff and through employer engagement opportunities.

In summary, there is evidence, of very high quality with regard to this feature, showing that scholarship and professional practice, including employer engagement which contributes to a very high quality experience for students.

## SE4: Staff professional development and academic practice

The College submission describes how it seeks to ensure that employability is embedded in the curriculum through the employment of teaching staff that currently practice and are experts in their professional fields.

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes:

- Identifying professional development needs through a formal staff appraisal system, which is, in part informed by session observations. Where best practice is identified these are collated by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Department and disseminated across departments.

- Staff are supported to seek recognition through the Advance HE / Higher Education Academy, with a target of 100% of staff to have recognition by the end of 2024-25. Currently, of the 101 staff teaching on HE courses 34% are recognised as Fellows with 32% of these recognised as Senior Fellows.

- The College supports staff to maintain their professional practice, research and scholarship through attendance at relevant conferences and publications. Staff receive remission on their workload allocation and 3 examples illustrate this: a Developing Your Creative Practice project, awarded by Arts Council England; a 2021 exhibition 'Connected Cloth: Exploring the Global Nature of Textiles' as part of the British Textile Biennial; members of the Ophthalmic Dispensing team have published articles in some of the main national optical-industry journals (Dispensing Optics and Optometry Today)

- In their submission students were positive about how the professional practice and scholarship of staff contribute to teaching and learning. For example they noted that; "many members of the teaching staff are experienced practitioners in their fields, this ensures courses are kept up to date and staff can provide relevant pointers to support students' research; tutors use contemporary examples to bring the teaching and learning to life; lecturers are all qualified, so industry experience is high. This allows students to gain insight into different areas (of work) through their respective lecturers."

The panel considered that the evidence detailed above demonstrated that staff maintain and use their professional practice and scholarship which informs and enhances teaching and learning.

In summary the panel considered that there is evidence of a very high quality feature and that there is very high quality support for staff professional development and excellent academic practice is promoted.

## SE5: Learning environment and academic support

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes:

- A system of student support based on a personal tutorial system, with 5 tutorials a year focused on academic progress and identifying barriers to learning. The personal tutorial system is allied to a central team of personal development officers. While the personal tutors remit is mostly related to academic matters and support, they are able to refer students to support services and personal development officers for academic skills support, coaching and mentoring and for pastoral matters. Personal development officers also

deliver interventions on matters such as mental health, exam stress, anxiety and community matters such as healthy relationships, coercive control and gang crime.

- The submission describes how additional learning support is individualised and needs based, with examples given in relation to assistive technology, accessibility guidance and 1:1 support. This was recognised by external examiners, for example; "the tailored approach to teaching, learning and assessment. It is this student-centred practice which enables every student to achieve their potential".

- The submission describes mandatory training for all staff on equality, diversity and inclusivity and mental health awareness matters.

- Courses include a mandatory academic skills module at L4. Additionally students are supported with their academic skills development through the College's SWAP (Successful Writing for Academic Purposes) programme and in their submission students valued this in terms of supporting them to succeed in their studies.

- The College's information, advice and guidance provision is matrix-accredited and the College as a whole is in receipt of a Quality in Careers Standard Award for its careers advice and support.

- In their submission students were very positive with regard to the extent of support they receive from tutors and support staff alike. Students noted how they found tutors to be readily accessible and supportive enabling them to discuss both academic and pastoral matters. Students were positive about their learning environment. They commented that the tutorial system provides opportunities for formative assessment and personal guidance.

- External examiners comment positively on quality of support from programme teams; "for example, (the) supportive professional relationship between the students and all teaching staff is clearly an important contributory aspect of the success of the trainees; the amount of energy, time and resources invested in the students' learning and welfare is a credit to the programme teams and the college support systems".

- The student submission cited the end of year student survey, in which 94% of students agreed that tutors challenged them to do their best. Academic support from the specialist librarians was also cited in the student submission, as a positive aspect of studying at the College, with 88% of respondents to the EYSS agreeing that the library has supported their learning well.

The overall indicator for full-time students with regard to Academic support is materially (86.3%) in line with benchmark and there is some suggestion of improvement over time with the most recent year materially (98.6%) 8.7ppt above benchmark

There is a similar picture for part-time students where the overall indicator is materially (99.65) 9.7% above benchmark.

For both full and part-time students most aspects are at or above benchmark with varying materiality.

For full-time students the following subjects are materially above benchmark – Computing, Law, and Allied Health.

For full-time students the following subjects are materially below benchmark – Business Management, Health and Social Care.

For part-time students the following subject is materially above benchmark - Allied Health.

The panel considered that the evidence described above illustrates a coherent approach to support for learners, both in terms of academic and pastoral support, which recognises the characteristics of the student body as a whole and of individual students.

In summary, there is evidence of a very high quality feature such that the College provides a highly supportive environment and that its students have access to a wide range and a readily available range of outstanding quality academic support tailored to their needs.

## SE6: Learning resources

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes:

- The College submission acknowledges the low NSS indicators in regard to learning resources but claims improvements in recent years. This is substantiated, to some extent in the full-time student indicator, where there is some suggestion of improvement with the time series showing below benchmark in years 1 and 2 and the most recent year being above benchmark – 81.5/78.2 but with low materiality (78.2%)

- The submission describes how the provision of outstanding facilities and learning resources for HE students has been a key area of focus for the College over the last five years noting that data from the NSS and internal programme surveys had indicated previous dissatisfaction with learning resources, including IT, which has required intensive work to address.

- The submission goes on to describe intensive improvement plans, which included a change of location for the library and the allocation of specific staff to each department. The submission claims a clear improvement in student satisfaction with the library, citing 2022 NSS data which showed that for Question19 (library resources, e.g. books, online services and learning spaces, have supported my learning well), the library achieved 85% agreement, an increase of 11% from the previous year and 3% above the benchmark. In the College's EYSS for 2021/22 regarding library support, the library achieved an 87% agreement rate (an increase of 10% on 20/21).

- The College submission describes how each HE programme has a named academic librarian, providing specialist and personalised support for staff and students. Members of staff have been recipients of awards from the Council for Learning Resources in Colleges (CoLRiC).

- The submission also details capital investments in specialist learning resources, including, a Textile Archive; Jacquard Weaving Loom, a digitally-programmed industrial machine; a virtual Ophthalmic Dispensing practice environment and a simulated vocational environment for students on the BA (Hons) Early Years Practice.

However, the overall full-time student indicator is materially (100%) below benchmark – 69.9/78.4 and for all other aspects the indicators are below benchmark, many with high materiality. Subjects materially below benchmark are Health and Social Care is materially (100%) below benchmark – 55.8/79.6 and Business and Management (96.4%) – 68.8/79.5.

In contrast, for the part-time cohort the overall indicator is materially (82.2%) above benchmark – 83.3/78.2 with some suggestion of improvement with the most recent year materially (98.6%) above benchmark – 90.5/76.1

For the part-time Asian cohort the indicator is below benchmark - 76.8/83.1 but with low materiality (76.7%) 53% of students are of Asian ethnicity, but there is not a pattern of low indicator values for this group.

For all other splits there is mix of above and below benchmark indicators but with low materiality.

Evidence in relation to this feature includes:

- The College submission comments on improvements in library resources and in the VLE based on a Digital and Blended Learning Strategy, an element of which includes the deployment of Digital Champions to support individual staff and departments. This has been recognised by Advance HE and there are endorsements with regard to the College's use of digital learning and the VLE by external examiners and the General Ophthalmic Council.

- The submission describes how the College supports students facing financial disadvantage through the inclusive provision of IT equipment, with any student requiring a laptop being loaned one for the duration of their studies. In addition, students with learning or physical disabilities are supported by the Additional Learning Support service to receive IT equipment and accessibility tools following a full assessment of their needs.

- To develop and support digital learning the submission describes how the College, in collaboration with Advance HE, has undertaken a project to develop an understanding of blended learning models and the guiding principles that underpin effective virtual learning environment (VLE) design. Arising from this the College has developed a Digital and Blended Learning Strategy where dedicated digital champions identify and address areas of need, at both individual and department level, which informs CPD needs. The project's success was recognised by Advance HE. The College is building on this through work with Microsoft on the Innovative Educator Programme.

- The submission cites external examiner endorsement of its approach to digital learning. For example; "pro-active use of technology to support and enhance the learning experience, and provision of feedback to students in a timely manner; Promotion of innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment such as quizzes on Moodle and GBL platforms provide all students with regular and constructive feedback that helps them identify how well they are progressing".

- In their submission, students are positive about learning resources and the VLE, especially so in regard to the College's response to remote learning during the coronavirus pandemic, citing the deployment of laptops and support from the IT team and the use of MS Teams and Moodle. Students also commented positively about innovative digitally based

approaches such as lesson recordings, Smartboard slides and Bite Sized videos. In their video submission, students were positive about the 'general learning environment'.

The panel weighed the evidence from the submissions and the indicators and noted that the College has recognised the need for and is in the process of enhancing the resources for students. However, this has yet to show any impact.

The panel concluded that, at this point, there is insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

## SE7: Student engagement in improvement

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes the following:;

- The College submission describes mechanisms by which the College engages with / listens to its student body. These include course representation and course committees and the Student Council, where student representatives act as part of the management team for the department through these meetings and the College Students' Union. The submission also describes how students participate in self-assessment and review of departmental quality improvement plans and student outcomes. The Submission gave one example of change brought about through student consultation, that being the provision of 1:1 meeting / interview rooms which provide a better environment for all students and in particular for those with a disability.

- In their submission, students were positive about their engagement with the College through these mechanisms but were also positive in a broader sense, in so far as they valued the way in which the College recognises them as individuals, they have ready access to tutors and professional support staff and that the College values and promotes equality and diversity. However, the student submission also notes that students were less sure that feedback had been acted upon.

- The College submission cites NSS 2022, feedback which indicated that 79.64% of respondents agreed with the statements in the 'Student Voice' section. This was 10.5% above benchmark. In addition, 82.46% of NSS 2022 respondents agreed with the statement that 'Staff value students' views and opinions about the programme' (11.6% above the College benchmark) and 68.75% agreed that 'It is clear how students' feedback on the programme has been acted on' (11.4% above the benchmark).

The overall Student voice indicator for both the full-time and part-time cohorts are materially (93.4% and 98.3% respectively) above benchmark (FT – 73.8/73.5 / PT - 84.8 / 75.2). For both cohorts there is a suggestion of improvement over time with for FT students the most recent year materially (98.2%) above benchmark – 79.2/70.2 and for PT students the most recent year materially (97.6%) above benchmark – 82.7/66.2

All other split indicators are broadly in line or above / below benchmark but with low materiality.

The following subject areas are materially above benchmark; Computing / Law / Allied Health

The following subject areas are materially below benchmark; Business and Management / Education and Teaching / Health and Social Care.

In summary the evidence detailed above shows a comprehensive approach to student engagement.

Overall the panel considered that the evidence shows a very high quality feature where the College effectively engages with its students, which leads to improvements in the student experience and in their outcomes.

# Student outcomes

## Student outcomes: aspect rating

The panel applied the ratings criteria set out in Annex B of RA22 and considered the best fit rating to be 'Bronze'. Considering the features holistically, the panel judged there to be evidence of typically high quality student outcomes, where some features of this aspect are very high quality for most groups of students.

As above, in accordance with the guidance, the panel considered all the evidence available in the submissions and the indicators and weighed up this evidence to identify very high quality and outstanding quality features (further detail below). The panel then considered the extent to which there are very high quality or outstanding quality features across the aspect as a whole, rather than treating the features as a checklist, and considered how far the outstanding or very high quality features apply across all the College's student groups and the range of its courses and subjects.

The guidance sets out that the outcome indicators provide more direct measures of some of the student outcomes features (SO2 and SO3) and these student outcomes features could be identified without necessarily requiring further evidence in the submission. However, the panel noted that, should these indicators be below benchmark, this should not be determinative that the associated feature is 'not very high quality'. In these instances, the panel considered the evidence in the College submission to be important to the panel's assessment of the indicator evidence and features, such as contextual evidence regarding the impact of areas with high economic deprivation or those where participation in higher education is low.

Having considered and weighed up the evidence in the College submission and indicators to identify outstanding and very high quality features, the panel concluded that there was substantive evidence of very high quality with regard to SO1, SO4 and SO5 but that there was insufficient evidence of very high quality with regard to SO3 and SO6. The panel did not form a view to arrive at a quality level for SO2

The rationale for the panel's assessment of each feature is below.

## Student outcomes: features of excellence

In respect of this aspect the panel were cognisant of the following contextual details. The College Submission sets out the nature of its student body and details of this are given above and repeated here.

As a local provider of higher education taught in a further education college the College predominantly serves its local community. The student cohort has a significant Asian body, 53.4% of enrolments equating to 500 students and a high proportion (65.7%) of female students. Provision is largely vocational based on programmes with a broad range of subjects. Those with

the highest proportions of students are education and teaching (24.5% - 230 students); allied health (16.6% = 160 students) and health and social care (13.2% = 120 students).

A significant proportion of students are from lower socio-economic backgrounds: IMD quintiles 1 and 2 - 84.8%, FSM - 35.6%. 20% of students declare a disability.

## SO1: Approaches to supporting student success

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes the following;

The College submission notes the non-traditional educational backgrounds of the student body, and the multiple disadvantages that students face. The submission describes upward trajectories of student outcome indicators over time, and also a commitment to supporting all students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies. Internal college data suggest that initiatives are having a positive impact; for example, continuation rates of first degree programmes improving in 2020-21 by 2.2% and in 2021-22 by a further 2.9% to 82%.

The submission cites The Bradford College Strategy for 2020-2025 and the College Access and participation plan for this period, which articulate targets to improve continuation and completion rates and that internal data suggests that these strategies are working, with a three-year improving trend in young and mature continuation rates across all provision in the period 2019-20 to 2021-22.

In their Submissions students were very positive with regard to the support they receive to succeed and progress in their studies, citing the ways in which staff relate to them as individuals, how they receive effective feedback on assessment through formal 1:1 tutorials and through more informal ready access to tutors and professional support staff. Students were positive about the general learning environment at the College, that it was conducive to study and personal development. One student in the student submission video noted the 'wrap around' support that they received from the outset of their studies. The student submission notes the caring community of the College.

The submissions and indicator evidence related to SE5 are also pertinent to SO1. However, when also set against the indicators for Continuation, Completion and Progression (see SO2 and SO3) these additional indicators are less positive in terms of how the support for students leads to outstanding levels of continuation, completion and progression (see below).

The panel considered that the evidence detailed above shows that the College is aware of the characteristics of its student body, the challenges they face in terms of the support they need for their studies and has a coherent set of approaches to support all cohorts.

In summary, the panel considered that there is evidence to show very high quality for this feature where the College effectively supports its students to succeed in and progress beyond their studies.

## SO2: Continuation and completion rates

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes:

- The provider submission recognises challenges relating to continuation and completion but describes a range of mechanisms by which it seeks to ensure high rates of continuation and progression. These include the delivery of Academic Skills modules in all Level 4 courses and the Support for Writing for Academic Purposes (SWAP) approach in each

department to support individuals and groups in their academic writing. There is also a cross College strategy to ensure that at Level 4 there is a focus on the acquisition of knowledge and skills, followed by a  focus on employability and personal development as students progress to Levels 5 and 6. The provider submission also describes a 'Project Based Pedagogy' approach, where there are common projects across disciplines, designed to enhance module pass rates.

- The submission also notes a number of targeted interventions to enhance continuation and completion rates and these include individualised support and referrals, academic skill development and aligning curriculum to industry attributes, tutorials and soft skills development.

- In their Submissions, students did not provide substantive evidence in regard to SO2 but were positive about the extent to which they felt the College does its best to promote positive outcomes.

The overall continuation indicator for thefull-time cohort is materially (97.6%) below benchmark – 80.7/84.6 while for the part-time cohort the indicator is broadly in line with benchmark – 72.2/73.2 but with low materiality (77.5%), although in the most recent year it is further below benchmark – 73.1/78.3 but with low materiality (73%)

For both the full-time and part-time cohorts split indicators are mixed but with low materiality.

However for the part-time cohorts in the following subjects the continuation indicator is materially below benchmark: Business and Management, Creative Arts and Design, Education and Teaching.

For the part-time cohort the Allied Health continuation indicator is materially (99.9%) above benchmark – 87.1/75.6

Continuation is better for disabled than for non-disabled students, though completion for disabled students is materially below benchmark. Completion for part-time Asian students also below benchmark

Continuation for Asian and Black students is below benchmark; completion is broadly in line with benchmark for Asian students and above benchmark for black students. Completion is better for IMD quintiles 1 and 2, than for quintiles 3 and 5

Continuation is broadly in line with or above benchmark for full-time female students and mature students. Younger male students from non-traditional educational backgrounds are below benchmark for continuation

The overall Completion indicator for the full-time cohort is materially (84.15%) broadly in line with benchmark – 76.5/78.4 and for the part-time cohort is also materially (82.2%) in line with benchmark – 72.3/73.5 with some suggestion of improvement over time, the most recent year being 76.7/74.7 but with low materiality. For both the full-time and part-time cohorts all other aspects are broadly in line with benchmark but with varying materiality. Where some full-time cohorts are notably below benchmark, the materiality is not high.

The panel considered that in its submission, the College has recognised where there was a need to enhance student continuation and completion rates and has put in place strategies to address

this. However, these are yet to show notable impact. Overall and split indicators presented a mixed picture with those for continuation being notably less positive than those for completion. When considering the evidence holistically, the panel considered that there was insufficient conclusive evidence to arrive at a quality decision for this feature.

## SO3: Progression rates

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes:

- The College submission recognises challenges with regard to the progression of its students but sets this in the context of the socio-economic background of a large proportion of its student body and that of the region in which it operates and into which many students progress. The College has noted the poor levels of progression for students from its Business and Management programme and plans to withdraw this programme and to focus on those subjects where there is a more direct vocational progression and claims that for these subjects (such as HN programmes and those with PSRB recognition) there are better levels of progression.

- The College submission notes and the panel acknowledged, the positive contribution of students to the economy, but that for many, their career choices and opportunities do not align with Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes 1-3.

- In their submissions, students did not provide substantive evidence in regard to SO3 but were positive about the extent to which they felt the College does its best to promote positive outcomes. In their video submission, one student described how they had gained promotion at work as a result of the skills and knowledge gained during their studies. Several students in the submission video spoke very positively about how their experience at the College had promoted their personal development, confidence and aspiration.

The overall progression indicator for full-timefull-time cohort is in line with benchmark but with low materiality, however the most recent year is materially (99.5%) below benchmark – 50.8/61.9 and for the following subjects, progression is materially below benchmark; Business and Management; Performing Arts; Computing; Allied Health.

The overall progression indicator for the part-time cohort is materially (81.1%) below benchmark – 71.0/76.2 and all other aspects are broadly in line with or below benchmark but with low materiality.

Progression for disabled students is below benchmark and slightly worse than for non-disabled students.

Progression for Asian and black students is broadly in line with benchmark.

For programmes where there is strong PSRB alignment progression is above benchmark.

Progression indicators for the following cohorts are materially below benchmark, albeit with small numbers of students contributing to the denominator: Allied health, Business and management and Computing.  Similarly for ABCS (Association between characteristics of students) quintiles 1 and 2: Allied health, Business and management, and Computing.

The panel considered that in its submission, the College has recognised where there was a need to enhance progression rates rates and has put in place support strategies to address this.

However, these are yet to show notable impact. Overall and split indicators show that for many groups of students progression is material below benchmark. When considering the evidence holistically, the panel considered that there was insufficient evidence of a very high quality feature.

## SO4: Intended educational gains: SO5: Approaches to supporting educational gains: SO6: Evaluation and demonstration of educational gains

Substantive evidence in relation to this feature includes:

- The College submission describes the Graduate Attributes that it intends to engender and these are set out as; the development of knowledge and skills to progress with confidence to employment or further study; to develop professionalism and resilience and; to develop a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Throughout there is a stated commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, challenging injustice and social inequalities.

- These aspects are further developed in the submission with reference to a focus on academic skills and knowledge development at level 4, followed by the enhancement of employability and personal development at levels 5 and 6.

- The submission describes various approaches to developing student employability to enhance progression. Such approaches include supporting students to gain additional sector relevant qualifications, employer engagement through live briefs, guest speakers, work placements and masterclasses.

- The submission also describes a wide range of approaches to student support which are detailed above in SE5 and students, in their submission, were very positive about this aspect, citing the wrap around support they receive throughout their student experience.

- In their submission, students were very positive about the extent to which their College experience had enabled them to grow personally with increased confidence and aspiration and that the College respects them and deals with them as individuals.

- The College submission describes how it monitors achievement of graduate attributes through its learning outcome matrices embedded within programme specifications. Following a pilot activity in 2220- 23, the College is proposing to roll-out the formal assessment of progress towards educational gains. The assessment of progress will be embedded in tutorial records and incorporate student and staff assessment of performance against individual targets. While the panel noted this intent, by definition there is no evidence of the impact of this to date.

Overall for SO4 and SO5 there is evidence of very high quality features by which the College articulates the educational gains it intends for its students and supports its students to attain these.

However, with regard to SO6 there is less substantive evidence given that the College is in the early phase of rolling out a formal means of evaluating the educational gains made by its students. Accordingly for this feature (SO6) the panel considered that there was insufficient evidence of very high quality, while noting that the College is taking initial steps to evaluate the educational gains it intends for its students.

# Overall rating

The panel noted that, in addition to the very high quality features set out above, there was also some very high quality provision evidenced in the completion indicators as detailed above under SO2.

Applying the regulatory guidance set out in RA22 and the panel members' expert judgment, because the panel arrived at a rating of Silver for the student experience aspect and a bronze rating for the student outcomes aspect, the panel concluded the overall rating to be 'Silver'.

Accordingly the panel judges that across all the available evidence the student experience and student outcomes are typically of very high quality.

In reaching this decision, the panel considered there to be compelling evidence that the very high quality features apply to most of the College's groups of students, including students from areas of multiple deprivation and low participation in higher education.

# General duties and public sector equality duty

As a committee of the OfS, the panel, throughout its evaluation of the evidence provided and using its expert opinion, considered the OfS's general duties set out in section 2 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA)

In this case, the panel noted how the College, by providing quality, choice and opportunity, tailored to its locality and to the characteristics of its students, helps to ensure that its higher education provision is at the best quality for students and results in improved student experiences and outcomes. The panel judged that the College strives to deliver higher education at very high quality for the benefit of the students, employers and the community.

Throughout its consideration of the evidence the panel paid due regard to the public sector equality duty set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires the OfS to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, foster good relations between different groups and take steps to advance equality of opportunity. In this respect the panel noted how the College seeks to provide a very high quality student experience and delivers very high quality student outcomes, in a locality where participation in higher education by minority ethnic groups is relatively low. In addition the panel noted the College's strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion which is embedded in its higher education provision and reflected in student experiences and outcomes.