REVIEW OF THE TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK
YEAR 2:
PROCESS, RESULTS AND NEXT STEPS
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 2

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEF ................................................................. 4

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS FROM YEAR 2 OF THE TEF ..................................................... 8

  PROVIDER AND STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS ................................................................. 8
  METRIC FLAGS ...................................................................................................... 12
  METRIC SUPPRESSION ........................................................................................... 15

PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS .................................................................................................... 17

  SUBMITTING A RESPONSE ...................................................................................... 17
  COST OF SUBMISSION ........................................................................................... 22
  IMPACT ON DECISION-MAKING ............................................................................... 24
  FUTURE OF THE TEF ................................................................................................ 26
  SUBJECT-LEVEL TEF ................................................................................................ 32

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ................................................................... 36

ANNEXES .................................................................................................................. 38

  ANNEXE A: COST ANALYSIS ...................................................................................... 38
  ANNEXE B: COST ESTIMATES ................................................................................... 42
  ANNEXE C: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS ............ 43
INTRODUCTION

This report reviews the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in its first ‘test’ year, covering the assessment period of winter 2016–17 that resulted in the June 2017 awards. It reviews the results, the impact and cost of making submissions from a survey of Universities UK (UUK) members, and explores issues for consideration in future iterations. The key findings from the report are:

- There appears to be general confidence that overall process was fair, notwithstanding the outcomes of individual appeals. Judgements were the result of an intensive and discursive process of deliberation by the assessment panel.

- The TEF produced independent results that are partially corroborated by other metrics. The results did not correlate with institutional characteristics such as student population or research income, but there was a slight correlation with entry tariff and other rankings.

- Further consideration will need to be given to how the TEF accounts for the diversity of the student body, particularly part-time students. Some regional patterns also suggest that the sensitivity of judgements to contextual factors may also need further consideration.

- It is estimated that the cost of participating in the TEF for 134 higher education institutions was approximately £4 million. This has been driven principally by the range and intensity of staff involvement, particularly at senior levels.

- There is widespread belief that the TEF will raise the profile of teaching and learning. There is also early evidence that the TEF process has enhanced engagement with institutional metrics, will reshape internal assurance processes and has influenced teaching and learning strategies.

- There are genuine concerns about how the assessment framework defines and measures teaching excellence and the viability of subject level assessment. It will be important these issues are thoroughly reviewed to improve confidence in the TEF and its impact on the sector.

- All the above points are of relevance if subject-level TEF is to provide students with reliable information that will help their decisions. Key questions include the impact of increased suppression of metrics and how judgments are made in the absence data, the comparability of subject groupings, and the increase in cost and complexity of submissions and assessment.
These findings suggest that if the TEF is to make an effective contribution to the ongoing success of the whole UK sector, further consideration will need to be given to:

• how the TEF defines and measures excellence in a diverse sector and supports development of teaching and learning practice

• the role that the TEF plays across the student decision-making process and the relationship with the wider student information landscape

• the process for the future development of the TEF and the role of the sector, including students and devolved nations

• the relationship between the TEF and quality assessment, including regulatory baselines and the Quality Code

The independent review of the TEF will be an important opportunity to address these questions. This process should ensure that the sector’s quality and student information architecture are complementary and avoid unnecessary burden, complexity or duplication.

The findings are based on a survey of Universities UK (UUK) member institutions conducted in February 2017, immediately after the deadline for TEF submissions. 83 responses were received, including two from institutions that did not eventually participate in the TEF. The survey was targeted at institutional teams and leads responsible for compiling responses and collecting feedback based on their experience. It aims to provide a baseline for consideration as part of the future development of the TEF.
THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEF

The full TEF judgements were published on 12 June 2017. Providers were awarded ratings of gold, silver and bronze or a provisional award. An independent panel made judgements based on three main criteria – teaching quality, learning environment and student learning gain and outcomes – and using a combination of core metrics and provider submissions. 299 UK institutions applied for an award, including 134 higher education institutions. Participating English institutions were permitted to increase fees with inflation regardless of performance.

Objectives for the TEF:

- inform students’ choices about what and where to study
- reward and recognise excellent teaching
- support the enhancement of teaching across the sector
- improve the matching of graduate skills with needs of employers and the economy

The TEF originated in the Conservative Party 2015 general election manifesto as part of a commitment to secure value for money for students. The 2015 Higher Education Green Paper, Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice, invited formal input on design proposals that resulted in core design features, including the use of outcomes, metrics, provider submissions and panel judgements. This was followed by the 2016 Higher Education White Paper that committed to introducing the TEF, and to the future development of subject-level assessment, and lower fee increases for providers rated bronze.
Design features of the TEF:

- provides students with an accessible judgement about the teaching and learning experience at a university
- criteria-based but aims to produce differentiation to drive competition and student choice
- primarily focuses on student outcomes and the impact of teaching rather than inputs or process
- assesses the impact or value added to students by benchmarking performance against salient features of the institution (e.g., intake and subject mix)
- judgements are based on a combination of core metrics, contextual information, provider submissions and panel judgements
- participation is voluntary and open to universities from across the UK but contingent on meeting baseline quality requirements
- participating English universities can charge inflationary fee increases

The TEF was included in the 2017 Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) in Section 25 which permits the Office for Students (OfS) to:

*make arrangements for a scheme to give ratings to English higher education providers regarding the quality of, and the standards applied to, higher education that they provide.*

Schedule 2 of the Act establishes the link between the TEF and fees in England. This includes an upper amount, not exceeding inflation, for institutions receiving a ‘higher award’, as determined by the secretary of state, and a lower ‘sub-level’ amount between the ‘floor’ amount (£9,000 with access agreement) and the upper amount. The Act requires an independent review of the TEF – likely to take place in 2018–19 (section 26) – before the secretary of state can set a ‘sub-level’ amount based on performance of the TEF and not before the academic year starting 1 August 2020 (Schedule 2 section 20).
Independent review:

The report must cover the following in the case of each scheme:

a) the process by which ratings are determined under the scheme and the sources of statistical information used in that process

b) whether that process, and those sources of statistical information, are fit the purpose of determining ratings under the scheme

c) the names of the ratings under the scheme and whether those names are appropriate

d) the impact of the scheme on the ability of higher education providers to which the scheme applies to carry out their functions (including their functions relating to teaching and research)

e) an assessment of whether the scheme is in the public interest

f) any other matters that the appointed person considers relevant
Expected timeline of the TEF until 2020

Institutional level

TEF Year 3
- Application window
- Assessment Window

TEF Year 4
- Application window
- Assessment Window

Combined TEF

TEF Year 5
- Application window
- Assessment Window

Subject level

Subject level Pilot
Year 1
- Application Window
- Assessment Window
- Subject level Consultation
- Outcomes (not public)

Subject level Pilot
Year 2
- Application Window
- Assessment Window
- Outcomes (not public)

Timeline:
- Sept 2017
- Dec 2017
- March 2018
- June 2018
- Sept 2018
- Dec 2018
- March 2019
- June 2019
- Sept 2019
- Dec 2019
- March 2020
- June 2020

Secretory of State sets sub-level fee amount

Independent review of the TEF

Transition to Office for Students higher education register

Year 5 Outcomes

Year 5 fees link - September 2021

Year 4 Outcomes

Year 4 fees link

Year 3 Outcomes

Year 3 fees link

Lessons learned and Year 3 spec

Inclusion of LEO data

TEF 2 fees link
ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS FROM YEAR 2 OF THE TEF

This section assesses whether there are any notable trends in the results of TEF Year 2. It finds that:

- There are no significant correlations between institutional characteristics and TEF outcomes. There is, however, a positive correlation with entry tariff, and a negative correlation with the proportion of students living at home or recruited locally.

- The strongest indicator of performance was associated with the Learning Environment metrics based on National Student Survey (NSS) academic support questions and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) non-continuation measure.

- There was significant suppression of metrics for the part-time student population and by ethnicity. Although this may not have affected results, there is a correlation between levels of suppression and gold awards.

PROVIDER AND STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

134 higher education institutions took part in TEF Year 2, of these 33% achieved gold (44) awards versus 18% that received bronze (24). Figure 1 highlights how these results are broken down across the regions and whilst there is no direct correlation between outcomes and region, it is clear that some fared better than others. The East Midlands emerged as the ‘top’ region with eight gold and one silver award, while the picture was more mixed for London which received the highest proportion of bronze ratings (33%).

Figure 1: Breakdown of TEF awards by region of provider (includes 134 providers designated as higher education institutions)
One of the main design features of the TEF was to ensure that institutional context was considered and that the profile of the student body did not determine results. Assessments addressed this in two ways: firstly, through the benchmarking of metrics and assessment relative to them; and secondly, by providing contextual information to the assessment panel to allow them to understand more about the institution’s nature and operating context.

There was no significant correlation between TEF outcomes and the size of undergraduate student population; study mode (full-time versus part-time); proportion of black and minority ethnic (BME) students; domicile of undergraduate students; subject breakdown by undergraduate student population; total research income; research income as a percentage of total income; Times Higher Research Excellence Framework (REF) grade point average and rank; the proportion of students from different POLAR3 (the participation of local areas) quintiles; the age of the institution; offer rate; and number of applications.

Some links between TEF outcome and student characteristics were found; institutions with higher average tariffs were more likely to receive a gold award, while those with a higher proportion of students living at home and recruiting locally were more likely to receive bronze.¹ This relationship is not straightforward however, as the average entry tariff of an institution is also inversely correlated to the proportion of its students living at home and recruited from the local area. These relationships are shown in Figure 2.

The correlation found between average tariff and TEF outcome does not necessarily mean the assessment process has failed to account for this characteristic. It is highly possible that institutions with the highest levels of teaching excellence can recruit students with the highest prior attainment. It should be noted, however, that no correlation was found between TEF outcome and offer rate or application numbers, which are markers of market position and selectivity. The causality of these relationships merits further investigation to ensure judgements about excellence are not being skewed by prior attainment.

¹ Average tariff, p-value <0.27, sig. to 0.01. Proportion living at home, p-value 0.46, sig. to 0.01. Proportion local recruitment, p-value 0.40, sig. to 0.01. Data source: Higher Education Statistics Agency Student Record 2015–16, Copyright Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited
Another stated aim of the TEF was to aid student choice. UK league tables have traditionally aimed to be such a source of information and use similar metrics including NSS and employment outcomes. Figure 3 shows that there is a positive correlation between league table positioning and TEF outcomes for the Guardian 2015 and Complete University Guide 2018 rankings. The correlation between the TEF outcome and league table position is slightly stronger in the case of the Guardian than the Complete University Guide, which also considers research excellence.

---

2 Guardian 2015 p-value 0.49, Complete University Guide 2018 p-value 0.42
There is, however, a significant range of league table positions for each TEF outcome – the largest is for the Complete University Guide 2018 in which bronze institutions span 120 league table positions. The spread of league table rankings within each TEF outcome will be influenced by three factors:

a) TEF outcomes are influenced by provider submissions and the panel judgement

b) the TEF assesses benchmarked performance, league tables measure absolute performance

c) league tables consider indicators of performance not included in the TEF

**Figure 3: Ranking in the a) Guardian 2015, b) Complete University Guide 2018 for institutions as a function of TEF Year 2 outcomes (HESA)**
METRIC FLAGS

As the TEF assessment consisted of two parts – provider performance against benchmarked metrics and the provider statement – it is useful to consider whether there are relationships between final judgement and the benchmarked metrics. Core metrics were benchmarked against the provider’s student population, with a provider’s relative performance indicated through a system of flags.

Core metrics

- **For teaching quality**: NSS questions on ‘teaching on my course’ and ‘assessment and feedback’
- **Learning environment**: NSS questions on ‘academic support’ and the HESA non-continuation measure
- **Student outcomes and learning gain**: Destination of Leavers in Higher Education Survey’s percentage of students in employment or further study and those who were in highly-skilled employment or further study six months after graduation

Distribution of flags

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Double positive flag</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Double negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three standard deviations and three percentage points above benchmark</td>
<td>Two standard deviations and two percentage points above benchmark</td>
<td>Within two standard deviations of benchmark or within two percentage points of benchmark or both</td>
<td>Two standard deviations and two percentage points below benchmark</td>
<td>Three standard deviations and three percentage points below benchmark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4: Types of flags received by providers at each award level in TEF Year 2

Learning environment flags

Academic support

Gold
- Neutral
- Positive
- Double positive

Silver
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Double positive

Bronze
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral

Non-continuation

Gold
- Neutral
- Positive
- Double positive

Silver
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive

Bronze
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral

Student outcome and learning gain flags

Employment

Gold
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Double positive

Silver
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Double positive

Bronze
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Double positive

Highly-skilled employment

Gold
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Double positive

Silver
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Double positive

Bronze
- Double negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Double positive
The metrics associated with learning environment show the strongest relationship with outcomes. In both cases, no gold provider received anything other than a double positive, positive or neutral flag for these metrics, and no bronze provider received any positive or double positive flags. Most silver providers also received neutral flags for these metrics (50 and 56 out of 66 for academic support and non-continuation metrics respectively). Figure 4 details the type of flag provided within each rating received.

The metrics associated with teaching quality show a varying relationship between TEF result and metric flags. Once again, no gold providers have any negative or double negative flags, and no bronze providers have any positive or double positive flags for the teaching on my course metric. This relationship is not replicated for the assessment and feedback metric where three providers received a gold outcome despite double negative or negative flags.

The metrics associated with student outcome and learning gain show the least correlation between final provider award and initial flags. For both employment metrics, there are several institutions whose outcome was gold having received negative or double negative flags, and bronze institutions who received initial double positive flags.
METRIC SUPPRESSION

Metrics included for each provider were broken down by mode of study (full-time or part-time), and data was also split by the level of study; disadvantage; sex; age; ethnicity; domicile; and disability. This data was included to enable assessment of consistency or variation across an institution’s student population. Metrics were suppressed in four cases:

- the denominator population was too low
- the response rate was too low
- there was insufficient data to form the benchmarks
- there were no students in the denominator population

The following analysis excludes cases where flags are a result of no students in the denominator population. None of the 134 higher education institutions who participated in the exercise had core metrics suppressed for their full-time student population. However, 48 providers – 36% of those participating – had one or more of their core metrics suppressed for their part-time student population. There is an over-representation of gold institutions with suppressed core metrics; they make up 33% of awards but 46% of those with part-time core metric suppression. Low response rate, particularly for the NSS based metrics, was the predominant reason for suppression.

**Figure 5: The number of higher education institutions with a core metric suppressed for their part-time student population and the reason for suppression**

When split by the different characteristics, the data split by ethnicity shows the highest levels of suppression, both for the full-time and part-time student populations. 30 institutions (22%) have had one or more metrics suppressed when split by ethnicity for their full-time student population. This number rises
significantly for the part-time population where 125 providers (93%) have had one or more ethnicity-split metrics suppressed. Response rates are a prevalent reason for suppression; a lack of students in the denominator population is also a significant issue (Figure 6).

Once again, the level of suppression is not spread evenly among the three award levels. For the data split by ethnicity for the full-time population, gold providers represent 53% of those who have had metrics suppressed but are only 33% of all providers. For the other splits, levels of suppression in the full-time population are low but increase to substantial levels for the part-time population.

**Figure 6: The number of higher education institutions with an ethnicity split metric suppressed for their full-time and part-time student population, and the reason for suppression**

Further consideration of the impact of metric suppression on TEF outcomes will be necessary, particularly for part-time students and ethnicity. Factors include the impact of an absence of data on panel deliberation and comparison, the usefulness of judgements to students from populations affected by suppressed metrics, and the relationship with tariff trends. Suppression is also significant for the subject-level TEF where student populations will be significantly reduced. The implications of this are discussed further in Section 8.
PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS

This section presents the results from the survey of UUK members following the deadline for provider submissions in TEF Year 2. It considers the impact of the process on institutions and their priorities for future iterations.

SUBMITTING A RESPONSE

The survey of institutional teams responsible for developing provider submissions explored the approach universities took to compiling their submission. Compiling responses was an intensive process that engaged a wide range of staff including senior leaders. This has helped to raise the profile and engagement with teaching and learning strategies and institutional data. Compiling responses to the TEF also represented a substantial investment, and universities expect to establish ongoing processes for collecting evidence for future rounds.

The first question asked who took the lead responsibility for compiling the TEF. Responses clearly show that the pro vice-chancellor (PVC) or equivalent for teaching and learning (58%) was predominantly responsible for the TEF. Roles in the other category included deputy vice-chancellors or deans for teaching, as well as PVCs and deputy vice-chancellors. Clearly, different job titles carry different emphasis and roles in different universities but this clearly suggests that responses to the TEF were owned by senior leads for teaching and learning.

Figure 7.1: Survey results on the process of submission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PVC/ deputy VC teaching and learning</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of quality and enhancement</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic registrar</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registrar</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVC/ deputy VC student experience</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of strategic planning</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/Head of Educational Development</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who took lead responsibility for compiling your TEF submission?
89% of institutions that responded to the TEF set up a steering group to deliver a response that brought in a much wider range of roles. In addition to senior leads for teaching, notable members included directors of planning, which begins to illustrate an engagement with institutional data alongside academic registrars, directors of quality, and enhancement or educational practice. 65% of respondents had a dedicated student representative on the steering group. Only nine respondents (11%) appointed a dedicated project officer to deliver the TEF response, suggesting that staff were re-tasked from within the university.

**Figure 7.2: Survey results on the process of submission**

UUK also asked which body ‘signed off’ the TEF response. This question may illustrate more about the structure of different universities in relation to executive and senate structures. Nevertheless, it does highlight the clear prominence of these two bodies on TEF responses, and the lower-level of direct engagement of governing bodies. Some of this will be determined by the timescale of responses but also illustrates the delineation between setting strategic direction and monitoring risks, executive management and academic outputs.
In terms of expected audiences for submissions, governing bodies were anticipated to read submissions (93% of cases), highlighting a potential connection between the TEF and future institutional strategy. Similarly, in 88% of responses, university staff were an expected audience of TEF submissions. The expectation that 60% of prospective students would read responses might be optimistic and highlights the question of how applicants will engage with the TEF. Fortunately, 100% of responses anticipated that the TEF assessors and panel would read the submission.

**Figure 7.4: Survey results on the process of submission**
The survey also asked for feedback on the types of evidence that institutions used in their submissions. Although this analysis should be augmented by the actual submission, and weighted depending on success, it gives an early steer on where the emphasis was placed. It illustrates two things: the importance of the core metrics alongside the NSS, and the importance of existing enhancement and review systems. This also aligns with feedback that suggests that the TEF has played a role in encouraging a greater level of engagement with institutional data and feedback mechanisms on teaching and learning and impact.

**Figure 7.5: Survey results on the process of submission**

Evidence for submissions was generally collected through a call to departments and schools, alongside centrally held evidence. Nearly 50% of institutions held targeted workshops with selected staff, while 12% held a dedicated workshop for all staff. A wider range of responses were received when asking how many people were directly involved in collecting evidence for a submission. This ranged from three at a small specialist institution, through to 97 at a large multi-faculty institution with an average of 27 and a median of 22.
The TEF guidance set out an expectation that students would be involved in compiling a response. However, in some cases, this was complicated by local student union policies to boycott the TEF based on the link to fees. Some institutions chose to respect this stance and consequently did not have direct student involvement in their submission. Nevertheless, in most cases, students were involved in responses, either through student representatives on the steering or project group, or through the use of existing student feedback forums – and often both.
COST OF SUBMISSION

69 institutions responded to the survey’s request for a breakdown of the amount of time their staff had spent on their Year 2 TEF submission. The findings show a variation in the time spent on compiling responses with larger institutions generally spending longer with more senior staff input, illustrating the challenge of pulling together a single story for the whole institution. Based on the responses to this survey, UUK estimate that participating higher education institutions spent a total of £3.3 million in salary costs which, including ‘on costs’ (employers’ National Insurance and pension contributions), rises to £4.1 million.

UUK asked institutions to specify how many days staff from the differing categories and of varying seniority had spent on preparing their institutional TEF submission. These categories are listed in Annexe A. As shown in Table 1, the results exhibit a significant variation in the time spent on submissions. Several factors may have contributed to this variation including:

- different ways of interpreting the survey question
- the challenge of responding to a new exercise, which required the formation of new processes
- differing levels of confidence in achieving a desirable outcome, and therefore varying approaches to compiling a submission following the receipt of their metrics and initial hypothesis
- differing levels of ease with which institutions collected evidence for the purposes of the submission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UG size</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Months taken(^4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>218.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>319.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>116.4</td>
<td>129.5</td>
<td>228.8</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) Of those, 67 institutions went on to make a TEF submission.
\(^4\) This is the estimated number of months spent on consideration of the TEF submission by the institution, ranging from five months (from the release of the TEF year 2 guidance to the January 2016 submission date) to one month (January 2016)
Despite this large variation, there does appear to be some relation between the size of institution and the amount of time taken by staff, with smaller institutions taking less time over their submission and larger institutions taking longer.

This variation does, however, highlight the difficulty of producing a single representative figure for time spent by individual institutions and the whole sector on Year 2 TEF submissions. This is due in part to the novelty of the TEF submission process; as outlined above, even institutions that did not submit under Year 2 of the TEF incurred substantial costs. The government’s own impact assessment for the TEF\(^5\) acknowledges that institutions are likely to incur additional ‘familiarisation costs’, although our analysis suggests that these costs have been underestimated.

Nonetheless, the survey data does allow us to estimate broad costs. The 67 institutions providing data on the cost of submitting to TEF Year 2 spent just over 6,000 staff days and £1.47 million in salary costs alone\(^6\) on TEF submissions. Once the additional staff-related costs that employers pay (National Insurance payments and pension contributions, at an additional 24.4%) are added on, this total increased to £1.83 million. The full breakdown of this calculation is available in Annexe A.

Using this data, we estimate a total spend for all higher education institution entrants to Year 2 of the TEF of 12,800 days and £3.31 million in salary costs, increasing to £4.12 million when employers’ National Insurance and pension contributions are added. That figure does not account for the cost of those institutions that considered the TEF but decided against participating, nor the full economic cost of staff facilities and equipment.

By comparison, the impact assessment carried out by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) estimated that the sector costs for all participating providers (299) would total between £3.3 million and £5.9 million in Year 2, with a best estimate of £4 million. BIS based submission costs on the REF analysis, assuming a cost of £18,000 per submission (£18,700 in 2016 prices), which led to an estimated total cost between £3.6 and £6.5 million for TEF Year 2 when including familiarisation costs, with a best estimate of £4.3 million. Our estimate of £4.1 million, is higher as it is only indicative of the cost for the 134 higher education institutions, rather than all participants.

For the last REF cycle, research by Technopolis calculated a £212 million spend on submissions, with £2 million estimated as non-pay costs over the six years that institutions had to prepare.\(^7\) The total staff costs for central management and coordination of the REF were estimated at £44 million, or £7 million a year over the six years. This broadly equates to a cost of £230,000 per institution per year.

---

\(^5\) BIS (2016), *Detailed impact assessments: Higher Education and Research Bill*

\(^6\) This does not include the cost of employers’ National Insurance or pension contributions.

\(^7\) Technopolis (2015), *REF Accountability Review: Costs, benefits and burden.*
Much of the additional cost relative to the TEF estimate is due to the different structure of assessment the REF includes approximately 30 units of assessment, and processes that involve selection of staff and outputs to submit.

**IMPACT ON DECISION-MAKING**

The TEF is intended to provide information to students and is constructed in a way that introduces reputational incentives for institutions to prioritise teaching and learning. As it is the first full year of its operation, and only a year since the original technical specification was published, it is hard to assess whether significant long-term impacts have taken place. However, the responses to the survey suggest that over the last two years nearly 50% of responding institutions have taken the TEF into account when taking decisions relating to teaching and learning strategies and practice.

Over 80% of institutions expect to set up an on-going process for collecting and reviewing evidence for future submissions. Although 40% felt that they would likely streamline the future submissions, on-going processes of collecting and reviewing evidence are likely to represent an additional cost or, at the very least, a reallocation of resource. It will be important to track the extent to which this represents a specific process for TEF submissions or is embedded into existing enhancement arrangements.

**Figure 8.1: Survey results for impact on decision-making**
The survey also asked about the types of measures in relation to teaching and learning that have been taken since summer 2015. This date was chosen as the point after the formation of the 2015 Conservative government and the reiteration of the intention to deliver the manifesto’s commitment to the TEF. The selection of actions was broadly modelled on the examples of evidence that was set out in the TEF’s technical specification and subsequent guidance, with some additional questions added in relation to the engagement of staff with teaching.

During this time, respondents reported an average and median score of eight actions, illustrating ongoing development of teaching and learning practice across the sector. Most notably, 81% of respondents had undertaken additional investment in teaching and learning, with 60% reporting additional investment in teaching staff. Employability has also been a prominent theme, with 70% updating strategies for employability or enhancing engagement with employers. There is also evidence of increased engagement with institutional data, including monitoring of core TEF metrics and ways of tracking student success, though notably just over 40% have also incorporated core TEF metrics into key performance indicators.
28% of responding institutions, however, have introduced a new progression route for teaching, and 40% have introduced additional forms of recognition for teaching staff. The low level of responses related to change in the number of teaching staff is notable, and may be driven by the sensitivity of the question or the inability to give firm answers for the whole institution.

When asked whether these changes had been influenced by the TEF, there was a notable split in responses. 48% of responses reported some influence by the TEF on these decisions, with 22% reviewing existing proposals and 26% accelerating existing changes. Conversely, 53% reported that the TEF had no impact or influence on these measures. This highlights what is likely to be an ongoing question for institutions about the extent to which the TEF should directly inform teaching and learning strategy and practice or should remain an important but separate factor.
FUTURE OF THE TEF

This section presents feedback on confidence in the TEF and priorities for future development. It finds:

- there is a high degree of confidence that the TEF will increase institutional focus on teaching and learning, but that there are notable concerns about how it defines and measures excellence

- that a clear priority for the future of the TEF is for testing with students to ensure that it makes a positive contribution to decision-making and provide evidence for future decisions

- there was interest in the development of new metrics, including measures of learning gain, but there is concern about the cost effectiveness of subject-level assessment

Confidence in the TEF

On balance, respondents were not confident that the TEF would make a positive contribution to student decision-making, with 46% answering negatively, 18% positively, and the remaining 36% neutral. There is a belief that the TEF will enhance the profile of teaching and learning, with 73% agreeing and only 6% disagreeing. The process of compiling responses, including senior staff time has contributed to furthering engagement with teaching and learning strategies.

Figure 9: Survey results for confidence in the TEF
There are significant concerns, however, about whether the TEF will accurately assess teaching and learning excellence. The concern about whether the TEF measures excellence does have implications for the likely impact of the TEF on enhancing teaching and learning practice. In this case, ‘disagree’ and ‘agree’ are broadly comparable – 25% and 29% respectively – while neutral is reported in 45% of cases. This uncertainty is likely to be linked to the novelty of the exercise and findings that only 42% of higher education institutions have embedded the TEF into institutional enhancement processes. It is also unclear how the metrics will steer institutional practice or the salience of the award in student decision-making.

**Development of new metrics**

The survey asked about the priorities for future development of the TEF. Respondents to this survey clearly prioritised testing of how the TEF will be used by students (79%). Respondents were interested in the possibility of new metrics (53%) and more sophisticated assessment (51%). When asked what metrics should be prioritised for future versions of the TEF, there was very little interest in a teaching intensity metric (12%) – a measure that is being tested as part of the subject-level pilots in autumn/winter 2017–18. 27% prioritised longitudinal education outcomes, which is also being tested for inclusion, while 43% prioritised inclusion of a teaching qualifications measure.
Figure 10.1: Survey results on priorities for future development of the TEF

What should be prioritised for future developments of TEF?

- Other
- Testing how TEF will be used by students
- The balance between metrics & submission
- Revised metrics scoring algorithm
- Revised subject-level benchmarking
- Full subject level metrics
- More opportunity for subject level narrative &...
- New metrics for teaching excellence
- More sophisticated assessment process
- Reduced cost & complexity of the process

Which of the following metrics would you prioritise for inclusion in future versions of TEF?

- Comparative learning gain measure
- Teaching intensity
- Teaching qualifications
- Benchmarked Longitudinal Educational Outcomes metrics (earnings)
A learning gain measure was felt to be the priority metric for future versions of the TEF by a clear majority of respondents (65%). The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) learning gain project is part way through a multi-faceted programme of work, and recently published an evaluation report of Year 1. Learning gain is defined as ‘a change in knowledge, skills, work readiness and personal development’\(^8\). Measures can be used to aid enhancement of teaching and learning practice, as well as informing students about their own progress and study strategies. The concept also recognises the difficulty of comparing gain between institutions with different intakes of students, subject mix, diverse curricula, and autonomous degree-awarding powers.

**Figure 10.2: Survey results on priorities for future development of the TEF**

![Survey results](image)

Developing a measure of learning gain that adequately covers the full diversity of students and institutions presents a significant challenge. This includes how learning objectives and outcomes are defined by different subjects, for example, humanities or sciences, and across the range of prior student attainment. The HEFCE pilots also highlight the challenge of delivering in-depth longitudinal cognitive assessments, students sensitivity about the purpose of the assessment, and concern about the potential impact on teaching and learning priorities.

Careful consideration of how learning gain can be incorporated into the TEF should be considered as it develops. The different pilot projects being funded and supported by HEFCE present different opportunities for how learning gain may be incorporated in the future:

- **Institutional or collaborative projects.** If successful, localised assessments are an opportunity to generate data for institutional enhancement and student feedback. This data could in turn be presented as part of provider submissions, along with other types of internal enhancement data.

- **The single, comparative ‘mixed methods’ survey.** If successful, this approach would lend itself to inclusion in a core metric. However, any development of a single survey exercise is likely to be a longer-term development as it presents significant logistical and methodological challenges.

- **Statistical models of added value.** This strand is in the early stages but has the potential to provide contextual data to help inform judgement about an institution. A predominantly statistical exercise is potentially lower cost and presents less logistical challenges, but is dependent on the quality and completeness of data and robustness of the method.

At this point, local institutional or collaborative projects are the most likely to produce tangible data for the TEF in the short and medium term. Local initiatives allow institutions to develop approaches that respond to the priorities of their students, and that are embedded in institutional enhancement processes. However, if this data is included in institutional submissions, there would be legitimate concerns from the assessors about the comparability, quality and integrity of the data. Shared principles and methods for assuring local assessments would merit consideration as part of this work.

The low priority given to a ‘teaching intensity’ metric illustrates uncertainty as to how it would aid differential assessment of excellence across diverse subjects and pedagogical practice. For example, the Higher Education Academy (HEA)-Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) survey suggests that student satisfaction is linked to a minimum number of hours per week – approximately 12 – while higher education requires space for independent study and discovery. This would also be a departure from the TEF’s focus on outcomes, for example, whether students are satisfied with teaching. By contrast, a contact hours metric is an input measure of staff time, whether collected through administrative data or student surveys.
There was more support for the development of a benchmarked metric based on the Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data. This data is likely to be included in TEF Year 3 as a supplementary metric. As with the other core metrics, how the LEO data will be benchmarked and contextualised will be an important issue. At present, LEO data is affected by several such factors which cannot be disaggregated, such as mode of employment (ie part-time/full-time), location of work, pro-rata earnings in part-time work, and variations in local labour markets. In particular, LEO data does not report salaries for self-employed graduates or those who have moved abroad.

The survey also asked about the current benchmarking methodology used in the assessment to evaluate performance independently of certain institutional characteristics, such as intake or subject mix. The most common concern was geographical effects (59%), including representation of local recruitment and labour markets, and the sensitivity of POLAR measures in areas such as London. Contextual information about geography was available to the panel but further consideration will need to be given to how sensitive metrics and judgements are to these factors.

The other priority area was in relation to the balance between benchmarked and absolute scores (40%), particularly among higher tariff institutions (70%). There are methodological challenges around the sensitivity of benchmarks at the upper levels of performance, the relationship between an institution’s performance, and its referencing cohort and the sophistication of contextual factors. These difficulties were in part addressed by making the panels aware of absolute score as contextual information alongside advice on potential weaknesses. Nevertheless, the benchmarking flags played a significant role in anchoring judgements through the initial hypothesis.

A fundamental review of UK Performance Indicators by the Student Information Advisory Group is currently underway and should help to inform the independent review of the TEF. This review consists of an independent assessment of the statistical approach currently used for benchmarking, and a review of the principles and methodology employed in selecting and applying the factors used in benchmarking calculations. The question of benchmarking raises significant questions about the definition of excellence, and the relationship between contextualisation and absolute definitions for the purposes of comparing performance and student choice.
SUBJECT-LEVEL TEF

The survey also collected initial views on the commitment to develop subject-level TEF assessments, as set out in the 2016 Higher Education White Paper and subsequently reiterated in the passage of the Higher Education and Research Bill. The survey was conducted during a series of workshops facilitated by UUK on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). Although these workshops involved upwards of 90 people, not all respondents to this survey would have had equal knowledge of the models that have subsequently been proposed for the pilots.

Figure 11: Survey results in relation to subject-level TEF

Based on your experience of TEF2, which approach would your prioritise for subject-level TEF?

- Unable to answer
- There is no proportionate approach for producing a robust subject-level TEF judgement which will be useful for students
- Providing high-level judgements against approximately 7 broad subject groupings based on higher quality data
- Providing granular judgements against approximately 40 programme categories based on lower quality data

What other approaches or considerations should subject-level TEF assessment take into account?

- There is no proportionate approach to produce useful and robust subject-level TEF judgements
- Testing of how institutional and subject-level judgements would be used by students
- Provide more context for the information that is already provided to students at course level
- Produce more rounded institutional judgements that take into account disciplinary differences
- Give more opportunity for provider submissions to evidence areas of disciplinary excellence
Subject-level TEF will be piloted over two years, 2017–18 and 2018–19, with a full introduction planned for Year 5 of the TEF in 2019–20. In 2017–18, two models of the TEF will be piloted with 40 providers. Both models will use the second level of the Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH) to group courses into 35 assessed subject areas. The main assessment framework will be based on that operating at provider level. A new metric, teaching intensity, will also be developed and tested alongside these pilots.

**Model A: By exception**

This model will consider incidences where subject-level metrics deviate from those of the provider. Subjects whose metrics lead to an initial hypothesis different to that of the provider will be considered as an exception (unless the changed hypothesis results from subject level-metrics changing to neutral from positive or negative at provider level). Providers will still submit a 15-page provider-level submission, and then up to five pages per subject generated as an exception.

The main panel will consider the provider-level metrics and submission to form a rating for the provider. Any non-exception subjects will also receive this rating. Subject panels will then consider the exception subjects and recommend ratings for these to the main panel.

**Model B: Bottom up**

This model assesses and provides ratings for all subjects. These are then considered along with the provider-level metrics and submission to also generate a provider-level rating. Although providers are given metrics for all relevant 35 CAH2 subjects, these are grouped further into seven subject areas. Providers then prepare a submission for each of the seven groups in which they have provision. The length of the submission for each subject group depends on the number of subjects the provider has in each grouping, and will be based on (n+4) pages, where n = the number of relevant subjects in the grouping. Providers can then prepare a ten-page provider submission to focus on institutional context.

The responses highlight the challenge involved in developing a credible subject-level TEF. Concerns include the comparability of subject coding, the quality of data at granular levels, the comparability of judgements, and cost. There are also risks in relation to the impact on institutions, such as subject mix or organisation of subject groupings that may deter interdisciplinary approaches, for example. In this respect, the pilots will be important for assessing the viability of the methods and should aim to provide evidence on these issues for consideration by the independent review of the TEF.
There was some interest in alternative ways of including subject-level information as part of helping students to make decisions. There was support for testing how subject-level TEF judgements would be used by students (51%). There was also interest in opportunities for providers to submit evidence in relation to disciplinary evidence (41%) or other examples of innovation. It was less clear as to what extent subject-level assessment will enhance teaching and learning beyond institutional-level TEF.

Our analysis of the results and process of TEF Year 2 highlights two important areas that require further consideration as the TEF progresses to subject-level: levels of metric suppression and the cost of the exercise.

As discussed, the level of suppressed metrics, particularly for part-time students and ethnicity splits, was significant for TEF Year 2 exercise. This would have limited the extent to which assessors could account for the experience of all students and highlighted a relationship between suppression levels and final ratings, which requires further consideration. With the increased granularity introduced by subject-level TEF and the resultant decreased student populations upon which metrics are formed, levels of suppression are likely to increase further in subject-level TEF.

Analysis performed by the DfE suggests that although 97.7% of students are included in subjects with reportable metrics, 87% of providers will have non-reportable core metrics in at least one subject.9 The pilot framework will consider how best to assess excellence in the case of non-reportable metrics. The pilots will consider whether a threshold for a partial set of core subject-level metrics is appropriate and if a minimum cohort size should be set.

The ethnicity data will also be decreased from six splits to three. After decreasing the level of ethnicity split, the DfE estimates that split data would be reportable 72% of the time at subject-level. As such, when evaluating the subject-level pilots, careful consideration must be given to ensuring parity of assessment between providers where metrics are available, and those where they are not.

---

9 Department for Education (2017), *Teaching Excellence Framework: Subject-level pilot specification*
The second aspect of subject-level TEF to consider is the cost burden of the exercise. Analysis of information on the cost of participating in TEF Year 2 provided by participating institutions and presented in this report suggests an overall cost of £4.1 million to higher education institutions. The original impact of assessment of implementing the Higher Education and Research Act did include an estimated cost for subject-level TEF, but several important factors have changed since then, such as the year of introduction, the possible models of implementation, and the level to which such subjects will be defined.10

The original impact assessment assumed that a subject-level TEF submission would cost a third of the institutional-level submission in Year 2, which is estimated at £4.1 million. Based on this assumption, an indicative cost could be calculated for both the subject-level models and participation of the same 134 higher education institutions in Year 5 of the TEF – when subject-level TEF is due to be introduced.

These calculations suggest that Model A could cost higher education institutions collectively £11.6 million, and Model B £13.7 million. For reasons explained in Annexe B, along with details of the calculation and assumptions made, UUK believe these to represent low-end estimates. As such, the subject-level pilots must consider how to accurately capture and assess the burden of each model, and cost to the participating institutions must be a key component of this burden.

Role of the assessment panel

The assessment panel played an essential role in formulating the outcome of final judgements. This is illustrated by the 35 providers that had their eventual award changed from the original hypothesis. A detailed consideration of the panel process is being undertaken by the DfE as part of the lessons learned exercise. However, some initial themes from the process include:

- The panel process represented an intensive discursive process that assessed complex information including core metrics, contextual information and provider evidence, based on agreed rules and informed by professional judgement.

- The intensity of this process, and the integrity and expertise of the panel members should give confidence in the overall integrity of TEF judgements. This does not discount ongoing debate about the design and structure for future assessments or appeals against individual judgements.

---

10 BIS (2016), Detailed impact assessments: Higher Education and Research Bill
• The complexity of judgements, including consistent and clear rules to guide and record comparable and nuanced assessment of complex data across a diverse sector, presents a challenge for ensuring transparency of judgements and maintaining confidence in the exercise.

• The core metrics and guidance to providers and the assessment panel provided a clear rule-based approach for judgements. However, these rules and criteria may also have masked some weaknesses or nuances in the data, or potentially over-emphasised the tangible difference between providers.

• Contextual institutional data and provider submissions enabled the panel to formulate nuanced, comparable judgements. This information also made the development of comparable and transparent judgements more complex.

• There were challenges around comparing the data presented by different providers as evidence of their impact. This includes data from internal quality assurance processes, internal surveys or learner analytics. This will be relevant for future comparison of localised measures of learning gain.

Further consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the various parts of the assessment framework are set out in Annexe C.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The TEF represents a significant addition to the higher education regulatory framework. It is a source of information for students, and a performance framework for universities that focuses for the first time on teaching and learning. In England, it is a key part of the statutory architecture set out in the HERA with a link to fees. Furthermore, the incoming Chair of the OfS has identified the TEF as a central part of the strategy for supporting improvement in teaching and learning.

The first full TEF assessment was delivered against a tight time frame and required a large degree of familiarisation by both institutions, the assessment panel, and the DfE and HEFCE teams charged with delivering it. The assessment framework has been subject to significant and ongoing scrutiny across the sector, and there appears to be a general acceptance of the judgements as fair and transparent. There are some aspects of the process that would benefit from improved transparency, such as the clarity of guidance, and the way that judgements are recorded and presented.

The ongoing debate about the TEF has highlighted competing definitions of teaching excellence. This includes the relationship between student satisfaction and outcomes and teaching excellence, and appropriate consideration of the institutional context and its characteristics. These debates are particularly salient given the role that the TEF should play in guiding student choice and the different factors a student should consider. This includes factors not covered by the TEF such as research intensity, entry tariff, and less tangible factors such as emotional fit.

In practice, the TEF judgements represent a definition of excellence produced through an intensive and discursive process of deliberation by the assessment panel. It is essential that the assessment framework that informed this process is kept under review to improve the sector's confidence in the quality and accuracy of judgements. This includes: the scope, weighting and benchmarking of core metrics; the presentation of contextual information; and the comparability of provider submissions. Any future changes to the TEF should consider the strengths and weaknesses of different components of the process.

If the TEF is to make a positive contribution to the sector, it is essential that it is useful to students. It is also essential that institutions are provided with a clear and transparent framework that enables long-term planning and shapes positive enhancement of teaching and learning. In this respect, the independent review should play an important role in shaping the development of the TEF in the longer term. For the TEF to gain the confidence of the sector, including students, the following aspects of the TEF may merit further consideration:
a) Long-term design principles. The TEF should be based on clear principles, including the desired outcomes, its place in the wider student information landscape, definitions of excellence, and associated design criteria. This should consider evidence of the actual and likely usage and impacts of the TEF, particularly on student decision-making, as well as institutions.

b) Future governance. This should include a clear role for the sector, including students, in collaboration with the OfS, to develop shared principles for the design and development of the TEF, as part of the development of a co-owned regulatory framework.

c) Phasing of changes. The future development of the TEF should avoid piecemeal changes that may increase the complexity, comparability and burden of the process. The independent review represents an opportunity to establish a clear vision for the priorities for future development.

d) Relationship with quality assessment. The TEF represents a differential assessment of teaching that sits on top of sector owned baselines of academic quality. As the Quality Code and the TEF develop, it is important that definitions of quality and excellence, and associated assessment arrangements, complement each other.
ANNEXE A: COST ANALYSIS

The following section describes the full process followed for estimating the cost of submission to TEF Year 2 for participating higher education institutions. Institutional responses were classified by the size of their undergraduate population, dividing all institutions nationally into quartiles based on the number of undergraduate students in 2015–16. Responses were also classified by how involved senior management was in an institution’s TEF submission, dividing institutions into quartiles based on the time spent on a TEF submission by senior management as a proportion of the total time spent.

The quartiles used are outlined in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Institutional quartiles used in survey analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management involvement (% of total time spent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A day rate for each staff category was calculated by dividing the mean annual salary by the number of annual working hours, and multiplying by the length of a standard working day. HESA staff categories and their mean annual salaries were used. UUK followed the approach used by Technopolis and RAND in their analysis of REF, and assumed that an FTE post comprises 1,950 work hours a year (7.5 hours a day, 37.5 hours a week, over 260 days a year), and that staff work a standard 7.5-hour day. This day rate was used in combination with the obtained survey data on the number of days spent on their TEF submission by staff at each institution to arrive at a total staff cost for the institutions who returned data to the survey. These results are given in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Total time and salary costs per staff category for survey respondents who submitted to TEF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary total (£000’s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total with on-costs (£000’s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* summed totals by staff category plus institutional total for two institutions that were unable to provide a breakdown

---

11 HESA (2017), HESA staff record 2015–16
12 Technopolis (2015), REF Accountability Review: Costs, benefits and burden
To estimate a value for all 134 higher education institutions participating in TEF Year 2, the costs were weighted by undergraduate size. Responding institutions were broadly representative of the regional distribution of higher education institutions who entered TEF Year 2 and the spread of awards. Three outlier institutions were also removed; two from quartile 2 and one from quartile 3. These weightings are given in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate size quintile</th>
<th>Proportion of TEF entrants</th>
<th>Proportion of survey respondents</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This calculation produced the numbers given in table 4 and the overall estimated cost of £4.1 million when including employer salary contributions.
Table 4: Total time and salary costs per staff category for the entire sector (illustrative only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Senior managers</th>
<th>Head of School</th>
<th>Head of Department</th>
<th>Lecturers etc.</th>
<th>TEF</th>
<th>Appointment</th>
<th>Senior professional</th>
<th>Professional services staff</th>
<th>All staff totals*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>1,880</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>6,010</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>1,610</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>2,410</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>2,970</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days total</td>
<td>3,610</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>1,490</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>3,380</td>
<td>2,480</td>
<td>12,790</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary total (£000’s)</td>
<td>1,472</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>3,308</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total with on-costs (£000’s)</td>
<td>1,831</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>4,115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* summed totals by staff category plus institutional total for two institutions which were unable to provide a breakdown.
ANNEXE B: SUBJECT COST ESTIMATES

MODEL A CALCULATION

The subject-level technical consultation document states that applying CAH2 to providers who participated in TEF Year 2 results in 4,500 subject incidences. Of these, 28% (or 1260) are exceptions. Higher education institutions accounted for 58% of providers who submitted to TEF Year 2, so it is assumed that 731 (or 58% of 1260) of these exceptions will occur for higher education institutions. Each of these exceptions will require a submission which, as assumed in the original BIS estimates, is estimated to cost a third of the cost of a full institutional submission (£10,200). The original institutional submission cost is then also incurred by the production of the institutional submission, and leads to the estimated £11.6 million cost.

The median higher education institution submission length in Annexe C of the technical consultation suggests that the majority of exception subjects occur at higher education institutions and as such this is considered to be a low-end estimate.

MODEL B CALCULATION

This calculation assumes that each higher education institution will produce a submission in each of the seven subject groupings, and that these submissions will cost a third of the institutional submission. The cost of 938 subject submissions (seven at each of the 134 higher education institutions) has been added to the original £4.1 million cost for institutional submissions, producing an overall estimated cost of £13.7 million.

Not every higher education institution will submit in each of the seven subject groupings and as such, this estimate could be perceived as a high-end estimate. However, this estimate does not account for the fact that each subject grouping will contain several subjects, and institutions will be provided with metrics at this increased level of 35 subjects to consider in preparation of their submission. If this subject-level cost was calculated at this level (35 subject submissions per higher education institution), then the cost estimate would rise to £52 million. As such, UUK believe £13.7 million to be a low-end estimate.
## ANNEXE C: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core metrics</td>
<td>Provided a clear process for weighing core metrics to provide an initial hypothesis.</td>
<td>Simplification of benchmarking flags may mask variations, nuances or weaknesses in the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benchmarking provides a consistent methodology to contextualise performance.</td>
<td>The standard deviations may over represent the tangible difference in performance to produce differentiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metrics are based on comparable data that is collected based on agreed standards.</td>
<td>The relative number of core metrics and initial scoring algorithm may skew judgements toward the NSS metrics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core comparable metrics for all providers.</td>
<td></td>
<td>There is a potential pattern of bias against women and BME lecturers in the NSS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual benchmarking of ‘performance’.</td>
<td></td>
<td>No benchmarking by mode of delivery, geography or term time residency of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features</td>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contextual data</strong></td>
<td>Sub-level splits of core metrics by student characteristics. Absolute scores for core metrics. Geographical context of an institution.</td>
<td>Provided a richer set of data about the university performance to enable a more rounded panel judgement. Encouraged institutional and sector focus on the outcomes and experience of minority groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guidance</strong></td>
<td>Set out specifications for assessment to guide provider submissions and panel judgement.</td>
<td>Provided an essential framework to guide institutional submissions to aid focus and comparability. Provided a transparent reference point for the assessment panel to consider and justify decisions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Provider submission | Presented by universities as appropriate. | Essential for enabling representation of institutional missions and practice in the TEF judgements.  
A formative process of considering and articulating an institution’s teaching and learning impact.  
Produces an in-depth resource for the panel and sector to define and judge excellence, and identify trends in practice.  
Submission enabled the panel to identify where institutions had clearly integrated strategies and ethos for teaching and learning. | Restrictions on length did not necessarily lower the burden or intensity for provider.  
It was hard to assure the comparability and integrity of data that is presented by providers in support of impact.  
The quality of the written submission was variable across the sector, particularly between higher education institutions and further education colleges due to availability of resource. |
|---|---|---|
| Panel | Rounded judgement of core metrics and provider submission. | Discursive process of judging institutional performance.  
The process produces sector-owned judgements of excellence.  
Weighing multiple points of evidence equally and fairly is complex.  
Potential tensions between nuance of complex discursive judgements and transparency at individual levels. |