

News story: Review of UK university rating system launched

A review is being launched today (18 January) to ensure the Government's flagship higher education rating system continues to support high quality teaching so students have the information they need to choose the best university for them.

The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) shines a light on higher education providers that offer excellent teaching and good student outcomes, through awards of gold, silver or bronze.

[Research](#) out today shows that the TEF has already been an important driver of quality in higher education, leading providers to invest in training schemes and develop initiatives to improve teaching standards, and that applicants are using the ratings to inform their university choices.

In order to ensure the rating system continues to be effective as it can be, Dame Shirley Pearce is leading an independent review to make sure it is fit for purpose, starting with a public call for views opening today to hear how the potential of the system can be maximised.

Universities Minister Chris Skidmore said:

As Universities Minister I want you, the experts, to take part in Dame Shirley's call for views and to give your thoughts so the TEF can work as well as it possibly can. It is important that we maximise the potential of this system and can only do that by getting invaluable insights from the sector.

We all know that choosing a university is one of the biggest decisions that many people will make in their lives, and the information that TEF provides is helping students make the best choice for them.

Of course, this framework is just one part of the wide range of information we are making available on institutions and courses, including employability and likely earnings, to help students them make the a choice which can boost their future prospects.

The [call for views](#) will close on Friday 1 March and asks the higher education sector, students, graduates, parents, careers advisers, employers and the general public about the effectiveness of the scheme. Anyone with suggestions of how the scheme can be enhanced is urged to take part.

The current framework for the TEF aims to provide information for students and employers and to drive world-class standards and quality in higher education.

Dame Shirley will consider, among other things, whether the information used for the current rating system is appropriate, the names of the rating categories, the impact of the rating system on providers and whether it is in the public interest.

The TEF is just one measure as part of the department's priority to drive high-quality teaching in higher education and ensure students have access to the information they need to make the best decision for their future careers. Last year the department announced a second year of pilots for the subject-level TEF rating system, which will include 'grade inflation' as one of the key criteria that institutions will be measured against.

At the same time, the Government is improving student information and choice by increasing transparency in higher education data, publishing a wide range of data on likely earnings, employability, and teaching quality at universities.

Dame Shirley Pearce DBE said:

This independent review is an important and exciting opportunity to make recommendations to government about the future of TEF. I want these recommendations to be informed by the views of all involved in TEF providers of higher education, students, applicants as well as employers.

I hope all will respond to this Call for Views so that we can ensure your ideas are able to influence TEF's future development.

Dame Shirley has appointed her own expert group to advise her on her review, which will conclude in summer 2019.

Alongside the launch of the review today, the Department for Education has published research, showing findings from the initial impact of the TEF on applicants and higher education providers.

The TEF was introduced in 2016 and its full impact will not yet be felt, however the research shows that it has already contributed to higher education providers driving improvements, particularly in the quality of their teaching, and for student employability.

This research will form part of the evidence base that the review will consider.