

# [News story: Universities rated in Teaching Excellence Framework](#)

UK university teaching quality recognised for the first time.

The [Higher Education Funding Council for England](#) has today (22 June 2017) published the first set of ratings for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

It has revealed that the majority of UK universities are offering quality teaching to their students – 59 providers were rated ‘gold’, 116 rated ‘silver’ and 56 rated ‘bronze’.

The ratings will help students decide which university or college to apply to and encourage teaching and learning excellence across the UK.

Universities Minister Jo Johnson said:

These results, highlighting the extraordinary strengths of our higher education system, will help students choose which university or college to study at.

The Teaching Excellence Framework is refocusing the sector’s attention on teaching – putting in place incentives that will raise standards across the sector and giving teaching the same status as research.

Students, parents, employers and taxpayers all have a shared interest in ensuring higher education equips the next generation of graduates for success.

Universities taking part have been assessed by an expert panel in 3 areas:

- teaching quality
- the learning environment
- the educational and professional outcomes achieved by students

As set out in its white paper, [Success as a knowledge economy](#) (May 2016), the government will shortly begin a lessons learned exercise into this first trial year of the TEF. The findings of the lessons learned exercise will inform the operation of the TEF in 2018 and the intention to move to subject level assessments.

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## **News story: Customer research manager vacancy at the IPO**

This post will support the work of customer insight in transforming services. Closing date for applications is 4 July 2017.

### **Purpose**

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is transforming its services for our customers using modern technology. Our transformation portfolio includes a number of projects that are being delivered in accordance with the Government Digital Service project approach. The successful candidate will lead the User Research function within the wider IPO Customer Insight team.

### **Role and responsibilities**

- lead and develop the IPO User Research function, investing in the team's capability, with a focus on continuous learning and improvement
- manage and lead customer research exercises, including usability testing to identify customer issues and areas for service improvement
- represent customer requirements in projects to build new online capability
- engage customers in the development of online services, tools and content
- make authoritative recommendations for courses of action within the context of professional practice

### **How to apply**

Full details of this role and how to apply are available on the [Civil Service jobs website](#)

The closing date for applications is 4 July 2017.

For more information please email [adminvacancies@ipo.gov.uk](mailto:adminvacancies@ipo.gov.uk).

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## **News story: Crime news: outstanding bill submissions for Crown Court work**

Reminder letters are going out about the need to bill for Crown Court work for cases that finished more than 3 months ago.

We are sending out reminder letters to providers to send in bills for Crown Court cases that finished more than 3 months ago.

The letters are going to providers:

- about outstanding bills under the Litigators Graduated Fee Scheme (LGFS)
- where the instructed advocate has yet to submit a bill under the Advocates Graduated Fee Scheme (AGFS).

The help of providers is needed to forward letters to advocates about billing under AGFS. This is because we do not have contact details for advocates until they have submitted an AGFS bill.

Advocates are asked to give their support when letters are forwarded to them.

### **Why are you doing this now?**

We've reviewed our services and are concerned that delays in submitting bills under LGFS and AGFS is affecting our service delivery.

### **Further information**

[Nil-Bill-CCMT@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Nil-Bill-CCMT@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk) – for any questions about this process

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## **[News story: GC history and role explained at RSC meeting](#)**

The Government Chemist was invited to speak at a meeting of the Peninsula section of the Royal Society of Chemistry at Plymouth University

Selvarani Elahi, the Deputy Government Chemist, was invited as a guest speaker at the Annual Open Meeting of the Peninsula section of the [Royal Society of Chemistry](#) held at Plymouth University in May 2017.

Selvarani gave a presentation that began with the origins of the Government Chemist in the mid-19th century when professional chemistry was in its infancy. At the time eager debate took place within the newly founded scientific societies, such as the Chemical Society (now the Royal Society of Chemistry), on new discoveries and how to communicate these to demonstrate the benefits of chemistry to society.

Government first established a laboratory in 1842 with a single scientist to determine the adulteration of tobacco for excise purposes. From these humble beginnings the laboratory grew and official recognition of the importance of chemistry was established by the appointment of a Government Chemist. The

Laboratory of the Government Chemist, as it was subsequently called, grew in stature to provide government departments with accurate chemical measurements and sound scientific advice to underpin a modern industrialised society.

Peninsula section of the Royal Society of Chemistry

Selvarani took the audience through the different types of cases that the Government Chemist has had to deal with over the years. She explained the work behind recent food safety and food fraud events such as the “horsemeat scandal” and the presence of peanut in a nut-free factory.

For more information about the work of the Government Chemist please contact us.

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## **Statement to Parliament: West Coast Partnership and South Eastern rail franchise bidders**

I am pleased to inform the House that we have today (22 June 2017) published the [shortlists of companies](#) that will bid for the new West Coast Partnership (WCP) franchise which will launch the first services on HS2, and the next South Eastern franchise.

The House will be aware passenger numbers have more than doubled since privatisation of the railways 20 years ago and our country’s railways need to adapt and change to be able to cope with this and future demands. This government is committed to revolutionising our railways through innovation and investment to transform passengers’ experiences and ensure our railways work for everyone.

This is an exciting time for both franchises, which are changing to ensure passengers are at the heart of their services. The winner of the WCP franchise will be expected to work with HS2 Ltd to launch the first services on HS2, taking advantage of the extra space it will provide for commuters on the West Coast Main Line. The winner of the South Eastern franchise will need to work as one team with Network Rail to ensure passengers experience better journeys and provide longer trains with more space.

### **West Coast Partnership franchise**

The WCP will be responsible for services on the West Coast Main Line from April 2019 and will design and run the initial HS2 high speed services between London and Birmingham from 2026.

The shortlist contains bidding consortia which sees UK rail network experts

working in partnership with companies that operate high speed railways around the globe, supported by businesses which have an excellent track record in customer services.

They are:

- First Trenitalia West Coast Ltd, a joint venture between First Rail Holdings Ltd and Trenitalia SpA
- MTR West Coast Partnership Ltd, a joint venture between MTR Corporation (UK) Ltd and Guangshen Railway Company, with the following key sub-contractors:
  - Deloitte MCS Ltd
  - Panasonic Systems Europe
  - Snowfall AB
  - Trainline.com Ltd
  - WSP Parsons Brinkerhoff
- West Coast Partnership Ltd a joint venture between Stagecoach Group plc, Virgin Holdings Ltd and SNCF C3

The WCP will support growth and better services on the West Coast Main Line while helping to ensure HS2 becomes the backbone of Britain's future railways. This will create more seats for passengers, improve connections between our great cities, free up space on existing rail lines and generate jobs and economic growth throughout the country.

The winning bidder will collaborate with HS2 Ltd to design, launch and operate the initial HS2 services and deliver the transition of the timetable on the West Coast Main Line as it is revised to take advantage of the extra capacity provided by HS2. There are significant benefits in bringing the 2 projects closer together to ensure the best outcomes for passengers both before and after the start of the HS2 services.

The new operator will also be expected to work closely with local transport authorities, Transport Scotland and the Welsh government to ensure passengers receive the excellent experience they demand from the West Coast Main Line.

## **South Eastern franchise**

The South Eastern franchise is one of the busiest franchises in the UK, running almost 2,000 services every weekday. We want passengers to be at the heart of everything that the new operator does, enjoying modern, spacious trains on a more punctual and reliable service. We will listen to what passengers say in the current public consultation, and we will seek to make changes and improvements only with their support. We will create more space for passengers in the peak commuting times including by running longer, more modern trains in and around London.

Other ambitions for this franchise include:

- increasing the reliability of trains by using the latest technology while reducing delays by encouraging the operator to work closely with Network Rail

- improving passenger compensation arrangements and supporting smart ticketing
- improving customer service, with staff able to respond quickly and effectively, including during disruption.

The new franchise will also complement the completion of 2 major enhancement schemes – Thameslink and Crossrail – providing passengers with more trains, more destinations, and significant improvements in reliability and performance. The winner of the next South Eastern franchise will be required to optimise the value of these investments for passengers.

The shortlisted bidders for the South Eastern rail franchise competition are:

- the franchise applicant, South Eastern Railways Ltd, is currently a wholly owned subsidiary of Abellio Transport Group Ltd
  - if awarded the franchise it would become a subsidiary of South Eastern Holdings Ltd, a joint venture between Abellio and the consortium of East Japan Railway Company and Mitsui & Co Ltd
- London and South East Passenger Rail Services Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Govia Ltd
- Stagecoach South Eastern Trains Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Stagecoach Group plc
- Trenitalia UK Ltd, wholly owned by Trenitalia SpA

The [public consultation seeking views and priorities for the new South Eastern franchise](#) runs until June 30. The new franchise is planned to start in December 2018.

## **New companies enter the market**

I am also pleased to inform the House that 2 companies have applied for a [pre-qualification questionnaire passport](#) to allow them to enter the bidding process. These firms are now eligible to express an interest in all upcoming rail franchise competitions until September 2019.