

# TEF POLICY

Title:	TEF	Date of Group Chat:	April 2019
Proposer name:	Laura Douds	Role:	President
Seconder name:	Amanda Campbell White	Role:	Vice President (Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences)

## Union Notes:

1. The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) has been introduced as part of a wider Higher Education Bill and has been created from the Conservative Party Manifesto in the 2015 General Election.
2. The TEF tries to define teaching quality and then ranks universities with a bronze, silver or gold award based on the metrics they've chosen.
3. Metrics involved in the TEF include NSS data, retention rates of students, and employment outcomes. They also look to see if, eg. There are specific differences in outcomes between students of different ethnicities.
4. A majority of English universities have entered into the TEF because of funding restraints from the current government.
5. There is also a subject-level TEF getting implemented soon, which aims to compare the teaching on specific courses around the country rather than a broad-brush comparison of institutions generally.
6. TEF is now mandatory for universities.

## Union Believes:

1. That while the fundamentals of informing students about teaching quality at an institution they're attending is a good thing, the TEF itself is not a good measure of teaching quality.
2. Though the NSS weighting in the results was halved, the NSS remains unfit for use in TEF metrics as the results are known to be skewed negatively when courses have lots of BME lecturers [1], or women [2].
3. The subject areas chosen for the subject-level analysis are broad enough to be functionally meaningless, as one course could be excellent but tarnished by the rest of a department being poor, or vice versa, which gives students no actual indication of whether the teaching on the course is good.
4. The amount of time and resource being put into TEF detracts from meaningful change being made elsewhere on other projects. The biggest 'cost' of participating in TEF is people's time.
5. Attaching a single simple ranking of bronze, silver, or gold is too broad and doesn't encourage people to look into what their potential institutions are actually getting ranked on.

[1] <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/biased-students-give-bme-academics-lower-nss-scores-says-study>

[2] <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2016/apr/04/will-the-teaching-excellence-framework-be-sexist>

## Union Resolves:

1. To continue to stand against the TEF wherever possible.
2. To work with ARU's branch of UCU to oppose the TEF.
3. To lobby, as appropriate, for a better measure of teaching quality.

## Policy Summary:

To stand against the harmful Teaching Excellence Framework and what it represents.

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