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Understanding, recognising and rewarding teaching quality in higher education: an exploration of the impact and implications of the Teaching Excellence Framework

A project report for UCU
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Executive summary

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings and recommendations of an independent research study on the impact and implications of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) on staff working in higher education (HE) provision in the UK. The study captures the views and experiences of over 6,000 UCU members working in universities and college-based HE providers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, along with the perspectives of the Chair of the TEF assessment panel and representation from the National Union of Students (NUS).

The introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in 2016 marked a key turning point for HE in the UK. Never before has the 'quality' of HE teaching been subjected to such external scrutiny, culminating in high stakes assessment outcomes for institutions through the TEF's medal categories of gold, silver and bronze. HE providers are still very much coming to terms with what the TEF means for them and how best to organise their institutional responses. Thus the TEF and the whole debate around the quality of teaching in HE is not only live and topical but equally one that continues to raise more questions than answers across the sector.

Between February and November 2018, a team of academic researchers from Birmingham City University (BCU), commissioned by the University and College Union (UCU), carried out an independent study aimed at plugging the gap in knowledge and research relating to the impact and implications of the TEF on those working in HE. The study aimed to investigate UCU members' awareness, involvement and perception of the TEF and its impact on them. The project was commissioned in anticipation of UCU's contribution to the Independent Review of the TEF in 2019. UCU also recognised the need for staff perspectives to be made more visible in the Review, which has not been the case in the development and implementation of the TEF to date, as they have largely been excluded from the process. Thus one of the unique contributions of this report to debates around teaching excellence and the TEF in particular is the inclusion of the voices and experiences of the HE workforce who are most directly affected by this policy reform.

A distinctive strength of this report and the research project it encapsulates is the scale and breadth of the sample it captures. To date, no other study has harnessed the views of such a large representation of staff working in HE provision about the TEF. The TEF and how it has impacted on the professional lives of the HE workforce was a subject about which the participants in this project had a lot to say. This report brings together a wealth of perspectives, opinions and situated experiences generated in the project data through the voices of those directly involved in and affected by the TEF.

This report has drawn on a range of evidence collected during the research project to inform its findings and recommendations. These include: 1) a literature review on teaching excellence and cognate publications; 2) an online survey of university and college-based HE staff across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; 3) a series of national



strategic seminars hosted in England and Scotland and 4) interviews with representatives from the TEF assessment panel and the NUS.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **The TEF has proven to be an unpopular policy with the vast majority of the project's participants, with only one in ten welcoming its introduction.**

Overall, participants reported limited evidence that the TEF recognised, promoted and/or rewarded teaching excellence. A strong criticism of the TEF to emerge from the project is its failure to appreciate the extent to which teaching, its development and delivery, is a collective rather than an individual activity. This is embodied in the TEF's ranking system which participants considered divisive and resulting in unhealthy and counterproductive competition between providers. In this sense, many participants considered the TEF as a further example of the marketisation of HE.

2. **Despite its significance as a key driver in recent HE policy reform and the high profile attention given to it since its introduction, HE providers and the government have failed to engage the vast majority of the staff working in HE with the TEF. Overall, engagement remains clearly marginalised for the vast majority of staff.**

Varied levels of awareness, involvement, consultation and impact of the TEF were reported across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with English institutions recording the highest levels. Staff from college-based HE providers also showed low levels of awareness of and involvement in the TEF. Most participants in management positions reported involvement and/or awareness, whereas more than seven in ten of those in teaching-focused/teaching-only positions reported no involvement and/or awareness of TEF-related work in their institutions. Reasons for low levels of engagement were twofold. Firstly, they reflected the way in which HE providers had managed and communicated their institutional responses to the TEF to their staff. Secondly, there was evidence in the project data of disaffection and a lack of willingness to want to engage with a policy of which many disapproved.

3. **Over 80% of participants reported no level of consultation and/or involvement in their institution's TEF-related activities and/or TEF submissions. Much TEF-related activity is management-led and is usually coordinated by professional services at an institutional level.**

The extent to which TEF activities are communicated to all staff across an institution was limited for over half of the project's participants. While TEF-related activity is purportedly meant to capture the teaching excellence of an institution, the data clearly revealed that in many providers, very small groups of staff (often those in management and professional services roles) are responsible for managing such work. More participants in non-permanent and/or non-full time positions reported much lower levels of awareness, involvement and consultation overall, suggesting that they were on the periphery of any TEF-related activity. Additionally, those in research-focused/research-only and teaching-focused/teaching-only positions consistently reported low levels of awareness and a lack of involvement. Levels of awareness, involvement and consultation were greater in post-92 compared to pre-92 universities.



- 4. There were mixed responses across participants regarding their awareness of changes in policies and/or procedures in their workplaces since the introduction of the TEF in 2016.** Twice as many participants reported not being aware of any change as those who did report change. More participants from post-92s compared to pre-92s reported changes. A significant number of participants reported the ratcheting up of monitoring mechanisms and accountability procedures involving both staff and students, driven principally by the student experience and student outcomes. Among some of the most frequently cited changes were: 1) a steep rise in the reliance on learning analytics; 2) increased programme evaluations; 3) increased student evaluations; 4) performance-management led observations; 5) standardisation of templates for student assessments and student evaluations across programmes; 6) requirement for academic staff (new and existing) to gain teaching qualifications such as the PG Cert in HE Learning and Teaching and/or other accreditation such as HEA fellowship.
- 5. The implementation of the TEF has had a negative impact on the workloads of academic and support staff.** The TEF has resulted in the creation of another layer of administrative bureaucracy, which in turn has given rise to additional work streams for staff, often with no additional resources to support this extra workload. The project data revealed evidence of this extra workload having a detrimental impact on the health and well-being of participants.
- 6. The TEF was reported as having a greater impact on institutional policies of teaching and learning than the actual teaching of academic staff.** However, there was an increased preoccupation with teaching and learning from management across some institutions. In addition, there was evidence of greater investment in small-scale research into teaching and learning, along with more opportunities to gain promotion/ career progression via a teaching route.
- 7. There were significant criticisms and concerns raised about the legitimacy and credibility of the TEF as an instrument of measurement of teaching excellence.** Repeatedly across data sets, participants called into question the fitness for purpose of the TEF as a method of evaluating teaching excellence, with an overwhelming consensus that the assessment framework requires a fundamental review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. National debate on Teaching Excellence** – There is a pressing need for a national debate on what teaching excellence actually is and how appropriate the TEF is as a vehicle for making valid and reliable judgements about teaching excellence, especially given the widespread misgivings about its conceptualisation of HE teaching and learning and its methodology. Any debate should ensure the representation of all relevant stakeholder groups, notably policy makers (e.g. the OfS), the HE workforce, students, student bodies (e.g. National Union of Students), senior leaders and professional bodies representing the sector.



- 2. Fundamental review of the aims and methodology of the TEF** – There was a strong consensus among participants that the TEF has failed to achieve the original aims that underpinned its introduction. There was overwhelming disapproval among participants of the purpose(s) of the TEF and its current methodology. A framework that recognises and rewards good teaching and learning is welcomed by the HE workforce. However, if there is to be an instrument for measuring the quality of HE teaching that retains credibility and legitimacy among the HE workforce, then a fundamental review of the aims and methodology of the current TEF is of paramount importance. A key outcome of this review should be the creation of more valid and reliable methods of assessment in consultation with sector staff. One concrete suggestion that surfaced across institutions and participant groups was for peer review to feature more prominently in the TEF. In addition, it was recommended that the well-established and respected external examiner system that plays a vital role in the ongoing quality assurance of HE provision in the UK should be incorporated into any future teaching excellence exercise.
- 3. Increasing staff awareness and involvement** – Any framework or approach aimed at improving teaching must include staff at all levels. Institutions need to ensure that the consultation, creation and communication of all TEF-related work (from policy formation to implementation) include a broader representation of all academic staff and not just an elite group of those in (senior) management and/or professional services. This requires a more inclusive approach to involving staff in shaping institutional policies and practice at every stage of local TEF planning and implementation.
- 4. Recognition of TEF workload** – TEF has undoubtedly resulted in additional work streams for many academic and professional services staff. This needs to be formally acknowledged by employers and taken into consideration when planning for workload allocation, timetabling etc. In particular, there needs to be a recognition and allocation of time and resources required to facilitate TEF-related changes to teaching and learning.
- 5. Dedicated teaching and learning development time** – Sir Michael Barber has stated that the TEF should be ‘a catalyst for the improvement and innovation in the quality of teaching ... [to] generate informed dialogue about teaching quality’. While we regard this report as one contribution to this dialogue, the project data provided minimal evidence that any such dialogue was occurring within HE providers. Unless specific time and resources are allocated and protected for teaching and learning development, then it is unlikely to happen. It is therefore recommended that all institutions should allocate dedicated teaching and learning development time and resources to all staff with a teaching responsibility to enable them to share practice, research into teaching and learning and to collaborate collectively.
- 6. Situating the TEF in the wider HE policy environment** – TEF and REF are currently presented to staff as competing agendas and interests in many organisations. Findings from this study suggest that institutions have started strategically positioning their



staff and resources to ensure desirable outcomes are achieved against each of these assessments. In some institutions, teaching is viewed and treated very separately from research and consequently the two are often separated out into different job roles and contracts. The sector, institutions and policy makers need to be more mindful of the interplay between the TEF and the REF and recognise that teaching, learning and research are the core of much HE activity and should not be treated as though they are in competition with each other.

What this report makes clear is that understanding, recognising and rewarding excellent teaching in HE is an important undertaking that is welcomed by staff working across HE provision. However, the data collected for this study strongly suggests that under the current framework, in both its conceptualisation and methodology, the TEF fails to address how teaching might actually be supported and developed in any meaningful way. More worryingly, the very staff who are most involved in teaching are rarely part of institutional TEF planning and implementation, rather they often find themselves marooned outside the process, passive recipients of strategies and initiatives which are not informed by their day-to-day experience of teaching and learning in HE.



Declaration

This report presents an independent research study *Understanding, recognising and rewarding teaching quality in higher education: an exploration of the impact and implications of the Teaching Excellence Framework*. This study was carried out by Professor Matt O'Leary, Dr Vanessa Cui and Dr Amanda French from Birmingham City University between February and November 2018. The study was funded by the University and College Union (UCU). The terms of this arrangement were reviewed and approved by Birmingham City University in accordance with its policy on research ethics and integrity. We would like to thank UCU for funding and supporting this project.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this research project. From those UCU members who completed the online survey, to those who participated in the strategic seminars. We are also grateful to Professor Sir Chris Husbands, chair of the TEF assessment panel, and Hannah Sketchley from the National Union of Students for agreeing to be interviewed. Without the cooperation or generosity of all these participants, we would not have been able to gather such a rich collection of data.

We would also like to thank the project steering committee and colleagues at Birmingham City University for their contributions to the project, along with their comments on an earlier draft of the report, all of which have proven very valuable. We would particularly like to express our thanks to Dr Rob Cook for his advice and input with designing the online survey and analysing the quantitative data.

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INTRODUCTION

The University and College Union (UCU) is the largest further and higher education union in the world, representing staff who work in higher education institutions (HEIs) and college-based higher education (HE). UCU is very concerned about the unintended consequences of the TEF results. For example, rather than focusing on teaching excellence per se and improving teaching and learning, it is concerned that the TEF relies too heavily on metrics that do not in themselves capture the complexity and diversity of teaching in HE, nor do they offer any means of supporting teaching development (UCU 2017).

In February 2018 UCU commissioned a group of researchers based in Birmingham City University (BCU) Centre for the Study of Practice and Culture in Education (CSPACE) to carry out a research project specifically aimed at investigating UCU members' awareness, involvement and perception of the TEF and its impact on their professional lives at a personal and institutional level. By focussing on staff, this study was designed to plug the current gap in knowledge and research relating to the impact and implications of the TEF on staff. This report presents the evidence gathered during the course of this project.

UCU intends to use this report to inform their response, alongside other key bodies such as The Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE) and Universities UK (UUK), to the Government's Independent Review of the TEF, which was mandated in the HE and Research Act 2017 and is scheduled to take place in 2019. It is intended that the results of this Independent Review will inform the TEF from 2019-20.

It is important to note that the Office for Students (OfS) is now the sole regulator of English HE. HEFCE and HESA are now 'designated bodies' who report to the OfS but who have no actual power to influence any of its decisions. (Evans 2018)

The Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) guidance for 2017 stated that the Government introduced the TEF as a way of:

1. **Better informing students' choices about what and where to study;**
2. **Raising esteem for teaching;**
3. **Recognising and rewarding excellent teaching;**
4. **Better meeting the needs of employers, business, industry and the professions.**

Certainly since launching the TEF, the OfS has been very keen to promote a positive message about the TEF principally centring on its ability to provide objective information about the quality of 'teaching excellence' (TE) available across a diverse range of HE providers. This message was reinforced by Sir Michael Barber in his foreword to the OfS Regulatory Framework (2018) where he stated that, thanks to TEF and the OfS frameworks:



Prospective students will be equipped with the means, underpinned by innovative and meaningful datasets and high quality information, to enable them to make informed choices about the courses that are right for them.

This report begins with a brief literature review that seeks to describe and contextualise the TEF. It also explores how, since its inception three years ago, the TEF has been implemented and critiqued across the sector. However, it is important at the outset to acknowledge that the TEF, and the wider context of HE provision that it exists within, are constantly changing and under review. Thus this report can only reflect participating UCU members' experiences and perceptions of the TEF and its impact at the time the research was conducted. It therefore offers a snapshot of a particular moment in the history of the evolution of the TEF.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE PURPOSE OF THE TEF

Interviewed for this project, the Chair of the TEF assessment panel, Professor Sir Chis Husbands echoed Sir Michael Barber's sentiments above when he states:

[...] I hope we will have established TEF as an integral part of the way the sector thinks about teaching excellence. I hope we'll have embedded it in the understanding of prospective students and their families as one of the data points they take into account when they make their decisions. I hope we'll have clearly embedded it into university systems as a driver for teaching quality and enhancement.

Husbands' comments suggest that the TEF's primary function remains as an indicator of teaching excellence (TE), clearly communicated via an easy-to-understand institutional ranking system (bronze, silver, gold) composed of largely empirical data drawn from a combination of quantitative and qualitative data sets. However, this viewpoint was clearly at odds with that of the National Union of Students (NUS), which expressed 'significant concerns' about the TEF, as their policy officer, Hannah Sketchley, interviewed for this project stated:

We have significant concerns about the TEF. We don't believe that it's possible or effective to have a metrics based framework for teaching excellence because teaching excellence is qualitative and it's about challenging and engaging teaching. You can't define that particularly with the metrics within the current TEF.

It has been argued that the current international focus on TE is a consequence of the growing global market for HE, fuelled by governments who see its value in primarily economic terms (Naidoo, Shankar and Veer 2011). HE providers are, in this market, increasingly positioned as key players in an international 'knowledge economy' (Ball 2008; OECD 2015). As the ENQA report Concepts of Excellence in Higher Education (2014) concluded:



There is a perceptible shift in thinking away from utilitarian notions of equity and the view of higher education as a 'social good' towards the promotion of a more competitive market for institutions in the belief that competition will improve standards and quality.

(in Brusoni et al. 2014, 19)

The TEF, therefore, arguably represents the latest manifestation of the current government's desire to facilitate a shift, in England at least, towards a more competitive market in HE. This shift has been evident for some time and can be traced through a variety of government reports and papers preceding the TEF (see Appendix 1 for an overview). As the government Green Paper outlined back in 2015:

Those providers that do well within the TEF will attract more student applications and will be able to raise fees in line with inflation. The additional income can be reinvested in the quality of teaching and allow providers to expand so that they can teach more students. We hope providers receiving a lower TEF assessment will choose to raise their teaching standards in order to maintain student numbers. Eventually, we anticipate some lower quality providers withdrawing from the sector, leaving space for new entrants, and raising quality overall.

(DBIS 2015, para 1.4).

Another manifestation of increased marketisation is the idea that tuition fees could be reduced for certain courses across the sector. This has been an area of tension since the passing of the Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) in 2017. Indeed, Theresa May has recently indicated that the Government's long-promised major review of post-18 education funding in England will revisit a consideration of the current structure of £9,250 undergraduate tuition fees (Adams 2018).

In such a marketised, competitive economy, HE teaching is increasingly being judged, by the current government at least, on the extent to which it can be considered 'value for money' (or not). Not surprisingly, it is one of the OfS' four core objectives, as outlined in the regulatory framework for HE in England, issued in February 2018 (OfS 2018). The question of how the Government thinks this might be best achieved in the UK was most recently addressed in their report Value for Money in Higher Education, published in November 2018.

In practical terms, this question of 'value for money' is reflected in the OfS' preoccupation with the extent to which a graduate level education increases an individual's employability and earning power. This evidence is captured through the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE) and, since TEF 3 in June 2018, the more comprehensive Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) data, which measures the extent to which a graduate level education increases an individual's employability and earning power (or not). In the light of this preoccupation, the policy intention, as outlined by Barber above, is that these employment data will operate as a set of 'market signals' to potential consumers, that is, students and other stakeholders (McCaig 2018). Like many of the participants in this survey the NUS was cognisant of the TEF's marketisation agenda, as its policy officer makes clear in the interview excerpt below. Though, at the same time,



she suggests that the devolved administrations of the other UK nations did not necessarily share this marketised agenda:

... in terms of its policy aims, the TEF sits very much in the English regulatory system of competition and market-logic whilst the regulatory atmosphere in the devolved administrations is more towards enhancement.

Viewed as part of a 'value for money' agenda, TEF rankings are not just about providing potential students with an informed choice, but may, over time, function to reshape what many see as the demand/supply disequilibrium in HE. This was alluded to by Sam Gyimah, when he was Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research & Innovation in his recent keynote to the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI):

Many parents and credible commentators are now questioning the principle of mass participation in higher education. The challenge takes two forms: questioning the value for money that students get during their course; and the benefit they derive from a university education post-graduation (Gyimah 2018).

This focus on 'value for money' as a way of driving changes in HE is also reflected in the recent additional use of the phrase Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TESOF) on the Office of Students website. Interestingly Professor Sir Chris Husbands was very clear in his interview for this project that TEF remains as the primary acronym to be used when referring to the framework. However, this new title reflects a view, implicit in government policy well before the TEF was implemented, that entry into a HE degree is primarily a financial investment linked to increased employment prospects and higher lifetime earnings (the so-called 'graduate premium').

The NUS expressed its dissatisfaction with how the Government had responded to their criticism of TEF 2. Although the DBIS, OfS and the TEF assessment panel believe the TEF measures some aspects of teaching quality, the NUS clearly did not share this view, as Hannah Sketchley comments:

The change of name is quite a superficial solution. It's a response to the criticism in a way but it's not the answer to the criticism. It addresses criticism that the TEF focuses too much on outcomes and not enough on teaching quality but instead of making its focus on teaching quality, it's trying to change the way it's perceived.

Since the passing of the HE and Research Act (HM Government 2017), it has become ever more apparent that the 'dividends' and 'outcomes' that the government expects graduates to enjoy are primarily about the superior salaries that they might expect to earn as a consequence of having 'invested' in a degree. This is arguably a manifestation of what Lilley and Papadopoulos (2014, 972-4), call 'biofinancialisation' in which a 'culture of valuation' pervades all aspects of everyday life, including the decision to study for a degree.



[...] teaching quality [...] should be among the most important factors in students' choices. Good teaching – broadly defined to include learning environments, student support, course design, career preparation and 'soft skills', as well as what happens in the lecture theatre or lab – pays dividends in terms of outcomes for students[...] (DBIS 2016)

In order to rank universities for TE, the TEF now requires HE providers, as has been the case in school and colleges for many years, to provide measurable outcomes (House of Lords 2018; O'Leary and Wood 2019). Measurable outcomes for HE, of one kind or another, have long been linked to the idea that participation in HE will deliver better employment opportunities and higher wages for individual graduates, as well as the belief that a better educated workforce will better support the economy (Ball 2008).

The new element that the TEF brings to this debate about the importance of graduate employment is the assumption that TE can be reliably measured and mobilised in order to differentiate between HEIs as a way of ensuring students *are* getting 'their money's worth'. To this end, governments and adjoining agencies, both national and international, have made a significant investment in recent years to try and determine what TE is and/or how it might be recognised and developed across HE (French and O'Leary 2017). The resulting plethora of government reports on TE (see Appendix 1) has been complemented by a number of high profile academic reviews commissioned by different government-funded agencies, such as the Higher Education Academy, OECD and the European Science Foundation (renamed Science Connect) to name but a few (see Appendix 2 for a full list).

TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Pre-dating this flurry of interest in TE by governments worldwide, the concept of 'best practice' in HE teaching has been a long-standing concern of academics and managers interested in student engagement and aspects of effective pedagogy. However, despite decades of research, defining what makes an HE educator 'excellent' can often cohere around their personal attributes and the quality of the relationship they have with their learners, both of which are notoriously difficult to measure in any empirical sense. Bartram, Hathaway and Rao (2018) summarise the various attempts made in recent years to pin-down what makes an effective HE teacher. For example, in 1990, Handy classified six essential 'e-factors' for successful teaching, namely: energy, excitement, enthusiasm, effort, effervescence and enterprise. Fried (2001) meanwhile focused on the need for HE teachers to have 'passion' for their subject, whilst Ramsden (2003) identified a very broad set of desired 'qualities, skills and dispositions', which included expert subject knowledge, communication, information and technology skills, a good sense of humour; being reflective, approachable, passionate and supportive; and providing timely feedback.

The concept of TE therefore, whilst seductive, remains elusive and inherently subjective. Personal qualities like enthusiasm, creativity, relevance, authenticity, clarity, organisation, stimulation and expertise are consistently evoked by studies spanning nearly thirty years, suggesting that the debate has not really moved on from the conundrum that some individual teachers have an enviable ability to engage students better than others (Sherman



et al. 1987; Gibbs 2016; Su and Wood 2012; Bradley, Kirby and Madriaga 2015; Parker 2015; Greatbatch and Holland 2016). As well as these personal attributes, another key factor that emerges as significant to any assessment of lecturers' performance is their ability to manage practical tasks such as producing useful materials to aid student learning, giving constructive feedback and turning marking around on time (Gibbs 2010; Brusoni et al. 2014). All of these more concrete aspects of TE are still, however, relatively difficult to measure in any meaningful way.

In addition to the difficulties in actually measuring the quality of teaching, there is research that shows that student perceptions of teachers' personal and practical attributes play out very differently depending on the gender, age and social class of HE lecturers, which makes it difficult to ensure that students' assessment of teaching is fair and/or consistent. For example, research conducted at the University of California found that female staff consistently received lower scores on student evaluations of teaching (Boring, Ottoboni and Stark 2016). Likewise, a study in Canada found that female tutors were more likely to be judged harshly than male tutors in student evaluations when they did not give higher marks. Indeed, students receiving lower marks often made reference to negative female gender stereotypes with regard to the female teachers who had marked their work (Sinclair and Zunda 2000).

According to existing research evidence, gender is not the only factor that influences students' perceptions when completing surveys on their learning experiences in HE. Research conducted in the UK (Bell and Brooks 2018) found that by cross-referencing NSS scores with statistics on staff demographics from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), they could show that the ethnicity of lecturers had a significant impact on NSS scores, with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) lecturers consistently being scored lower than their white counterparts. This work echoed research in the USA, which found that black and minority ethnic teachers tended to be evaluated more harshly on websites such as RateMyProfessor.com. (Subtirelu 2015). Ahmed (2004) has argued, in the light of such research, that academic authority does not seem to 'stick' to female or black academics, rendering them at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to asking students to measure their quality and effectiveness as HE lecturers through matrixes like NSS which are used in TEF assessments.

Overall, the most significant fact to emerge from all this scholarly activity is a distinct lack of agreement about what TE actually is, how it can be described and how it can be reported on in any meaningful way. Moreover, whilst there is some evidence that individual approaches to teaching and learning and the distinctive experiences of learning that they engender could be significant, there has been relatively little external evaluation done on the impact of how diverse teaching approaches and the learning experiences they create might inform or affect students' perceptions of teaching excellence per se (Bradley, Kirby and Madriaga 2015).

Not surprisingly, in the light of the weight of evidence presented above, it can be argued that the TEF, in its present form, fails to deliver its promise of a coherent, research-informed



vision of teaching excellence (French and O'Leary 2017). Yet government acknowledges the complexity and interconnectedness of teaching and learning processes which, to be meaningful, one might argue the TEF should be designed to capture. To do so it needs to:

... take a broad view of teaching excellence, including the teaching itself, the learning environments in which it takes place and the outcomes it delivers. (DBIS 2016, 43)

The Chair of the TEF panel, Professor Sir Chris Husbands, writing after the TEF 2 results were published in June 2017, agreed that:

[while] the TEF cannot capture the richness, range and complexity of all that goes on in teaching in higher education, it does focus on things that surveys – and not least HEPI's own – tell us that matter to students: routes to work; retention; assessment; and quality of teaching. The metrics may be proxies for these things, but all social statistics are flawed. The metrics provide a fix on important issues, which generate initial hypotheses for further investigation. (Beech 2017, 4)

These qualifying statements about TE and the TEF reflect the real difficulty facing the government in their quest to define and measure the 'excellence' of something as complicated as teaching and learning. Bartram, Hathaway and Rao (2018) in their comparative examination of TE initiatives in Australia and UK, summarise the dilemma facing the Government in the following terms, as a 'tension between elitist and egalitarian conceptualisations of excellence'. They argue that the model of TEF that has been opted for encapsulates Strike's (1985) elitist definition of excellence, which is inherently competitive and norm-referenced, designed to rank and pit individuals and organisations against one another by literally creating a rigidly defined 'gold standard' which signifies a:

... mark of distinction, describing something that is exceptional, meritocratic outstanding and exceeding normal expectations (Brusoni et al. 2014, 20)

In comparison, Strike's egalitarian notion of excellence is based on an inclusive, criterion-referenced understanding of excellence, which in theory means that all organisations may be capable of achieving it, albeit in different ways. Supporting this idea, Gunn and Fisk's (2013) pragmatic approach to quality maintains that 'good practice' in HE will inevitably manifest itself in a variety of ways given the breadth of provision.

A significant alternative to the TEF that takes a more differentiated approach to notions of excellence can be found in Scotland where QAA Scotland has carried out Enhancement-led Institutional Reviews (ELIR) at Scottish HE providers in recent years (2014). ELIR does not purport to focus on TE rather it uses a more holistic approach than TEF to explore what different institutions across the sector have to offer. Their process involves staff and students from other institutions joining a team of internal reviewers to examine: contextual information about the institution, student population, the student learning experience, strategies and practices in place for enhancing learning and teaching, academic standards and quality processes and the quality of collaborative provision. Ultimately,



commendations and recommendations are issued relating to the ways in which each institution ensures academic standards and a positive student experience. As such, ELIR allows potential students and other stakeholders to judge different providers on their own merits. In this way the Scottish system seems much more nuanced and capable of providing the kind of contextual picture that students and others could draw on to make a properly informed decision. And what is more, the Scottish approach is more concerned with differentiating the HE teaching and learning experience rather than seeking to rank it across different organisations. The Chair of the TEF assessment panel, Professor Sir Chris Husbands, does not seem convinced though by a peer-review based approach and insists on 'externality' as a central tenet of any attempts to assess TE:

Some people have said to me that you could do this through moderated peer review institutionally, although I've not seen detailed papers on this, when I've been sitting over a drink with people discussing it, I haven't been convinced that you could get there. I think there's a principle of externality that I think has to be there ... It can't be institutionally led, it's got to be from outside the system.

METHODOLOGY OF THE TEF

The sample: Who is taking part in the TEF?

Since its introduction in 2016, the TEF has been optional for HE providers in the UK. Although some providers from Scotland and Wales participated in TEF 2 (2017) and TEF 3 (2018), the TEF remains principally an English exercise. HE providers from Northern Ireland remain the only one of the four nations not to have participated to date, although at least one has conducted their own internal TEF exercise. However, from April 2019, participation in the TEF will be a condition of OfS registration for all HE providers, thus effectively making it an obligatory requirement. In the words of Professor Sir Chris Husbands, 'it is now essentially a condition of registration for English providers'.

In TEF 1 in 2016 there was a single level of award (Meets Expectations) automatically bestowed on all providers that met the minimum criteria for quality. This was based on their most recent QAA rating. In TEF 1, 430 English institutions were permitted to increase their fees up to an inflation-increased limit of £9,250 (the higher amount) or to £6,165 (for those able to charge only the basic amount).

What has changed from the TEF 2 to the TEF 3?

TEF 2 in 2017 was the first 'opt-in' round, with institutions assessed on the basis of metrics and a narrative submission (see below for more details). Most providers who entered both TEF 2 and TEF 3 improved on their performance between 2017 and 2018. 43 of the 60 providers that reapplied in 2018 received a higher award in 2018, with 15 retaining the same award and 2 downgraded. The biggest upward movement was seen from providers who were upgraded from bronze to silver awards. Of the 113 awards given in 2018, 27 were provisional. These are given to providers that meet threshold quality requirements but do not have sufficient data to be assessed for a gold, silver or bronze award (OfS).



The OfS press briefing for TEF 3 maintained that TEF 2 is ‘broadly comparable’, with some ‘slight changes of emphasis’ in TEF 3 because the same criteria, judgements and underlying metrics were used for both. However, the decision to adjust the TEF metrics, for example, the NSS had its weighting halved (5% down from 10%) from TEF 2 to TEF 3 and to add new ones, most significantly, the addition of LEO (as discussed above) means that the TEF 3 baseline calculations are inevitably different from TEF 2. One can argue the TEF outcomes should reflect this change and that if they had done, then the results should differ between TEF 2 and TEF 3, as some have suggested (e.g. Bagshaw 2018). Moreover, it is obvious that one of the consequences of this ongoing data refinement may be that if the changes to the data continue into TEF 4 and beyond, it will be increasingly difficult to compare TEF outcomes from one year to another.

EMPIRICAL MEASUREMENT OF TEACHING EXCELLENCE DATA

Despite the many debates about defining and measuring TE in the context of the TEF, the Government, has chosen to employ a relatively narrow set of metrics, as well as a ‘contextual report’ to rank providers’ TE. This mixed methods approach and the Government’s willingness to change the instruments of measurement from year to year is symptomatic of the difficulties of defining TE, as outlined above. TEF collates data from the various metrics listed below to establish an ‘initial hypothesis’ regarding the performance of each provider.

The Chair of the TEF panel, Professor Sir Chris Husbands, made an analogy to what assessors do as ‘deriving a story about the institution, building a picture of the institution’. The starting point for this ‘story building’ being based on an initial hypothesis of the three core data sets (DfE 2017).

1. Teaching Quality: student engagement, valuing teaching, rigour and stretch, and feedback.

2. Learning Environment: resources, scholarship, research and professional practice, personalised learning.

3. Student Outcomes and Learning Gain: employment and further study; employability and transferrable skills, positive outcomes for all.

Teaching quality and learning environment are measured by NSS, HESA and Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data. Student outcomes and ‘Learning Gain’ are measured by Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) data in TEF 2, in TEF 3 the Longitudinal Education Outcome dataset (LEO) was added, which draws on information from the National Pupil Database (NPD), the ILR, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs data (HMRC), The National Benefit Database, the Labour Market System and Juvos, the unemployment research database.



Once the data have been collated, each provider is given a 'benchmark' based on the age, ethnicity and subjects of study of its undergraduate student cohort. In addition to these 'core' measurements (e.g. with regard to retention, how many students leave a particular degree programme early), the data can be 'split', in order to examine in more detail the significance of particular factors, including gender, ethnicity, age and disability. These split metrics are cited as one of the key mechanisms for fulfilling the TEF's stated aims of supporting widening participation as they can be used to highlight negative differences between student groups in order to 'incentivise' providers to do something about them (OfS 2018). In the next stage of the process:

Once the core and split metrics are calculated and benchmarked, those results that are significantly and materially different from benchmark are highlighted. This is referred to as flagging. (HEFCE 2016)

'Flags' are used in the TEF assessment in the following way:

A provider with three or more positive flags (either + or ++) and no negative flags (either - or --) should be considered initially as Gold... A provider with two or more negative flags should be considered initially as Bronze, regardless of the number of positive flags. Given the focus of the TEF on excellence above the baseline, it would not be reasonable to assign an initial rating above Bronze to a provider that is below benchmark in two or more areas. All other providers, including those with no flags at all, should be considered initially as Silver. (HEFCE 2016)

The resultant positive and negative 'flags' indicate a provisional categorisation (Gold, Silver, and Bronze). However, what is not clear is the extent to which the flags and metrics determine the final rating. HEFCE's TEF guidance (2016) allows for a situation where the panel could disregard the empirical data if there was strong evidence to the contrary, for example from the contextual data included in the provider's narrative submission. This scenario is precisely what happened in the case of one provider in TEF 2, as the Chair of the TEF assessment panel describes below. Understandably, this raises questions about the transparency of the assessment process, the weighting and the relationship between the metrics and the narrative submission:

I won't be entirely explicit about it but there was an institution in TEF 2017 that came out of initial metrics/hypothesis as bronze but landed as gold. And the issue there was a significant part of its provision related to a group of students who had good employment outcomes but employment outcomes not classified as skilled employment. And what we did in that case was first of all to assess that case, we thought it was a pretty robust case they were making, we then reran the metrics for every other institution that also had that bit of provision and worked out that this had a bigger impact in this one institution. In fact it had a unique impact in this one institution. And our judgement there was that although the initial metrics were pretty clear, once you set that in the context of institutional mission and institutional context more generally, you would get to a different conclusion.



One of the common criticisms levelled by many at the TEF is that most of the metrics that form the basis of the benchmarking data are not specifically related to teaching (with the exception of the eight questions in the NSS) and as such cannot be used to measure TE in any meaningful way. In the following excerpt, Professor Sir Chris Husbands describes how he sees the role of the TEF assessment panel:

Clearly, the TEF panel, the TEF assessors do not directly measure teaching ... this is about being an archaeologist, you're looking at traces and you're drawing conclusions from them. So we're not looking directly at teaching but we are looking at student retention, at student perceptions of learning resources. We are looking at DLHE outcomes in terms of graduate employability so it seems to me that across the system we are looking at some of the outcomes, the results of what it is universities and colleges do with their students but we're not looking directly at teaching. What we're saying here is again about drawing hypotheses, about an institution making connections between what the data is telling us are the outcomes for the institution and what the contextual data is telling us about that institution, in relation to those outcomes, what the institution is saying about itself in the institutional submission. With those three sets of data, assessors and panellists are deriving a story about the institution, building a picture of the institution. And it's about the outputs of higher education and the outcomes of teaching and teaching broadly conceived.

QUALITATIVE DATA

In addition to the core metrics, providers are invited to submit an additional 'contextualised material' as part of their 'institutional provider statement' that seeks to illustrate and explain what is distinctive about their provision to the TEF panel. Like the Research Excellence Framework (REF) panels, TEF panels employ a range of 'selected experts' from across the sector. The provider statement is therefore a critical means by which providers can potentially personalise the TEF process. In addition to the use of core and split metrics data, panels can draw on other supplementary information such as the geographical uptake for different HEIs via Participation of Local Area (POLAR) data and regional employment rates. The additional statement also represents a chance for providers to contextualise their institutional strategies and practices making clear what is distinctive about their 'offer' to students and crucially what has worked well. Again, the Chair of the TEF assessment panel gives his views on the role of the narrative submission:

What the narrative submission is doing is to give institutions the opportunity to say three things. First of all, here is the data that explains and mitigates this (i.e. results from core metrics). Secondly, here is data that gives you a fuller picture. And thirdly, here is a clear narrative about the way we operate as an institution.

In conclusion, through these different sources of information and evidence the TEF is being used by the government to confidently, at least in public, address what they call the 'acute' lack of information about teaching quality in HE through the TEF.



RESEARCH DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

Between February and October 2018, a team of academic researchers at BCU carried out an independent research study which aimed to plug the gap in knowledge and research relating to the impact and implications of the TEF for those *working* in HEIs and college-based HE. The study was specifically aimed at investigating UCU members' awareness, involvement and perception of the TEF and its impact on their professional lives.

The study's objectives were 'exploratory', 'descriptive' and 'explanatory' (Robson 2002, 59-60). It aimed to explore and explain participants' situated experiences of the TEF by capturing contextualised examples from their workplaces as well as exploring their wider perceptions of how the TEF was impacting on policy and practice at an institutional, faculty, programme and individual level. The study also intended to address what the project team perceived as a sectoral need to inject critically informed perspectives on work relating to the quality of teaching and ongoing discussions around notions of teaching excellence in HE. An additional line of inquiry that the study sought to explore and capture evidence of were those practices/approaches to understanding, recognising and promoting teaching quality that were either absent from the current TEF assessment framework or fell under the radar of official TEF submissions.

The key research questions underpinning this study were thus:

1. What are the experiences and perceptions of UCU members of the TEF and its impact on their work in HE?
 - 1.1 To what extent do the experiences and perceptions of UCU members differ according to their workplace contexts, their contractual roles, modes and terms of employment?
2. What alternative approaches and methodologies to the current reliance on metrics are there for understanding, recognising and promoting teaching quality based on the experience and research of those working in HE?

Project aims and objectives:

1. To explore UCU members' awareness of how their institutions have responded to the recent introduction of the TEF.
2. To explore UCU members' involvement in TEF-associated policies and practices in their institutions.
3. To explore UCU members' involvement in their institutions' TEF submission.
4. To examine UCU members' perceptions of the intended and unintended consequences of the TEF in their institutions.



5. To examine UCU members' perceptions of the impact and implications of the consequences of the TEF on their work.
6. To provoke sector-wide discussions around how the TEF has impacted on teaching and collate evidence of situated examples.
7. To provoke sector-wide discussions and capture alternative approaches and methodologies, with the aim of understanding, recognising and rewarding teaching quality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The project adopted a mixed-methods research design, involving both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and a mixed-methods multi-layering approach to data analysis. Given the nature and focus of the project's research questions listed above, it was decided that a combination of these different methods would provide the most effective means of addressing the research questions while maintaining consistency and validity throughout the project.

Decisions about what data to collect, what the most appropriate and effective means of collecting the data were, along with what to do with the data were therefore 'dictated by the research question[s]' (Newman and Benz 1998, 15). Quantitative methods were used to facilitate the analysis of a large sample size able to capture the overarching trends across the membership and draw out generalisable conclusions. Other methods sought to explore the situated perceptions and experiences of participants of the TEF in order to create a research narrative and so required a qualitative approach. The adoption of a mixed-methods approach not only enabled the project team to harness the complementary strengths of these different methods but also to explore the research topic in sufficient breadth and depth.

Strategies for strengthening validity at different stages of the research process were used to avoid selective and unrepresentative use of data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 198-99). Triangulation was embedded into each of the phases of data collection, analysis and reporting. This included the use of several researchers and their multiple perspectives through the design, data collection, data analysis and writing up stages of the study. For example, data analysis of different data sources were first analysed independently by each researcher and then cross-referenced between the team during the second stage of data analysis.

There were four distinct methods and phases of data collection used during the course of the project. These comprised: 1) a literature review on teaching excellence and cognate publications; 2) an online survey; 3) a series of national strategic seminars and 4) interviews with representatives of HE sector stakeholders. The literature review sought to situate the research topic in the wider HE policy setting and provide a contextual backdrop to the key developments relating to the TEF; it also sought to examine the



methodology used as part of the TEF assessment framework, as well as identifying some of the key themes and issues since the implementation of the TEF.

The online survey was designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data to address the project aims 1-6 listed above, while the strategic seminars and interviews were intended to capture more detailed and context-specific evidence to address project aims 4-7. The first phase of the fieldwork (online survey) took place from April to June, the second phase (national strategic seminars) in June 2018 and the interviews were carried out in September and October 2018.

Online survey

The survey was designed by the research team at BCU, including a quantitative research expert. The survey was trialled with a pilot group of respondents from a Birmingham based HEI and a college-based HE provider and was reviewed by the project steering group members¹ before the final version was produced and distributed to UCU members.

The online survey was designed to explore participants' awareness, experiences and perceptions of the TEF in their respective workplaces and their institutions' responses to the TEF. The aim of the survey was to canvass respondents' views and insights into the impact and implications of the TEF's intended and unintended consequences on their work in general and related to learning and teaching in particular. It was anticipated that the use of an online survey would help to provide a snapshot of the research topic, giving an overview of policy and practice at a particular point in time across a range of respondents and institutions to which fine-grained detail would be added through the strategic seminars and interviews.

The survey incorporated a mixture of broad binary responses with individual opinions. In total, participants could answer up to 62 questions, depending on their path through the survey. See Appendix 3 for a Microsoft Word version of the survey.

The survey was structured in three sections:

- **Section 1** - participant profile (Q2 - Q15)
- **Section 2** - participant awareness, involvement and perceptions of the institution-level TEF (Q16 - Q35)
- **Section 3** - participant awareness, involvement and perceptions of the subject-level TEF (Q37 - Q41).

Section 1 collected information about respondents in two areas: personal and employment/work-related demographics. The data gathered in this part of the survey served three purposes:



1. to ensure all demographic groups across UCU had the opportunity to be represented in this study
2. for the determination of whether the respondents are a representative sample of the target population (i.e. UCU membership base) for generalisation purposes
3. to use the demographic groupings as variables to carry out the statistical analyses to answer research questions 1 and 1.1.

All the personal demographics and some of the employment/work-related demographics (i.e. modes and terms of employment) used in this survey were designed to follow UCU membership data definitions and categories. As this study set out to explore new knowledge on HE workforce awareness, experiences and perceptions of the TEF, additional employment/work-related demographics were collected to determine to what extent the awareness, experiences and perceptions of the respondents differed according to their work place contexts, pre-92, post-92 and college based HE and their contractual roles.

The questions in Section 2 of the survey were designed to collect information on three areas: respondents' awareness, their involvement and their perceptions of the TEF at institutional level. The data gathered in this part of the survey served three main purposes:

1. to provide a snapshot overview of the levels of awareness and involvement UCU members had in institution-level TEF and their perceptions of the TEF at institutional level
2. to serve as observational variables in order to carry out the statistical analyses to answer research questions 1 and 1.1
3. to gather qualitative information on institutional changes since the introduction of the TEF and the impact they have had on learning and teaching from the participants' point of view.

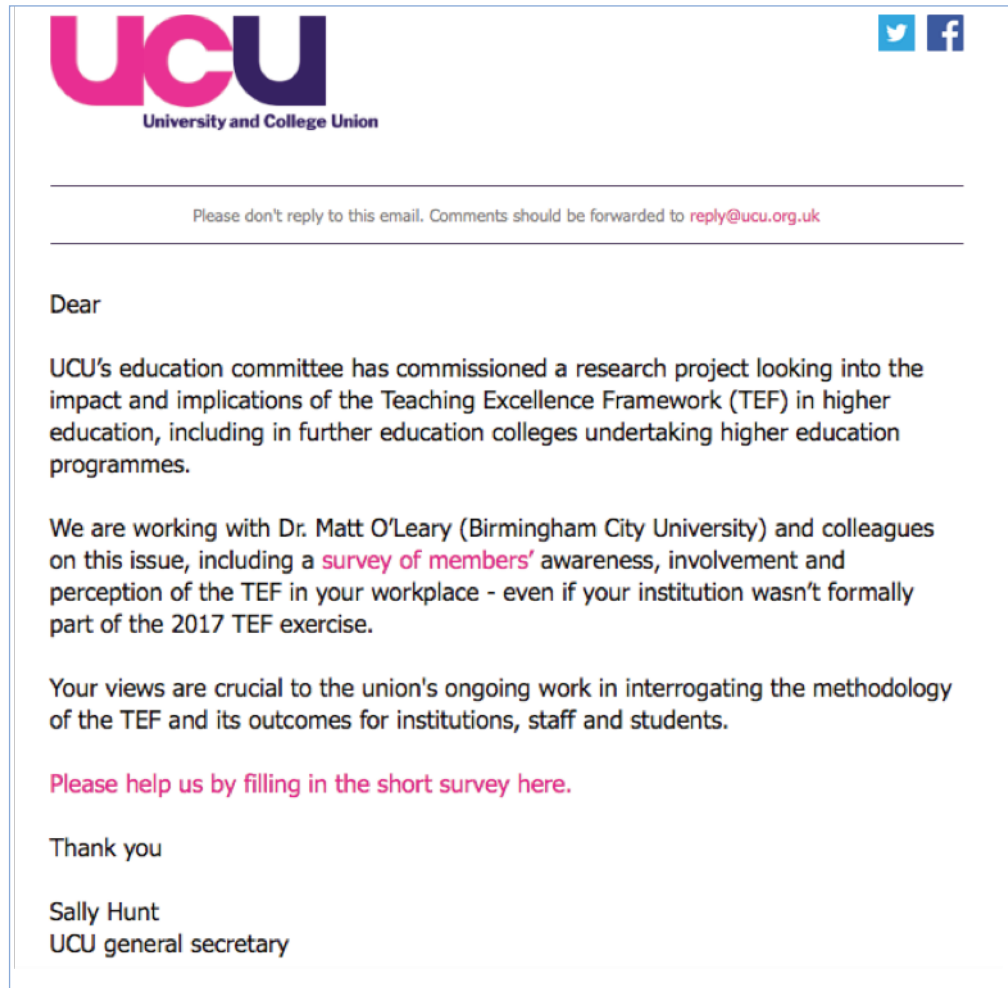
Section 3 questions were designed to collect information in three areas: participants' awareness, their involvement and their perceptions of the subject-level TEF. The data gathered in this section therefore shared the same purposes as Section 2 (see above). At the time of the survey, the subject-level TEF was still being piloted and involved only 50 selected institutions, thus the majority of UCU members would not have had experience of subject-level TEF. This section had fewer questions compared to Section 2. Participants were given the option of completing Section 3 at the end of Section 2 or to finish the survey and submit their responses without completing Section 3.

Between April and June 2018, the online survey was made available to all UCU members in HEIs and college-based HE via the Online Surveys platform (formerly BOS). The link to the survey was sent to members through UCU headquarters electronic mailing. Members were contacted about participation in the research through their emails by UCU using



their existing member database. After the initial email was sent out to UCU members on 25th April, reminders were sent via UCU campaign emails and direct emails on a biweekly basis.

Image 1 Email to all UCU members with the online survey link



Data analysis from the survey generated a range of themes and lines of inquiry which informed the focus and direction of the later strategic seminars and interviews with HE stakeholders.

National strategic seminars

A set of national strategic seminars, 'TEF Talks', were carried out to capture more detailed and context-specific evidence to address project aims 4-7. These seminars were designed for three main purposes:

1. to collect detailed evidence of the changes that have taken place since the introduction of the TEF, participants' experiences of these changes and their views on the impact and implications of these changes

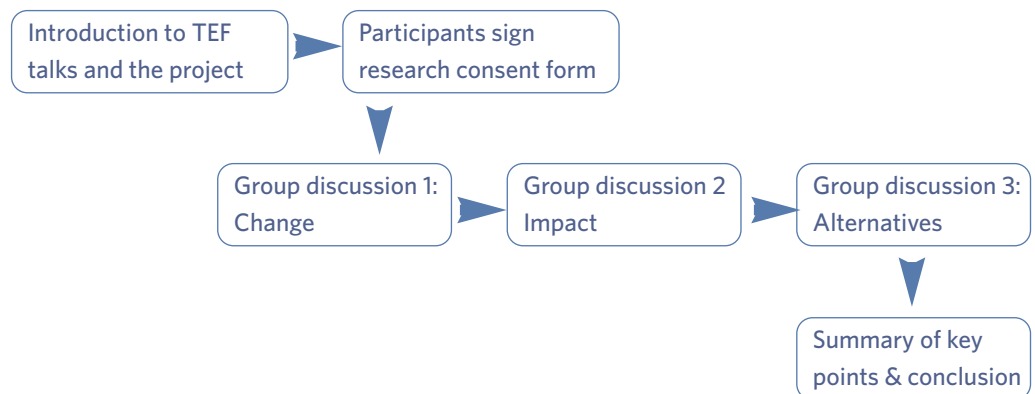


- 2. to collect responses to some of the preliminary analysis of the survey data, thus acting as an important means of validation and stimulating further analysis
- 3. to gather suggestions and/or detailed evidence from HE practitioners on approaches and methodologies with the aim of understanding, recognising and rewarding teaching quality, which are alternatives to the metrics.

Five 'TEF Talks' took place in June 2018 at BCU, UCU head office in London, Heriot-Watt University, University of Bristol and Sheffield Hallam University. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select the host institutions for the seminars on the basis that it allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested (Silverman 2005). Our rationale was to ensure a geographical spread that would allow potential attendees from all three countries (England, Scotland and Wales) the opportunity to attend. Thus institutions were selected from the North, the Midlands, the South and the South West of England, as well as Scotland. This provided participants across the country the opportunity to attend and contribute to the discussions and debates. The seminars were advertised to UCU membership and non-UCU members via Eventbrite pages. The links to the Eventbrite pages were sent out via UCU to its HE and college-based members and the research team's professional networks.

The seminar sessions were designed to facilitate discussions with up to 30 participants divided into groups with a maximum of 10. Key themes Change, Impact and Alternatives were used to guide and shape the discussions. For each theme, approximately 60 minutes were given for the discussions, which were facilitated, by at least one of the research team members. Before discussing each theme as a group, participants were given five to ten minutes to write down key points and reflections they wished to discuss in their groups on postcards. Contemporaneous summary notes were taken by research team members and the discussions were audio recorded. After each seminar session, the extant summary notes were cross-validated using the audio recordings to produce a final set of summary notes for each seminar. Postcard notes were typed into Microsoft Word for separate data analysis. Both postcard notes and final discussion summary notes were emailed to participants for data verification.

Figure 1: Process of 'TEF Talks' seminar session





Interviews with HE stakeholders

Representatives of significant HE stakeholders [i.e. the Chair of the TEF assessment panel and a policy officer of the National Union of Students (NUS)] took part in one-to-one semi-structured interviews with the project team. The focus of these interviews was informed by findings from the online survey, the strategic seminars and current perspectives on understanding, recognising and rewarding the quality of teaching in HE from relevant literature.

Professor Chris Husbands, chair of the TEF assessment panel and Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield Hallam University was interviewed at his workplace on 21st September 2018. The interview lasted over an hour and covered a range of questions about the TEF, which were shared with Professor Husbands in advance of the interview (see Appendix 4 for interview schedule). The interview was recorded with a digital voice recorder and subsequently transcribed.

Hannah Sketchley, policy officer for the NUS was interviewed via phone on 12th October 2018. The interview took just under 50 minutes during which a range of topics about the student union's perspectives on the TEF were discussed (see Appendix 4 for interview schedule). The interview was recorded with a digital voice recorder and transcribed afterwards. The transcription was sent to Hannah for data verification.

Ethical considerations

In the recruitment stage of the project all participants were briefed on the aims, focus and anticipated outcomes of the project and informed that they had the choice to remain anonymous throughout the duration of the project or to have their identities disclosed. Participation was voluntary and participants were made aware that they had the right to withdraw the research data they provided to the study at any stage of the project before publication. Before each research activity, participants were provided with an information leaflet and a consent form which gave participants an overview of the project and the ethical considerations for the research activity they were about to take part in.

Before the participants completed the online survey, they were presented with a participant information leaflet and consent form. To participate in the online survey, respondents were asked to provide their consent electronically. Given the levels of detailed demographic information collected through the survey, the research team was mindful of protecting participants' anonymity. Data analysis of the survey data therefore only focused on broad categories and avoided focusing on specific individuals or risking individuals' identities being compromised.

Participants' identities at each seminar session were known to each other. However, to create a safe space for participants to openly share their experiences and views and to protect their anonymity from outside the seminar session, the project team requested that participants respect the privacy and anonymity rights of other participants by treating the discussions at the focus group as confidential. All participants of the strategic seminars were provided with further confidential opportunities to discuss sensitive issues outside



the open forum of the seminars (e.g. through direct face-to-face or email exchanges with the research team). Summary notes of discussions and each participant's handwritten postcard notes were emailed to them to check for accuracy and verify potential anonymity and/or confidentiality issues.

Participants at the seminars were assigned numbers for reporting purposes and any information disclosed considered a risk to revealing their real identities was edited to remove any identifying features. Any data from the survey, seminars and interviews that referred to institution names and/or specific individuals had the names removed or replaced by an appropriate broad description to ensure data could not be traced to specific institutions or individuals.

The representatives of the stakeholder groups consisted of identifiable public figures (i.e. the chair of the TEF assessment panel, NUS officer, UCU representative); this was clearly stated on the Participant Information Letter and the Consent Form. The research team also clarified with these participants about consent to reveal their identities before data collection began. The data collection, analysis and reporting procedures for these interviews followed the same principles and practices as the strategic seminars (see above).

The data were stored securely by the research team on the university's password protected server. Backup data were stored by the project lead in a password-protected folder on a work PC. The physical copies of signed consent forms and 'TEF Talks' postcards were stored securely in BCU provided facility following the university's guidelines.

The research adhered to BERA ethical guidelines for educational research (BERA 2011) and was approved by BCU Health, Education and Life Sciences (HELS) Faculty Academic Ethics Committee, which assesses proposed research and business projects in terms of insurance risks related to reputational damage, legal and financial liability and institutional costs related to disciplinary action or investigations of misconduct.

Data analysis

The data analysis process began with the online survey, which contained quantitative and qualitative data. Initially these two data sets were analysed separately, mainly due to the practicalities of managing such a large amount of data rather than any fundamental differences in principles to analysing quantitative and qualitative data. There were obviously differences in technique when it came to analysing the two data sets inasmuch as the quantitative data were fed through pre-developed systems for analysis, whereas the coding of the qualitative data was not something that could be predetermined and thus evolved. There were, however, also similarities in the procedures followed for analysing both sets of data, illustrating the iterative connections between these mixed methods. For example, in both cases the research team went through a process of reading and re-reading all the data in order to familiarise themselves with them. In this way, the analysis of all the data collected throughout the project was based on a continuous process of identifying similarities and differences across the data sets (seminar materials,



interview transcriptions and survey data) re-visiting them iteratively in order to develop and refine categories.

Quantitative data analysis

Raw data from the online survey was downloaded as csv data form. Data was cleaned through visual inspection and plotting. Extra demographics were added based on the participants’ institutions, including: the country they are based in and whether it is a Pre- or Post-92 university. These two institution-based categories allowed further analysis of the experience of participants according to how their experiences of TEF depending on their respective institutions.

In the first phase of data analysis, the project team selected which demographic categories and questions to focus on. This involved using the chi-squared and Kruskal-Wallis H tests to detect signals across the data while taking into account key themes and issues from the literature review.²

Table 1: Questions selected for analysis

DEMOGRAPHIC	QUESTIONS		
	Awareness	Involvement	Experience & Perception
Country institution is based in (Q2)	Awareness of the TEF (Q17)	Being consulted on TEF-related activity (Q23)	Impact the TEF has had on T & L at institutional level (Q27)
Pre-/Post-92 (Q2)	Awareness of who is responsible for TEF work in their institution (Q18)	Being directly involved in TEF-related activity (Q25)	Impact the TEF has had on T & L at personal level (Q33)
Mode of employment (Q10)	Awareness of institution's TEF submission (Q19 & Q20)		Seeing evidence of what the TEF is set out to do in their institution (Q28 - Q31)
Terms of employment (Q11)	Awareness of changes in policies/procedures related to T & L (Q21)		Awareness/experience of unintended consequences of the TEF (Q32)
Role profile (Q13)			Attitude towards the introduction of the TEF (Q34)
Typical workload (Q14)	Awareness of changes in academic-related/professional services contracts (Q22)		



Phase two analysis involved the use of descriptive and inferential statistics to understand how the demographic features identified affected participants' opinions on awareness, involvement, experience and perception of the TEF. For each question, data were broken down by demographic groups with the total number of participants in each category treated as a unit of analysis on each question and response percentages calculated for each option. For example, to calculate the percentages of all the participants on a full-time contract, participants were invited to respond 'yes', 'no' and 'not sure' on Q17.

The majority of answers were binary data hence the chi-squared test was used to see whether there was a relationship between a particular demographic group and an area of participants' awareness/involvement/experience and perception. For example, whether participants' awareness of the TEF is independent of their mode of employment.

For Q27 and Q33, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the demographic categories of their perceptions of the impact the TEF has had on teaching and learning at institutional and personal levels. Where statistical significance was detected, post hoc Mann-Whitney U tests were carried out to order the demographic categories.

These two sets of analyses were carried out independently by a member of the research team and a statistician at BCU. The pair then compared their findings while crosschecking the data simultaneously.

Phase three of the survey data analysis involved cross analysis of quantitative and qualitative findings. This involved comparing key findings, identifying similarities and differences.

Qualitative data analysis

Undertaking the analysis of the qualitative data, particularly from the survey, presented the team with some significant challenges, largely owing to its scale and complexity. The sheer volume of the survey's qualitative data was overwhelming and unwieldy at times. For example, questions 32a-35 each generated between 2,000 and 6,300 free text comments from respondents, with each response ranging from two or three words to over 400 words in length in some cases. Added to this, making sense of individual responses within a macro HE context was difficult, as there was representation from 154 HEIs, and 143 college-based HE providers.

Given the volume and breadth of the qualitative data collected during the project, analysing and writing up the data was inevitably a time-intensive process. The project team started by dividing the data sets into manageable chunks. Thus, in the case of the survey, clusters of questions were chunked (e.g. Qs 21-25; 28-31; 32, 34 & 35) and each researcher was allocated a section of the survey to analyse and follow up with a preliminary set of notes on emergent themes to share with the rest of the team at a follow-up meeting. A similar process was adopted for the data generated from the 'TEF talks' seminars and the semi-structured interviews.



The findings were presented under a number of final categories and links were made to extant literature and theories. The researchers wanted to move beyond the 'anecdotalism' (Silverman 2005) of the participants' responses, to critically interrogate their contributions and to look for patterns across institutions and the sector as a whole. The final analysis included multiple perspectives and diverse quotations, as well as challenging and contradictory data.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

ONLINE SURVEY

The participants for the online survey were self-selected volunteers from UCU's membership base.³ In total, there were 6337 participants who completed the survey and gave their consent to use the data. 5895 participants were from 154 universities,⁴ 420 from 143 college based HE providers and 22 did not state which sector they were from. For the purpose of this report, findings from university and college-based HE are presented separately. This is because:

1. As this study set out to investigate staff's experiences at their work place, we recognise that university and college based HE have their unique work context characteristics that are significantly different from one another such as the clear differences between the types of HE teaching and learning each offer. This difference is also reflected in the demographic data collected by this study. For example, none of the college-based participants reported they were on research-focused/ research-only contracts.
2. The data collected by this study from university staff and college based HE staff revealed that their experiences of HE teaching are very different. Analysing the data separately, allowed us therefore to illustrate clearly the experiences of staff working in different HE institutions.

This section includes some of the key information on our research participants. More detailed information is included in Appendix 5

University-based participants

In total, 5895 participants came from Pre- and Post-92 universities and specialist university colleges across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



Table 2: University-based participant by countries

COUNTRY	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE% ⁵
England	5193	88.09%
Scotland	365	6.19%
Wales	227	3.85%
N. Ireland	92	1.56%
Not assigned	18	0.31%
Grand Total	5895	

Table 3: University-based participant by types of institution

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE%
Pre-92	3933	66.72%
Post-92	1944	32.98%
Not assigned	18	0.31%
Other		
Grand Total	5895	

Compared to the overall UCU membership population, the Chi-squared tests revealed that there were more participants from English universities than expected and fewer from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This could be due to the low participation of providers from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland i.e. only 8 Welsh providers and 5 Scottish universities participated in TEF2 and TEF3, compared to 285 English HE providers, thus far fewer participants from providers outside of England were aware of or engaged with it. Post-92 institutions had more responses than expected while fewer participants than expected from Pre-92 institutions responded to the survey. Cross-referencing participants from Pre- and Post-92 institutions across the four countries, none of the participants from Northern Ireland worked in a Post-92 institution and only a small number were from Scottish and Welsh institutions (31 and 49 respectively). This means that when interpreting the data, we needed to keep in mind 96% of the Post-92 participants in this study were from English institutions, while it was 84.64% for Pre-92s.

As one of the elements that the project set out to explore was the extent to which the experiences and perceptions of UCU members differed according to their workplace contexts, their contractual roles, modes and terms of employment, participants were asked to report the mode and terms of their employment, their contractual job role, the role profile of their current employment and their typical workload.⁶ A breakdown of participants' mode and terms of employment revealed:



- 4958 participants were full-time (84.11%), 730 were part-time (12.38%), 166 were hourly-paid (2.82%) and 41 stated 'other' (0.70%)
- 5150 participants were on open-ended/permanent contracts (87.36%), 581 were on fixed-term contracts (9.86%), 72 were on zero hours contracts (1.22%), 41 were on variable hours contracts (0.70%) and 51 stated 'other' (0.87%)

Compared to the overall UCU membership population, while participants on part-time contracts were at expected levels, there was a much greater representation of staff who responded to the survey on full-time contracts and open-ended/permanent contracts, but fewer than expected on hourly-paid and fixed-term contracts, zero hours contracts and variable hours contracts.

PARTICIPANTS FROM COLLEGE BASED HE⁷

In total, 420 participants from 143 college based HE providers completed the survey and gave their consent to use the data. With the exception of four colleges, there were less than eight participants from each of the other 139 providers who completed the survey. The number of participants from college based HE was small compared to participants from universities, but it was estimated that there are fewer staff working in this particular provision. All participants were from English college-based HE providers.

A breakdown of participants' mode and terms of employment showed 354 participants from college based HE were on open-ended/permanent contracts (84.29%) and the rest were on fixed-term, zero hours, variable hours or other contracts; 274 participants were full-time employed (65.24%), 123 were part-time employed (29.29%), 19 were hourly-paid staff (4.52%) and 4 stated 'other'. The majority of college-based HE participants were doing teaching-focused/teaching only work (n=322, 76.67%) and there was no research-focused/research only staff from college-based HE in this survey.

NATIONAL STRATEGIC SEMINARS

The participants for the five national strategic seminars were self-selected volunteers who were predominantly UCU members, though there were also some non-UCU members present.



Table 4: National strategic seminars participants

SEMINAR	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	COUNTRY INSTITUTION BASED IN	INSTITUTIONS (NO. OF PARTICIPANTS)	ROLES/JOB PROFILE
Birmingham	8	England	Pre-92 (1), Post-92 (7)	Faculty management Lecturer/senior lecturer Professional service
London	9	England	Pre-92 (7), Post-92 (2)	Central management Hourly paid lecturer Lecturer/senior lecturer Reader
Edinburgh	9	Scotland (8) Northern Ireland (1)	Pre-92 (8), UCU (1)	Lecturer/senior lecturer Union policy officer
Bristol	7	England (6), Wales (1)	Pre-92 (5), Post-92 (2)	Central management Hourly paid lecturer Lecturer/senior lecturer
Sheffield	6	England	Pre-92 (2) Post-92 (4)	Faculty quality manager Lecturer/senior lecturer

In total, 39 participants attended and contributed to the discussion at the seminars of which 23 were from pre-92 institutions and 16 were from post-92s. The majority of participants were lecturers/senior lecturers from a range of subject/disciplinary areas including sciences, business, arts and humanities, social sciences and behavioural sciences. Several hourly paid lecturers also took part, as did faculty and institution management staff, professional service staff and faculty quality management staff and a UCU policy officer. Participants came from a range of institutions that had been awarded Gold to Bronze in the TEF2 assessment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

This part of the report presents analysis and discussion of the project's findings. It is divided into two discrete sections: 1) findings from quantitative data and analyses and 2) findings from qualitative data and analyses. The volume of data collected during this project meant we were mindful of providing our readers with an accessible and coherent way of navigating through the richness, depth and complexity of our findings. This format of presentation follows on from the approach we adopted when analysing the project data, thus it accurately illustrates how the two data sets were analysed and interpreted by the research team.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

Introduction

As discussed above, the online survey was designed to explore participants' awareness, experiences and perceptions of the TEF in their respective workplaces. In particular, this study was interested in finding out through the online survey:



What are the experiences and perceptions of UCU members of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and its impact on their work in higher education (HE)?

To what extent do the experiences and perceptions of UCU members differ according to their workplace contexts, their contractual roles, modes and terms of employment?

This section includes key findings from the online survey quantitative data. More detailed information from each question is included in Appendix 6

Findings on institutional-level TEF from university-based participants

Awareness

Overall, 83.04% of participants reported that they were aware of the TEF and its key aims. There was no significant difference between the level of awareness reported by those from Pre-92 and Post-92 institutions. Moreover, the types of institution participants came from did not appear to influence the levels of awareness of the TEF in our study. Fewer participants from Northern Ireland institutions reported awareness (71.74% answered ‘yes’) compared to other countries, though given that no Northern Irish providers have participated in the TEF to date, this is unsurprising.

The Chi-Squared tests revealed there were dependences between participants’ awareness of the TEF and their contract levels, terms, modes and types. Those participants on full-time contracts, open-ended/permanent contracts and those in management positions and teaching and research roles reported higher than expected levels of awareness; participants on part-time contracts, hourly-paid contracts and those in non-permanent positions and teaching or research only roles reported lower than expected level of awareness.

Chart 1: University-based participant overall awareness of the TEF by mode & terms of contract

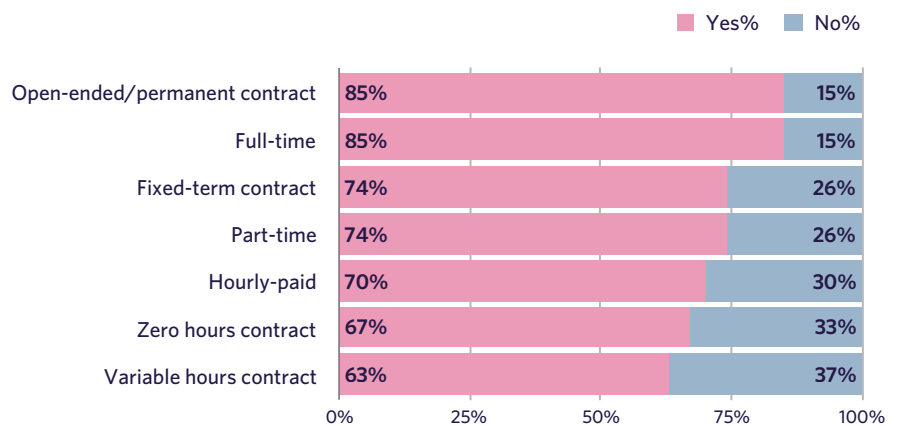




Chart 2: University-based participant overall awareness of the TEF by role profile

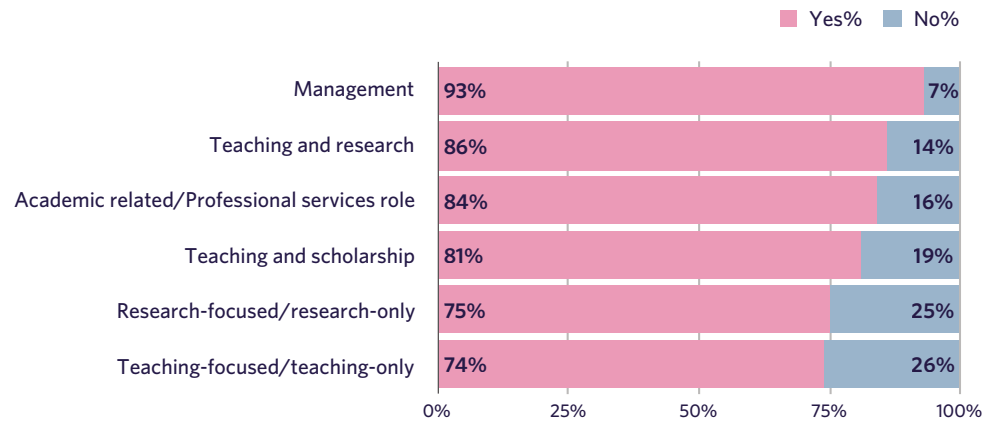
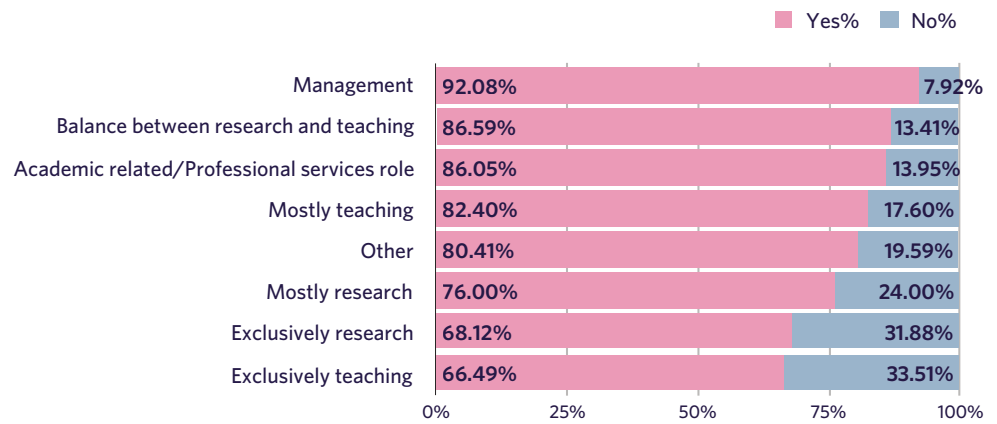


Chart 3: University-based participant overall awareness of the TEF by typical workload



Less than half of the participants reported awareness of their own institution’s TEF work and TEF 2 submission.⁸ Comparing participants from different types of institutions, a bigger proportion of participants from Post-92s reported an awareness compared to those from Pre-92s. The Chi-Squared tests revealed that the types of institution and the reported awareness of these institution-level activities are dependent. In other words, in this study there is a relationship between the type of institution participants are from and how aware they were of their institution’s TEF 2 activities.

Table 5: Awareness of institutional TEF activities by university types

QUESTIONS	POST-92s YES AWARE (%) ⁹	PRE-92s YES AWARE (%) ¹⁰
18. I am aware who is responsible for TEF work in my institution	36.93%	31.15%
18a. Do you know who these people are?	38.89%	34.12%
19. I was made aware of my institution’s TEF submission	59.05%	43.68%
20. I am aware of the information included in my institution’s TEF submission	49.23%	37.60%



The Chi-Squared tests revealed fewer participants than expected from Scotland and Northern Ireland reporting they were aware of their institution's TEF activities and submission and around 50% of participants from Scotland and Northern Ireland answered 'not applicable' to Q18, Q18a, Q19 and Q20. This could be due to fewer institutions in these countries having taken part in TEF assessments to date.

Table 6: Awareness of institutional TEF activities by countries

QUESTIONS	ENGLAND YES AWARE (%) ¹¹	SCOTLAND YES AWARE (%) ¹²	WALES YES AWARE (%) ¹³	N. IRELAND YES AWARE (%) ¹⁴
18. I am aware who is responsible for TEF work in my institution	34.7%	17.8%	29.5%	10.9%
18a. Do you know who these people are?	37.40%	20.55%	30.84%	11.96%
19. I was made aware of my institution's TEF submission	52.09%	18.36%	37.00%	10.87%
20. I am aware of the information included in my institution's TEF submission	44.64%	12.33%	28.63%	8.70%

Awareness of the TEF reported by participants on different types of contracts and in different job roles varies.¹⁵ In particular, a much bigger proportion of those in management positions reported awareness of these activities compared to participants in other roles across all these areas. A consistently higher than average proportion of participants working in combined roles of research and teaching (research and teaching, teaching and scholarship) and academic related/professional services roles answered 'yes' to these questions. Consistently, a smaller proportion of participants in teaching-focused/teaching only and research-focused/research-only roles reported 'yes'.

The Chi-Squared tests revealed there were dependences between participants' awareness of their institution's TEF activities (Q18, Q18a, Q19 and Q20) and their contract levels, terms, modes and types. In other words, this study found a relationship between the types of contracts participants were on, the type of roles they have and how aware they were of their institutions' TEF2 activities. For example, those in management, academic related/professional services positions, on full-time contracts and open-ended/permanent contracts reported higher than expected levels of awareness. Those on part-time contracts, in hourly-paid positions, non-permanent positions and mostly/exclusively teaching or research roles reported lower than expected levels of awareness.



Chart 4: University-based participant awareness of who is responsible for TEF work in their institution by mode and terms of contract

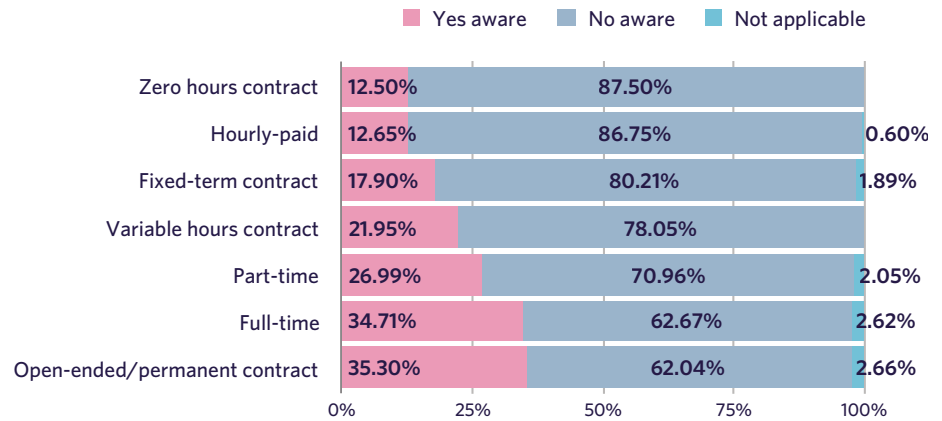


Chart 5: University-based participant awareness of who is responsible for TEF work in their institution by role profile

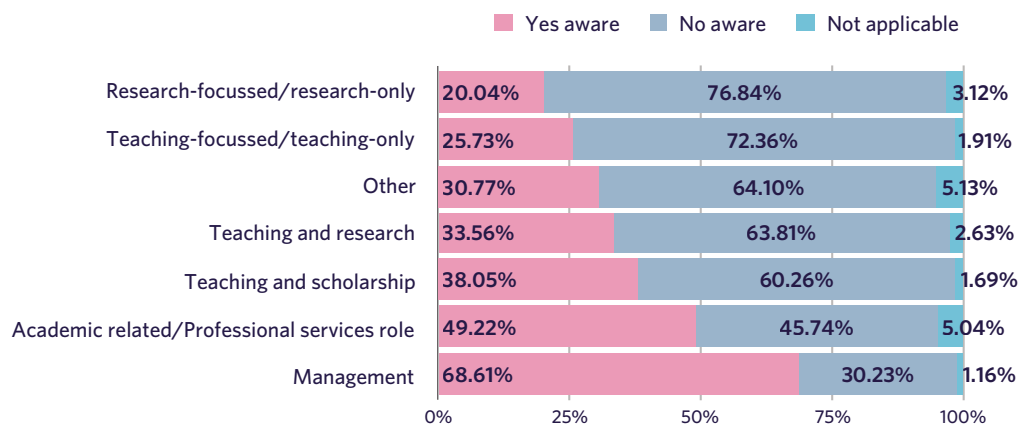


Chart 6: University-based participant awareness of their institution's TEF submission by mode and terms of contract

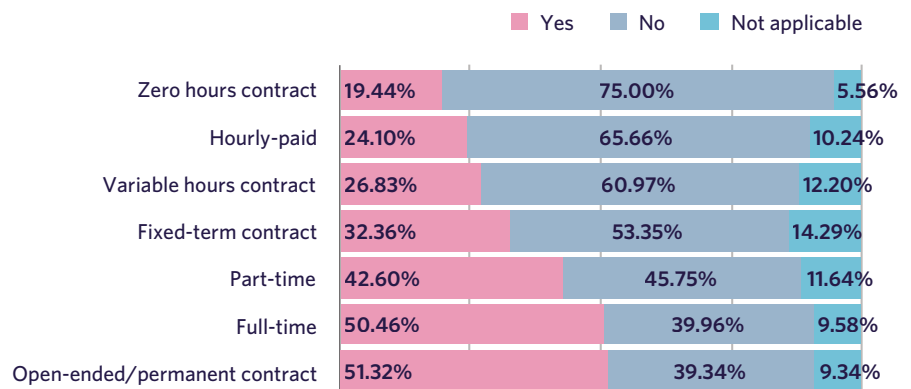




Chart 7: University-based participant awareness of their institution's TEF submission by role profile

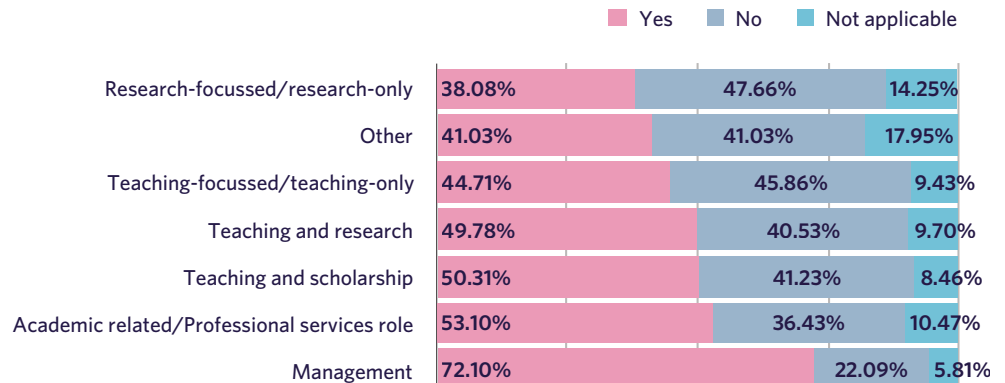


Chart 8: University-based participant awareness of the information included in their institution's TEF submission by mode and terms of contract

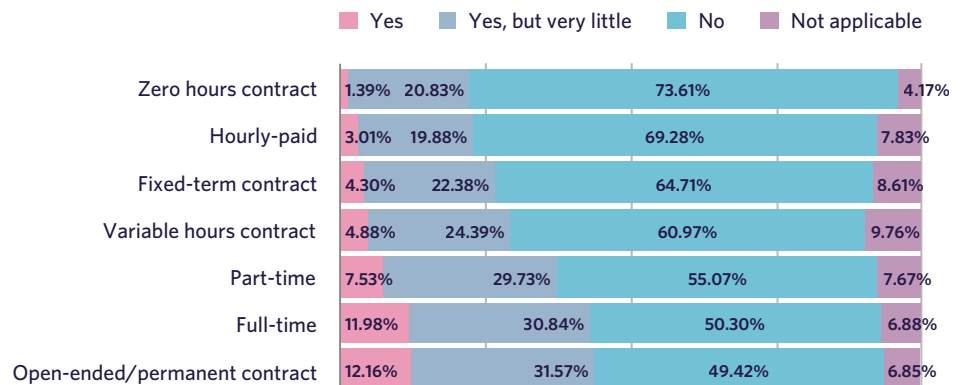
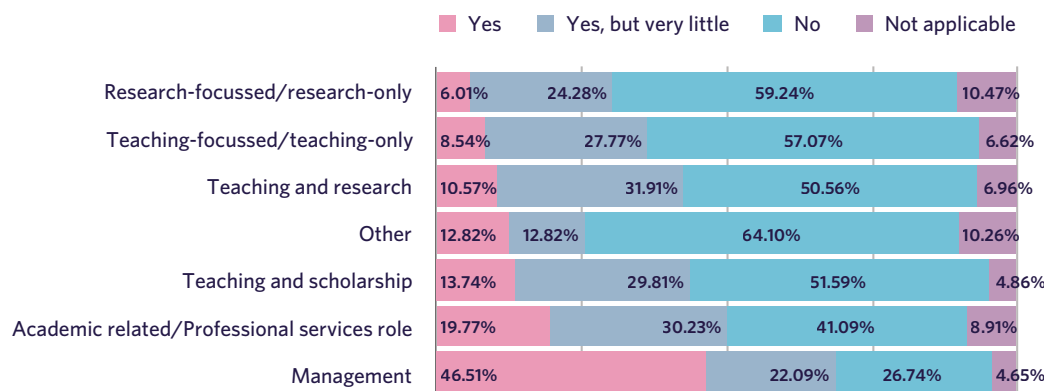


Chart 9: University-based participant awareness of the information included in their institution's TEF submission by role profile



Participants were asked if they had experienced any changes at their place of work with regard to teaching and learning (T & L) policies/procedures since the introduction of the TEF. Overall, 1319 participants reported 'yes', 2336 reported 'no', 1983 reported 'not sure' and 257 reported 'not applicable'. (There are more details on what policies/procedures have been introduced/changed since the introduction of the TEF in the qualitative findings

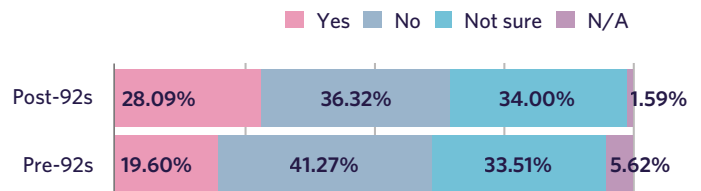


and discussion section of the report). Qualitative data from the survey and the seminars also revealed that the reported level of awareness of such changes could be due to a number of reasons:

- No change took place
- Participants were not informed about the changes
- Participants were not engaged with the information about the changes
- Participants were not involved in the changes
- Changes have been ongoing, difficult to attribute them to the introduction of the TEF.

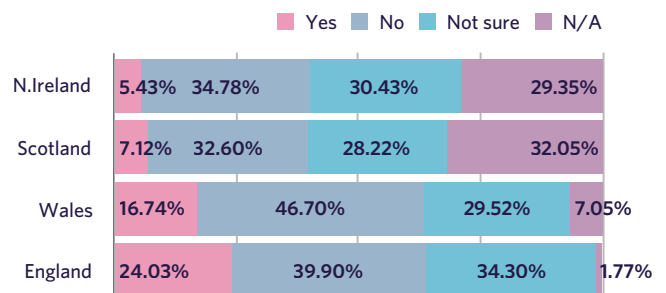
Data showed a clear difference between participants working in Post-92s and Pre-92s in relation to this question. While a very similar proportion of participants from Pre-92s and Post-92s reported they were unsure whether changes have taken place (33.51% of Pre-92 participants 34.00% of those from Post-92s), a much greater proportion from Post-92s reported that they were aware of changes compared to those reported by participants from Pre-92s. The Chi-Squared test revealed there was a dependence between the type of institutions participants were from and the reported awareness of changes in T & L policies/procedures. More participants from Post-92 institutions reported being aware of changes than expected, fewer from Pre-92 institutions reported being aware of changes. However, it could be there were more changes at Post-92 institutions or participants at these institutions were more aware.

Chart 10: University-based participant awareness of changes in policies/procedures related to T & L by type of institution



The Chi-Squared test revealed fewer participants from Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh institutions reported being aware of changes in policies/procedures related to T & L compared to expected levels. Again, this is probably because there were fewer changes at institutions in these countries or participants were less aware of changes having taken place.

Chart 11: University-based participant awareness of changes in policies/procedures related to T & L by country





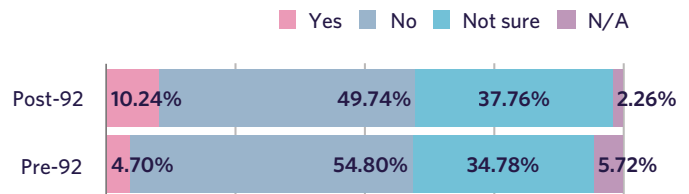
Breakdown of the data by participants' mode and terms of employment and their job roles showed:¹⁶

- fewer participants on 'Hourly-paid', 'Fixed-term' and 'Zero hours contracts' reported being aware of changes of T & L policies and/procedures while more participants on 'Open-ended/permanent contracts' reported being more aware;
- more participants in 'Academic related/Professional services role' and 'Management' reported being aware of changes than expected, while fewer of those doing 'Exclusively research', 'Exclusively teaching', 'Mostly research' reported being aware of any changes.

Awareness of changes in academic-related/professional service contracts since the introduction of the TEF was also reported. Overall, 386 out of 5895 participants reported they were aware of contract changes. 2105 participants reported 'not sure' whilst 3130 reported 'no'. There are more details on what kinds of contractual changes have been taken place since the introduction of the TEF in the qualitative findings and discussion section of this report.

The Chi-Squared test revealed a dependence between the type of institutions participants were from and their reported awareness of contract changes. More participants from Post-92s reported being aware while fewer staff from Pre-92s reported awareness.

Chart 12: University-based participant awareness of changes in academic-related/professional service contracts by type of institution



More participants in 'Academic related/Professional services role', 'Mostly teaching' and 'Teaching and Scholarship' reported being aware of change whilst fewer participants in 'Balance between research and teaching' roles reported being less aware. This is the only aspect of the survey where participants on 'Mostly teaching' contracts and doing 'Teaching and Scholarship' type of work reported higher than expected levels of awareness. This could be because more of them experienced contract changes than those on other types of contracts/roles.



Chart 13: University-based participant awareness of changes in contracts by role profile

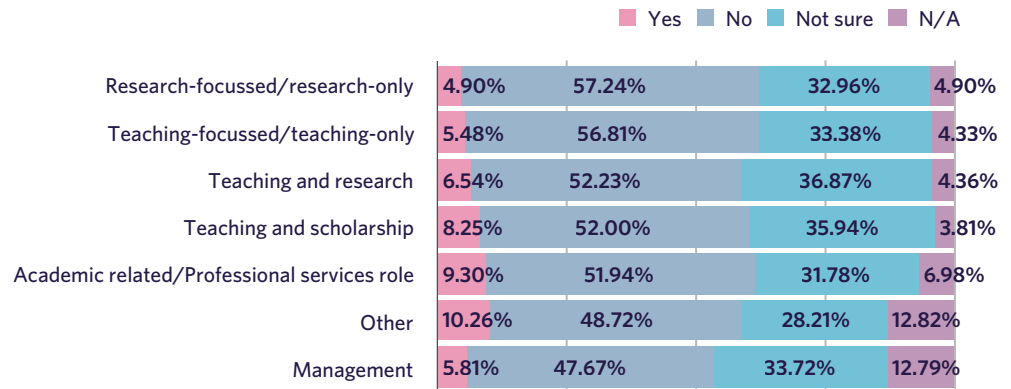
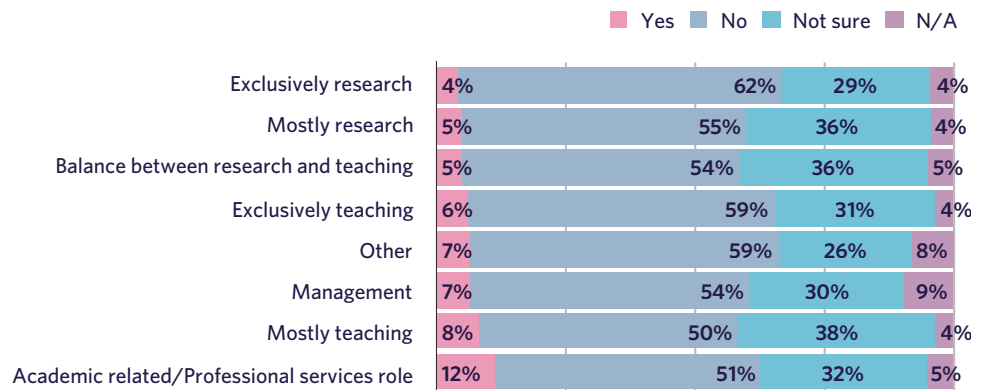


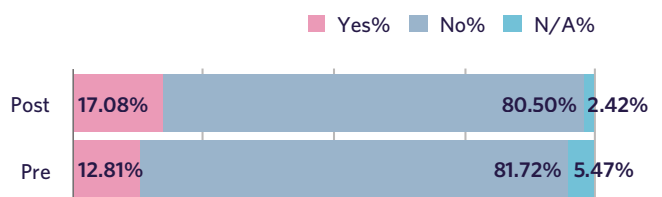
Chart 14: University-based participant awareness of changes in contracts by typical workload



Involvement

In the survey, participants were asked to report on whether they were consulted on TEF-related activity and whether they had been directly involved in TEF-activity in their institution. 837 reported they were consulted while 4791 said they were not. The majority of those who reported 'yes' were from English institutions (n=772). Between Pre-92s and Post-92s, more participants from Post-92s reported being consulted while fewer from Pre-92s answered 'yes'. Whilst a Chi-Squared test revealed the two variables are not independent, they are indicative of a relationship between the type of institution the participant was from and whether they were consulted on TEF-related activity in their university.

Chart 15: University-based participant consulted on TEF-related activity by institution type





Breakdown of the data by participants' mode and terms of employment and their job roles showed:¹⁷

- The Chi-Squared test revealed a dependence between the terms and the modes of employment and whether participants had been consulted on TEF-related activity in their institution. More participants on 'Open-ended/permanent contracts' reported being consulted while fewer staff on 'Fixed-term', 'Zero hours' and 'Hourly-Paid' contracts reported being consulted.
- The Chi-Squared test showed in this study there was a connection between the participant's role/typical workload and whether this person had been consulted about the TEF. While it is clear research-focused participants in this study have not, in the main, been involved in TEF-related activity consultation in their institution, many of those in teaching-focused roles also reported a lack of involvement in consultation. In addition, more participants in 'Academic related/Professional services roles' and 'Management' reported being consulted, while fewer participants in 'Balance between research and teaching', 'Research-focused/research-only', 'Mostly research', 'Exclusively research' and 'Exclusively teaching' roles reported being consulted.

Only 472 participants out of 5895 reported they had been directly involved in TEF-related activity in their institution. The Chi-Squared test revealed there was no significant difference between expected levels of involvement and what the participants reported across the four countries and there was no relationship between the countries and the level of involvement - 442 from English institutions answered 'yes', 15 from Wales, 10 from Scotland and 3 from Northern Ireland. No significant differences between expected levels of involvement were reported between Pre-92s and Post-92s (291 from Pre-92s answered 'yes' and 179 from Post-92s).

None of the participants on 'Variable hours' reported they were directly involved in TEF-related activity in their institution while very small proportions of 'Hourly-paid' (0.06%), 'Zero hours' (1.39%) and 'Fixed-term' (3.10%) participants reported direct involvement.¹⁸ The Chi-Squared test showed there was a dependence between modes and terms of employment and participants' involvement. Fewer participants on 'hourly-paid' and 'fixed-term contracts' reported being directly involved than expected and none of the participants on 'variable hours contracts' reported direct involvement in their institution's TEF-related activity.

A higher proportion of participants in 'Management' (36.05%) and 'Academic related/Professional services role' (18.22%) reported direct involvement compared to participants in other roles ('Teaching and scholarship' - 9.30%; 'Teaching and research' - 7.41%; 'Teaching focused/teaching-only' - 5.86%; 'Research-focused/research-only' - 3.56%)

A dependence was also revealed by the Chi-Squared test between the roles participants were in and whether they had been directly involved in TEF-related activity in their institution. A greater number of participants in 'Academic related/Professional services role'



and 'Management' reported being directly involved than expected, while fewer participants in 'Research-focused/research-only', 'Mostly research', 'Teaching-focused/teaching-only', 'Exclusively teaching' and 'Balance between research and teaching' roles reported being directly involved in TEF related activity than expected.

Experiences and perceptions

Participants were asked a range of questions on what they had experienced in their institutions since the introduction of the TEF and what they thought of these experiences. Most of these questions were focused on T & L and some of them were directly about what the TEF was set out to achieve according to the White Paper (BIS 2016).

Chart 16: University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching, learning and outcomes' in their institution

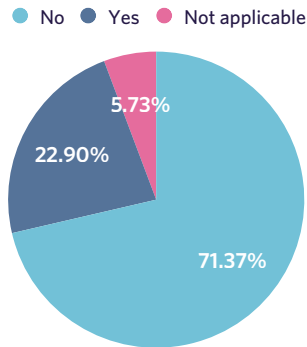


Chart 17: University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'sharpening focuses on teaching and outcomes that matter to students' in their institution

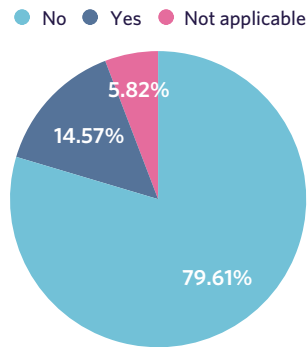


Chart 18: University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'helping inform prospective student choice' in their institution

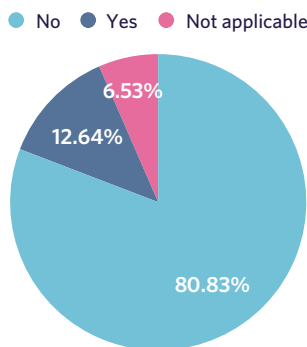
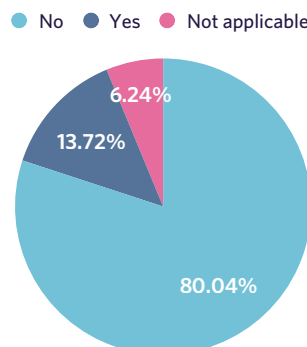


Chart 19: University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'supporting widening participation in HE' in their institution





Overall, only a small proportion of participants in this study saw evidence in their institutions of the original aims of the TEF as set out in the White Paper (BIS, 2016). Just under three quarters of participants answered that they had not seen any evidence in their workplace of the TEF resulting in a sharpening of focus on teaching and outcomes that matter to students. Overall, there was a higher level of participants who answered 'yes' (n=1391) to this question compared to the previous one. Over a fifth remarked that they had seen a sharper focus on teaching and outcomes that matter to students in their institutions as a result of the introduction of the TEF.

Of the four aims, a greater number of participants reported that they saw evidence of the TEF sharpening the focus on teaching and outcomes in their institution. Perhaps this is the area that institutions have put more emphasis on since the introduction of the TEF. However, findings from the survey's qualitative comments and seminar data also suggested that in areas like widening participation and informing prospective student choice, institutions had done a lot of work prior to and independent of the TEF and that these were well-established areas of work in many institutions that pre-dated the TEF. In the case of widening participation, for example, those participants who commented on this issue emphasised how it was a high priority for their employers, with long-standing policies and initiatives already firmly in place. Some participants referred to their institutions as a 'WP university/college' with a 'long track record' of important work in this area, particularly for those providers whose core student population comprised those from the most deprived and economically challenged communities.

The Chi-Squared tests showed that in two of these areas, the type of institution the participant was from influenced their responses as to whether they had seen evidence of the TEF's impact. 300 participants from Post-92s (15.43%) reported they saw evidence of the TEF 'helping inform prospective student choice' in their institution - this was more than expected ($p = 0.00034$). 330 participants from Post-92s (16.98%) reported they saw evidence of the TEF 'supporting widening participation' in their institution, and this was more than expected; 479 participants from Pre-92s (12.18%) reported they saw evidence on this, and this was less than expected ($p=4.93 \times 10^{-06}$).

Across the four countries in the UK, Q29 was the only question where a dependence was shown by the Chi-Squared test - there was no significant difference between what was reported and what was expected in Q28, Q30 and Q31. More participants from English institutions reported 'yes' across the four questions than the others, followed by Wales. Around 1/3 of participants from Scotland and Northern Ireland reported 'not applicable' across these questions, compared to around 4-8% of participants from England and Wales. This reflects the various degrees of participation in TEF2 by institutions across the four countries and for Scotland and Northern Ireland in particular, findings from this survey consistently showed low levels of awareness of the TEF and its impact at institutional level.

Looking at the answers for Q28, Q29, Q30 and Q31 with regard to participants' modes and terms of employment, there was no significant difference between what was



reported and what was expected from the Chi-Squared tests. This was also the case when analysing the data by participants' self-reported job roles. Unlike the data from questions on awareness and involvement where participants on 'Full-time contract', 'Open-ended/permanent contract' and those in 'Management' and 'Academic related/Professional services role' did report higher than expected levels of awareness of evidence. Across different kinds of modes and terms of employment and job roles, various levels of 'not applicable' were reported. The Chi-Squared tests, however, showed there was a relationship between participants' workload and their reported perceptions of what kind of evidence they saw in relation to these four issues. This suggests that the kind of work they do does relate to whether they reported having seen evidence.

Regarding the TEF recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching, learning and outcomes (Q28), 22.26% of participants in 'Management' positions and 18.60% of participants in 'Academic related/Professional services role' reported they had seen evidence of recognition attributable to the TEF. In contrast, only 10.63% of those in 'Exclusively teaching' answered 'yes' to Q28. Answers for Q29, Q30 and Q31,¹⁹ a greater proportion of participants in 'Management' and 'Academic related/Professional services role' reported they had seen evidence of recognition while the proportion of those doing 'Exclusively teaching' was smaller than the other groups.

This pattern continued from the analysis of data on awareness and involvement. This could be because participants in management and/or academic related/professional services were more aware of the evidence and/or more involved with activities that address these aims whereas those exclusively teaching were the ones who were less aware and/or involved in TEF-related activities. The qualitative data from the survey and the seminars also revealed how participants perceived these original aims of the TEF. This could also have affected how participants interpreted this question. There are more details on what evidence participants saw in relation to these aims at their institutions in the qualitative findings and discussion section of the report.

For Q28, the Chi-Squared test showed that fewer participants in 'exclusively teaching' roles than expected reported they saw evidence in their institution, whilst more management staff than expected reported 'yes' ($p=0.0021$). For Q29, the Chi-Squared test showed fewer of those in 'exclusively teaching' than expected reported they saw evidence in their institution, and more management participants than expected reported 'yes' ($p=2.63 \times 10^{-6}$). For Q30, the Chi-Squared test revealed a dependence - $p=0.0011$ and the signal comes from a greater number of those who reported their typical workload as 'other' answered 'yes'. Regarding the TEF supporting widening participation in HE (Q31), fewer of those participants who self-reported a 'balance between research and teaching' work answered 'yes' while a greater number in 'Academic related/Professional services' 'Management' roles as well as those who do 'Mostly teaching' reported they saw evidence ($p=5.28 \times 10^{-12}$).

Q27 and Q33 asked participants about their perceptions of the impact the TEF had had on T & L at their institution and on their own practice. Participants were asked to rank



their perception of the impact. Comparing participants’ perceptions of the TEF’s impact at these two levels, more participants were unsure about the impact at institutional level. While over 40% of participants felt the TEF had had either great or some impact on their institution’s T & L, around 26% felt the TEF had impacted on their own T & L either greatly or at some level; on the other hand, more than half of the participants felt the TEF had had very little or no impact on their own T & L. This could mean that participants in this study felt the TEF was operating at a higher/managerial level only and at the time of the survey it was yet to reach them. Certainly, findings from our qualitative data confirmed this assumption.

Table 7: University-based participants’ perceptions of the TEF impact on T & L at their institution

PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT	NO. OF RESPONSES	% TO TOTAL NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
Great impact	629	10.67%
Some impact	1841	31.23%
Little impact	993	16.84%
No impact	512	8.69%
Not sure	1796	30.47%
Not applicable	124	2.10%
Grand Total	5895	

Table 8: University-based participants’ perceptions of the TEF impact on their own T & L

PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT	NO. OF RESPONSES	% TO TOTAL NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
Great impact	248	4.21%
Some impact	1311	22.24%
Very little impact	1451	24.61%
No impact	1709	28.99%
Not sure	748	12.69%
This is not applicable to my role in my institution	238	4.04%
Not applicable	190	3.22%
Grand Total	5895	

Kruskal-Wallis H tests on data from these two questions using the participants’ personal and employment-rated demographic categories revealed there were significant differences of perceptions between some demographic groups.

The perceptions of impact at institution-level from participants in different role profiles showed a significant difference (p=0.0004). A post hoc Mann-Whitney U test revealed



that those in 'Teaching-focus/teaching-only' role considered there was a weaker impact compared to the perceptions reported by those participants in 'Academic related/ Professional services' 'Management', 'Research-focused/research-only', 'Teaching and research' and 'Teaching and scholarship' roles.

Participants' perceptions of the impact of the TEF on their T & L also showed a significant difference ($p=0.00041$) in different role profiles. Post hoc Mann-Whitney U tests showed:

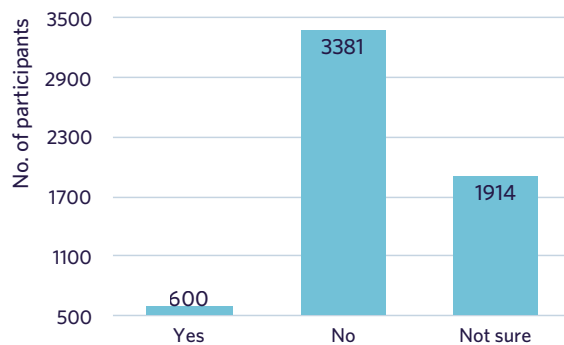
- Overall, those in 'Research-focused/research-only' and 'Teaching-focused/teaching-only' roles perception of the impact of the TEF was weaker than the perceived impact reported by those in 'Academic related/Professional services roles', 'Teaching and research' and 'Teaching and scholarship' roles;
- Overall, the perceived impact of the TEF reported by participants in 'Teaching and research' and 'Teaching and scholarship' roles was weaker compared to the perceptions of those in 'Academic related/Professional services'.

Participants' perceptions of the impact of the TEF on their T & L based on their typical workloads showed a very significant statistical difference ($p=6.77 \times 10^{-08}$). Post hoc Mann-Whitney U tests revealed:

- Overall, the perceived impact reported by those in 'Exclusively teaching' and 'Mostly research' roles was weaker compared to the perceptions of those in 'Academic related/Professional services', 'Balance between research and teaching', 'Management' and 'Mostly teaching' roles.
- Overall, those in 'Exclusively research', 'Mostly teaching' and 'Balance between research and teaching' roles' perception of the impact of the TEF on their T & L was weaker than the perceived impact reported by those in 'Academic related-Professional services' roles.

Finally, participants were asked whether they welcomed the introduction of the TEF.

Chart 20: University-based participant response to 'I welcome the introduction of the TEF'



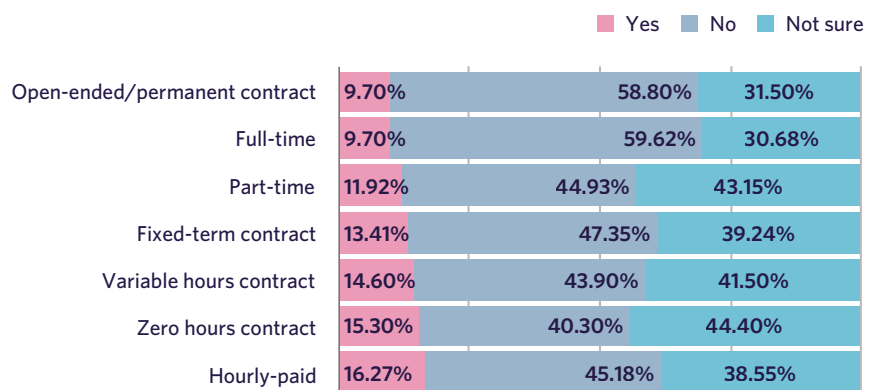


57.35% of participants in this study disagreed with the statement 'I welcome the introduction of the TEF', while 32.47% were unsure. The qualitative data collected from the survey and the seminars revealed a great detail about the complexity of participants' attitudes towards the TEF in the current HE policy context. This is discussed in more detail below in a separate section.

12.19% of participants from Post-92 universities answered 'yes' to the statement 'I welcome the introduction of the TEF', while 9.18% of those from Pre-92s answered 'yes'; 38.12% of Post-92 participants were 'not sure' about the statement while 29.60% of those from Pre-92s answered 'not sure'. The Chi-Squared test showed that there was a significant dependence between the type of institution participants were from and whether or not they welcomed the TEF ($p=3.56 \times 10^{-16}$). Participants from both Pre-92s and Post-92s reported being unsure more than expected. However, more participants than expected from Pre-92s expressed they did not welcome the TEF, whilst participants from Post-92s expressed more acceptance/welcoming of the TEF than expected. Participants' responses to this statement were strongly related to the mode and the terms of their employment (modes of employment Chi-Squared test $p=3.33 \times 10^{-13}$; terms of employment Chi-Squared test $p=2.14 \times 10^{-06}$):

- a greater number of participants than expected on 'Part-time contracts', 'Hourly-paid contracts' and 'Fixed-term contracts' welcomed the TEF;
- more participants than expected on 'Part-time contracts' were 'not sure';
- a greater number of participants than expected on 'Full-time contracts' did not welcome the TEF or were unsure.

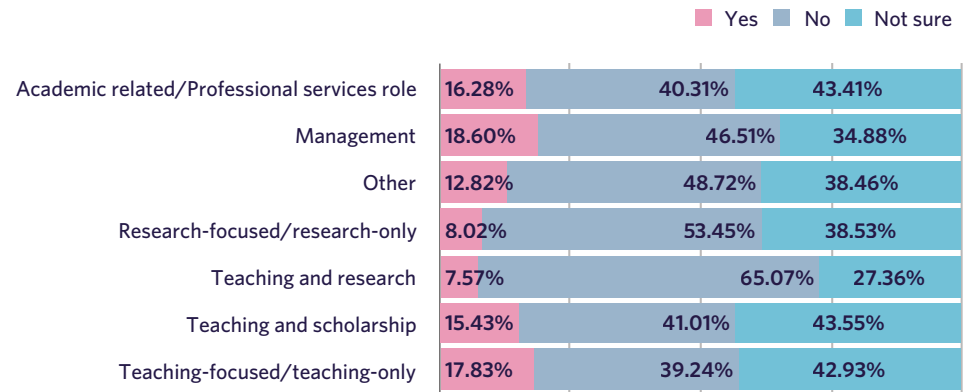
Chart 21: University-based participants responses to 'I welcome the introduction of the TEF' by mode and terms of employment



The Chi-Squared test also revealed participants' attitudes (welcoming or not welcoming) towards the introduction of the TEF and their role profiles were dependent ($p=4.45 \times 10^{-60}$). A greater number of participants than expected in 'Academic related/Professional services', 'Management', 'Teaching and scholarship' and 'Teaching-focused/teaching-only' roles either welcomed or were unsure about the TEF; whereas more participants than expected in 'Teaching and research' did not welcome it.

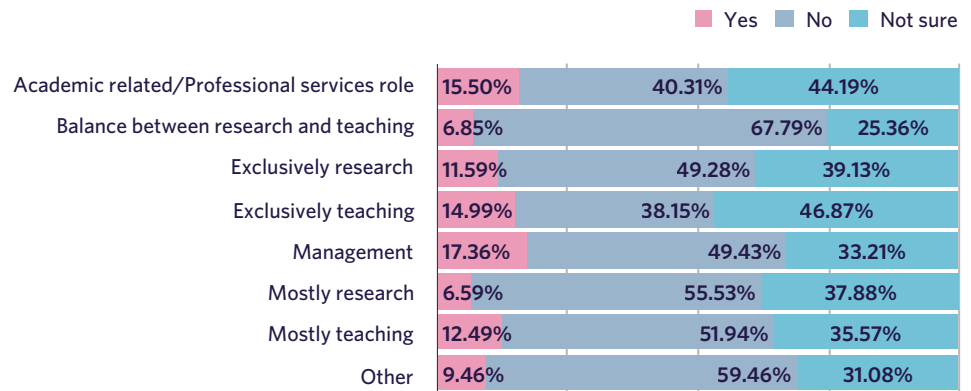


Chart 22: University-based participants responses to 'I welcome the introduction of the TEF' role profiles



Finally, a very strong dependence between participants' attitudes (welcoming or not welcoming) towards the introduction of the TEF and their typical workload was detected by the Chi-Squared test ($p=3 \times 10^{-45}$). More participants than expected in 'Management', 'Academic related/Professional services role', 'Exclusively teaching' roles and 'Mostly teaching' roles welcomed the TEF, whilst more participants than expected in 'Academic related/Professional services role', 'Exclusively teaching' roles and 'Mostly teaching' roles said that they were 'not sure'. Lastly, a greater number of participants than expected in 'Balance between research and teaching' expressed answered that they did not welcome the TEF.

Chart 23: University-based participants responses to 'I welcome the introduction of the TEF' by typical workload



FINDINGS ON INSTITUTION-LEVEL TEF FROM COLLEGE-BASED HE PARTICIPANTS

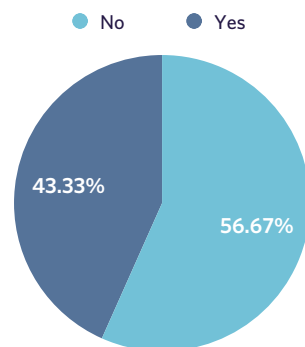
420 participants came from college-based HE. Due to the small number of participants on 'hourly-paid' contracts (19) in this report we only looked at participants on 'full-time' and 'part-time' contracts when analysing their awareness, involvement, experience and perceptions by mode of contract. 354 out of 420 participants were on an 'open-ended/permanent' contract and the others were on various terms of contract so we decided to not use terms of contract in this part of the analysis. Participants' self-reported typical workload was used as a demographic variable as it provided a more substantial sample



of participants in each category. Descriptive quantitative analyses were carried out as inferential analyses were unsuitable for data reported by this group of participants.

Out of the 420 college-based HE participants, 182 reported they were aware of the TEF and its key aims. Breaking this down by participants according to different modes of contracts, more participants on 'part-time' contracts answered 'yes' to those on 'full-time' contracts (47.97% compared to 41.61%).

Chart 24: College-based HE participants saw evidence of the TEF 'recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching, learning and outcomes' in their institution



111 out of 166 participants working in 'exclusively teaching' roles reported not being aware of the TEF and its key aims. The proportion was slightly smaller for those in 'mostly teaching' roles with 97 out of 175 reporting they were unaware of the TEF. Of the 25 participants in 'management' roles, 4 reported they were unaware of the TEF and its key aims.

At the institutional level, fewer participants reported awareness of TEF-related activities:

- 106 answered 'yes' to 'I am aware who is responsible for TEF work at my institution', 300 answered 'no' and 14 said 'not applicable';
- 85 reported they were made aware of their institution's TEF submission, 287 reported no and 48 said 'not applicable';
- 36 stated they were aware of the information included in their institution's TEF submission, 49 stated 'yes, but very little', 301 stated 'no' and 34 said 'not applicable'.

Fewer participants on 'part-time' contracts reported awareness of their institution's TEF submission compared to those on 'full-time' contract.



Table 9: College-based HE participants' perceptions of the TEF impact on their own T & L

QUESTIONS	FULL-TIME 'YES AWARE'	PART-TIME 'YES AWARE'
18. I am aware who is responsible for TEF work in my institution	27.01%	23.58%
19. I was made aware of my institution's TEF submission	21.90%	16.26%
20. I am aware of the information included in my institution's TEF submission	9.12% ²⁰ 11.31% ²¹	8.13% ²² 11.38% ²³

Breaking down the data on awareness from Q18, Q19 and Q20 by participants' typical workload,²⁴ the number of participants in 'balanced between teaching and research' work was small (10); out of the 25 participants in 'Management' work, more than half of them reported awareness of who was responsible for their institution's TEF work and their institution's TEF submission. More of those in 'mostly teaching' reported awareness compared to those in 'exclusively teaching'; marginally more of those in 'academic-related/professional services' answered 'not applicable' compared to other groups. There was inconsistency in college-based HE participants answering 'not applicable' to these questions, which could mean they were unsure about their institution's TEF submission and/or TEF-related activities.

More than half of college-based HE participants reported they were unaware of changes in policies/procedures on T & L at their institution since the introduction of the TEF and 65% reported they were unaware of changes in contracts at their institution. This could suggest that either participants were not being informed about the changes or few changes had taken place in college-based HE since the introduction of the TEF, which suggests the TEF has had a limited impact on college-based HE to date.

Chart 25: College-based HE participant awareness of changes in policies/procedures on T & L at their institution

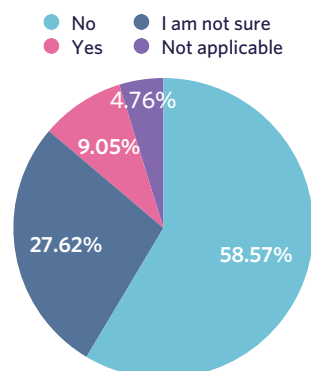
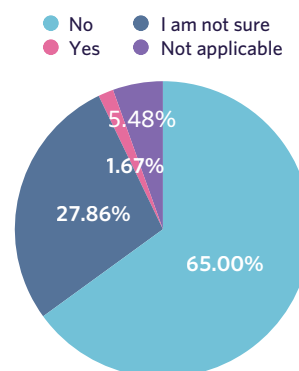


Chart 26: College-based HE participant awareness of changes in academic/professional services contracts at their institution





Breaking down the data by typical workload, participants in management roles were most sure about their level of awareness about changes to policies/procedures on T & L. In this group 40% of participants answered 'yes'. In comparison, 8% of participants doing 'mostly teaching' and 3.61% of those doing 'exclusively teaching' said they were aware of changes. This might mean there have been some changes in policies/procedures on T & L in college-based HE providers but they were not apparent to teaching staff members.

Most college-based HE participants stated they had not been consulted or directly involved in TEF-related activities in their institution. Slightly higher proportions of participants on a full-time contract reported they were consulted or involved in TEF related activities compared to those on a part-time contract, but bigger proportions of 'part-time' participants answered 'not applicable' compared to 'full-time' participants. More than half of the participants in 'management' stated they were consulted and directly involved in any TEF-related activity, whilst almost 95% of the participants doing 'exclusively teaching' reported they were not consulted.

Chart 27 : College-based HE participant being consulted on TEF-related activities in their institution

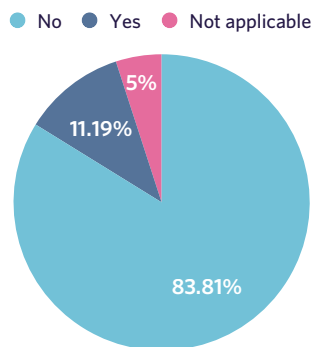
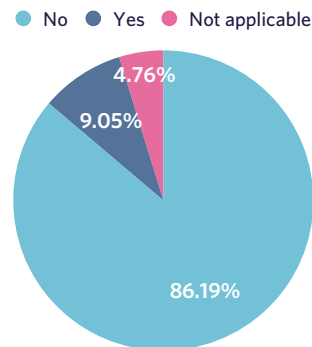


Chart 28: College-based HE participant being directly involved in TEF-related activities in their institution



A small proportion of college-based HE participants saw evidence of the original aims of the TEF set out in the White Paper (BIS 2016). This is a similar finding to that which was reported by university-based participants. Breaking this down by participants engaged in different types of work, similar proportions of participants from each group answered 'yes'.

59.52% of participants from college-based HE providers also reported they were unsure about the TEF impact on T & L at their institution. This echoes the findings from data reported in previous questions on participant awareness, involvement and experiences of TEF-related activity at their institution. Nevertheless, 38.10% of college-based HE participants felt unsure about the TEF impact on their own T & L while 30.95% felt the TEF has had no impact on their T & L.



Table 10: College-based participant perception of the TEF impact on T & L at their institution

PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT	NO. OF RESPONSES	% TO TOTAL NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
Great impact	12	2.86%
Some impact	37	8.81%
Little impact	42	10.00%
No impact	56	13.33%
Not sure	250	59.52%
Not applicable	23	5.48%
Grand Total	420	

Table 11: College-based participant perceptions of the TEF impact on their own T & L

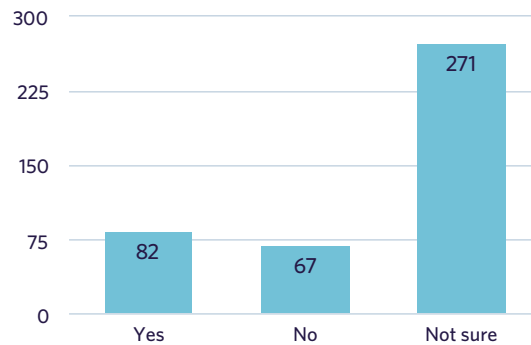
PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT	NO. OF RESPONSES	% TO TOTAL NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
Great impact	9	2.14%
Some impact	35	8.33%
Very little impact	49	11.67%
No impact	130	30.95%
Not sure	160	38.10%
This is not applicable to my role in my institution	17	4.05%
Not applicable	20	4.76%
Grand Total	420	

Breaking down the data from Q27 and Q33,²⁵ once again, participants in ‘management’ roles showed they were certain about how they felt about the impact of the TEF. 56% of them felt the TEF has had some impact on their institution’s T & L and 36% felt the TEF had impacted on their own T & L. This proportion was much smaller for those participants doing ‘exclusively teaching’ and ‘mostly teaching’ jobs. In particular, those participants in ‘exclusively teaching’ roles seemed most unsure about TEF’s impact, whilst around 25% of those in ‘mostly teaching’ felt they experienced some kind of effect from the TEF.

Finally, data on college-based HE participants’ attitudes towards the TEF echoes other findings from this study: 64.52% participants stated they were unsure about whether they welcomed the introduction of the TEF or not. Amongst the other 35.48%, 19.52% said they welcomed the TEF. However, this is very different to what university-based participants felt about the TEF as 57.35% participants said ‘no’ to ‘I welcome the introduction of the TEF’. Around 16% of participants in ‘management’, ‘mostly teaching’ and ‘exclusively teaching’ roles said they welcomed the TEF and 41% of those in ‘academic/professional services’ roles answered ‘yes’.



Chart 29: College-based participant response to 'I welcome the introduction of the TEF'



In this study, we collected a limited amount of data from college-based HE participants on their awareness, involvement, experiences and perceptions of the TEF. Our findings suggest college-based HE has its uniqueness in T & L in terms of workplace contexts (e.g. typical workload, terms and modes of employment). In relation to the TEF, it is clear the situation in college-based HE has been somewhat different to universities:

- Fewer participants showed awareness of the TEF
- Fewer participants showed awareness of TEF-related activity in the institution
- Fewer participants have been involved in their institution's TEF-related activities
- Fewer participants reported awareness of the impact of the TEF
- Many more participants were unsure about what the TEF is and how its operationalised in their institution
- Many more participants were unsure about their feeling towards the TEF
- More participants welcome the TEF

Overall, college-based HE participants showed much more varied levels of awareness, involvement and perceptions of the TEF across different types of typical workload roles. One possible explanation for this could conceivably be attributed to the high levels of accountability and inspection regimes that colleges have been subjected to for some time.

What is common between college-based HE and universities is that at institution level TEF-related activities appeared to be largely led and implemented by those in management roles.

FINDINGS ON SUBJECT-LEVEL TEF

3271 participants²⁶ (3113 from HEIs which was 52.81% of the total number of HEI participants, 158 from college-based HE providers which was 32.62% of the total number of college-based HE participants) responded to Part 2 of the online survey on their awareness, experiences and perceptions of subject-level TEF. At the time of the survey, 50 HE providers mainly from England took part in subject-level TEF pilot. Participants answered this part of the survey came from 111 HEIs and 13 college-based HE providers from across the four countries with the majority from English providers.



Amongst HEI participants, there was a broadly consistent level of between 45% and 55% of the total number of participants from each work-related category that responded to Part 2 of the survey (e.g. 54% of HEI participants on open-ended/permanent contract and 45% of those on fixed-term contract). The exceptions were participants in ‘exclusively research’ and ‘mostly research’ work, about 40% of participants in these two categories completed this part of the survey. This meant there was less ‘exclusively research’ and ‘mostly research’ participants who completed Part 2 of the survey compared to other HEI participant groups. For college-based participants, a smaller proportion (37.62%) took part in Part 2 of the survey. Most college-based participants who were on hourly-paid and variable hour contracts did not complete Part 2 of the survey.

Overall, data in Part 2 of the survey continued the general patterns from Part 1. A small number of college-based HE participants expressed their awareness and involvement in subject-level TEF at their institutions at the time of survey. Though more HEI based participants said they were aware of subject-level TEF, fewer of those from Scottish (18.12%) and Northern Irish HEIs (7.69%) were aware of it.

Chart 30: University-based participant awareness of subject-level TEF and its aims

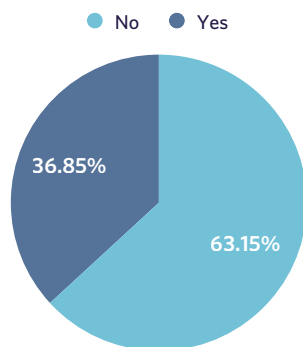
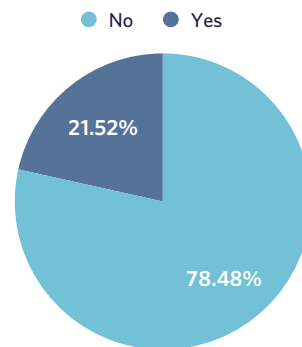


Chart 31: College-based HE participant awareness of subject-level TEF and its aims



For HEIs, fewer of those on part-time (26.71%), hourly-paid (13.19%), and fixed-term (25.38%) contracts were aware of subject-level TEF than those on full-time (39.02%) or opened-ended/permanent (38.67%) contracts. Those in management positions were the biggest proportion of participants who answered ‘yes’ to awareness of subject-level TEF (68.52%), followed by those in academic-related/professional services roles (60.17%), as was the case in Part 1 of the survey. 25.06% of participants in teaching focused/teaching only roles stated they were aware of subject-level TEF.

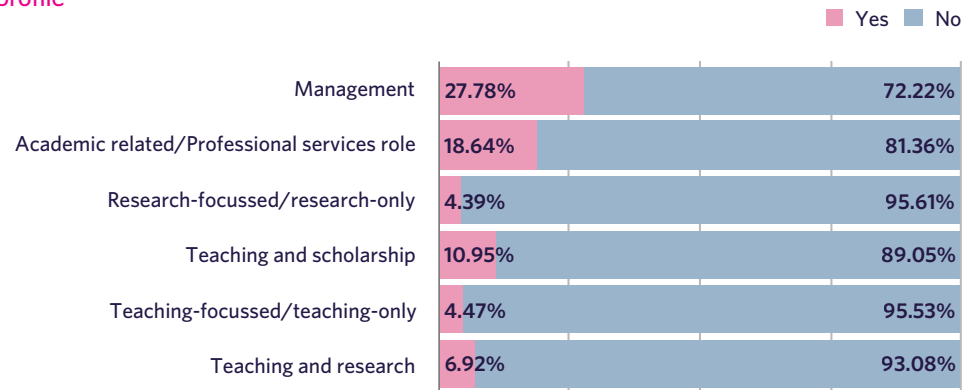
30.10% of HEI participants (937) said they were aware of work relating to subject-level TEF. In contrast, only 15 out of the 158 college-based participants were aware. A bigger proportion of Post-92 based participants (33.10%) were aware of subject-level TEF activities at their work place compared to Pre-92 based participants (28.51%). While 31.59% of participants on full-time contracts and 32.04% on open-ended/permanent contracts said they were aware of subject-level TEF activities at their work place, only 8.79% of those on hourly-paid contracts and 16.54% of those on fixed-term contracts



were aware. A very small number of participants in teaching-focused/teaching-only work were aware of subject-level TEF activities at their work place (19.11%) compared to 57.41% of those in management.

7.58% (226) of the 3113 HEI participants who completed Part 2 were involved in their work place subject-level TEF activities compared to only 9 college-based HE participants. Of these 226 participants, 216 were in English HEIs, 2 in Scottish and 8 in Welsh ones. Again, a bigger proportion of Post-92 participants were involved in subject-level TEF compared to Pre-92 participants. None of the participants on hourly-paid, variable hours or zero hours contracts reported involvement in subject-level TEF work and only 1.54% and 3.56% of those on fixed-term and part-time contracts respectively were involved.

Chart 32: University-based participant involvement in subject-level TEF at their workplace by role profile



Clearly, at the time of the survey, subject-level TEF activities were also led and carried out predominantly by management and participants in academic-related/professional services roles. Findings from Q38b (What are the activities?) revealed the kind of activities included:

Table 12: Subject-level TEF activities

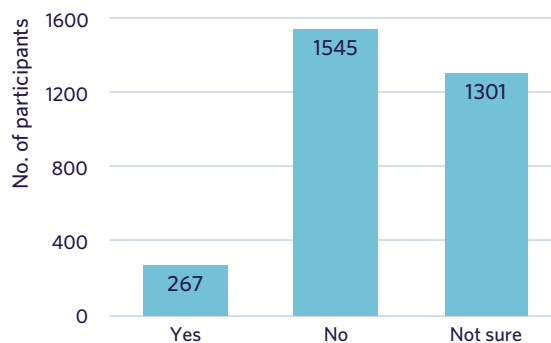
Collecting programme level data and carrying out metric analyses and cost analyses <i>e.g. 'Understanding how departmental procedures contribute to the metrics and how these can be improved.'</i>
Demonstrating meeting criteria for 'excellence' in course documentation.
Developing teaching and learning initiatives aimed at improving subject level practices <i>Further work on enhancing student experience e.g. 'Partnering with students in enhancement activities'.</i>
Informing programme teams of predicted TEF ratings, identifying targets for improvement <i>e.g. 'In a staff meeting yesterday we were shown statistical analysis on how the subject differentiations would play out for our department. Subject level means we are joined with BA programmes from other departments. This means that our awarded status will actually be out of our departmental control.'</i>
Key focus is on improving NSS scores
Liaising and sharing good practice between departments
Mock subject-level TEF exercise and modelling predicted ranking at course and department level
Pilot subject-level TEF submission



Raising awareness of and promoting the importance of teaching,
Revising programme design and specs
Staff consultation e.g. 'Finding ways to improve all the scores that count for TEF: Embedding employability in the curriculum. Revising the curriculum structure and academic calendar to facilitate better degree results, progression, creating more space for work placements. Identifying weaknesses in NSS scores and putting in place action plans to improve them.'
Staff workshop or away days on subject-level TEF data analyses and/or submission writing.
Subject-level TEF briefings e.g. 'Meetings encouraging us to somehow ensure that we have better student progression rates once they leave university.'
Website updating and web-based research
Working group/committee/party meetings

8.58% of the 3113 HEI based participants said they welcomed the introduction of subject-level TEF while 49.63% answered 'no' to the statement and 41.79% were unsure. Comparing the answers of participants from the four countries, those based in Welsh HEIs had the biggest proportion of participants answering 'yes' while those based in Northern Ireland had the biggest proportion of participants answering 'not sure'. Both English HEI participants and those in Scottish universities had around 50% of participants answering 'no' and approximately 42% answered 'not sure'. A bigger proportion of those in Pre-92s did not welcome it (53.20%) compared to 43.75% of those based in Post-92s.

Chart 33: University-based participant response to 'I welcome the introduction of Subject-level TEF'

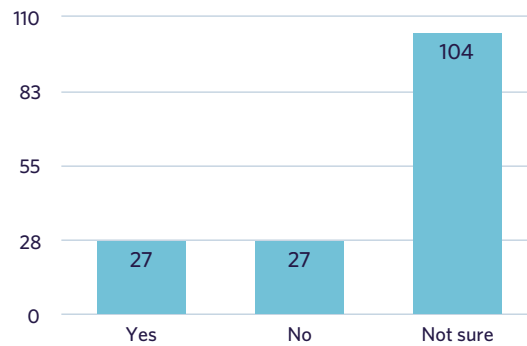


Over half of participants on full-time and open-ended/permanent contracts answered 'no' while more than half of participants on other types of contracts were 'not sure' whether they welcomed subject-level TEF. Qualitative data from Q40a (Why do you feel this way?) revealed many participants' concerns over workload, added burden from additional subject-level TEF work and subject-level TEF methodology. Details on these issues are in the findings and discussion of qualitative data discussed in detail below.



Nearly 60% of participants in teaching-focused/teaching only roles answered 'not sure', while about 30% of those answered 'no'. Considering many participants were not aware and/or not involved in subject-level TEF activities at their work place, it could be that they were still waiting to know what subject-level TEF entails before they can make an informed judgement about it. 56.67% of those in teaching and research roles answered 'no' while only 5.82% answered 'yes'. 30% of participants in this group knew about subject-level TEF activities at their work place and 7% of them were directly involved in some of these activities, which could mean that many of those in teaching and research role disapproved of subject-level TEF.

Chart 34: College-based HE participant response to 'I welcome the introduction of Subject-level TEF'



65.82% of college-based HE participants who completed Part 2 of the survey said they were 'not sure' about the introduction of subject-level TEF. In particular, most participants in exclusively teaching and mostly teaching positions were unsure. Of the 158 college-based HE participants who completed Part 2, only 9 were involved in subject-level TEF (4 of those were in management positions), the data was therefore inconclusive as to how college-based HE participants were experiencing and perceiving subject-level TEF at the time of the survey.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Introduction

This section of the report presents the key findings and discussion from the project's qualitative data relating to the impact of the TEF. The discussion is organised into substantive themes to emerge from the qualitative data, a complete list of these themes is included in Table 13 below. The themes listed in Table 13 form the basis of a series of sub-headings throughout this section, which draws on three discrete data sets to inform the analysis and discussion of the findings: 1) participants' textual comments to questions in the online survey; 2) participants' written notes and the research team's summary notes from the strategic seminars and 3) excerpts from transcribed interviews.

It is important to acknowledge that while the qualitative data contained examples that were understandably specific to individual institutions in some cases, the data also



revealed common themes, patterns of practice and activity across institutions, as well as institution types and countries. For reasons of scope, it is only these commonly recurring, substantive themes from the data that our analysis and discussion concentrates on in this section of the report.

Overall, the largest proportion of the project's qualitative data converged around the counterproductive impact of the TEF, reinforcing the predominant view that the TEF was an unpopular and unwelcome policy reform among the overwhelming majority of the project's participants.

Table 13: The impact of the TEF in higher education: an overview of key themes

SUBSTANTIVE THEMES
1. TEF ranking system reinforces the marketisation and commodification of HE
2. TEF methodology is not fit for purpose
3. Increased staff workloads
4. Increased levels of stress, anxiety and low morale among staff
5. Stratification of teaching and research
6. Imposition of a top-down, centralised policy response to TEF
7. Institutional standardisation of curriculum and pedagogy
8. Increased monitoring and surveillance of staff performance
9. Increased monitoring and surveillance of student experience and performance
10. Reification of students as consumers
11. Reduction in professional autonomy and trust of staff
12. Lack of institutional consultation in TEF policies and practice
13. Greater recognition of the importance and status of teaching
14. Push for teaching qualifications and associated accreditation
15. Greater emphasis on student assessment
16. Greater weighting to student voice

1. TEF ranking system reinforces marketisation and commodification of HE

A sizeable proportion of participants mentioned that their institution had used its TEF rating as a deliberate tool for marketing and publicity purposes to attract new students at events like open days, with the overwhelming majority of those from Gold-rated institutions, though this also included those that were awarded Silver and Bronze. ' Banners' and 'logos' were 'slapped on everything' from the institutions' buildings to its website, promotional literature and email signatures. These marketing activities were indicative of concerted efforts to use the TEF rating strategically to boost recruitment, which were clearly permeating the awareness of prospective students as one participant commented: 'students now come to open days with TEF-inspired questions'.



Some participants commented on how they were encouraged by senior/line managers and marketing staff to make explicit reference to their institution's TEF rating when talking to prospective students and their families. This chimed with one of the aspirations of the chair of the TEF assessment panel, Professor Chris Husbands, who stated that he hoped the TEF would be 'embedded in the understanding of prospective students and their families as one of the data points they take into account when they make their decisions'. His experience as a vice chancellor also inferred a growing public awareness of the TEF:

I front up all of our open days and I spend a day walking around talking to parents and I ask them why they're here and I'm quite impressed by the number who talk about the TEF

There was even the suggestion by some participants that their TEF ranking had helped to improve their position in national league tables, though these claims were unsubstantiated.

Some participants suggested that recruitment in their institution had been adversely affected as a result of having being ranked as bronze, leading to the perception that neighbouring institutions were taking advantage of their higher rating to boost their recruitment figures. Participants from a range of disciplines at one particular institution talked about how their 'recruitment figures [had] bombed as a result of us getting a Bronze'. In contrast, participants from Gold-rated providers made reference to increases in 2017/18 enrolments as a result of their TEF rating and ongoing rises in 2018/19 applications. For example, a senior manager from a college-based provider mentioned how their 'enrolment numbers [had] significantly increased' and the 'only plausible explanation' was 'attributable to being TEF Gold'.

The marketing and communications units of some institutions played a leading role in issuing departmental guidance on the 'key messages' that they recommended academic staff should relay to prospective students. In the case of Gold-rated institutions, there were numerous examples of staff explicitly instructed to 'take advantage of any opportunity to drive this message home'. Interestingly, in the case of a provider awarded Bronze, all staff were instructed to 'downplay the TEF rating' when talking to prospective students, thus reinforcing the impression of the TEF ranking as a judgemental tool.

The ranking of institutions was a contentious and objectionable element of the TEF for many of the project's participants. Some commented on how the ranking of providers according to a 'crude medal system' simply exacerbated the marketisation of the sector and it was contradictory to understanding, recognising and rewarding teaching excellence. Others felt that 'the categories of gold, silver, and bronze are both infantile and harmful - as if getting gold stars is what education is about'. In the case of some participants from college-based HE providers, they complained about the TEF 'not being a level playing field' as the competition between universities and colleges was 'unfair and counterproductive'. In addition, participants from TEF2 bronze-rated institutions expressed anxiety as to the consequences of their ranking and what might happen to those courses that underperformed according to the metrics.



2. TEF methodology is not fit for purpose

A strong theme to emerge from the data, which was reinforced across the four nations, different institutions and participant groups, was how the TEF methodology was not considered fit for purpose. As mentioned in the previous section, the TEF's methodology was regarded as reinforcing the commodification and marketisation of HE. The crux of criticisms about the methodology converged around two key issues. Firstly, participants regarded the TEF metrics per se as being ill equipped to capture and/or measure teaching and learning in any credible or meaningful way. And secondly, the issue of inequity in the assessment framework was a concern in terms of how certain institutions, subjects and groups were disadvantaged from the outset with the pre-established benchmarks.

The NUS' position on the TEF methodology echoed the concerns and disapproval expressed by the project's participants, as its policy officer articulates:

Overall, there is a deep, shared concern about the TEF and its wider impact as a tool for marketisation ... The main concerns around this are because the TEF metrics reflect graduate outcomes and employment rather than engagement, challenge or things like learning gain. It gears HE providers' behaviour towards completing the metrics rather than allowing innovative pedagogy and allowing academics to teach. We have always been concerned about the particular focus on graduate outcomes and graduate salaries because we know they are influenced by a lot of social factors such as race, gender and (social) class, this potentially could skew recruitment patterns which obviously would have negative impact on access and the make ups for the sector.

The prevailing view of students, voiced through the NUS, was that they did not consider the TEF in its current form would or indeed could improve T & L. Instead, it was considered a political and economic tool for the government to further marketise the HE sector. The current TEF methodology and the way it had been implemented at an institutional level was also regarded as a distraction from making genuine improvements to learning and teaching:

Universities are so squeezed now, they are not putting resources into doing the right thing focusing on improving teaching and learning, instead they are putting resources into doing well in the TEF. That doesn't speak for the entirety of the sector but that's a concern we have as a national body representing students in HE.

However, the Chair of the TEF assessment panel, Professor Sir Chris Husbands had a conflicting view, as he defends the metrics used in the TEF in the excerpt below:

I think I probably know more than most people about criticisms of the TEF. I think one of the irreducible things about the TEF, although some people have criticised the way it works, I think once you dig into it, it is a work of great statistical beauty, which is the benchmarking that the HEFCE data sets out. I will die in a ditch for benchmarking.



Table 14: Sample of comments of TEF methodology is not fit for purpose

TEF doesn't fit the OU model because part-time students are different and we are open access so it is unfair to measure us in the same way as full time campus based and selective intake institutions. (Pre-92, senior lecturer, full-time, permanent)

TEF does not assess the quality of teaching but rests primarily on student perceptions of teaching. Given that the style of teaching at university is different from what students have experienced before and that for many students, life at university is much more than just the education, I don't think student perceptions of teaching are accurate enough to assess teaching quality. For example, students may be swayed by engaging teachers but not actually learn much, whereas a different teacher may push them to think critically and academically. (Pre-92, part-time, fixed-term, teaching only, less than 2 years)

Ways of measuring universities is based on student bias. Confusion around being a consumer and a learner means learning experiences that are excellent may not be 'feel good'. Surveys privilege 'feel good' modules not excellent teaching. DLHE data requires students to be in subject relevant employment and assesses based on earnings. This does not take into account the success of employment in vocations that don't have high earnings but individuals make a vital contribution to society. Some disciplines do not work on a permanent employment basis and therefore it does not take into account freelance, portfolio careers that many students may aspire to or build over time in their subject. (College-based HE, part-time, permanent, less than 2 years, exclusively teaching)

This is not a metric that can speak to the most pressing issues. Policies determining institutional success on the average income of graduates is spurious. TEF is at odds with other, smaller, local programmes to try and innovate teaching, sometimes by trying things that are not proven and may risk a temporary dip in scores whilst kinks are hammered out. (Pre-92, full-time, permanent, less than 2 years, balance between teaching and research)

... it promotes unhealthy competition between universities, and further entrenches practices of monitoring and surveillance. Equally, the TEF has little effect on or interest in teaching practices themselves; rather, there is increased target setting, data collection, and of course creative writing. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, 6-9 years, management)

There is a much bigger gulf between TEF metrics and actual quality of teaching & learning, than there is between REF metrics and actual research quality and productivity. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, less than 2 years, management)

In principle I think it is good to balance the REF with a more teaching focused evaluation. However, I do not think the assessment is fair, it does not address issues such as 'distance travelled' on the learning and personal journey. For my university this is a key issue, we have many non-traditional students, often the first person in their family to go to university, many with a lot of personal baggage. The work we do with these students to get them to achieve a degree is not fully recognised. The socio-economic background of many of our students means that withdrawals are more likely than in other institutions. Working with a wider range of students entails a range of issues with are not truly acknowledged by the TEF. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, 2-5 years, mostly teaching)

With regards to subject-level TEF, participants were very vocal in their criticisms of how the methodology failed to accommodate the diversity and complexity of programmes on offer and as such failed to yield results that were in any way meaningful.



Table 15: Sample of comments on Subject-level TEF methodology

Because the data are not reliable at subject level - student numbers are too small to draw meaningful comparisons. Also, there's not enough detail available yet about how it is all going to work to make an informed comment. (Pre-92, full-time, permanent, 2-5 years, management)

We are a small subject area and so have been combined with another discipline that is underperforming. Each subject discipline however small should be assessed on its own merit. (Pre-92, full-time, permanent, 6-9, professional services)

Subject level TEF may also lump many courses of varying quality together, so I would advise prospective students to look at information about particular courses that interest them, not at subject level TEF. (Pre-92, full-time, permanent, less than 2 years, professional services)

3. Increased staff workloads

Across all data sets participants reported an increase in workloads. There was often mention of a 'busyness' surrounding the TEF in their institutions with lots of policies and initiatives introduced simultaneously. However, it was difficult to understand how they were connected to each other or formed part of a coherent institutional strategy in some instances. Greater levels of activity were recorded in post-92 compared to pre-92 institutions. This was encapsulated in comments such as 'all we hear is "TEF, TEF, TEF" at the moment' from post-92 participants to 'we're aware of it but it's very much in the background' from pre-92 participants.

A strong theme to emerge was how the TEF had created another layer of administrative bureaucracy, which had given rise to additional work streams, often with no additional resources to support this extra workload. A large proportion of participants experienced increasing workloads without any accompanying increase of hours and/or pay. One of the knock-on effects of this was a reduction in time for teaching preparation, teaching development and/or marking.

Table 16: Sample of comments on Increased Staff Workloads

Average working has gone from 45 hrs a week to 60 hrs a week. I've taught for 11 years and I enjoyed preparing exciting lessons in the extra unpaid hours at home. Now it is expected to complete student online files every day, updating information for management to then demand even more. Lesson preparation is the last thing I do at night now! So to maintain the quality of lessons I now do an average of an extra 23 hrs a week in evenings and weekends. I've come to the conclusion this is bad for my health and I will be leaving the profession. (College based HE, full time, permanent, mostly teaching, 10-13 years)

There is an increasing workload experienced by both academics and administrators due to TEF requirements. The actual writing of the TEF subject pilots was extremely time consuming for all involved and was expected to be accommodated on top of existing workloads. (Post-92, full-time permanent, 22 years or more, management)

Expectations are increasing all the time to ensure students have a positive experience. While I believe it is appropriate the students should have a good experience, there is little protection for



staff and what the expectations for the students should be. Feels unbalanced and breeds a culture of entitlement. Lots of staff going off sick with stress-related illnesses. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, 6-9 years, teaching and research, mostly teaching)

I have friends who are teaching fellows and the biggest thing which impacts on the quality of their teaching are excessive workloads. If new metrics lead to unintended consequences causing further excessive workload demands it seems to me they will only harm teaching quality. Although my institution is not yet in TEF it has concerns from NSS about poor feedback. Its response has been to rigidly enforce a 14 day turnaround in marking. This has led colleagues sometimes being expected to mark 60 5000 word essays in less than 5 days. Very stressful for staff! (Pre-92, full-time, permanent, 10 -13 years, mostly research)

We are already accredited by three different accreditation bodies. This feels like yet another layer of scrutiny without any financial resource to prepare for it or to be rewarded for our performance. (Pre-92, full-time, permanent, 18-21 years, teaching and research)

When you are spending all your time worrying about data and trying to improve this data you are having time and focus taken away from your actual job which is teaching. (College-based HE, full-time, fixed-term, mostly teaching, 2-5 years)

4. Increased levels of stress, anxiety and low morale among staff

Participants perceived the impact of the TEF to have been mostly negative on their working conditions, their personal health and wellbeing. Feelings of anxiety, pressure, a lowering of staff morale and an unpleasant atmosphere at work were stated by a large number of participants. Besides, some participants commented on how the TEF had been managed to date had left them feeling ignored, 'out of the loop', 'voiceless' and 'suffering in silence'.

There was also anxiety reported by some participants who were waiting to see how the recent TEF outcome in their institutions would impact on their contracts, their departments and/or their programmes. These participants were anxious about what they perceived as a lack of clarity about the day-to-day implications of changes to academic contracts.

Table 17: Sample of comments on increased levels of stress, anxiety and low morale of staff

The actual writing of the TEF subject pilots was extremely time consuming for all involved and was expected to be accommodated on top of existing workloads. It was hugely stressful and some of the academic leads fell ill as a consequence. Subjects that are rated Bronze are under enormous pressure to improve. There is a culture of fear developing - a fear that Bronze rated subjects will be closed, particularly if their rating impacts upon the ability of the University to achieve a Silver or Gold rating in 2020. This is not an irrational fear - such noises have been mooted at Executive level within the University. Staff in subjects rated Bronze in the subject pilots are made to feel as though they are letting the institution down; there is a culture of 'us' and 'them' developing. It is all hugely divisive. (Post-92, full-time permanent, 22 years or more, management)

Staff are being funnelled into one set of tasks or another, not taking into account that research staff also teach and that scholarship staff also do research. This is creating very damaging artificial boundaries in both support and funding of staff and completely crushing School morale. (Pre-92, assistant professor, full-time, permanent)



The TEF has only increased stress and anxiety to the detriment of staff and the students that they teach. (Post-92, visiting lecturer, part-time)

The TEF is contributing to universities being a toxic place to work with increasing pressure on academics, which results in rising levels of stress and anxiety. Many of the metrics used to determine the TEF rankings have nothing to do with teaching quality but are more about bribing students to keep them happy and managing their expectations. (Post-92, research fellow, full-time, permanent)

5. Stratification of teaching and research

There was clear evidence across data sets of an increase in new teaching only contracts, with supporting evidence in some cases of these teaching-focused roles being specifically linked to an institutional focus on teaching and learning and the TEF. Although it was not always possible to determine whether changes to more teaching intensive contracts had been driven by the REF rather than the TEF, there was a groundswell of views that the introduction of the TEF had provided some employers with additional leverage to divert some staff towards teaching intensive workloads.

In terms of pay and status, it was generally felt that these teaching-only contracts were paid less and were less highly regarded as their research equivalents and offered poorer career opportunities in the sector. It was noted that in general, new posts tended to have a longer probation and shorter notice periods written into the contracts than had previously been the case. It was not possible to determine if this drift towards an increase in teaching-only contracts was spread equally across both pre- and post-1992 providers.

Many existing staff across the sector were being asked to accept new roles and/or job specifications which had different workload arrangements and performance related activities such as teaching appraisals, which could result in suspension of increments, being put in 'special measures' or the allocation of a mentor. Research and/or teaching contracts appeared to be becoming more clearly differentiated across many providers. Reasons for this were not always straightforward to decipher but tended to be influenced by organisational priorities relating to the REF, TEF and sometimes both.

Table 18: Sample of comments on the stratification of teaching and research

A five-point personal performance rating has been proposed (partly in response to the TEF, partly in response to the REF), which colleagues fear will be used to manage 'under-performance' defined in the narrowest of ways OR as a 'rationalising' tool i.e. for selecting which staff to switch to teaching-only or part-time contracts, to re-apply for their jobs, and which staff to make redundant. (Pre-92, full-time, permanent, teaching and research)

We have to choose between teaching and research - it seems you cannot do both. They say they are equivalent, but the REF has all the kudos as far as I can tell. If we haven't chosen, they will choose the contract for us, and can say which contract they want us on, even if we do choose. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, associate professor)

A policy was proposed that would have introduced 'optional' switches to 'teaching-only' contracts. Colleagues criticised this as looking like a punitive reaction to low REF preparation scores and the policy was put on hold. (Pre-92, fixed contract, mainly research)



6. Imposition of a top-down, centralised policy response

Participants reported a concerted drive towards centralising key academic functions, underpinned by organisational policies that prescribed protocols for staff interaction with students. This was accompanied by an insistence on standardised templates for curriculum design with the requirement to articulate the learning objectives/content for each stage of each programme, assessment and marking, T & L initiatives and evaluation.

Many participants commented that there had been a flood of top-down, centralised initiatives, projects and activities introduced to manage and monitor the quality of teaching. Examples of such initiatives included teaching observations, student performance reviews, standardisation of teaching plan, module plan, marking and feedback form and procedures, though these were often introduced with little or no consultation. The value of such work was questioned by numerous participants from different institutions. Common complaints were that this work was often poorly planned and co-ordinated with no tangible outcomes or follow-up evaluation. Often obliged to attend and participate in these activities, some were resentful that such work simply added further pressure to already heavy workloads, while taking time away from their core responsibilities and priorities. One participant from a pre-92 university remarked that another layer of administrative accountability had been added as a result of recent initiatives in his workplace and that 'it takes the pleasure out of teaching it makes you feel as though you are being watched constantly'.

7. Institutional standardisation of curriculum and pedagogy

Across disciplines and institutions, participants talked of 'curriculum redesign' 'curriculum transformation' and, in some cases, a 'complete overhaul of programmes'. A recurring focus to such activity was management's desire to standardise policies, procedures and practices. For example, the importance of ensuring close alignment between the T & L outcomes and accompanying assessments was often cited as a priority in many institutions.

Table 19: Sample of comments on the centralisation and standardisation of policy and practice as a response to TEF

Threats of course closure where silver and above not achieved in simulation. Lecturers' resources moved from focus on teaching and students to concern over DLHE stats. Stress amongst staff. Frustration amongst students about top down changes to courses they were happy with. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, teaching and research, mostly teaching)

Our curriculum is being hollowed out to meet TEF requirements. We have had a curriculum reform which has generated a set of new courses which are supposed to enhance the student experience. These are however shallow, superficial and seem to me to be more about box-ticking than creating intellectual engagement. The TEF is not about excellent and little about teaching. (Pre-92, full-time, permanent, balance between teaching and research, 14-17 years)

All undergraduate programmes have gone through a process of "curriculum refresh" with a particular emphasis on employability; there is also a university-wide project aimed at eliminating attainment



gaps. Much of this activity is supported through an internal unit. However, the downside is that everything is driven by metrics - we have been undergoing our own "internal TEF" for the last two years with questionable methodology that works against the Humanities. This flags courses up as "failing" with staff being placed under constant and intrusive scrutiny. The result of this metrics focus is increased workloads, high levels of stress and low levels of job satisfaction. My university was awarded TEF gold - this is at the expense of staff being placed under unacceptable amounts of pressure and receiving no reward or gratitude from the institution. There's a strong sense that senior management don't trust staff or have faith in their ability. (Post-92, senior lecturer).

In our university it has led to prioritising employability even in theoretical/research focused disciplines like sociology. This has led our HoD to remove important subjects from the curriculum such as globalisation and political sociology to replace them with entrepreneurship-related modules and to replace dissertations with enterprise projects. This is a direct corruption of the discipline into a business subject. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, less than 2 years, exclusively teaching)

Participants commented on a more centralised, standardised and top-down approach to managing teaching and monitoring quality, e.g. centralised standardisation of teaching plans, module plans, marking and feedback forms and procedures. There were several cases where senior managers had created their own branded pedagogy and imposed on staff to implement.

As the final excerpt in Table 19 above highlights, 'employability' was a key focus for many institutions during the process of course revalidation and review. Participants repeatedly mentioned the increasing 'pressure to embed employability skills into modules', which was a particular challenge for those subjects where there is not a clear vocational pathway.

8. Increased monitoring and surveillance of staff performance

Increased monitoring of teaching 'performance' featured in many participant accounts and was evident through a range of initiatives, with repeated references to 'audit trails' of staff-student interactions. Participants mentioned peer reviews, teaching observations, action plans (based on student module evaluations) and the recording of all lectures and tutorials. These were often characterised as an overall 'tightening up of teaching protocols' rather than directly linked to TEF.

In the context of specific interventions introduced to monitor teaching performance, observations of taught sessions were reported as being on the rise. There was also evidence of teaching performance and the quality of teaching being included in performance review or appraisal meetings as a discrete criterion.

Participants reported that the quality of teaching was being scrutinised more directly in some institutions through the introduction of programme reviews (see below) and management-led observations, where the performance of staff was graded according to internally devised ranking scales. Such practice was particularly common in those college-based HE providers, largely because it has been established in FE provision for many years (e.g. UCU 2013). Though there was an underlying recognition of the



importance of improving the student experience among many participants, some felt that the onus had been shifted too far onto the shoulders of academic staff. In the pursuit to 'keep the students happy at all costs', some suggested that students had been absolved of too much responsibility for their own learning.

Participants repeatedly made reference to an increase in the levels of accountability that academic staff were subjected to, often manifested through the introduction of additional KPIs and metrics. For example, the head of student experience in a post-92 university remarked that in her workplace 'new TEF-related metrics and analytics' had been created, which in turn had spawned another layer of administrative work for academics around benchmarking and development planning. Module evaluations were regularly cited as an example of KPIs that were used to interrogate staff performance and call them to account. In one case, any modules with an overall score of less than 4 out of 5 were required to produce an action plan for future improvement. In short, an increase in staff accountability permeated course content, design, delivery, marking deadlines, module evaluations etc.

While there was broad acknowledgement by participants of the need for teaching staff to be accountable for the quality of the programmes they delivered, many objected to what they perceived as misguided emphasis on measures that seemed to be driven by the requirements of their institution's TEF submission rather than actions that would make a real difference to students' learning or support their needs.

Some participants talked of the focus being very much on 'the TEF as some sort of inspection and accountancy exercise rather than an opportunity for creative reflection and review', which resulted in 'weariness' and even resentment among staff in some institutions. In such cases, there was emphasis on competition rather than collaboration, with student involvement largely restricted to that of evaluators and staff performance across courses publicly compared and monitored. For example, a senior academic remarked that in their institution, students had been provided with a mobile app with a 'Report it' function for late feedback, lecturers arriving late, cancelling sessions etc. There was a 'league table' of module evaluation scores, which was disseminated across the institution. Courses in the lowest performing quartile were targeted for various interventions and this had even led to the closure of poorly performing courses and a 'wave of staff leaving on voluntary severance schemes'.

Table 20: Sample of comments on surveillance of staff and student performance

New requirements on staff to email students who don't attend for every single class missed, a ridiculous and overbearing amount of extra administrative tasks that is not reflected on workload, a general lowering of staff morale and lack of student responsibility as 100% of the responsibility for students 'doing well' has now been transferred to staff, a general lowering of students and managerial respect for teaching staff, who are treated as expendable commodities. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, mostly teaching, 2-5 years)



For a purported measure of 'teaching excellence', the data sets focus so heavily on student 'outcomes' that 'outcomes' are becoming prized over learning and developing. Teaching seems now to be measured almost exclusively by student achievement and response. (Pre-92, part-time, mostly teaching, 2-5 years)

Our focus is no longer on pedagogy but on ticking boxes and meeting KPIs. We are pushed to use technology in teaching because "it will look good for TEF" when we don't even understand what impact it will have on learning. (Lecturer from a pre-92 university)

Increased surveillance of teaching through observations and "learning walks". Students have become consumers and knowledge instrumentalised. Students are more likely to complain about teachers/dissertation supervisors and their complaint is taken seriously and supervisor changed rather than an in-depth assessment of the complaint. Staff morale is low, but workload increased. No time for reading and prep despite supposedly being a degree programme. (College based HE, part-time, exclusively teaching, 6 - 9 years)

... senior colleagues do take notice of the TEF, it gives them another set of levers with which to micro-manage academic colleagues from a position of assumed and spurious managerial neutrality. And most fundamentally, the TEF quite openly continues the encroachment of metrics-driven management into HE. Metrics redefine achievement in terms of arbitrary targets, degrade work by reducing it to the measured delivery of objectives, put staff into competition with one another and turn managers into controllers. These are not the side effects of metrics but their core effects. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, 6-9 years, mostly teaching)

9. Increased monitoring and surveillance of student experience and performance

The overwhelming majority of participants identified the 'relentless focus' on monitoring and improving the student experience, student satisfaction and student outcomes as one of the most demonstrable impacts of the TEF. While this was not necessarily a novel focus that could be attributed to the TEF per se given the longstanding importance and influence of national data sets such as the NSS, there was a consensus across data sets that the TEF had played a key part in triggering an intensification of this activity.

Examples of evidence of the prioritisation of the student experience included modules being rewritten in response to student feedback, greater emphasis on student-centred activities in sessions, explicit links to post-degree employment in taught modules and an increasing reliance on the use of learning analytics. Much of this work was overseen by senior managers, whose responsibility it was to identify key areas of concern and to manage responses at school/faculty level. This typically involved closer monitoring of module evaluations and calling staff to account if results fell below established benchmarks.

There was a significant clustering of activity around the student experience that permeated all levels of the institution and the curriculum. The NSS data provided an ongoing frame of reference and catalyst for focused responses at a course and institutional level with many participants referring to it as the 'main driver' of activity. Some participants mentioned that in addition to the NSS and end of module evaluations there were 'pre-module, mid-module evaluations, course evaluations', all of which increased the demands on students for feedback, 'with students fed up of being surveyed' but also



not necessarily aware of the impact that their comments were having on academic staff in some instances. One participant from a Scottish university remarked that 'teaching had become a slave to student evaluation under the TEF', with an imbalanced focus on the 'performance of teaching' to the extent that learning and students' responsibility for learning was absent from any discussion.

Participants reported an increased focus on student retention. This manifested itself in a variety of ways. Student retention data was increasingly being more closely monitored on a regular basis across departments and courses. Some institutions had introduced specific policies targeted at tracking or improving retention figures. For example, one institution established a 50 day 'engagement policy', which meant that in the event of students failing to engage during the 50 day period, they would be withdrawn by the institution before the window for HESA continuation figures.

10. Reification of students as consumers

There were repeated references by participants across data sets of how institutional systems and policies were increasingly framing interactions and communications between academic staff and students in a way that encouraged staff to 'treat the students as consumers'. Some examples of this included the inclusion of more detailed and 'student friendly' information about courses in promotional material (online and in printed form), institutional protocols on responding to student emails and management edicts on 'how to keep your students happy'. Those participants who drew attention to the 'students as consumers' approach often remarked on how they considered the TEF as 'yet another example of the commodification and marketisation of higher education'.

There were examples of how certain academic practice (e.g. dissertation supervision, academic misconduct reviews) was dismissed or changed and new practice introduced without any pedagogical/educational justification or systematic investigation, but often based largely on student feedback and/or complaints. A sizeable proportion of participants commented on what they saw as the 'dumbing down' of course content or assessment in response to student feedback or the intention to please students. Some commented on how in their institutions staff and students are placed against each other. For example, if the students are unhappy, then teaching staff must be to blame. This phenomenon was perceived as an outcome of the high-stakes student evaluation and the ethos of management in their respective institutions on demonstrating teaching excellence. Some participants expressed a concern that there was a snowballing effect to this i.e. the more staff do to please/satisfy students the more they expect. Out of all TEF metrics, student satisfaction was the aspect mentioned the most by participants. This could be because it was the aspect institutions felt they have the most control over.



Table 21: Sample of comments on the reification of students as consumers

It's got to the point where we're spoon feeding students to make sure they all pass their assignments because God forbid any of them should fail; not only would that be followed by a complaint that it's our fault for not teaching them right but it would also impact negatively on our achievement data (Post-92, senior lecturer, permanent, full-time)

Rather than considering the quality of teaching and learning activities, I have observed that the Department I work in facing the pressure of meeting student demands, including the use of lecture capture and having a more 'hand-holding' approach rather than insisting on developing students' independent learning and research skills. Higher education has become service provider focusing on satisfying student 'consumers'. (Pre-92, part-time, fixed-contract, 2-5 years, teaching and scholarship, exclusively teaching)

[...] much more focus on providing students with information which we would generally provide once they have signed up. E.g. some of the module/course material information which usually is provided once students have enrolled e.g. in their handbooks. These are now provided earlier since management think this may help student choice and encourage them to apply. (Pre-92, part-time, permanent lecturer)

We are beholden to student satisfaction surveys (e.g., end of module MEQs and NSS)... very little discussion about formally innovating teaching, most admin level initiatives have been geared toward making sure NSS scores remain high. (Pre-92, full-time, permanent, less than 2 years, teaching and research)

Curriculum and teaching strategy has been edited to accommodate student complaints, leading to homogenised less nuanced, less challenging content. Progression is expected of all students, even when not appropriate. All modules have become compensable to increase the likelihood of progression and therefore student satisfaction. Increased student complaints against individual members of staff on limited or no grounds. (Post-92, full-time, permanent, teaching and research, mostly teaching)

The shift towards student as consumer has gone too far, little autonomy and professional respect is left. (College-based HE, full-time, permanent, mostly teaching, 10-13 years)

11. Reduction in professional autonomy and trust of staff

Some participants talked about what they perceived as a lack of trust from management in their institutions. For them, this lack of trust was encapsulated in the increasing reliance on more management-led observations linked to performance management, management-led programme/subject reviews, as well as all students' feedback/complaints being automatically investigated through formal procedures without the members of staff being consulted beforehand. Or as one participant commented, 'it's like you're guilty from the start and you're the one who needs to prove their innocence'.

12. Lack of institutional consultation in TEF policies and practice

A very small number of participants had been members of TEF submission panels and/or had jobs directly associated with TEF planning in one capacity or another and as such had been responsible for developing and discussing the TEF related planning within



their institution such as data gathering and analysis and report submission. However, this level of personal involvement was rare. The overriding impression was that very little actual 'consultation' had taken place with staff across the sector about the TEF. Rather participants reported that information about the TEF was communicated or fed-down to teaching staff from bodies/individuals responsible for managing it within the institution at either faculty or university level, without any real opportunity for discussion.

Table 22: Sample of comments on lack of institutional consultation on TEF policies and practice

I am not sure consultation is the correct term. It has been much more of an information giving exercise - and the setting out of targets (for example, graduate employment rates) and how we need to meet them. (Pre-92, senior lecturer, full-time, permanent)

A deteriorating relationship whereby staff at the teaching 'coal-face', are not consulted but seen as recipients of instructions rather than a valued resource with good ideas and lots of experience. (Pre-92, Mostly teaching, 10-13 years)

I am utterly fine with teaching excellence being investigated, however I am really not happy with the fact that those who are delivering and who are now rated bronze were not given the chance to be able to prove what we do. It is an act of unspeakable arrogance for lecturers not to be consulted by management/ quality/registry nor given a chance to input to what essentially publicly defines our professionalism and efficacy as teachers. my colleagues deserve more respect than this. (College-based HE, part-time, permanent, 'Mostly teaching', 10-13)

In response to Question 23 of the survey (I have been consulted on TEF-related activity in my institution), 81.4% (n=5143) of participants said that they had not been consulted. Of the 14% (n=884) who said they had been consulted, the following patterns of notification, as opposed to consultation, emerged. Email (n=160) was overwhelmingly the most common means used to communicate directly with staff about the TEF. However, the majority of these comments were characterised as 'info dumps' where staff were 'not so much consulted as told via email'. The second most popular means of information-giving about the TEF was newsletters, although it was unclear if this referred to publications specifically about TEF or something more generic that featured information about the TEF. Following this, meetings and presentations were the next most common means of communication. These were typically university-wide and/or faculty-wide briefings specifically about the TEF given by senior managers i.e. the vice chancellor or pro-vice chancellor. A small number of participants had also been invited to workshops, away days or question and answer sessions about the TEF held by specialist staff responsible for its management in their institution (e.g. members of TEF unit/steering group/working party, or senior managers in charge of the TEF). Finally, some participants sat on programme, departmental or faculty-based committees, which had worked on TEF as part of a wider managerial remit. Faculty and university-wide T & L and academic committees were mentioned, which were involved in preparing TEF submissions and subsequently used as designated conduits for information about TEF.



In response to the subject-level section of the online survey (Part 2), while some participants stated they were involved in working groups or department-wide consultations on subject-level TEF activities, the majority revealed these were also led and carried out by management (e.g. programme manager, head of department, head of HE, quality manager, etc.), senior academic teams and/or academic services. Many participants questioned the rationale for giving these people alone the responsibility to lead/manage their subject-level TEF work, as there was very little consultation or communication about the activities at participants' workplaces (see quantitative findings and discussion above for details).

A common theme to emerge from all data sets was participants' conviction that whatever the framework is for teaching excellence, it needs to be inclusive and fair for all types of programmes and providers, along with maximising representation of academic staff.

13. Greater recognition of the importance and status of teaching

In response to Question 28 (According to the government, the TEF aims to "recognise and reward excellence in teaching, learning and outcomes". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution?), one of the most commonly cited examples of what some perceived as a productive influence of the TEF among survey participants was how it had led to a greater recognition of the importance of teaching in their workplaces, with over a quarter who responded 'yes' (n=890) making explicit reference to this.

Some participants from institutions that achieved gold remarked that the quality of teaching had always been good and as such little had changed as a result of the TEF, though these responses tended to be discipline specific. At the same time, staff from some institutions that received gold in TEF2 commented on how there had been 'positive changes in attitudes towards teaching', with 'a sense of pride and welcoming of recognition of good teaching and the hard work of staff'. Overall, participants provided many examples of how they perceived the TEF to have been the catalyst for a range of policies and interventions from an institutionally strategic level to a departmental and an individually operational level. Improving the quality of teaching and learning was cited as a priority for senior leaders and managers across institutions, which was regularly communicated in person at staff meetings and virtually through online communication. Similarly, this appeared to be reflected in the 'increased interest in teaching and learning' among academic staff.

Responses clearly indicated an increase in the recognition of the importance of teaching in a strategic and operational sense. Some institutions had created institutional teaching strategies and even institutionally specific pedagogies which staff were encouraged to adopt. The introduction of T & L conferences and other T & L related events such as pedagogic training/workshops and practice sharing were popular developments across providers, with the perception that 'greater value [was] being given to teaching' than had been the case previously. There were also comments that suggested that T & L was being discussed more frequently in faculty and departmental meetings in terms of improving its quality. At the same time, however, some maintained that the underpinning



driver for these discussions was the NSS and how to improve the institution's NSS results. Some respondents suggested that this 'relentless focus on the NSS' was 'disproportionate' and had given rise to an overload of online student surveys and evaluations 'to the detriment of a more sophisticated conversation or discussion with students'.

This greater recognition of the importance of teaching was not rhetorical as many participants mentioned how they had witnessed new investment and opportunities in their workplaces. For example, some mentioned how budgets for teaching initiatives, innovations and project grants had been increased, allowing them to pursue small-scale inquiries exploring teaching related topics. According to some participants, such initiatives were targeted at 'improving student/staff collaboration or TEF-metric related outcomes'. While some participants clearly saw this as a positive development, particularly in terms of the development of closer collaboration with students, there were those whose experience and/or perceptions were more circumspect, often because of the way in which such work was managed.

According to participants' perceptions, the data appeared to reveal links between the TEF and a growth in CPD opportunities, for example, peer mentoring schemes, practice sharing events and the creation of collegial communities of practice, though these tended to be more commonplace in post-92 institutions. Furthermore, some participants talked of the creation of a 'teaching excellence institute' and a 'specialised unit for teaching excellence' since the introduction of the TEF. The way in which this work was managed clearly differed across institutions with some describing it as a 'welcome boost for teaching' but others expressing concern about the 'substantial managerial oversight, some of which is problematic'.

During his interview, the Chair of the TEF assessment panel, Professor Sir Chris Husbands, argued that one of the tangible impacts of the TEF had been the way in which it had made senior leaders think more seriously about teaching:

There's little doubt in my mind that it has focused the attention of senior leadership in universities on three things pretty sharply. The first is overall teaching quality. The second is benchmark performance and in particular the performance of disadvantaged groups, as we've focused on gaps. And thirdly, institutional arrangements for enhancing teaching quality and performance. I think that institutional attention had partly been tilted towards research indicators and the view of politicians was that the indicators, the performance messages through to the system had become tilted a bit too far in that direction. And I think one of the things that TEF does is to even that playing field up a bit and I think that's a good thing ... I think it has engaged the attention of senior teams, really pretty impressively. It's been galvanising at that level.



Table 23: Sample of comments recognising the importance and status of teaching

*I welcome a focus on teaching as it has for too long been a Cinderella to research.
(Pre-92, part-time, fixed-term, teaching only, less than 2 years)*

I work in both research and education and my research role is measured by the REF but my teaching role is currently not. I feel that teaching within in institute should be given more value and hopefully the TEF will provide this in the future. Research is seen as the main goal and education and enterprise are the poor neighbours each should have equal weighting and the TEF should hopefully provide a measure for this for teaching. I think the TEF is a good thing but only if it is done properly and is inclusive. The current TEF is set up for English universities and does not reflect the system in Scottish universities this need to change. (Post-92, Scottish, part-time, permanent, 10 -13 years, research and teaching)

Although the measurement metrics and measurements are not fit for purpose, I value the attempt to rebalance (especially within a Russell Group University) teaching and research. In our university it has led to extra investment and discussion around teaching which will lead to improvements even if not relevant to TEF metrics. (Pre-92, permanent, full-time, over 22 years, mostly teaching)

It is quite right that HEIs should be judged on their teaching quality, if anything I would recommend more focus on L&T similar to in schools and colleges with inspections and giving research more less significance. Universities in particular, should be student and learning focused, employing and rewarding the best teachers above researchers who publish papers but can't teach for toffee. (Post-92, permanent, full-time, less than 2 years, mostly teaching)

There's certainly a higher profile to teaching and learning events, showcasing examples of teaching and learning projects and teaching and learning being discussed at meetings more. (Post-92, senior lecturer, full-time, permanent)

Promotions through the teaching and scholarly career path have really taken off. In the past promotion was mainly about research. We now have T&S professors and more senior lecturers (Pre-92, reader, full-time, permanent)

The University has introduced a career progression route for staff on teaching and scholarship role profiles. Hitherto there was no such progression route-only progression for research active staff e.g. to Readership/Professorship. Whilst the recognition and rewarding of teaching is welcome (and long overdue in HE), the way in which the changes have been implemented have been very controversial. Staff who will not submit to the REF will be placed on teaching and scholarship profiles even if they do not consent to this move (Pre-92, professor, full-time, permanent)

A small proportion of participants mentioned the creation of new pathways/career tracks for the progression/promotion of 'teaching focused staff'. The introduction of teaching based promotion for 'principal lecturers', 'associate professors' and 'teaching professors' were all cited as examples of pathways that until recently had been largely unattainable for teaching staff in many institutions, unless they were able to demonstrate a portfolio of accompanying publications and research.

Such changes were broadly welcomed among survey respondents and seminar participants, though there were suggestions they had led to a schism between teaching and



research focused staff with the creation of separate pathways and contracts in some instances. This point is discussed in more detail below when considering TEF and REF as competing agendas.

Approximately 300 survey respondents who made textual comments referred to the use of 'teaching excellence', 'teaching innovation' and/or 'extra mile' awards as formal recognition/reward of teaching excellence in their institutions; this was particularly noticeable among college-based HE participants. These rewards occurred at institutional and faculty levels and ranged from student-led to peer-led nominations as well as a combination of both. In addition to the esteem attached to these awards, some also carried with them a monetary reward. In some cases this comprised an allocation of internal funding to support small-scale learning and teaching projects. In other cases, such as college-based HE provision where the teaching performance of staff was measured via the use of direct interventions like graded lesson observations, this consisted of an honorarium payment to those who achieved a grade 1. It is worth adding the caveat that although that many of the participants who made reference to teaching awards also stated that they often pre-dated the introduction of the TEF. However, there was a general feeling that teaching awards had become more heavily promoted and emphasised in their workplaces since the introduction of the TEF.

While the majority of references to teaching awards drew attention to their heightened profile and how they had increasingly become more publicised across providers, since the TEF comments from some participants also revealed that one of the unintended consequences of such practice was that it could be divisive, resulting in an adverse effect on other staff who can feel 'unappreciated' and that they are 'underperforming' compared to their peers who win such awards. Nevertheless, others stated that they were encouraged to see their/their peers' efforts formally acknowledged and rewarded.

14. Push for teaching qualifications and associated accreditation

Despite the fact that they have been in existence for over a decade, a significant change related to T & L that appears to have taken place since the introduction of the TEF is the heightened urgency for newly appointed and existing lecturers to achieve appropriate teaching qualifications and accreditation. The need for academic staff to undergo teacher education courses and to acquire appropriate teaching qualifications such as the postgraduate certificate in learning and teaching in higher education surfaced repeatedly in participants' comments. Similarly, the issue of evidencing and validating prior teaching experience and/or expertise via external accreditation exercises such as the Higher Education Academy's (HEA) fellowship scheme featured as a strong theme in many responses in the online survey and in discussions in the strategic seminars. Participants across varied providers commented on how it was an increasingly obligatory requirement for academic staff at all levels to obtain their HEA fellowship, often with institutions setting specific targets. For example, one lecturer from a pre-92 university said that his employers had 'made HEA qualification a goal for 75% of staff by 2020'. Another from a post-92 university remarked that it was a 'prerequisite for internal



promotion' from senior lecturer to professorship in some instances. Participants also mentioned that HEA fellowship was a 'key target' included in performance review/ appraisal meetings. Dedicated support was provided for fellowship applications in some institutions with designated mentors available to advise and review colleagues' submissions.

15. Greater emphasis on student assessment

A quarter of survey participants who answered 'yes' to Question 29 (According to the government, the TEF aims to "sharpen the focus on teaching and outcomes that matter to students". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution?) mentioned an increased focus on student feedback and assessment as examples of a sharpening of the focus on teaching and student outcomes. Given how this has historically been the most challenging area for many institutions on the NSS, it was difficult to determine whether this increased focus was as a result of the TEF or aligned to ongoing NSS work, especially as the latter was mentioned frequently as the impetus for a lot of initiatives relating to assessment and feedback. Of course, another consideration is the impact of tuition fees and the increasing marketization of the sector where institutional responses are, in the words of one Head of School from a post-92 university, 'customer driven ... treating students as consumers with the whole "You said, we did" approach'. There was the suggestion by some participants that changes to the assessment and feedback of students' work were not solely a response to the need to improve practice in terms of ensuring consistency and equity but also about managing student complaints that converged around assessment outcomes:

Outcomes that matter to students - in particular this applies in relation to feedback on assignments: I am a firm advocate for feedback, and take it (and always have done) very seriously. But we've got to a point where levels of and approaches to feedback are counter-productive, ineffectual, and responding to students' complaints (essentially) about not getting the grade they want, dressed up as a problem caused by inadequate feedback.

An institutional thrust for 'timely' and 'quick' feedback was among the most common references made by participants to feedback in the qualitative comments. One senior lecturer mentioned how at her institution, staff had 'been told to reduce marking times to get feedback sooner'. The rationale given was to 'keep the students happy', which was a popular mantra cited in numerous responses. Yet, at the same time, this was seen as a positive development by some participants, as they described how the processes of assessment and feedback had improved in their workplaces, resulting in a better experience for students on their courses.

16. Greater weighting to student voice

Opinions about the greater weighting to 'student voice' were varied and divided among participants. Some remarked that the 'pendulum [had] swung too far in favour of the student' in terms of the way student views were determining institutional responses. Yet others appeared to welcome greater levels of student consultation and collaboration. While there was a consensus on the importance of student voice, there was also the



recognition that it needed to be balanced with the inclusion of 'staff voice', which many felt was currently neglected.

Students across the sector are, it seems, increasingly being afforded a more inclusive role in curriculum design and the decision making about courses from the pre-validation stage onwards. Commonly cited examples of such involvement included being consulted on the type of assessments, representation on learning and teaching committees, incorporating student feedback from module evaluations into course improvements etc

ALTERNATIVE VISIONS OF TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Across the study, participants provided a wealth of ideas and suggestions for alternative, more representative ways of considering, talking about and capturing teaching excellence. They also had a lot to say about alternative methodologies, approaches and/or considerations for understanding, improving, recognising and/or rewarding teaching. The richness and volume of the data on this was indicative of their wider interest in teaching quality and the valuable contribution that the HE workforce has to offer to discussions on teaching excellence. However, the reality is that to date they have largely been excluded from this debate and the current TEF framework has failed to address this in any substantive way.

Suggestions offered by participants broadly contributed to the three themes below:

- Understanding, recognising and rewarding teaching excellence
- Quality assurance and enhancement
- Accountability

Across the survey, seminar and interview data, there was a strong message from participants (including both the Chair of the TEF assessment panel and the NUS representative interviewed) that understanding, improving, recognising and rewarding teaching is welcomed and desired by HE staff and students. However, it was clear that the majority (including the NUS representative) did not consider the TEF to be an effective tool for achieving TE in HE in its current form. Many participants called for 'a paradigm shift' with regards to HE practices around T & L. These comments often focused on the need to 'create a different kind of culture, mind-set and practice' and 'reframing teaching and learning to students'.

Understanding, recognising and rewarding teaching excellence

The TEF has four board aims (HEFCE, 2017):

- Better informing students' choices about what and where to study
- Raising esteem for teaching
- Recognising and rewarding excellent teaching
- Better meeting the needs of employers, business, industry and the professions



These core aims, according to our participants, have created confusion and even contradictions in their institutions' policies and practices. Moreover, they were viewed by some participants as a reflection of the contradictions in the TEF itself. In particular, 'better informing students' choices' and 'better meeting the needs of employers' were seen as 'not directly relevant to teaching excellence' though they are important to students and the UK economy. Indeed, according to many participants, it was clear that they felt these two aspects should be addressed separately to 'teaching excellence'.

According to many participants, a teaching excellence framework should place 'raising esteem for teaching' and 'recognising and rewarding excellent teaching' as its most fundamental aims. They argued that this could be achieved by **staff and students working together to develop a shared understanding of what matters to teaching and learning and appropriate evaluation mechanisms to accompany this**. This was reinforced in the comments of the NUS' policy officer, Hannah Sketchley, who remarked that:

If the TEF or if the measure of teaching excellence is to be successful, it needs to be from within the sector and from within the HE community and be properly co-designed with students. We would say student voice is absolutely at the core. And with input from staff from across the academic community.

Crucially, as findings from the subject-level data in the project's survey revealed, a teaching excellence framework also needs to be sensitive to differences between institutions and disciplines/subject areas to cater for the different needs of students and the different contexts staff are working in.

As discussed in the previous section, participants perceived that the current metrics-driven and TEF ranking methodology was based on the 'value for money' agenda, as discussed earlier in the report, rather than students' learning experiences and educational outcomes. Views on the use of metrics ranged from completely abandoning them to using them judiciously as supporting data. Most importantly, participants were of the view that **learning achievements and outcomes are crucial indicators of teaching quality and should play an important part when staff and students come together to develop a shared understanding of what matters to teaching and learning and appropriate evaluation mechanisms to accompany this**. Other suggestions by participants included recognising the importance of the social value of HE and the civic impact of HE providers on wider communities.

Many participants working in Post-92 HEIs and college-based HE felt strongly that the TEF metrics did not sufficiently represent the importance of 'value added' T and L for WP students. Many proposed more **qualitative and differentiated approaches to T and L evaluation that captured and valued the very different, but nonetheless, effective cultures and practices of individual HE providers**. Participants felt that such qualitative approaches would produce data that might be more meaningful for institutions to compare across similar organisations, with a view to improving their provision, rather than attempting to produce quantitative data to satisfy one-size-fits all definition of TE.



Similarly, it was felt that such individuated evaluations would allow prospective students to make better-informed choices about the institutions they were considering applying to.

To meaningfully raise esteem for teaching and recognising and rewarding excellent teaching, participants felt strongly that staff contracts and career progression pathways must acknowledge and reflect a commitment to teaching as part of their everyday working lives. Participants recommended that **'reviewing teaching pathways/contracts' and 'creating more sustainable and stable working conditions for teaching staff would be a starting point to raise esteem for teaching and provide a better student experience.'**

Quality assurance and enhancement

The TEF currently operates on the following terms:

... to be considered for a TEF rating, higher education providers have first to meet demanding national quality requirements. The TEF measures excellence in addition to meeting these standards. (OfS 2018)

Participants emphasised that there is a distinction between quality enhancement and quality assurance, and the TEF is targeting both through its metrics-driven gold, silver and bronze ranking methodology. However, this is another area where confusion and contradictions have occurred in terms of both the interpretation and the operationalisation of this dual focus.

For quality assurance, the added layer of TEF scrutiny was deemed 'wasteful on resources' and 'adding unnecessary burden on staff' and institutions by many participants. In addition, the TEF ranking of institutions was seen as 'completely pointless' for quality assurance purposes, as currently, degree courses are evaluated by each country's quality assurance agency, professional bodies, external examiners and student evaluation, a system that appears to have worked well for many years. Many participants questioned why the QAA framework was perceived to be insufficient/inadequate by the government necessitating the TEF in the first place: 'What is the problem that the TEF is trying to solve? Is there actually a problem with the quality of teaching in HE?'

A strong criticism of the TEF that emerges from the evidence is that it does not appreciate the extent to which teaching, its development and delivery, is more of a collective than an individual activity and to improve T & L requires openness, transparency and collaboration. As one participant from a Scottish university put it:

... the most problematic thing underlining the TEF, as a member of one university I don't want to feel like I am in competition with my colleagues at other universities. That's fundamentally harmful to what we are trying to do. Yes, students choose which university they go to, but they are making the choice on all sorts of reasons. When we do our work academically independent to how institutions operate, that's not how we work... (TEF does) not understand collaboration.



Participants argued that a TE framework should make a much stronger contribution to creating and supporting more collaborative cultures of TE across the sector. There should be less of an emphasis on individuals' interactions with students and more on ways of supporting discussions about how curricula are designed and developed, along with more opportunities for staff to share effective teaching and development practices across institutions. There could also be a greater focus on and research into how curricula are designed, developed and delivered effectively.

Achieving teaching excellence through 'raising esteem for teaching' and 'recognising and rewarding excellent teaching' are matters of quality enhancement which participants felt should focus on 'promoting what is excellent at different institutions and celebrating the diversity of UK HE'. Instead of institutions and disciplines competing against each other, there was a strong feeling in the study that **HE teaching excellence should be based on collaboration, cooperation, sharing and learning and a teaching excellence framework that supports and facilitates it**. At the national level, one example given by participants from Scottish institutions is the Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland of ELIR reviews, which is enhancement-led in various institutions, as discussed above. At institutional level, many participants suggested a peer-based evaluation/observation approach to teaching enhancement instead of the increasingly popular performance managing appraisals/observation mentioned in the previous section.

Accountability

Evidence from all data sets clearly showed that at many institutions the accountability for TEF outcomes has been directly placed onto departments/teams and individual staff. According to some participants, a malicious blaming culture had started to develop based on 'poor outcomes' and/or student evaluations. This was seen by participants as harmful to the development of positive T & L approaches. Many participants called therefore for **a change of attitude by management to focus on creating a more supportive and nurturing environment for teaching practitioners**. Instead of 'individual staff being seen as responsible for bad teaching', teaching practices should be viewed and addressed as one element of a wider institutional T & L environment, which takes into account the conditions of service, support and training for teaching staff, differentiated teaching requirements, disciplinary variations in T & L and the quality and accessibility of wider support services available to staff and students such as T & L centres.

Institutional leadership in T & L should be a discrete area of evaluation as part of any teaching excellence framework according to participants. Since the introduction of the TEF, many participants suggested that their HE institutional leadership should involve more teaching staff in their teaching excellence framework submission, not least because they develop teaching and deliver programmes, as well as evaluate them with their students. For this reason, it was argued by some participants that 'boards and SMTs should be subject to ... performance criteria' and the extent to which they effectively support teaching staff. Some participants compared this to the REF assessment on 'institution investments and commitment'. For example, one specific suggestion made was the inclusion of a staff satisfaction survey on T & L prior to TEF submission.



CONCLUSION

While the TEF has only been in place for a relatively short period of time and continues to evolve, it is important to acknowledge that judgements are being made in a market setting, which have the potential to establish market positions (positive or negative) for providers that may endure in the longer term. As this report has shown, TEF-related activities and the accompanying rankings affect all stakeholders in an HE sector that is under increasing pressure to evidence value for money. The impact of the TEF is therefore undeniable and very visible. For example, time and resources have been invested in reconfiguring and restructuring key institutional functions to achieve desirable TEF outcomes.

The TEF's processes, with their increasing emphasis on employability and graduate salaries, reflect an adherence to a quintessentially competitive market model of HE that actually has little to do with teaching excellence. Indeed when it comes to the question of the TEF's fitness for purpose in rating the quality of teaching in HE providers, this report adds to an emerging body of evidence suggesting that it is of very limited value in defining teaching excellence, capturing examples of teaching excellence or promoting initiatives that support excellent teaching development across the sector.

As the evidence from this study has revealed, attempts to recalibrate the balance in focus between research and teaching in HE are broadly welcomed by the HE workforce and it is important to acknowledge the TEF's contribution in triggering such a recalibration. It also cannot be denied that key benchmarking data generated for the TEF, such as the statistics on BAME recruitment, achievement and retention have forced institutions to act decisively to try to improve them. However, these data should in no way be seen as a proxy for teaching excellence.

Not only is the TEF not a direct measure of the quality of teaching, as acknowledged by Professor Sir Chris Husbands when interviewed, but it is not considered a credible measure at all by the overwhelming majority of the study's participants as emphasised repeatedly across data sets. This is quite a damning indictment of a policy that, according to Professor Husbands, is unlikely to disappear in the near future, regardless of the political persuasions of the present or future government:

I've got no reason to suppose that the TEF is going to disappear ... And I suspect, although I've not spoken to anybody in the opposition, that it's too useful a tool for any incoming government to want to get rid of it. So I think this is part of the landscape and we've got to make it as effective a part of the landscape as it can possibly be.

However, this statement inevitably begs the questions how and what is the TEF useful for and for whom? Beyond its use as a market signal for categorising providers according to its ranking system, who actually benefits from the TEF? And how can it ever become a 'catalyst for the improvement and innovation in the quality of teaching' when it is based on a unidirectional, episodic, desk-based assessment of a collection of data?



In his interview for this report, Professor Sir Chris Husbands repeatedly uses the analogy of the TEF assessment processes as a vehicle for 'telling a story about the institution'. Continuing this analogy, some of the key questions that need to be asked are: Who are the narrators of the story? Who is the audience? To what extent do the protagonists of the story have the opportunity for their voices to be heard?

One of the unique contributions of this report to debates around teaching excellence and the TEF in particular is the inclusion of the voices and experiences of the HE workforce who are most directly affected by this policy reform. What this report makes clear is that understanding, recognising and rewarding excellent teaching in HE is an important undertaking that is welcomed by staff working across HE provision. However, the evidence collected in this study strongly suggests that under the current TEF framework, both the conceptualisation and methodology employed to capture teaching excellence fails to do so in any meaningful way, along with its failure to address how teaching might actually be supported and developed with a view to bringing about sustainable improvement across the sector. Until these key issues are confronted directly, then the extent to which the TEF is capable of fulfilling its original aims remains unlikely.



Notes

¹The project steering group included a representative from UCU, a representative from the NUS, members of the research team, and two external academics whose work is situated in HE teaching and learning. Steering group meetings were held twice during the project which enabled the project team to share project design, to provide progress updates and to discuss emerging findings. The steering group also fulfilled a quality assurance function and helped to monitor key milestones and outputs.

²For the scope of this report, we selected certain demographic categories and questions that responded to our research questions. However, we also collected data on other demographic categories (e.g. gender) and questions which we plan to publish in due course

³For sample and UCU membership population comparisons, see Appendix 5

⁴Including specialist colleges

⁵Sample% states the percentages of each categories to the total number of participants

⁶Details in Appendix 5

⁷UCU does not have data on college based HE membership and there is no existing national database for the study to draw on, we are unable to check how representative our sample was or this particular group. Details in Appendix 5

⁸Details in Appendix 6

⁹% of total number of respondents from Post-92s

¹⁰% of total number of respondents from Pre-92s

¹¹% of total number of respondents from England

¹²% of total number of respondents from Scotland

¹³% of total number of respondents from Wales

¹⁴% of total number of respondents from N. Ireland

¹⁵Details in Appendix 6

¹⁶Details in Appendix 6

¹⁷Details in Appendix 6

¹⁸Details in Appendix 5

¹⁹Details in Appendix 5

²⁰% of staff answered 'yes'

²¹% of staff answered 'yes, but very little'

²²% of staff answered 'yes'

²³% of staff answered 'yes, but very little'

²⁴Details in Appendix 6

²⁵Details in Appendix 6

²⁶See detailed breakdowns of participants in Appendix 6



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Appendix 2: Funded reports in Teaching Excellence

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Appendix 3: The online survey

Research project on the impact and implications of the Teaching Excellence Framework

Introduction

Dear member

UCU have commissioned a research project on the impact and implications of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), a key part of which is this online survey.

The survey is designed to capture your awareness, involvement and perception of the TEF in your workplace. Data gathered from this survey will be extremely valuable in analysing the impact and implications of the TEF on the higher education workforce across the demographics of UCU members.

This survey is open from 25th April until the 8th June 2018.

Your participation is entirely optional and voluntary.

Your identity will remain anonymous and your comments confidential in all publications. Data captured from this project will be kept securely and only accessible to the project team.

Should you wish to withdraw your data or make changes to your answer(s) during any stages of the research project before the final report is produced (October 2018), please contact us and quote your unique identifiable number. You will receive this at the end of the survey.

Once the project is completed, data will be destroyed after five years of storage. This is for future publication purposes.

The whole survey is likely to take 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Please take your time to read the questions and options carefully, and answer the questions as truthfully as possible.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us (TEFImpact@bcu.ac.uk).

Thank you very much for your time

Dr Matt O'Leary

Project lead

CSPACE

Birmingham City University



Consent

By ticking the box below, you will give your informed consent to take part in this project:

I understand that participation is entirely voluntary

I understand my right to anonymity and confidentiality

I understand that I have the right to withdraw at any stage of the project before the end of project publication is made (October 2018) without prejudice. Should I withdraw from the project, my data will not be included in any disseminations/publications

1. I agree to take part in this online survey. Required
Yes No

Participant profile

Categories used in this section of the survey are taken from definitions/categories used by national organisations/census (e.g. ONS, HESA) to ensure the consistency in representing the population.

2. What type of institution do you consider the place you currently work for can be best described as? Required

Higher Education (2a)

Higher Education in Further Education (2b)

2a. Which institution do you currently work for?

[List of HEIs]

2ai. If you selected Other, please specify:

2b. Which institution do you currently work for?

[List of HE in FEIs]

2bi. If you selected Other, please specify:

3. What is your academic discipline/subject area? Required

Agriculture/Veterinary Medicine

Arts

Business and administration

Computer sciences

Economics

Education (including teacher education)

Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction, Architecture

Health/Social care

Humanities

Law



- Life sciences
- Mathematics
- Medical sciences, Health sciences
- Physical sciences
- Social and/or Behavioural sciences
- Other

3a. If you selected Other, please specify:

4. What's your gender? Required

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other

4a. If you selected Other, please specify:

5. What's your sexuality? Required

- Bisexual
- Gay
- Heterosexual
- Lesbian
- Lesbian or Gay
- Prefer not to say
- Other

5a. If you selected Other, please specify:

6. Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Required

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

7. What's your ethnicity? Required

- Arab
- Asian - Bangladeshi
- Asian - Chinese
- Asian - Indian
- Asian - Other
- Asian - Pakistani
- Black - African
- Black - Caribbean
- Black - Other Mixed - Other
- Mixed - White/Asian
- Mixed - White/Black African



Mixed - White/Black Caribbean
 Other Ethnic Groups
 White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
 White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
 White - Irish
 White - Other
 Prefer not to say

7a. If you selected Other, please specify:

8. How old are you? Required

25 and under
 26-35
 36-45
 46-55
 56-65
 Over 65
 Prefer not to say

9. What's your current job title/contract level? Required

Senior management
 Head of schools/Senior function head
 Professor
 Function head
 Non-Academic section manager, Principal lecturer, Reader, Principal research fellow,
 Advanced teaching and training
 Team Leader(Professional), Technical, Administrative), Senior Lecturer, Senior
 Research Fellow
 Senior Professional(Technical), Lecturer, Research fellow, Researcher
 (senior research assistant), Teaching fellow
 Senior Administrative staff (Professional/technical), Research assistant,
 Teaching assistant, Trainer/Instructor/Assessor/Verifier
 Assistant professional staff, Administrative staff
 Junior Administrative Staff, Clerical Staff, Technician/Craftsmen, Operative
 Routine task provider
 Simple task provider
 Other
 Prefer not to say

10. What is the mode of your employment at your current institution? Required

Full-time
 Part-time
 Hourly-paid
 Other



10a. If you selected Other, please specify:

11. What is the terms of your employment at your current institution? Required

- Open-ended/permanent contract
- Fixed-term contract
- Zero hours contract
- Variable hours contract
- Other

11a. If you selected Other, please specify:

12. How long have you worked in the institution that you currently are employed at? Required

- Less than 2 years
- 2-5 years
- 6-9 years
- 10-13 years
- 14-17 years
- 18-21 years
- 22 years or more

13. Which of the below most accurately describes the role profile of your original appointment? Required

- Research-focussed/research-only
- Teaching-focussed/teaching-only
- Teaching and research
- Teaching and scholarship
- Management
- Academic related/Professional services role
- Other

14. Irrespective of your formal role which of the following best describes your typical workload? Required

- Exclusively teaching
- Mostly teaching
- Balance between research and teaching
- Mostly research
- Exclusively research
- Management
- Academic related/Professional services role
- Other

15. What is your highest academic qualification? Required

- Doctoral degree
- Master's degree



Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate
 Bachelor's degree with honours
 Non-honours bachelor's degree
 Higher National Diploma/Certificate
 A-level (or equivalent)
 Other

15a. If you selected Other, please specify:

Awareness of the TEF

16. Which TEF assessment did your institution participate in?

2017 TEF assessment
 2018 TEF assessment
 My institution hasn't taken part yet
 I am not sure
 2017 TEF assessment with partner institutions
 2018 TEF assessment with partner institutions
 Other

17. I am aware of what the TEF is and its key aims. Required

Yes
 No

18. I am aware who is responsible for TEF work in my institution (e.g. planning, consultations, compiling case studies, etc.). Required

Yes
 No
 Not applicable

18a. Do you know who these people are? Optional

Yes
 Yes, but only some
 No

18b. Are there designated individuals/groups for the TEF work in your institution? (Choose all the options apply)

Individuals
 Working groups
 Other
 I don't know
 No, there isn't

18bi. If you selected Other, please specify:



18c. Are staff nominated for these roles/responsibilities?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

18d. Is there union representation amongst these individuals/groups?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

19. I was made aware of my institution's TEF submission (e.g. via email, newsletter, briefings, etc.). Required

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

20. I am aware of the information included in my institution's TEF submission. Required

- Yes
- Yes, but very little
- No
- Not applicable

21. I am aware of changes in policies and/or procedures related to teaching and learning that have taken place in my institution since the introduction of the TEF. Required

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure
- Not applicable

21a. Which of the following policies and/or procedures have changed since the introduction of the TEF? (Tick all the options apply.)

- Individual Performance Appraisal
- Teaching observation
- Time and resources allocated to teaching and learning
- Internal module student evaluation
- Annual programme evaluation (health check)
- Student achievement
- Using learning analytics
- Other

21ai. If you selected Other, please specify:

21b. I am aware that consultation(s) took place prior to these changes

- Yes
- No



22. I am aware of changes in academic-related/professional services contracts that have taken place in my institution since the introduction of the TEF. Required

Yes

No

I am not sure

Not applicable

22a. What kind of changes?

22b. I am aware that consultation(s) took place prior to these changes

Yes

No

Involvement in the TEF

23. I have been consulted on TEF-related activity in my institution. Required

Yes

No

Not applicable

23a. Through which platform(s)?

24. I have been consulted on TEF-related activity outside of my workplace (e.g. unions, professional bodies, associations). Required

Yes

No

24a. Through which platform(s)?

25. I have been directly involved in TEF-related activity in my institution (e.g. planning, consultations, compiling case studies, etc.). Required

Yes

No

Not applicable

25a. Through which activity(-ies)? (Tick all the options apply.)

Information giving/briefings (e.g. departmental, institutional, newsletter, report)

Leading/facilitating general consultation

Giving expert consultation

Training/development for staff

Practice sharing

Quality assurance

Taking part in the TEF working group

Leading the TEF work

Other



25ai. Of you selected Other, please specify:

26. I have been directly involved in TEF-related activity outside of my workplace (e.g. unions, professional bodies, associations). Required

Yes

No

26a. Through which activity(-ies)?

Perceptions of the TEF

27. How much impact has the TEF had on teaching and learning at your institution? Required

No impact

Little impact

Some impact

Great impact

Not sure

Not applicable

28. According to the government, the TEF aims to "recognise and reward excellence in teaching, learning and outcomes". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution? Required

Yes

No

Not applicable

28a. Please give examples of the evidence you have seen.

29. According to the government, the TEF aims to "sharpen the focus on teaching and outcomes that matter to students". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution? Required

Yes

No

Not applicable

29a. Please give examples of the evidence you have seen.

30. According to the government, the TEF aims to " help inform prospective student choice". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution? Required

Yes

No

Not applicable



30a. Please give examples of the evidence you have seen.

31. According to the government, the TEF aims to " support widening participation in higher education". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution? Required

Yes

No

Not applicable

31a. Please give examples of the evidence you have seen.

32. Are you aware of any other consequences of the TEF in your work place (e.g. impact on working conditions)? Required

Yes

No

Not applicable

32a. Please give examples of what they are

33. How much impact has the TEF had on your teaching and learning? Required

No impact

Very little impact

Some impact

Great impact

Not sure

This is not applicable to my role in my institution

Not applicable

34. I welcome the introduction of the TEF. Required

Yes

No

Not sure

34a. Why do you feel this way? Required

35. Are there any other comments, observations, suggestions you would like to make about the TEF?

Survey Part 2 - Subject TEF

In March 2018, Subject Level TEF was launched. Part 2 of this survey focuses on your awareness, involvement and perceptions on subject level TEF.

36. Would you like to proceed to Part 2 of this survey? Required

Yes

No



Subject Level TEF

37. I am aware of what Subject Level TEF is and its key aims. Required

- Yes
- No

38. I am aware that work relating to Subject Level TEF is going on at my work place.

- Required
- Yes
 - No

38a. I know who is responsible for this work at my work place

- Yes
- No

38ai. Who are they? And how were they selected?

38b. What re the activities?

39. I am involved in work on Subject Level TEF at my work place. Required

- Yes
- No

39a. What kind of involvement?

40. I welcome the introduction of Subject Level TEF. Required

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

40a. Why do you feel this way?

41. Are there any other comments, observations, suggestions you would like to make about the Subject Level TEF?

Ending the survey

Thank you very much for your time.

Please click 'Finish' to submit your answers and collect your unique participant number.

The project contact email is TEFImpact@bcu.ac.uk. Should you have any questions about this survey or would like to amend/withdraw your responses, please email us and quote your unique participant number.



Appendix 4: Interview schedules

Interview schedule for Professor Sir Chris Husbands – September 2018

1. In January this year your reappointment as Chair of the TEF assessment panel was confirmed, which will take you up to 2021. What was your original motivation for wanting to take up this post? And what do you hope to achieve in your tenure as chair?
2. What do you think the impact of the TEF has been on HE provision/the sector to date?
3. Do you think the TEF has had an impact on the quality of teaching? If so, what? Can you think of any examples of its impact here at Sheffield Hallam?
4. Our project confirms that the TEF still remains a very English initiative with low levels of participation from HE providers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Why do you think this is? Is this something that concerns you?
5. Following the 2017 TEF (Year 2) results last year, you acknowledged in a piece on the Wonkhe website that ‘the TEF is not a direct measure of teaching but a measure based on some of the outcomes of teaching’. Can you elaborate on what you mean by that?
6. Since the introduction of the TEF in 2016, there’s been a significant shift in focus to ‘student outcomes’, even to the extent that we’ve seen a rebranding from TEF to TESOF. Why is that?
7. In the piece for the Wonkhe website in June last year, you implied that those who criticise the current evidence base used for TEF because it doesn’t capture ‘direct’ evidence of teaching are implicitly arguing for an inspection based model of teaching assessment like Ofsted, of which you’re not in favour on the grounds that it would be much more costly and intrusive. That makes it sound as if it’s an either or choice. Is it?
8. Some TEF critics argue that the metrics used really only tell us about employment and employability and very little about teaching. What’s your response to that?
9. How does the TEF accommodate diverse providers from college-based HE to elite Russell Group universities in terms of the weighting of the core metrics used?
10. What’s your position on the use of the NSS data in the TEF and its weighting in the overall assessment?



11. Students are obviously a key stakeholder in any discussions about learning and teaching in HE hence the importance of capturing their voices through instruments like the NSS. But so too are the staff teaching them. To what extent does the TEF capture the voices of teaching staff?
12. During the launch of the Office for Students last year, Sir Michael Barber referred to the TEF as a 'catalyst for the improvement and innovation in the quality of teaching' and that it 'should never be a mechanistic/box-ticking exercise' but should 'generate informed dialogue about teaching quality'. Do you think the TEF is well placed to do this?
13. One of the key findings from our project is that a sizeable proportion of staff welcome policy reform to recognise and reward teaching in HE but they see very little evidence of the TEF helping to achieve this at present. What are your thoughts on that?
14. Some of the participants in our project, particularly those from research-intensive universities, referred to the TEF as a distraction from the REF. How do you see the relationship between the TEF and the REF?



Appendix 5: Participant profile

University-based participant sample and population comparison by countries

COUNTRY	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE%	NO. OF UCU HE MEMBERS ²⁷	POPULATION% ²⁸
England	5193	88.09%	70869	83.22%
Scotland	365	6.19%	8204	9.63%
Wales	227	3.85%	4309	5.06%
N. Ireland	92	1.56%	1773	2.08%
Not assigned	18	0.31%		
Grand Total	5895		85158	

University-based participant sample and population comparison by types of institution

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE%	NO. OF UCU HE MEMBERS	POPULATION%
Pre-92	3933	66.72%	59276	69.94%
Post-92	1944	32.98%	24738	29.19%
Not assigned	18	0.31%		
Other			739	0.87%
Grand Total	5895		84753	

University-based participant sample and population by mode of employment

MODE OF EMPLOYMENT	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE%	NO. OF UCU HE MEMBERS	POPULATION%
Full-time	4958	84.11%	55640	65.34%
Hourly-paid	166	2.82%	5524	6.49%
Other	41	0.70%	1376	1.62%
Part-time	730	12.38%	11535	13.55%
Unknown			5397	6.34%
Not assigned			5686	6.68%
Grand Total	5895		85158	

²⁷Sample% states the percentages of each categories to the total number of participants.

²⁸Population% states the percentages of each categories to the total number of UCU members.



University-based participant sample and population by terms of employment

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE%	NO. OF UCU HE MEMBERS	POPULATION%
Open-ended/ permanent contract	5150	87.36%	51827	60.86%
Fixed-term contract	581	9.86%	18957	22.26%
Zero hours contract	72	1.22%	1613	1.89%
Other	51	0.87%		
Variable hours contract	41	0.70%		
Self Employed			436	0.51%
Agency			146	0.17%
Unknown			12179	14.30%
Grand Total	5895		85158	

University-based participant by role profile

ROLE PROFILES	NO. OF RESPONSES
Teaching and research	3805
Teaching-focussed/teaching-only	785
Teaching and scholarship	473
Research-focussed/research-only	449
Academic related/Professional services role	258
Management	86
Other	39
Grand Total	5895



University-based participant by typical workload

TYPICAL WORKLOAD	NO. OF RESPONSES
Balance between research and teaching	2409
Mostly teaching	1954
Mostly research	425
Exclusively teaching	367
Management	265
Academic related/Professional services role	258
Other	148
Exclusively research	69
Grand Total	5895

College-based HE participant by modes of employment

MODE OF EMPLOYMENT	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE %
Full-time	274	65.24%
Part-time	123	29.29%
Hourly-paid	19	4.52%
Other	4	0.95%
Grand Total	420	

College-based HE participant by terms of employment

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE %
Open-ended/permanent contract	354	84.29%
Fixed-term contract	40	9.52%
Zero hours contract	10	2.38%
Variable hours contract	9	2.14%
Other	7	1.67%
Grand Total	420	



College-based HE participant by role profiles

ROLE PROFILE	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE%
Teaching-focussed/ teaching-only	322	76.67%
Academic related/ Professional services role	24	5.71%
Teaching and research	23	5.48%
Other	21	5.00%
Teaching and scholarship	18	4.29%
Management	12	2.86%
Grand Total	420	

College-based HE participant by typical workload

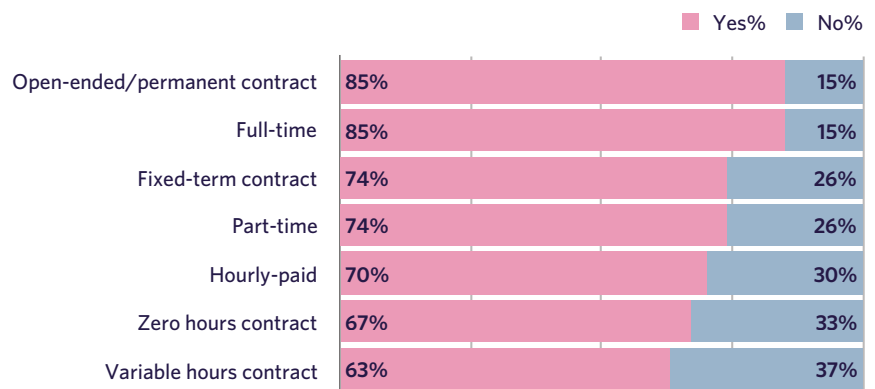
TYPICAL WORKLOAD	NO. OF RESPONSES	SAMPLE%
Mostly teaching	175	41.67%
Exclusively teaching	166	39.52%
Management	25	5.95%
Academic related/ Professional services role	24	5.71%
Other	20	4.76%
Balance between research and teaching	10	2.38%
Grand Total	420	



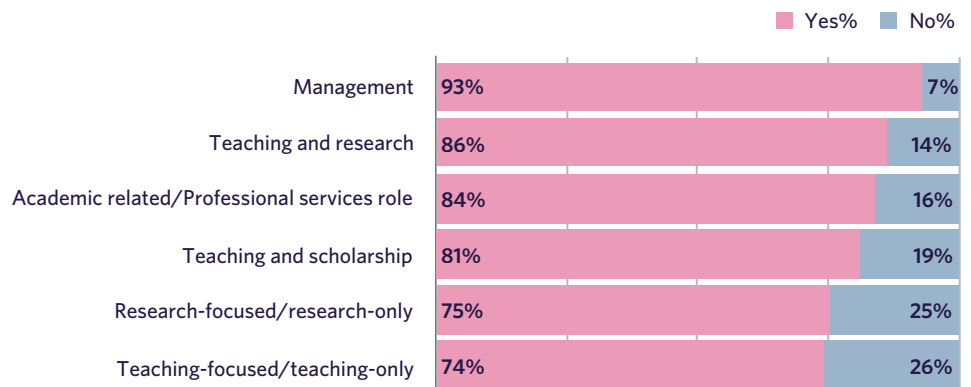
Appendix 6: Findings from quantitative data

Q17. I am aware of what the TEF is and its key aims

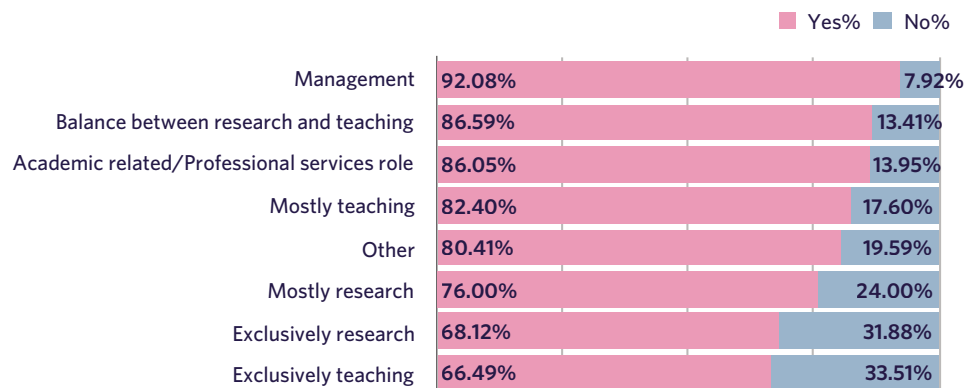
University-based participant overall awareness of the TEF by modes & terms of contracts



University-based participant overall awareness of the TEF by role profiles

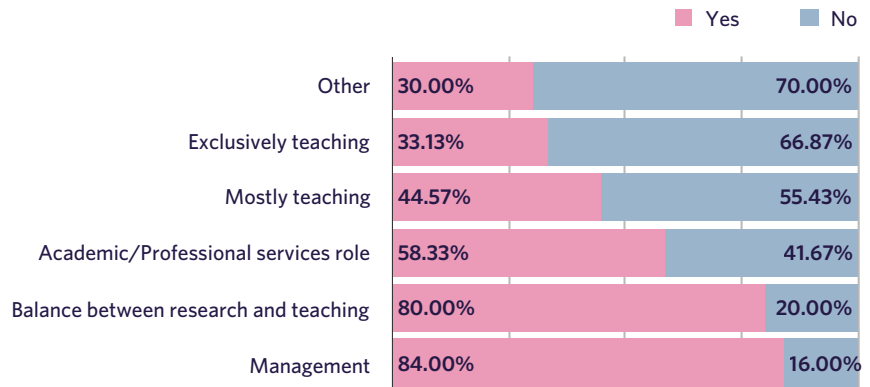


University-based participant overall awareness of the TEF by typical workload



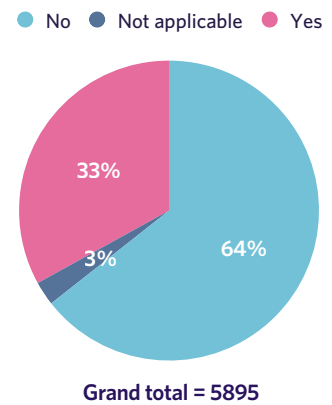


College-based HE participant awareness of the TEF - by typical workload

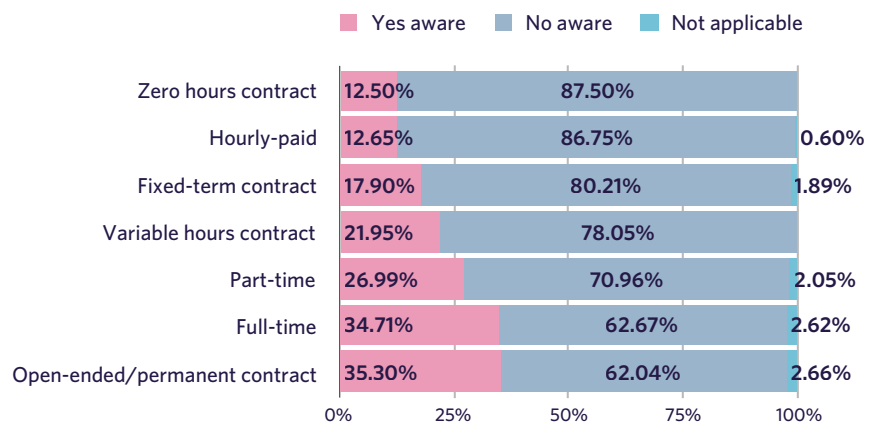


Q18. I am aware who is responsible for TEF work in my institution (e.g. planning, consultations, compiling case studies, etc.)

University-based participant awareness of who is responsible for TEF work in their institution

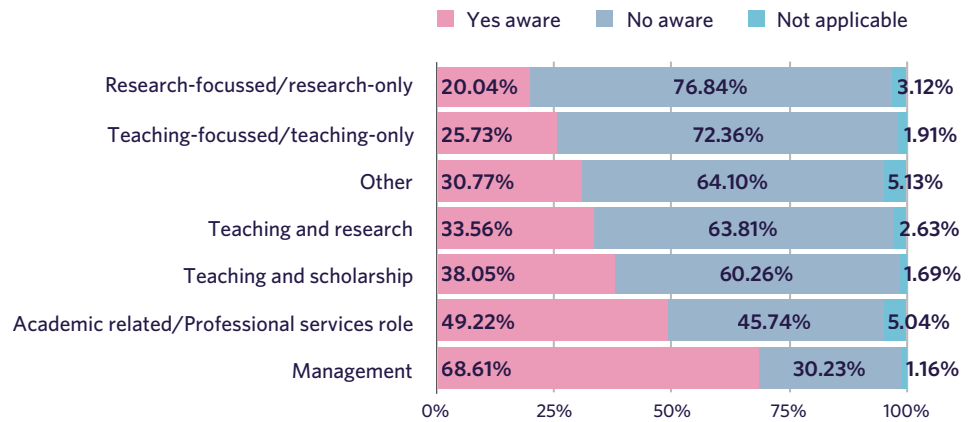


University-based participant awareness of who is responsible for TEF work in their institution - by modes and terms of contracts

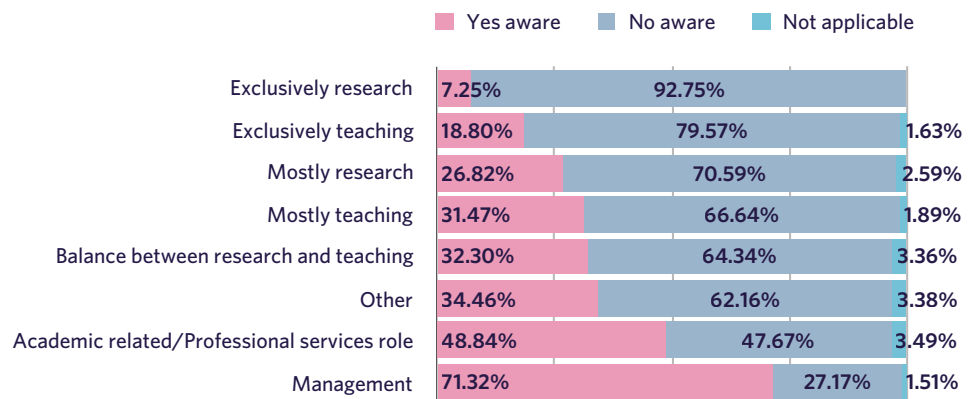




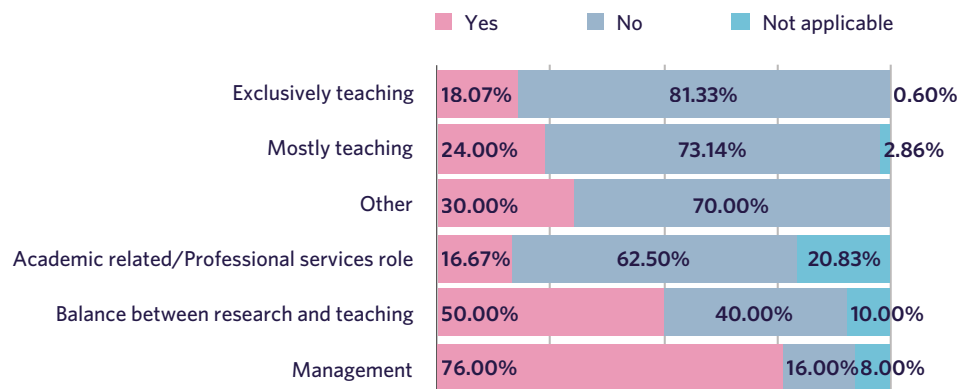
University-based participant awareness of who is responsible for TEF work in their institution - by role profiles



University-based participant awareness of who is responsible for TEF work in their institution - by typical workload



College-based HE participant awareness of who was responsible for TEF activities at their institution - by typical workload

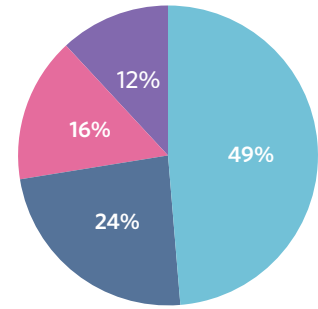




Q18a. Do you know who these people are?

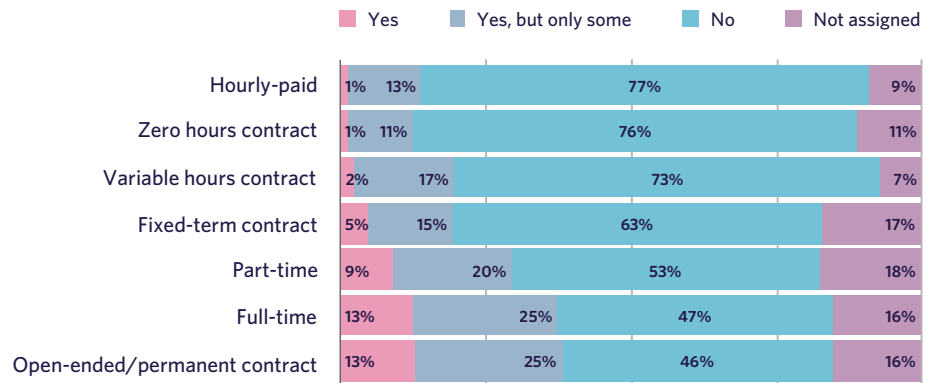
I know who is responsible for TEF work in my institution - University-based participant

● No ● Yes, but only some
● Not assigned ● Yes

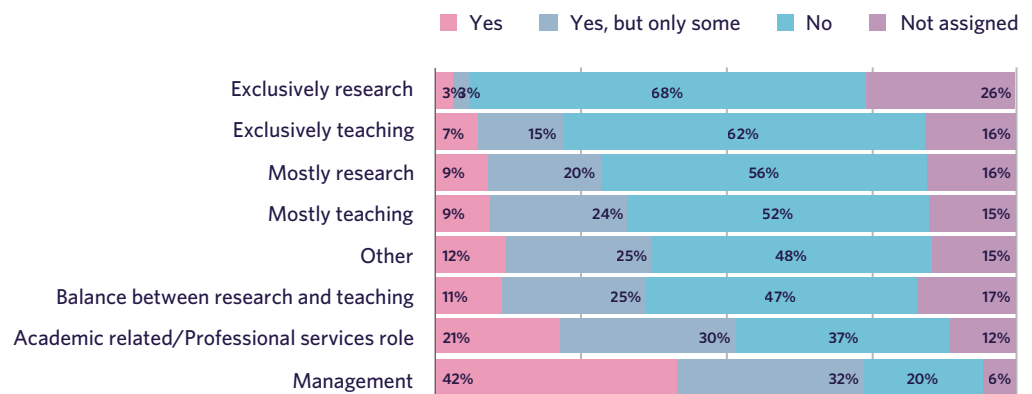


Grand total = 5895

University-based participant knowledge of who are the people responsible for TEF work in their institution - by modes and terms of contracts

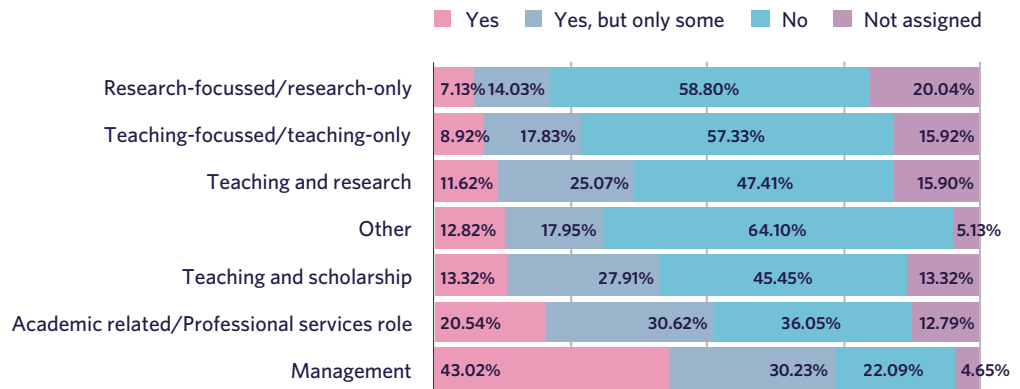


University-based participant knowledge of who are the people responsible for TEF work in their institution - by typical workload



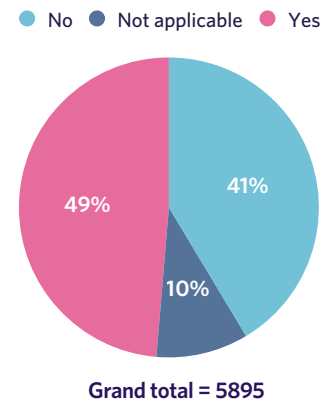


University-based participant knowledge of who are the people responsible for TEF work in their institution - by role profiles

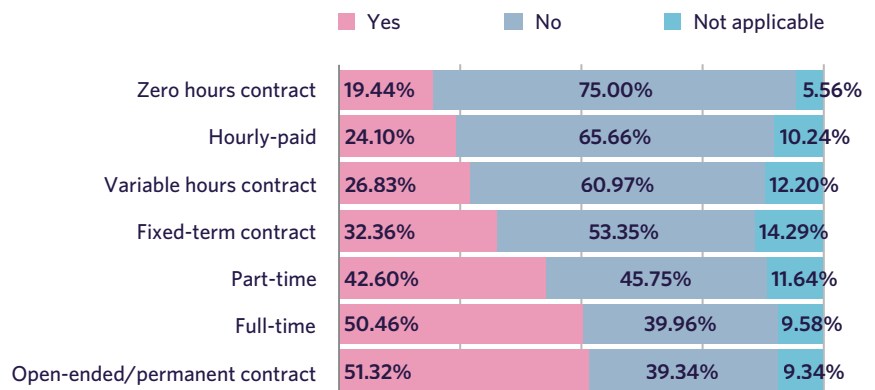


Q19. I was made aware of my institution's TEF submission (e.g. via email, newsletter, briefings, etc.)

I was made aware of my institution's TEF submission - University-based participant

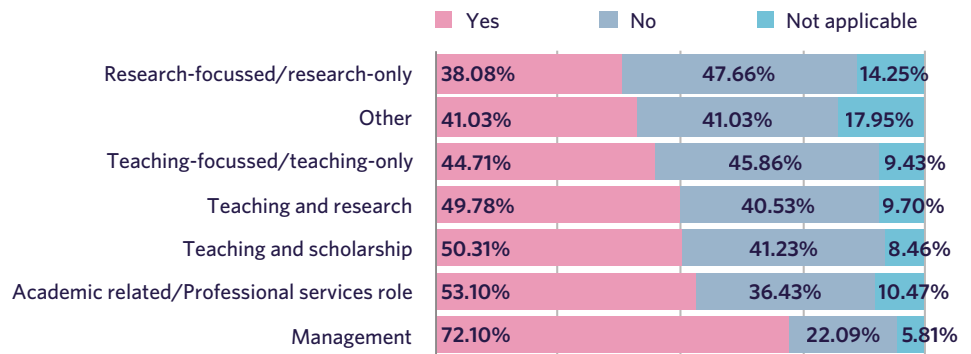


University-based participant being made awareness of their institution's TEF submission - by modes and terms of contracts

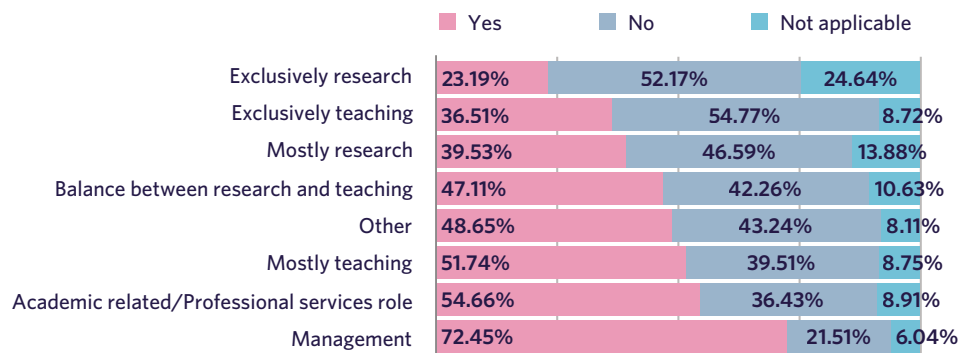




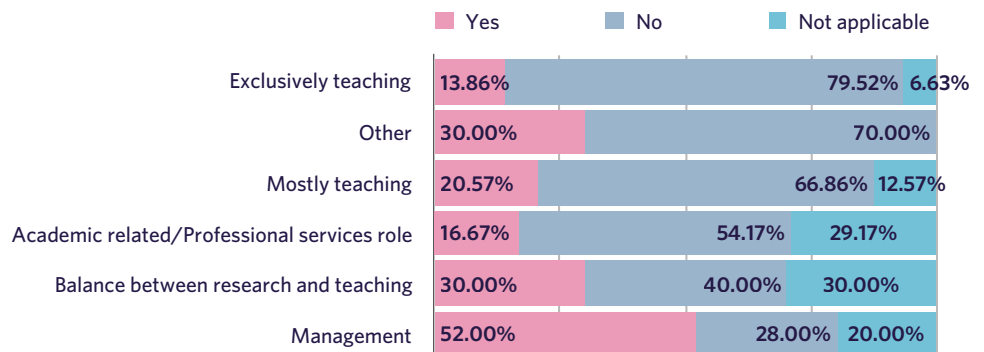
University-based participant being made awareness of their institution's TEF submission - by role profiles



University-based participant being made awareness of their institution's TEF submission - by typical workload



College-based HE participant being made aware of their institution's TEF submission - by typical workload

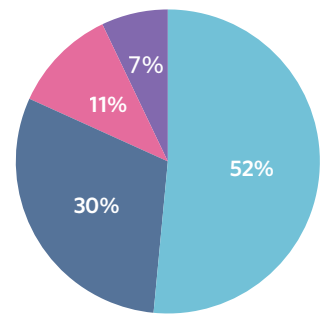




Q20. I am aware of the information included in my institution's TEF submission.

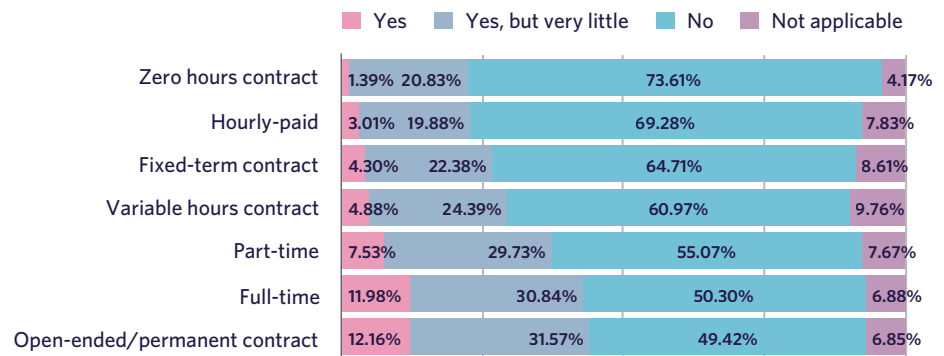
I am aware of the information included in my institution's TEF submission -
University-based participant

● No ● Yes, but very little
● Yes ● Not applicable

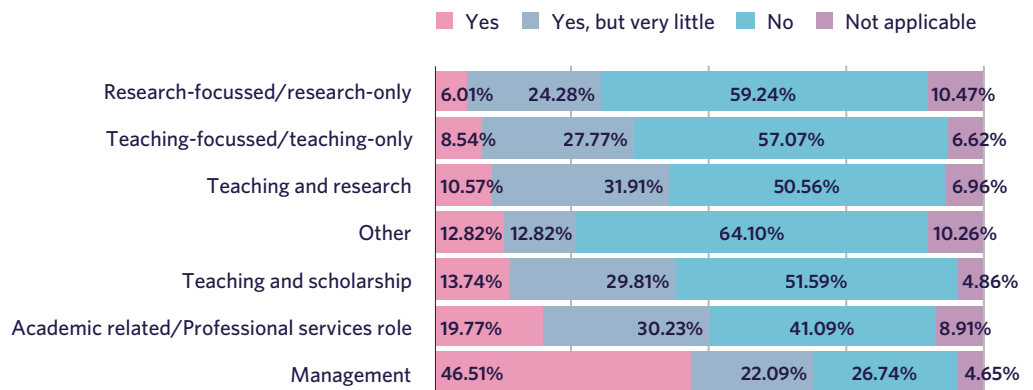


Grand total = 5895

University-based participant awareness of the information included in their institution's TEF submission - by modes and terms of contracts

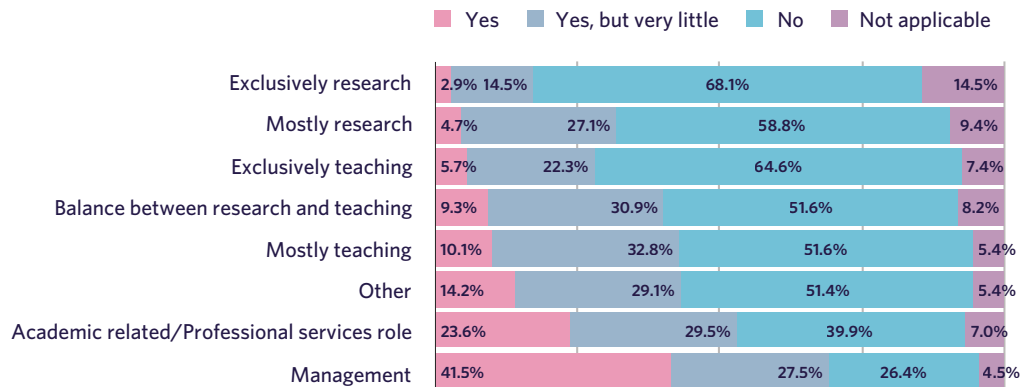


University-based participant awareness of the information included in their institution's TEF submission - by role profiles

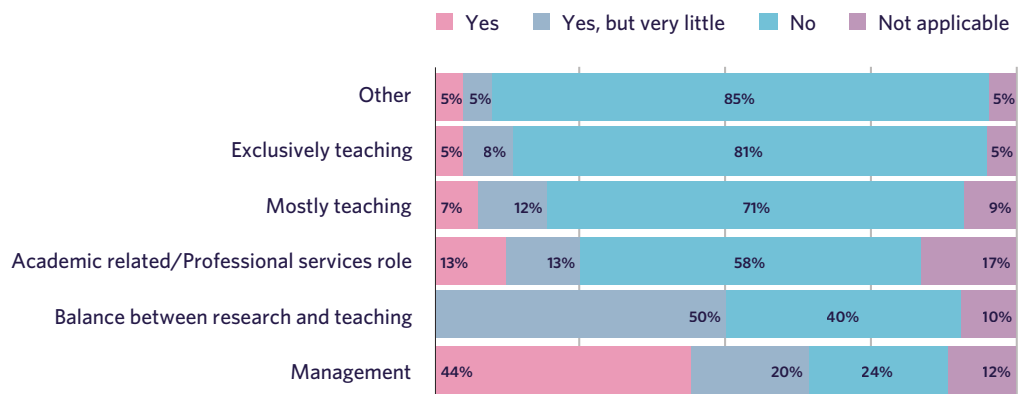




University-based participant awareness of the information included in their institution's TEF submission - by typical workload

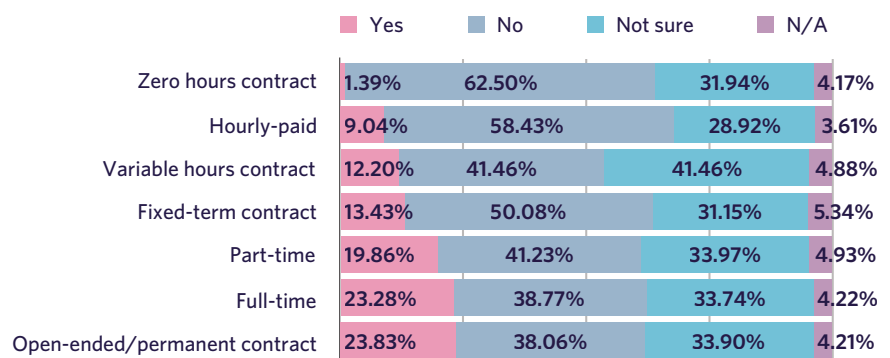


College-based HE participant awareness of their institution's TEF submission - by typical workload



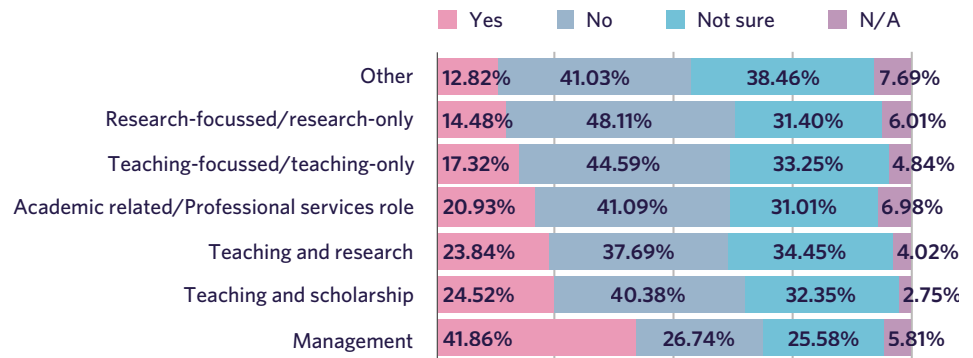
Q21. I am aware of changes in policies and/or procedures related to teaching and learning that have taken place in my institution since the introduction of the TEF

University-based participant awareness of changes in policies/procedures related to T & L - by modes and terms of contracts

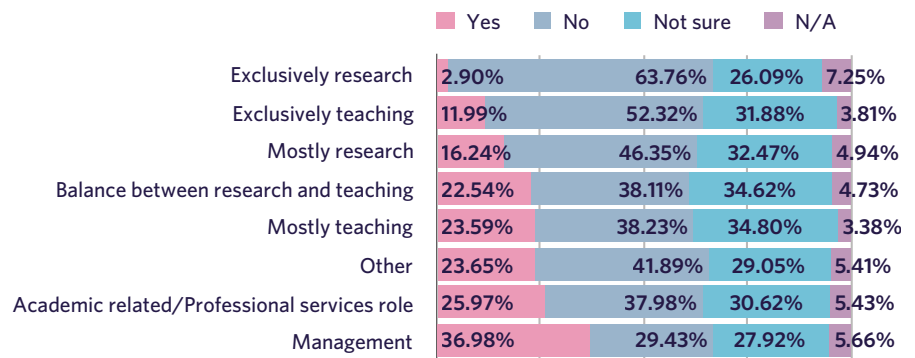




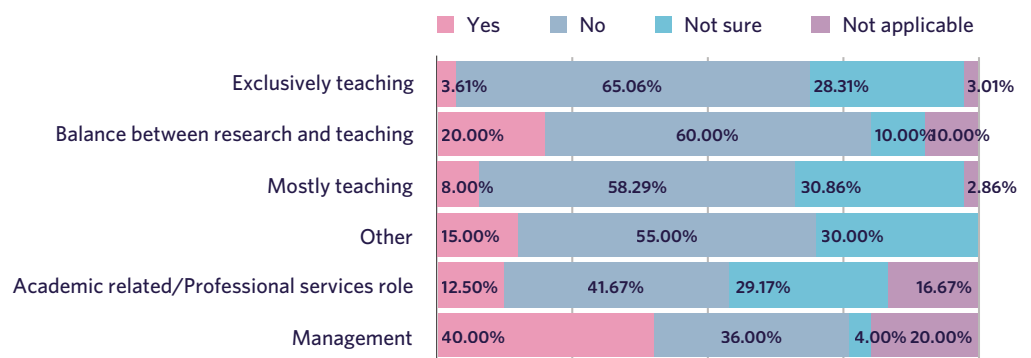
University-based participant awareness of changes in policies/procedures related to T & L - by role profiles



University-based participant awareness of changes in policies/procedures related to T & L - by typical workload



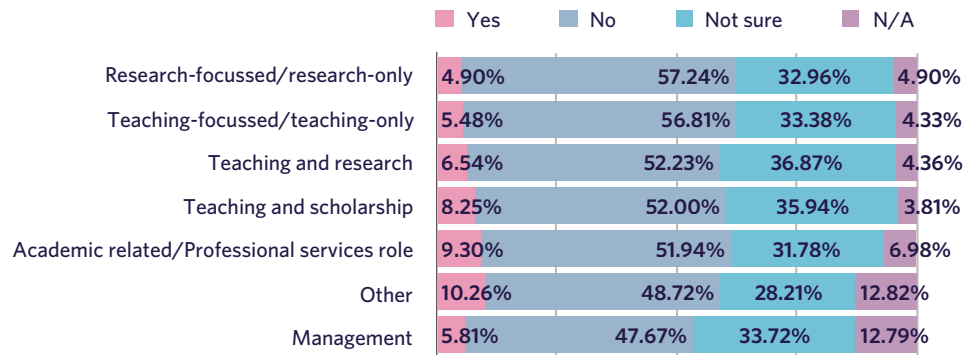
College-based HE participant awareness of changes in policies/procedures on T & L at their institution - by typical workload



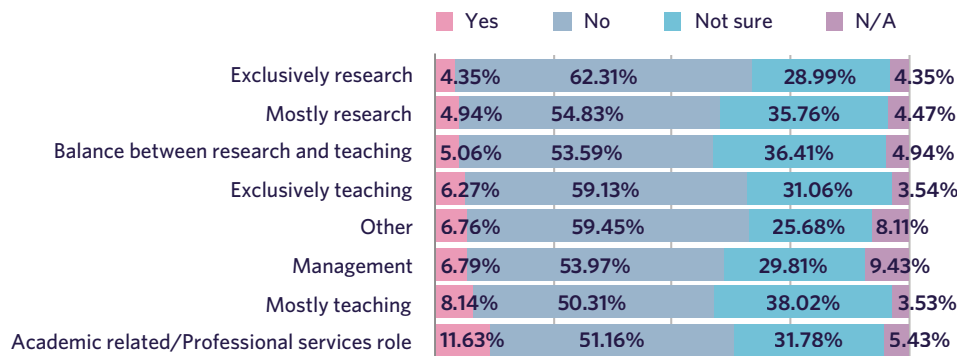


Q22. I am aware of changes in academic-related/professional services contracts that have taken place in my institution since the introduction of the TEF

University-based participant awareness of changes in contracts - by role profiles

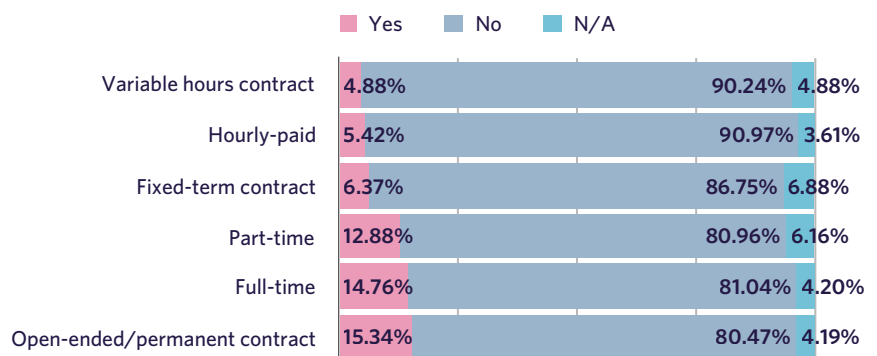


University-based participant awareness of changes in contracts - by typical workload



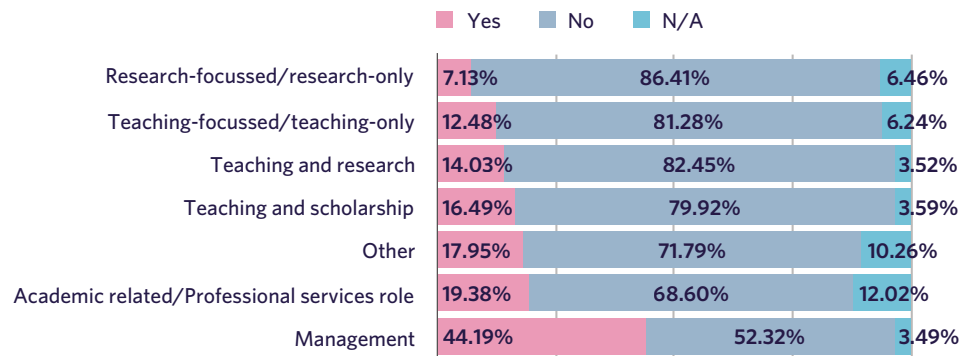
Q23. I have been consulted on TEF-related activity in my institution

University-based participant consulted on TEF-related activity - by modes and terms of employment

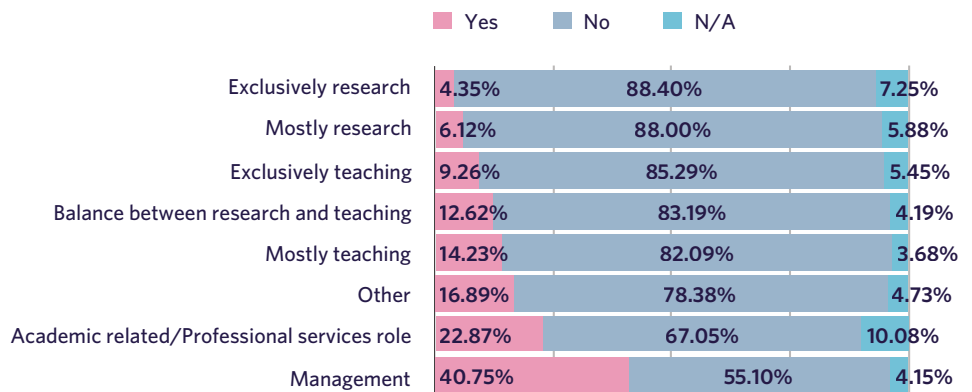




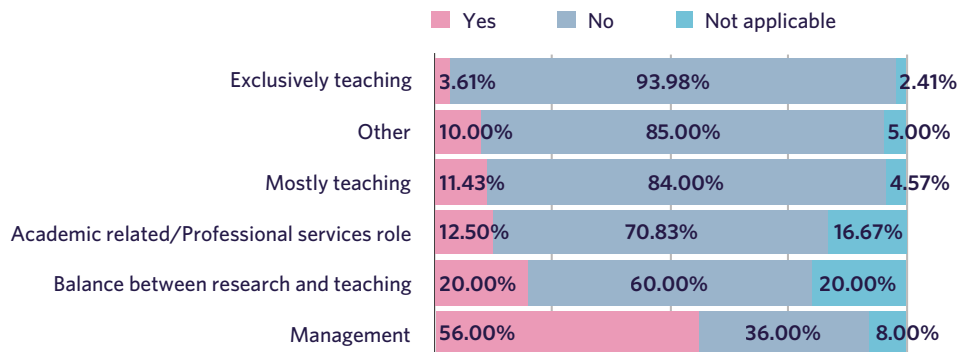
University-based participant consulted on TEF-related activity - by role profiles



University-based participant consulted on TEF-related activity - by typical workload



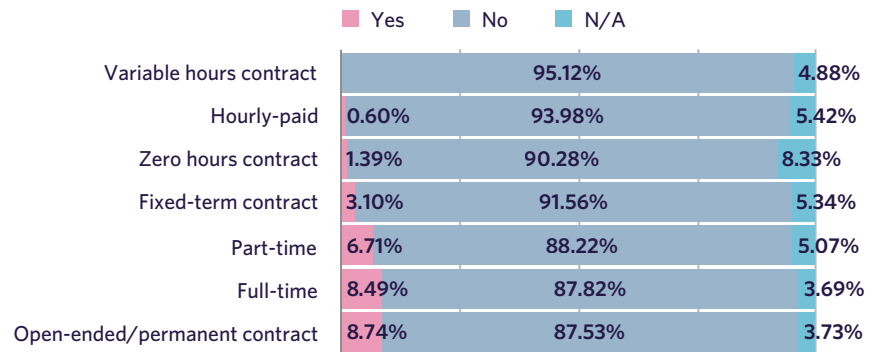
College-based HE participant being consulted on TEF-related activities in their institution - by typical workload



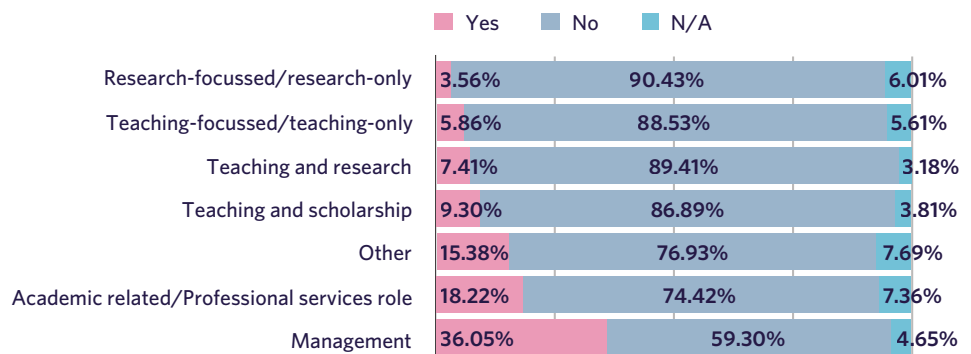


Q25. I have been directly involved in TEF-related activity in my institution (e.g. planning, consultations, compiling case studies, etc.)

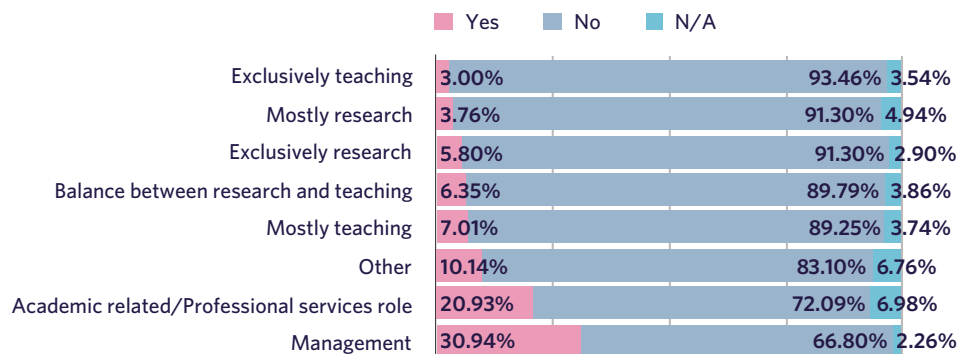
University-based participant direct involvement in TEF-related activity in their institution - by modes and terms of employment



University-based participant direct involvement in TEF-related activity in their institution - by role profile

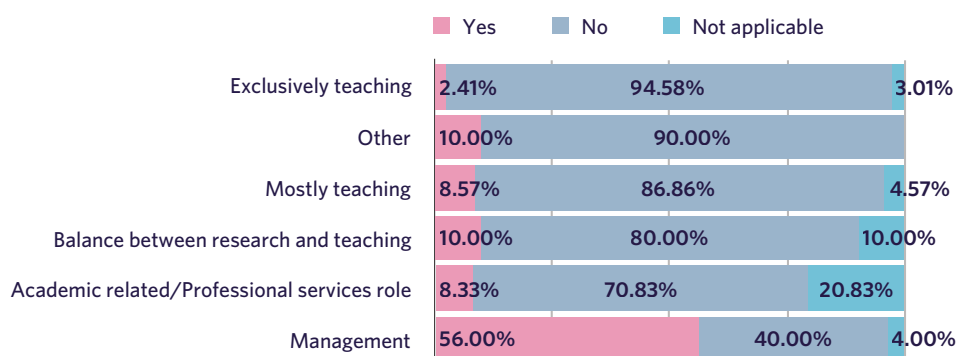


University-based participant direct involvement in TEF-related activity in their institution - by typical workload





College-based HE participant being directly involved in TEF-related activities in their institution - by typical workload



Q27. How much impact has the TEF had on teaching and learning at your institution?

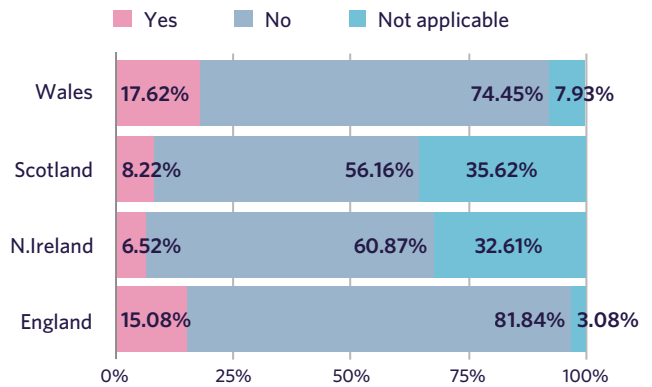
College-based HE participant perception of the TEF impact on T & L at their institution - by typical workload

TYPICAL WORKLOAD	GREAT IMPACT%	SOME IMPACT%	LITTLE IMPACT%	NO IMPACT%	NOT SURE%	N/A%	GRAND TOTAL
Academic related/ Professional services role	4.17%	12.50%	0.00%	4.17%	66.67%	12.50%	24
Balance between research and teaching	20.00%	20.00%	10.00%	20.00%	20.00%	10.00%	10
Exclusively teaching	1.20%	3.01%	7.23%	13.86%	70.48%	4.22%	166
Management	4.00%	28.00%	24.00%	16.00%	16.00%	12.00%	25
Mostly teaching	3.43%	10.29%	12.57%	13.14%	56.00%	4.57%	175
Other	0.00%	10.00%	5.00%	15.00%	65.00%	5.00%	20
Grand Total	2.86%	8.81%	10.00%	13.33%	59.52%	5.48%	420

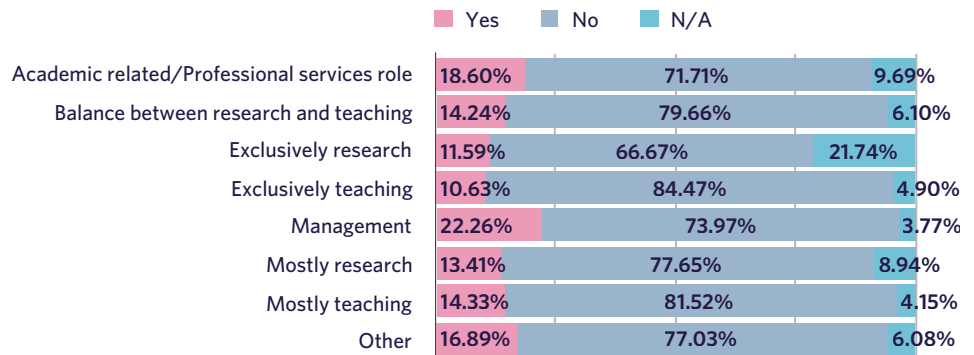


Q28. According to the government, the TEF aims to "recognise and reward excellence in teaching, learning and outcomes". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution?

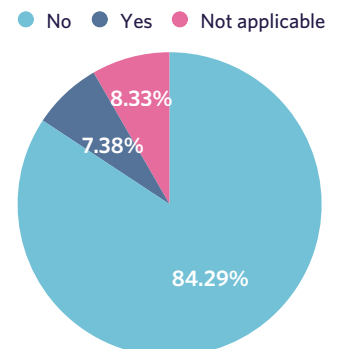
University-based participant saw evidence of the TEF 'recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching, learning and outcomes' in their institution - by countries



University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching, learning and outcomes' in their institution - by typical workload



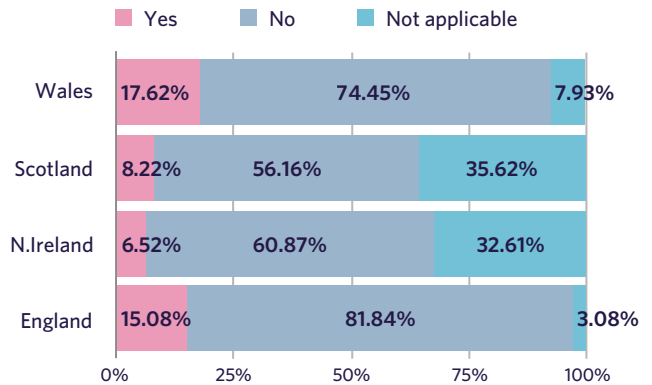
University-based participant awareness of who is responsible for TEF work in their institution



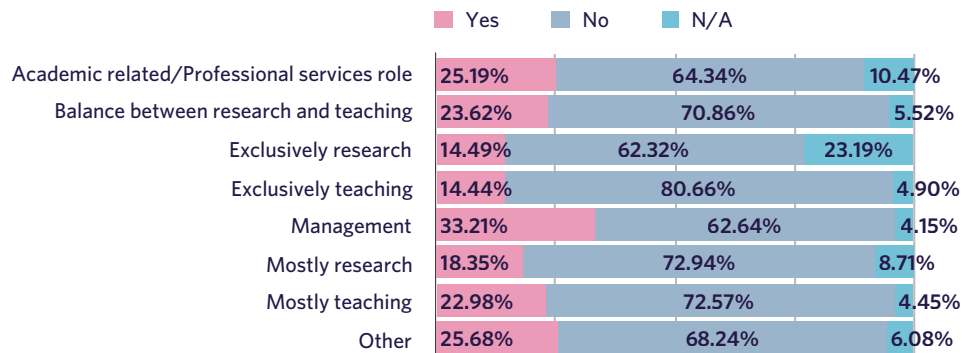


Q29. According to the government, the TEF aims to "sharpen the focus on teaching and outcomes that matter to students". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution?

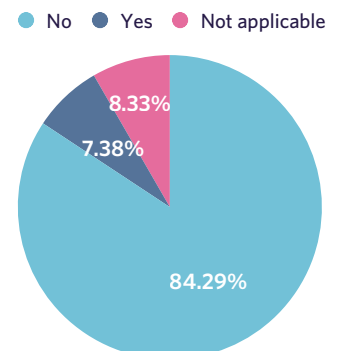
University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'sharpen the focus on teaching and outcomes that matter to students' in their institution - by countries



University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'sharpening the focus on teaching and outcomes that matter to students' in their institution - by typical workload



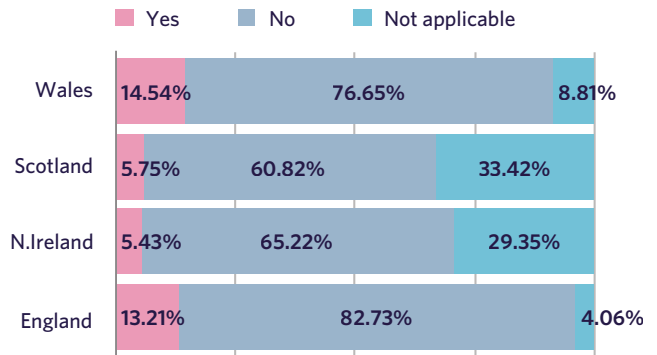
College-based HE participant saw evidence of the TEF 'sharpening the focus on teaching and outcomes that matter to students' in their institution



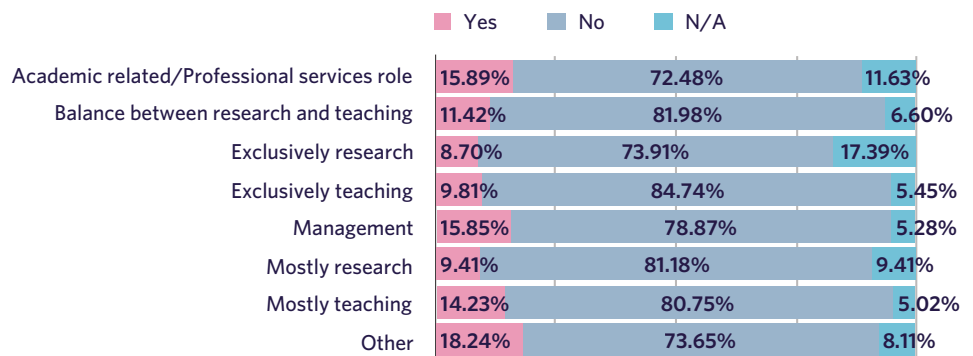


Q30. According to the government, the TEF aims to "help inform prospective student choice". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution?

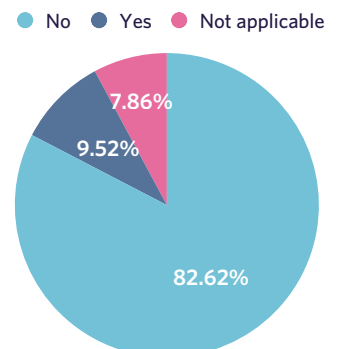
University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'help inform prospective student choice' in their institution - by typical workload



University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'helping inform prospective student choice' in their institution - by typical workload



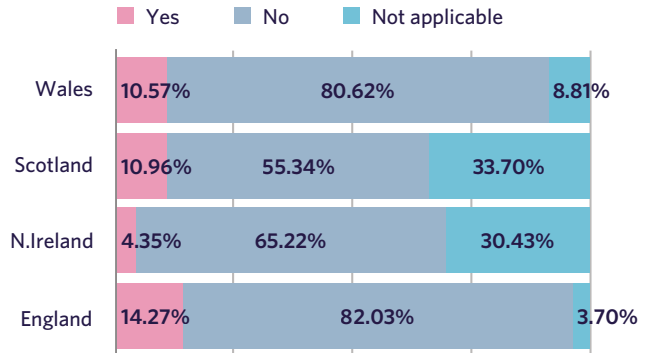
College-based HE participant saw evidence of the TEF 'helping inform prospective student choice' in their institution



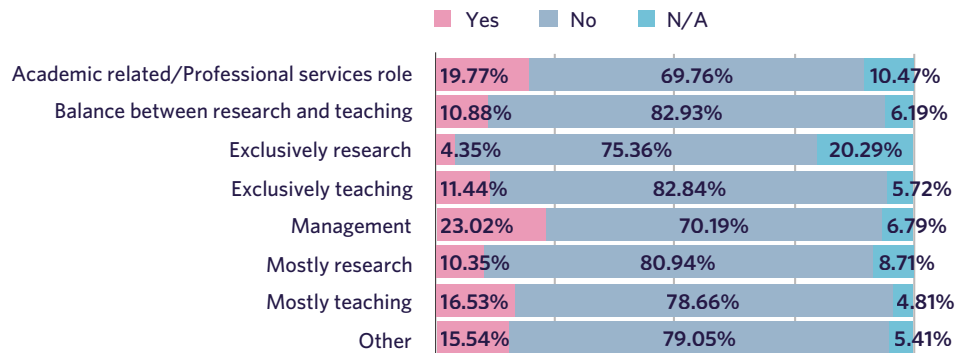


Q31. According to the government, the TEF aims to "support widening participation in higher education". Have you seen evidence of this in your institution?

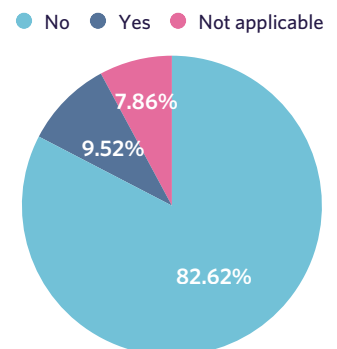
University-based participant saw evidence of the TEF 'supporting widening participation in HE' in their institution - by countries



University-based participants saw evidence of the TEF 'supporting widening participation in HE' in their institution - by typical workload



College-based HE participant saw evidence of the TEF 'supporting widening participation in HE' in their institution





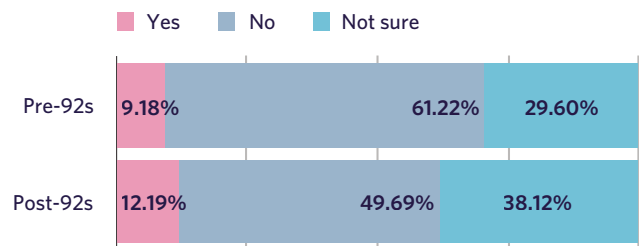
Q33. How much impact has the TEF had on your teaching and learning?

College-based participant perceptions of the TEF impact on their own T & L - by typical workload

TYPICAL WORKLOAD	GREAT IMPACT%	SOME IMPACT%	LITTLE IMPACT%	NO IMPACT%	NOT SURE%	NOT APPLICABLE TO JOB ROLE	N/A%	TOTAL
Academic related/ Professional services role	0.00%	8.33%	4.17%	20.83%	29.17%	16.67%	20.83%	24
Balance between research and teaching	10.00%	30.00%	10.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%	10.00%	10
Exclusively teaching	0.60%	5.42%	9.64%	33.13%	43.98%	3.61%	3.61%	166
Management	4.00%	12.00%	20.00%	40.00%	0.00%	20.00%	4.00%	25
Mostly teaching	3.43%	9.14%	13.71%	30.86%	38.86%	0.57%	3.43%	175
Other	0.00%	10.00%	10.00%	20.00%	50.00%	5.00%	5.00%	20
Grand total	2.14%	8.33%	11.67%	30.95%	38.10%	4.05%	4.76%	420

Q34. I welcome the introduction of the TEF

University-based participants responses to 'I welcome the introduction of the TEF' - by institution types





Q36. Would you like to proceed to Part 2 of this survey?

University-based participant completed Part 2 of the survey - by type of institution

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	NO OF RESPONSES
Post	1136
Pre	1968
Not assigned	9

University-based participant completed Part 2 of the survey - by country

COUNTRY	NO OF RESPONSES
England	2827
N. Ireland	39
Scotland	138
Wales	100
Not assigned	9

University-based participant completed Part 2 of the survey - by terms of employment

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT	NO OF RESPONSES
Full-time	2665
Hourly-paid	91
Other	20
Part-time	337

University-based participant completed Part 2 of the survey - by mode of employment

MODE OF EMPLOYMENT	NO OF RESPONSES
Open-ended/permanent contract	2759
Fixed-term contract	260
Zero hours contract	40
Other	33
Variable hours contract	21



University-based participant completed Part 2 of the survey - by role profile

ROLE PROFILE	NO OF RESPONSES
Teaching and research	2038
Teaching-focussed/teaching-only	403
Teaching and scholarship	274
Research-focussed/research-only	205
Academic related/Professional services role	118
Management	54
Other	21

College-based HE participant completed Part 2 of the survey - by terms of employment

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT	NO OF RESPONSES
Full-time	109
Part-time	44
Hourly-paid	3
Other	2

College-based HE participant completed Part 2 of the survey - by mode of employment

MODE OF EMPLOYMENT	NO OF RESPONSES
Open-ended/permanent contract	131
Fixed-term contract	20
Zero hours contract	3
Variable hours contract	2
Other	2

College-based HE participant completed Part 2 of the survey - by role profile

ROLE PROFILE	NO OF RESPONSES
Teaching-focussed/teaching-only	124
Academic related/Professional services role	6
Teaching and research	13
Other	4
Teaching and scholarship	5
Management	6



Q37. I am aware of what Subject Level TEF is and its key aims

University-based participant awareness of Subject-level TEF and its key aims - by type of institution

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
Post	425	37.41%	711	62.59%	1136
Pre	721	36.64%	1247	63.36%	1968
Not assigned	1	11.11%	8	88.89%	9
Grand Total	1147		1966		3113

University-based participant awareness of Subject-level TEF and its key aims - by country

COUNTRY	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
England	1081	38.24%	1746	61.76%	2827
N. Ireland	3	7.69%	36	92.31%	39
Scotland	25	18.12%	113	81.88%	138
Wales	37	37.00%	63	63.00%	100
Not assigned	1	11.11%	8	88.89%	9
Grand Total	1147		1966		3113

University-based participant awareness of Subject-level TEF and its key aims - by role profile

ROLE PROFILE	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
Teaching and research	769	37.73%	1269	62.27%	2038
Teaching and scholarship	103	37.59%	171	62.41%	274
Teaching-focussed/ teaching-only	101	25.06%	302	74.94%	403
Academic related/ Professional services role	71	60.17%	47	39.83%	118
Research-focussed/ research-only	61	29.76%	144	70.24%	205
Management	37	68.52%	17	31.48%	54
Other	5	23.81%	16	76.19%	21
Grand Total	1147	36.85%	1966	63.15%	3113



College-based participant awareness of Subject-level TEF and its key aims - by role profile

ROLE PROFILE	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
Teaching-focussed/ teaching-only	19	15.32%	105	84.68%	124
Teaching and research	7	53.85%	6	46.15%	13
Management	5	83.33%	1	16.67%	6
Teaching and scholarship	2	40.00%	3	60.00%	5
Academic related/ Professional services role	1	16.67%	5	83.33%	6
Other		0.00%	4	100.00%	4
Grand Total	34	21.52%	124	78.48%	158

Q38. I am aware that work relating to Subject Level TEF is going on at my work place.

University-based participant awareness of work related to Subject-level TEF at their workplace - by country

COUNTRY	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
England	903	31.94%	1924	68.06%	2827
N. Ireland	2	5.13%	37	94.87%	39
Scotland	12	8.70%	126	91.30%	138
Wales	20	20.00%	80	80.00%	100
Not assigned		0.00%	9	100.00%	9
Grand Total	937	30.10%	2176	69.90%	3113

University-based participant awareness of work related to Subject-level TEF at their work place - by type of institution

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
Post	376	33.10%	760	66.90%	1136
Pre	561	28.51%	1407	71.49%	1968
Not assigned		0.00%	9	100.00%	9
Grand Total	937	30.10%	2176	69.90%	3113



University-based participant awareness of work related to Subject-level TEF at their work place - by role profile

ROLE PROFILE	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
Teaching and research	642	31.50%	1396	68.50%	2038
Teaching and scholarship	91	33.21%	183	66.79%	274
Teaching-focussed/ teaching-only	77	19.11%	326	80.89%	403
Academic related/ Professional services role	47	39.83%	71	60.17%	118
Research-focussed/ research-only	45	21.95%	160	78.05%	205
Management	31	57.41%	23	42.59%	54
Other	4	19.05%	17	80.95%	21
Grand Total	937	30.10%	2176	69.90%	3113

Q39. I am involved in work on Subject Level TEF at my work place

University-based participant involvement in work on Subject-level TEF

INVOLVEMENT	NO. OF RESPONSES
Yes	236
No	2877
Grand Total	3113

University-based participant involvement in work on Subject-level TEF - By type of institution

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
Post	96	8.45%	1040	91.55%	1136
Pre	140	7.11%	1828	92.89%	1968
Not assigned		0.00%	9	100.00%	9
Grand Total	236	7.58%	2877	92.42%	3113



University-based participant involvement in work on Subject-level TEF -
By terms of employment

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
Full-time	224	8.41%	2441	91.59%	2665
Part-time	12	3.56%	325	96.44%	337
Hourly-paid		0.00%	91	100.00%	91
Other		0.00%	20	100.00%	20
Grand Total	236	7.58%	2877	92.42%	3113

University-based participant involvement in work on Subject-level TEF -
By mode of employment

MODE OF EMPLOYMENT	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
Open-ended/ permanent contract	232	8.41%	2527	91.59%	2759
Fixed-term contract	4	1.54%	256	98.46%	260
Variable hours contract		0.00%	21	100.00%	21
Zero hours contract		0.00%	40	100.00%	40
Other		0.00%	33	100.00%	33
Grand Total	236	7.58%	2877	92.42%	3113

University-based participant involvement in work on Subject-level TEF - By role profile

ROLE PROFILE	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	TOTAL
Teaching and research	141	6.92%	1897	93.08%	2038
Teaching-focussed/ teaching-only	18	4.47%	385	95.53%	403
Teaching and scholarship	30	10.95%	244	89.05%	274
Research-focussed/ research-only	9	4.39%	196	95.61%	205
Academic related/ Professional services role	22	18.64%	96	81.36%	118
Management	15	27.78%	39	72.22%	54
Other	1	4.76%	20	95.24%	21
Grand Total	236	7.58%	2877	92.42%	3113



Q40. I welcome the introduction of Subject Level TEF

University-based participant attitude towards the introduction of Subject-level TEF -
By terms of employment

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	NOT SURE	NOT SURE%	TOTAL
Full-time	223	8.37%	1391	52.20%	1051	39.44%	2665
Part-time	33	9.79%	112	33.23%	192	56.97%	337
Hourly-paid	9	9.89%	33	36.26%	49	53.85%	91
Other	2	10.00%	9	45.00%	9	45.00%	20
Grand Total	267	8.58%	1545	49.63%	1301	41.79%	3113

University-based participant attitude towards the introduction of Subject-level TEF -
By mode of employment

MODE OF EMPLOYMENT	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	NOT SURE	NOT SURE%	TOTAL
Open-ended/ permanent contract	232	8.41%	1410	51.11%	1117	40.49%	2759
Fixed-term contract	26	10.00%	103	39.62%	131	50.38%	260
Variable hours contract	3	14.29%	7	33.33%	11	52.38%	21
Zero hours contract	2	5.00%	11	27.50%	27	67.50%	40
Other	4	12.12%	14	42.42%	15	45.45%	33
Grand Total	267	8.58%	1545	49.63%	1301	41.79%	3113

University-based participant attitude towards the introduction of Subject-level TEF -
By role profile

ROLE PROFILE	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	NOT SURE	NOT SURE%	TOTAL
Teaching and research	147	7.21%	1155	56.67%	736	36.11%	2038
Teaching-focused/ teaching-only	43	10.67%	120	29.78%	240	59.55%	403
Teaching and scholarship	38	13.87%	101	36.86%	135	49.27%	274
Research-focused/ research-only	14	6.83%	95	46.34%	96	46.83%	205
Academic related/ Professional services role	16	13.56%	43	36.44%	59	50.00%	118
Management	7	12.96%	25	46.30%	22	40.74%	54
Other	2	9.52%	6	28.57%	13	61.90%	21
Grand Total	267	8.58%	1545	49.63%	1301	41.79%	3113



College-based HE participant attitude towards the introduction of Subject-level TEF -
By typical workload

TYPICAL WORKLOAD	YES	YES%	NO	NO%	NOT SURE	NOT SURE%	TOTAL
Academic related/ Professional services role	2	33.33%		0.00%	4	66.67%	6
Balance between research and teaching	1	25.00%	2	50.00%	1	25.00%	4
Exclusively teaching	10	16.13%	6	9.68%	46	74.19%	62
Management	3	25.00%	4	33.33%	5	41.67%	12
Mostly teaching	11	15.71%	14	20.00%	45	64.29%	70
Other		0.00%	1	25.00%	3	75.00%	4
Grand Total	27	17.09%	27	17.09%	104	65.82%	158