

Distinguished Lecture Series
University of Southampton
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What's wrong with our Universities, and will the Teaching Excellence Framework put it right?

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cdbu.org.uk

<http://www.slideshare.net/deevybishop/reading-list-whats-wrong-with-our-universities>

Structure of talk

- Case made by government for introducing TEF
- Responses to TEF consultation
- Validity of proposed TEF metrics
- Cost-benefit analysis of TEF

Alternative approaches to restore balance of
teaching and research

Case made by government for introducing TEF

Case set out in Green Paper in Nov 2015

FULFILLING OUR POTENTIAL

Teaching Excellence, Social
Mobility and Student Choice

NOVEMBER 2015

- Interested parties invited to comment
- Questions did not cover whether a Teaching Excellence Framework was needed – this was manifesto commitment* to be implemented

*Manifesto: “We will ensure that universities deliver the best possible value for money to students: **we will introduce a framework to recognise universities offering the highest teaching quality**; encourage universities to offer more two-year courses; and require more data to be openly available to potential students so that they can make decisions informed by the career paths of past graduates”*

Claim 1: Teaching is 'patchy' and 'lamentable'

Speech

9th September 2015

Higher education: fulfilling our potential



Jo Johnson
Minister for Universities
and Science

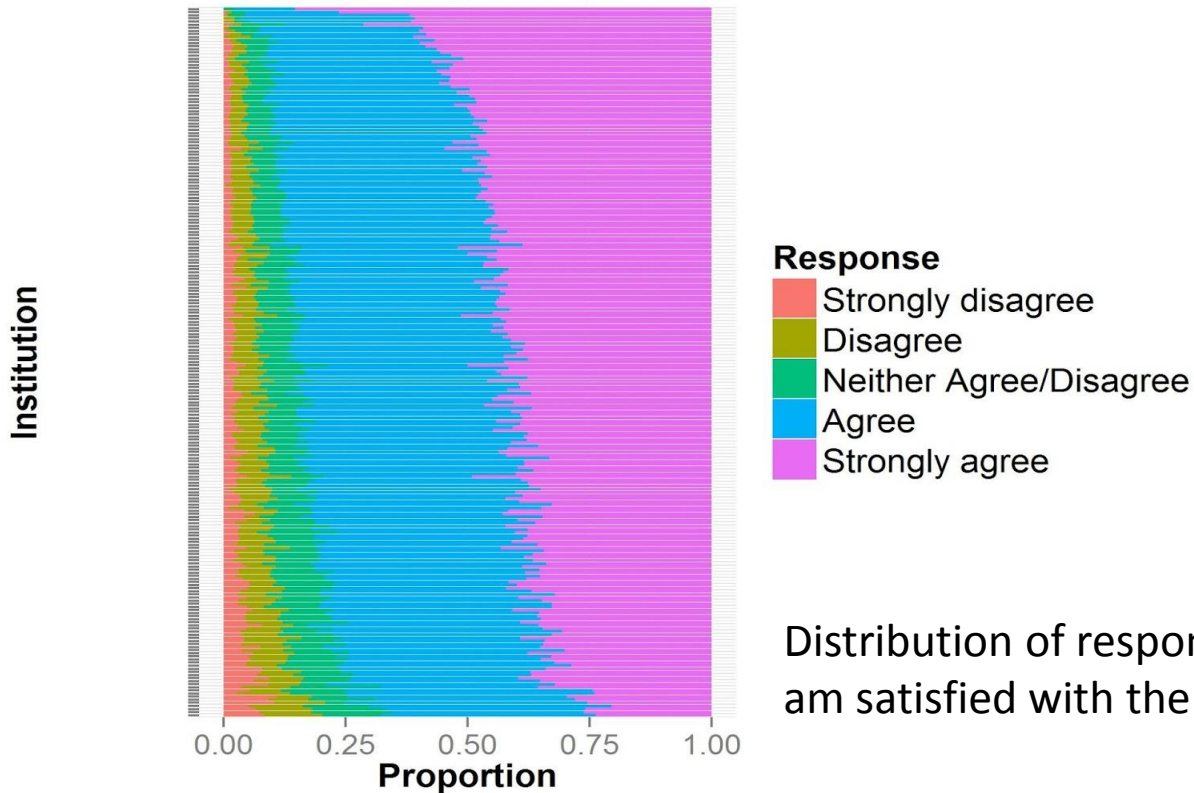
"I hear this when I talk to worried parents, such as the physics teacher whose son dropped out at the start of year two of a humanities programme at a prestigious London university, having barely set eyes on his tutor. Her other son, by contrast, studying engineering at Bristol, saw the system at its best: he was worked off his feet, with plenty of support and mostly excellent teaching.

This patchiness in the student experience within and between institutions cannot continue. There is extraordinary teaching that deserves greater recognition. And there is lamentable teaching that must be driven out of our system. It damages the reputation of UK higher education and I am determined to address it."

Is teaching 'patchy' and 'lamentable'?

Challenged to give evidence of 'lamentable' teaching by Select Committee:

"In the NSS 2015 survey, two thirds of providers are performing well below their peers on at least one aspect of the student experience; and 44% of providers are performing well below their peers on at least one aspect of the teaching, assessment and feedback part of the student experience." Jo Johnson

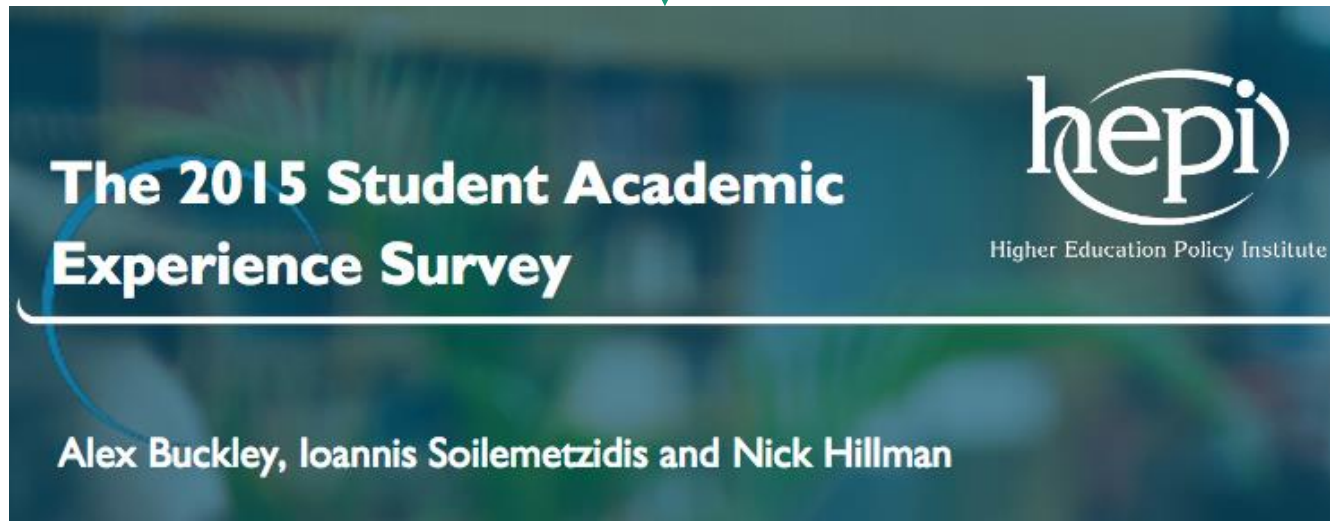


Distribution of responses to item 22: "Overall I am satisfied with the quality of the course"

Claim 2: Students are dissatisfied

Introduction: The transparency challenge, point 15: “Students are also concerned about value for money, with one third of undergraduates paying higher fees in England believing their course represents very poor or poor value for money.”

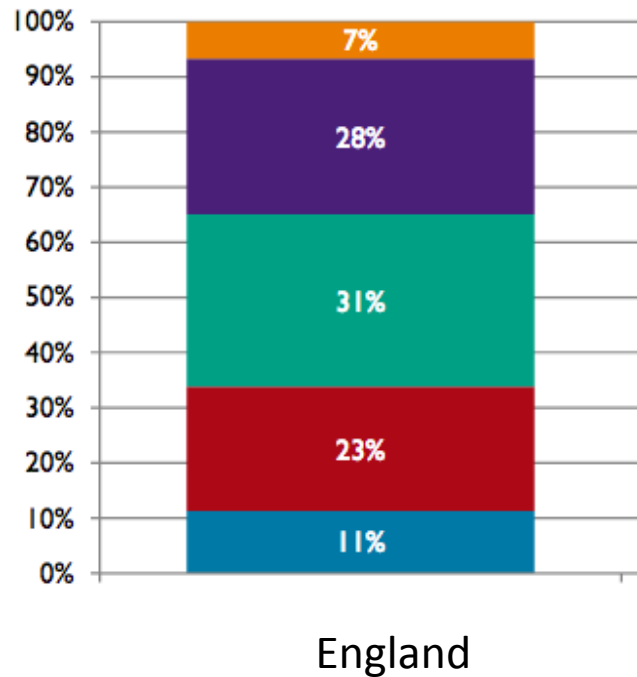
Cites this report:



<http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2015/06/04/2015-academic-experience-survey/>

Are students dissatisfied?

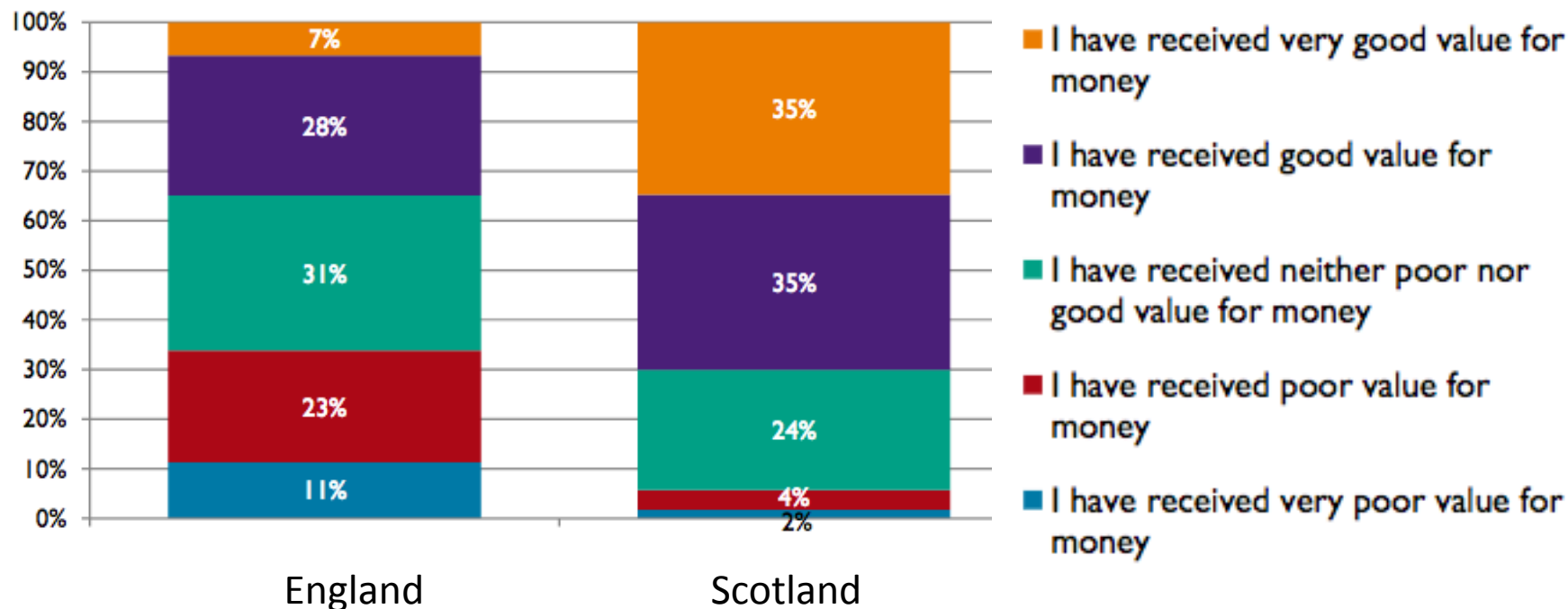
Figure 11: Perceptions of value for money, by fee regime



- I have received very good value for money
- I have received good value for money
- I have received neither poor nor good value for money
- I have received poor value for money
- I have received very poor value for money

Are students dissatisfied?

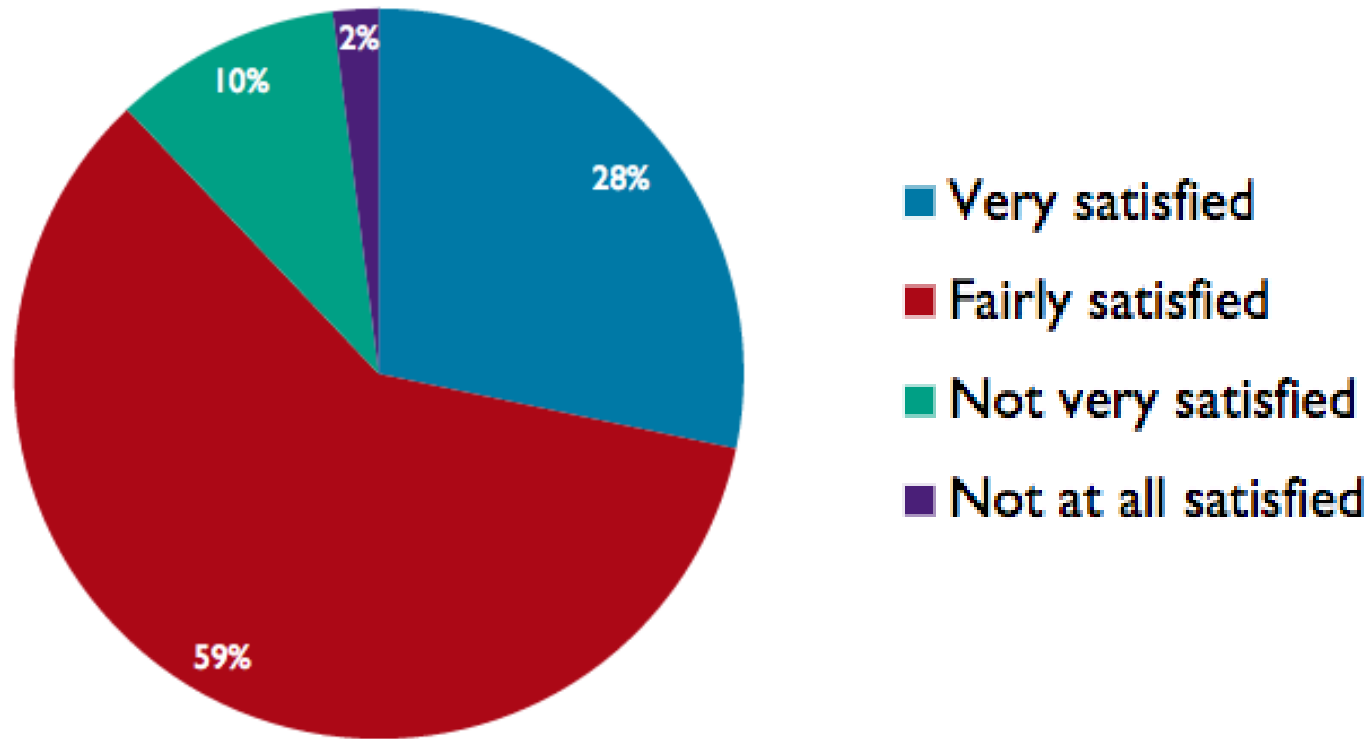
Figure 11: Perceptions of value for money, by fee regime



“Perceptions of value for money have diverged as a result of the increase in the full-time undergraduate fee cap to £9,000 in 2012 for students from England Only 7% of students from England on the higher fees feel they receive ‘very good’ value for money – the figure for students from Scotland who remain there to study is five times higher (35%).”

Are students dissatisfied?

Figure 1: To what extent are you satisfied, or not, with the overall quality of your course?



But some problems noted, e.g. : ‘One third (33%) of students describe the information they received before starting their course as “accurate”, which has been a consistent finding over the last three years’

Claim 3: Teaching is neglected relative to research

“There are weak incentives on Higher Education Providers to increase the standard of teaching in the higher education sector.”



Jo Johnson, Minister for Universities and Science

“Because many universities see their reputation, their standing in prestigious international league tables and their marginal funding as being principally determined by scholarly output, teaching has regrettably been allowed to become something of a poor cousin to research in parts of our system”

Proposed solution: more league tables, this time for teaching

N.B. League tables NOT needed to ‘drive out poor teaching’ – that requires Quality Assurance Agency: focus on poor-performing minority

Responses to TEF consultation

Responses to TEF consultation (Green Paper)



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching
Excellence, Social Mobility and
Student Choice

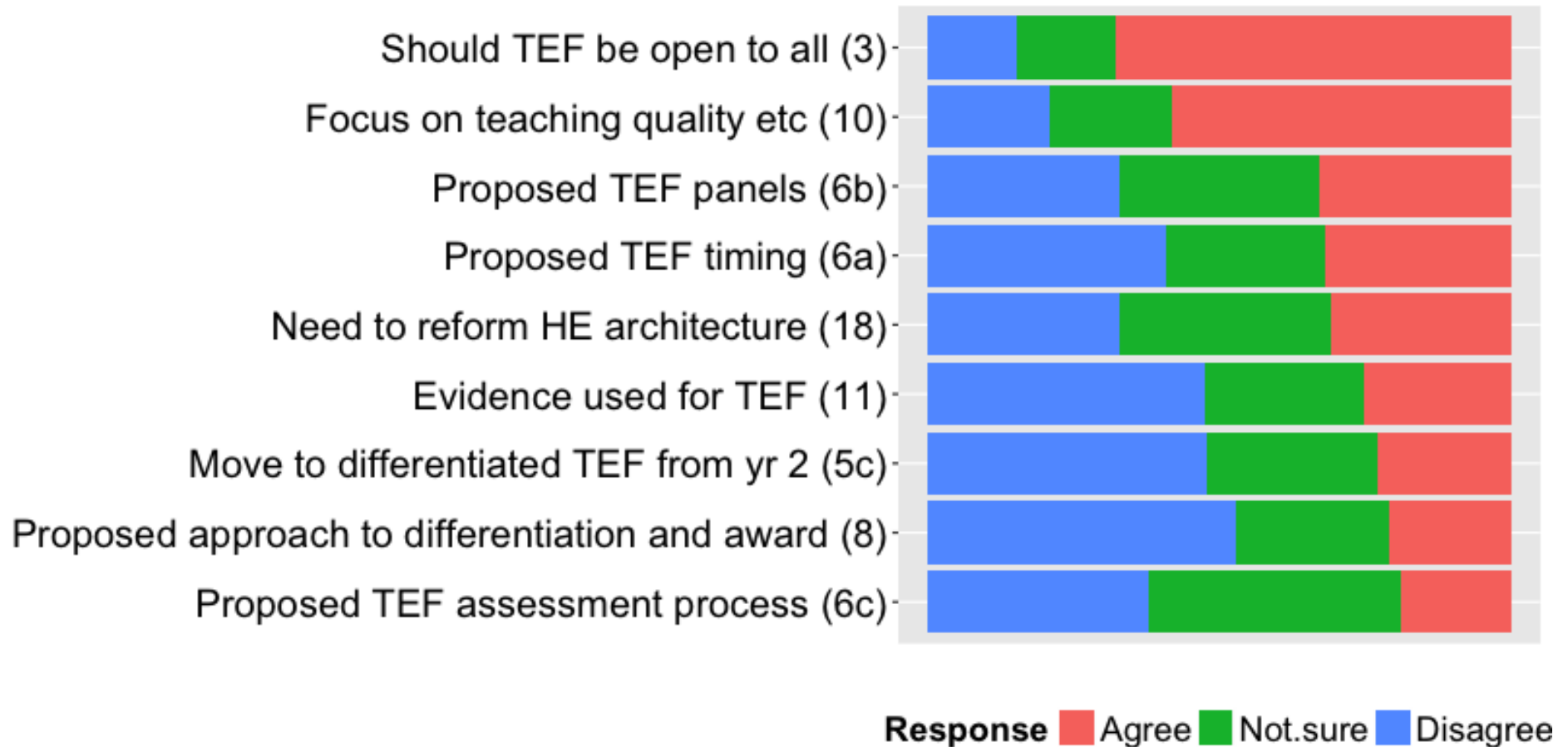
MAY 2016

618 respondees

- 136 Higher Education Institutions
- 26 alternative providers
- 22 further education colleges
- 78 student unions
- + individuals and organisations with a stake in the sector

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/556355/TEF_Year_2_specification.pdf

Responses to TEF consultation



Distribution of responses by type of respondent would be interesting, so I requested raw data from BIS.....

Dear Professor Bishop

Thank you for your email of 7 January regarding the results of the consultation exercise to the Green Paper on the Higher Education and Research Bill. On this occasion I have been asked to reply and I would like to apologise for the delay in doing so.

Unfortunately we do not hold the data in the requested format.

I am sorry we are unable to help you with your request.

No wonder it took BIS so long to produce their report: Appears they don't use computers!



Response by the University of Cambridge

“Any model of a teaching excellence framework (TEF) must provide a true measure of teaching excellence. ... a system that relies on crude or reductive metrics would be misleading to students and could create adverse incentives for institutions.

A TEF must be focused on teaching (or learning/educational) excellence alone. It must not be conflated with wider policy issues, such as widening participation.

If a TEF is associated with an ability to increase tuition fees beyond inflation, students would be forced to choose between quality, as measured by a TEF, and affordability. “

Has anyone listened?

Main change between Green Paper and White Paper:

TEF disappeared from the Higher Education Bill

TEF going ahead without Government approval: does not need legislation

Proposed TEF metrics

Table 5 TEF metrics aligned with aspects of quality

Aspect	Metric	Source
Teaching Quality	Teaching on my course	NSS Q1-4
Teaching Quality	Assessment and feedback	NSS Q5-9
Learning Environment	Academic support	NSS Q10-12
Learning Environment	Non-Continuation	HESA and ILR data
Student Outcomes and Learning Gain	Employment or further study	DLHE declared activity 6 months after graduation
Student Outcomes and Learning Gain	Highly skilled employment or further study	DLHE declared activity 6 months after graduation

- Some changes made since Green Paper
- To be interpreted in light of qualitative information about 'context'

Key

NSS: National Student Survey

ILR: Individualised Learner Record (FE)

DLHE: Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/556355/TEF_Year_2_specification.pdf



“Outcomes in Year Two will not be associated with differential fee uplifts for providers in England – rather, all those achieving a rating of Bronze, Silver and Gold will receive the full inflationary uplift. However, these awards will be used from Year Three onwards to inform differentiated fees”

Validity of proposed TEF metrics

The NSS scales

Teaching on my course

- 1 - Staff are good at explaining things.
- 2 - Staff have made the subject interesting.
- 3 - Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.
- 4 - The course is intellectually stimulating.

Assessment and Feedback

- 5 - The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
- 6 - Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.
- 7 - Feedback on my work has been prompt.
- 8 - I have received detailed comments on my work.
- 9 - Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand

Academic Support

- 10 - I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.
- 11 - I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.
- 12 - Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.

Benchmark factors:

Subject of Study, Age on Entry, Ethnicity, Sex, Disability

Problems with NSS as a metric

1. It doesn't measure teaching quality

Response by Royal Statistical Society

Question 1 (Chapter 1)

Do you agree with the criteria proposed in Figure 4?

Yes

No

Not sure

Please outline your reasons and suggest any alternatives or additions.

Response by Royal Statistical Society

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Not sure

Please outline your reasons and suggest any alternatives or additions.

It is concerning that Figure 4 equates student satisfaction as measured by the National Student Survey (NSS) with Teaching Quality. We are not aware that there is any evidence of a statistical association between the two concepts.

What some research does show is that there is no reliable association between the two. ¹

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“Anecdotally, we have heard of institutions explicitly ‘dumbing down’ programmes so as to result in higher NSS scores. A new TEF needs to recognise this and mitigate against it. One goal of higher education is to produce highly educated people of use to the society of the future and the NSS inadvertently encourages the opposite.”

TEF to limit use of 'flawed' NSS scores

Chair voices concerns over student satisfaction data as Cambridge's students' union joins NSS boycott

January 25, 2017

“I do not think student satisfaction is an accurate proxy for teaching quality,” said Professor Husbands, a former director of the UCL Institute of Education who was named [chair](#) of the TEF panel by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in August 2016. Professor Husbands drew attention to US studies that show that student satisfaction scores are heavily influenced by non-academic factors, including the sex or ethnicity of a lecturer. “Student satisfaction seems to be driven by the physical attractiveness of academics rather than anything else,” he said of the US research findings. He added that the TEF panel would “not draw policy from a single data point” and that “all data” are “flawed” in some respect. However, he went on, the challenge was to recognise and understand the flaws, and to learn how the information could be used effectively.

Problems with NSS as a metric

1. It doesn't measure teaching quality
2. It doesn't discriminate between institutions

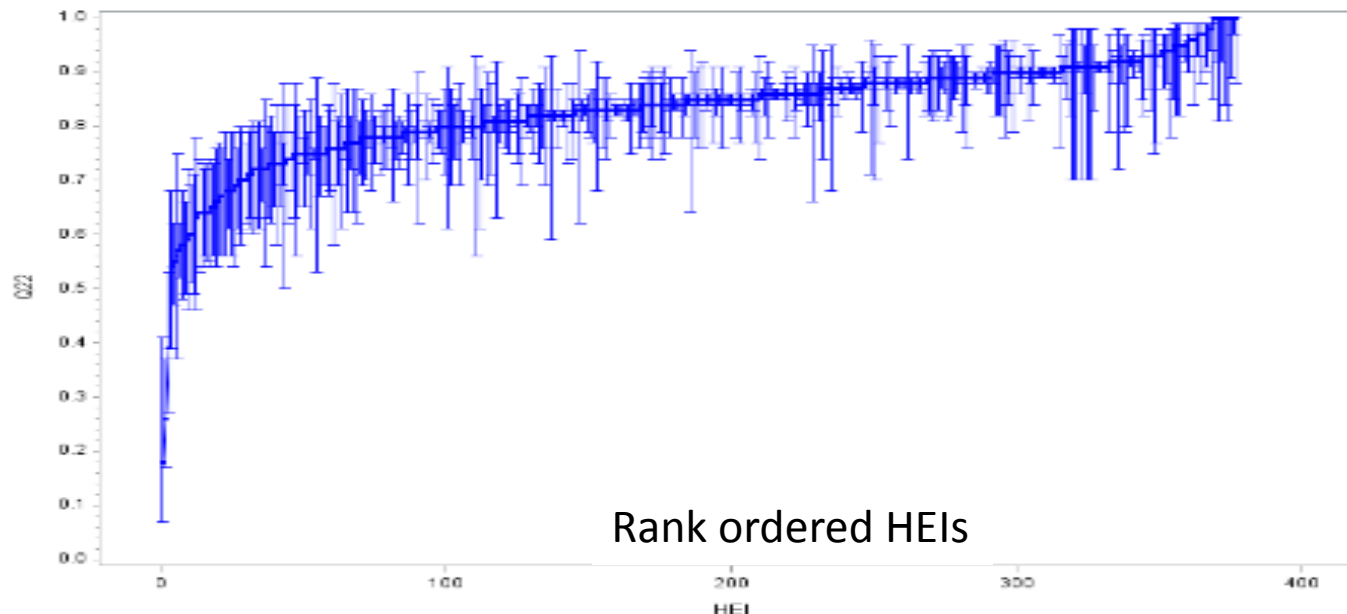
Response by Royal Statistical Society

“It is not clear that it is possible to discriminate the vast majority of HE institutions on the overall NSS satisfaction scores, let alone when they are broken down into smaller subgroups.”

Cites ONS: “Teaching Excellence Framework: Review of Data Sources --- Interim Report”



Figure 1: Percentage of students with positive response to Q22 – Overall satisfaction

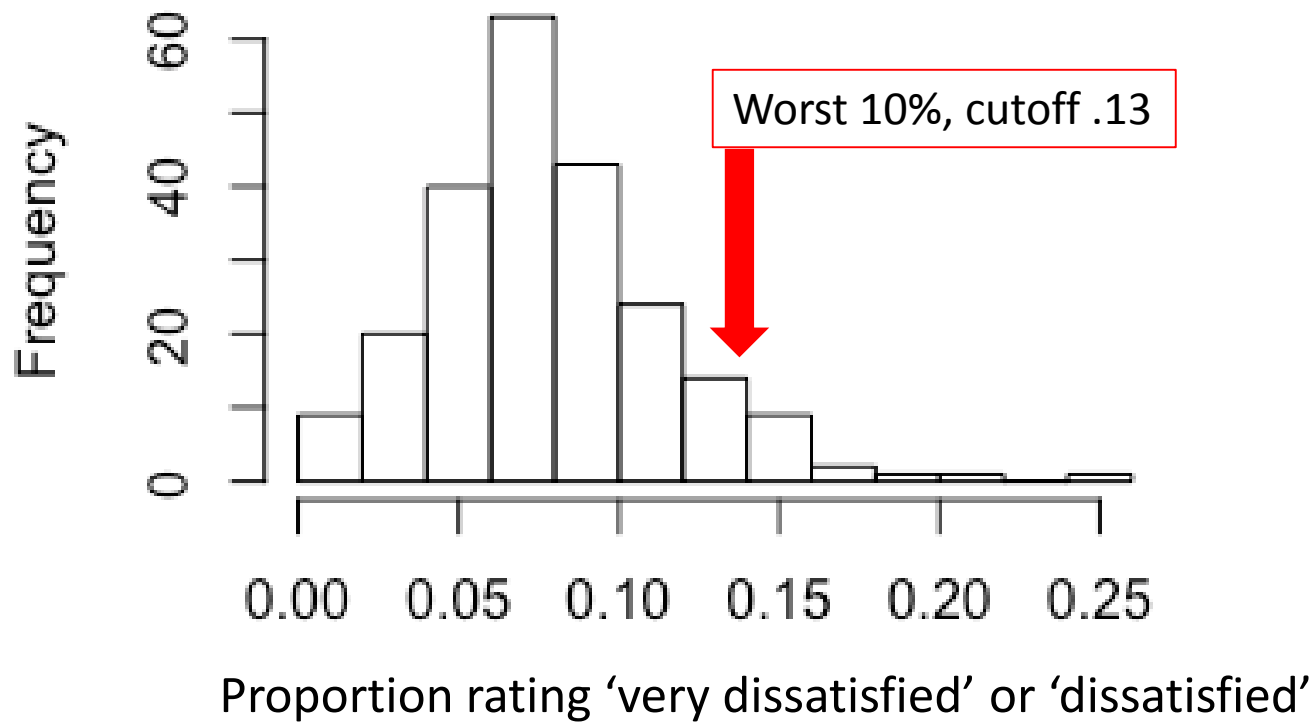


Line shows mean score, vertical bar shows confidence interval

Problems with NSS as a metric

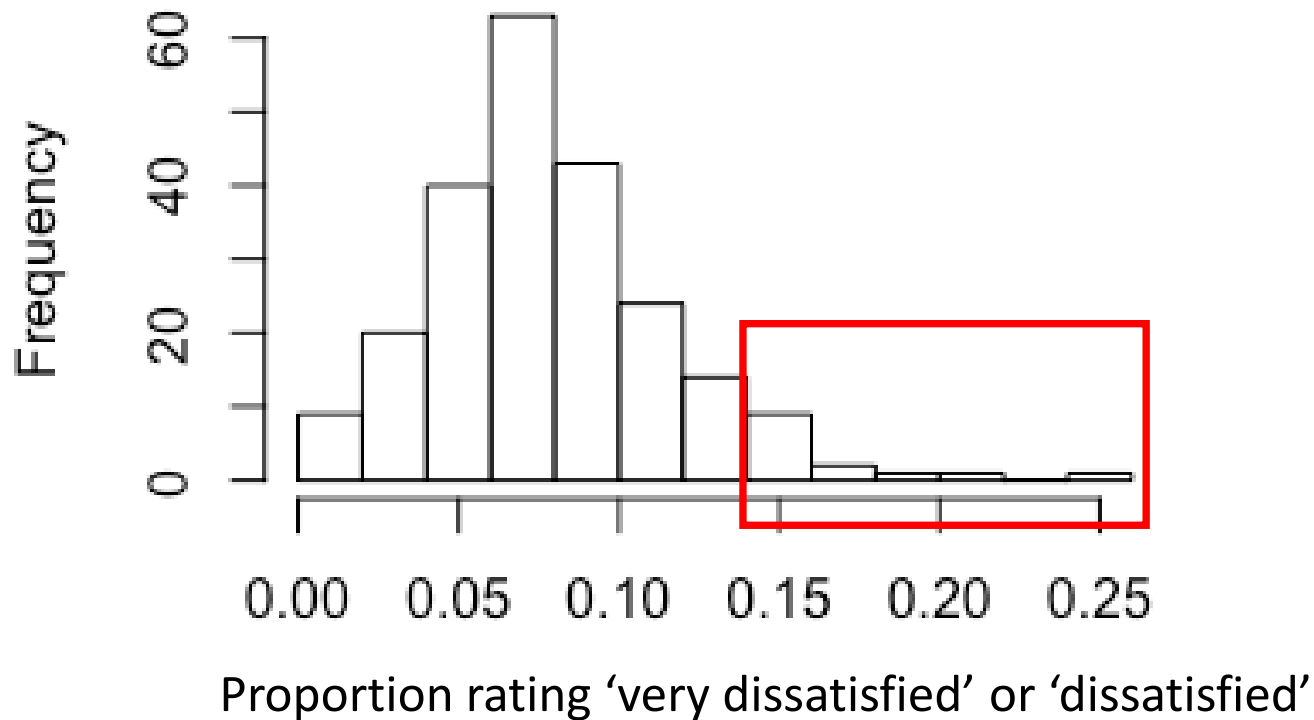
1. It doesn't measure teaching quality
2. It doesn't discriminate between institutions
3. Success is defined relative to all providers
i.e. norm-referenced rather than criterion-referenced

Problems with norm-referenced measure



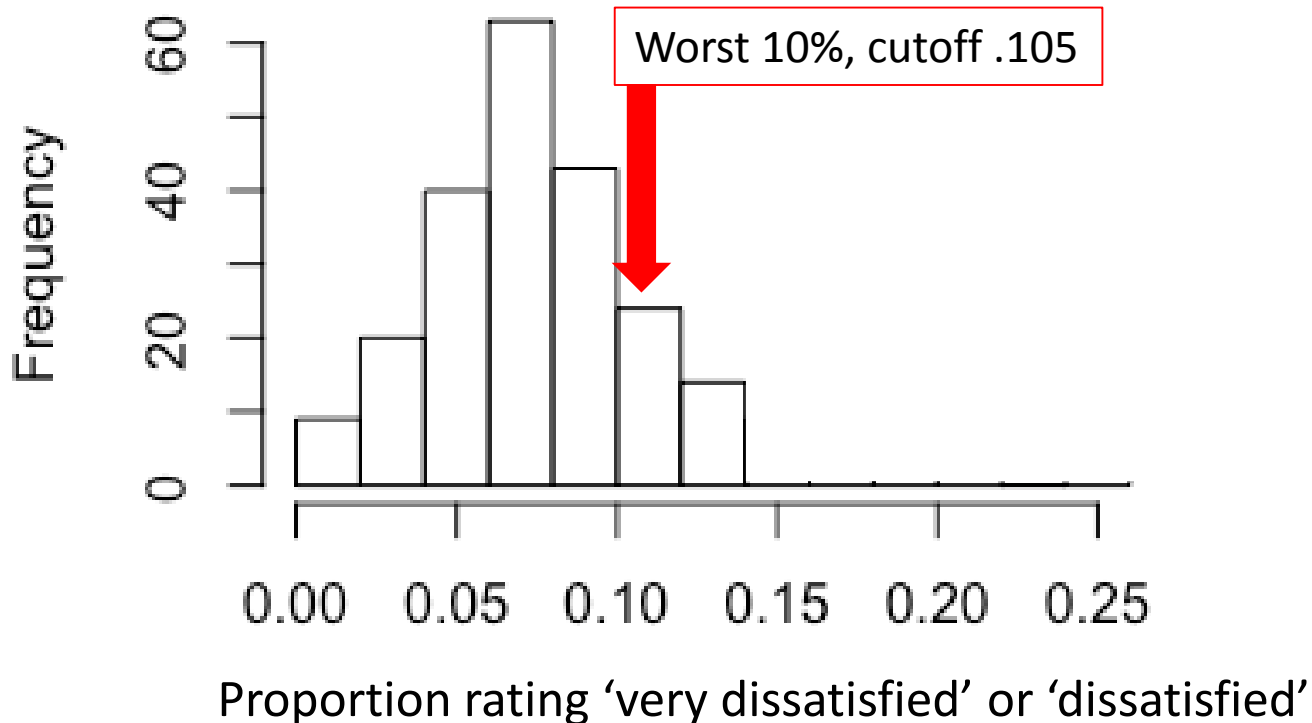
Problems with norm-referenced measure

Suppose the worst-performing institutions either improve or go out of business



Problems with norm-referenced measure

Cutoff now moves: however good they are, some institutions will always be in the bottom 10%



Problems with norm-referenced measure

- Measure only as good as the data it is based on
 - What if substantial N students don't comply?
 - What if institutions likely to do poorly opt out?
- Benchmarking raises statistical problems: very difficult to compare institutions fairly when different sizes; unclear how best to estimate standard errors

Cost-benefit analysis of TEF

Cost-benefit analysis of TEF



Department
for Business
Innovation & Skills

DETAILED IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Higher Education and Research
Bill

JUNE 2016

Table 1: Summary of annual direct impacts on business from measures in the Higher Education and Research Bill (equivalent annual net direct cost to business (£m))

	Direct Cost to business (£m)	Direct Benefit to business (£m)	Net Direct Cost to Business (EANDCB) (£m)
Teaching Excellence Framework	20.0	1146.0	-1126.0

= Universities/HEIs

Estimated as £53K per institution on average

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/528005/bis-16-295-he-research-bill-detailed-impact-assessment.pdf

<https://deevybee.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/cost-benefit-analysis-of-teaching.html>

Cost-benefit analysis of TEF: Benefits

Table 14: Benefits to HEIs in real terms

Year	Student N (millions)	Inflation	Fee, no TEF	Fee, Bronze	Fee, Silver/Gold
2016/17	0.995	2.5	9,000		
2017/18	1.02	2.8	8,755	9,000	
2018/19	1.04	3	8,500	9,000	9,000
2019/20	1.055	3.1	8,244	8,863	9,000
2020/21	1.065	3.1	7,996	8,727	9,000
2021/22	1.087	3	7,764	8,598	9,000
2022/23	1.11	3	7,537	8,471	9,000
2023/24	1.134	2.9	7,325	8,350	9,000
2024/25	1.158	2.9	7,119	8,231	9,000
2025/26	1.182	2.8	6,925	8,117	9,000

- Projections crucially dependent on correctly predicting student N and inflation rate
- Benefits of TEF vs no TEF purely down to fact that fees will be fixed if no TEF

Cost-benefit analysis of TEF

Why not allow everyone to increase fees in line with inflation provided they have a satisfactory Quality Assurance rating?

“whilst QA is a good starting point, reliance on QA alone and in the longer-term will not enable significant differentiation of teaching quality to help inform student decisions and encourage institutions to improve their teaching quality.” (p. 37).

One consequence (and one suspects one purpose) of TEF is to facilitate the division into institutional sheep and goats, followed by starvation of the goats.

(Bishopblog analysis, July 2016)

Warwick vice-chancellor: universities 'backed into a corner' by TEF

Warwick vice-chancellor Stuart Croft on why his university reluctantly joined the 'flawed' teaching excellence framework

January 31, 2017

'...the metrics are flawed. This is not renegade opinion, but rather the overwhelming view of those actually involved in higher education.... Yet the government has us over a barrel. It has linked the TEF to tuition fees and, potentially, our ability to recruit international students.'

What about costs to academic staff?

REF demands

Bring in substantial grant income

Publish in 'high impact' journals

Manage a research group

Demonstrate impact beyond academia

TEF demands

Be available for students at all times

Provide detailed and prompt feedback

Give interesting lectures with enthusiasm

Ensure students go on to get good jobs



Can one person do all of these?
As well as being good 'academic citizen'?

Alternative approaches to restore balance of teaching and research

1. Include student learning in the impact section of REF

Professor Roger Brown

<http://cdbu.org.uk/reflections-on-the-green-paper-tef/>

Alternative approaches to restore balance of teaching and research

2.

**Higher
Education
Network**

Tef: dump the pointless metrics and take a hard look at casualisation

US research shows that putting staff on insecure contracts affects the success of students. The least the UK government could do is some studies of its own

Sally Hunt

Sally Hunt is general secretary of the University and College Union

Tuesday 8 November
2016 12.26 GMT



325

18



<https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2016/nov/08/tef-dump-the-pointless-metrics-and-take-a-hard-look-at-casualisation>

House of Lords Debate, 18th Jan 2017

Lord Willetts

These are not perfect measures. We are on a journey, and I look forward to these metrics being revised and replaced by superior metrics in the future. They are not as bad as we have heard in some of the caricatures of them, and in my experience, if we wait until we have a perfect indicator and then start using it, we will have a very long wait. If we use the indicators that we have, however imperfect, people then work hard to improve them. That is the spirit with which we should approach the TEF today

Lord Lipsey

Before the noble Lord sits down, will he explain what consolation he will offer to those institutions which are put out of business, at worst, while we perfect the metric that is being used in this case?

The final word?

Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (Lab)

My Lords, the noble Lord, Lord Willetts, said that we are embarking on a journey, which indeed we are, but I feel that the car in which we will travel does not yet have all the component parts. I therefore wonder if, when we have concluded all our debates, rather than going full speed ahead into a TEF for everybody who wants to participate, we should have some pilots. In that way the metrics could be amended quite properly before everybody else embarks on the journey with us.

<http://www.slideshare.net/deevybishop/reading-list-whats-wrong-with-our-universities>

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cdbu.org.uk

Lowest-scoring item: 'Feedback on my work has been prompt'

prompt

adjective · **UK**  /prompt/ **US**  /pra:mpt/

★ **B2** (of an action) done quickly and without delay, or (of a person) acting quickly or arriving at the arranged time: