

# This week's webinars

**Monday: What about the PGRs?**

**Tuesday: What keeps senior uni people awake at night?**

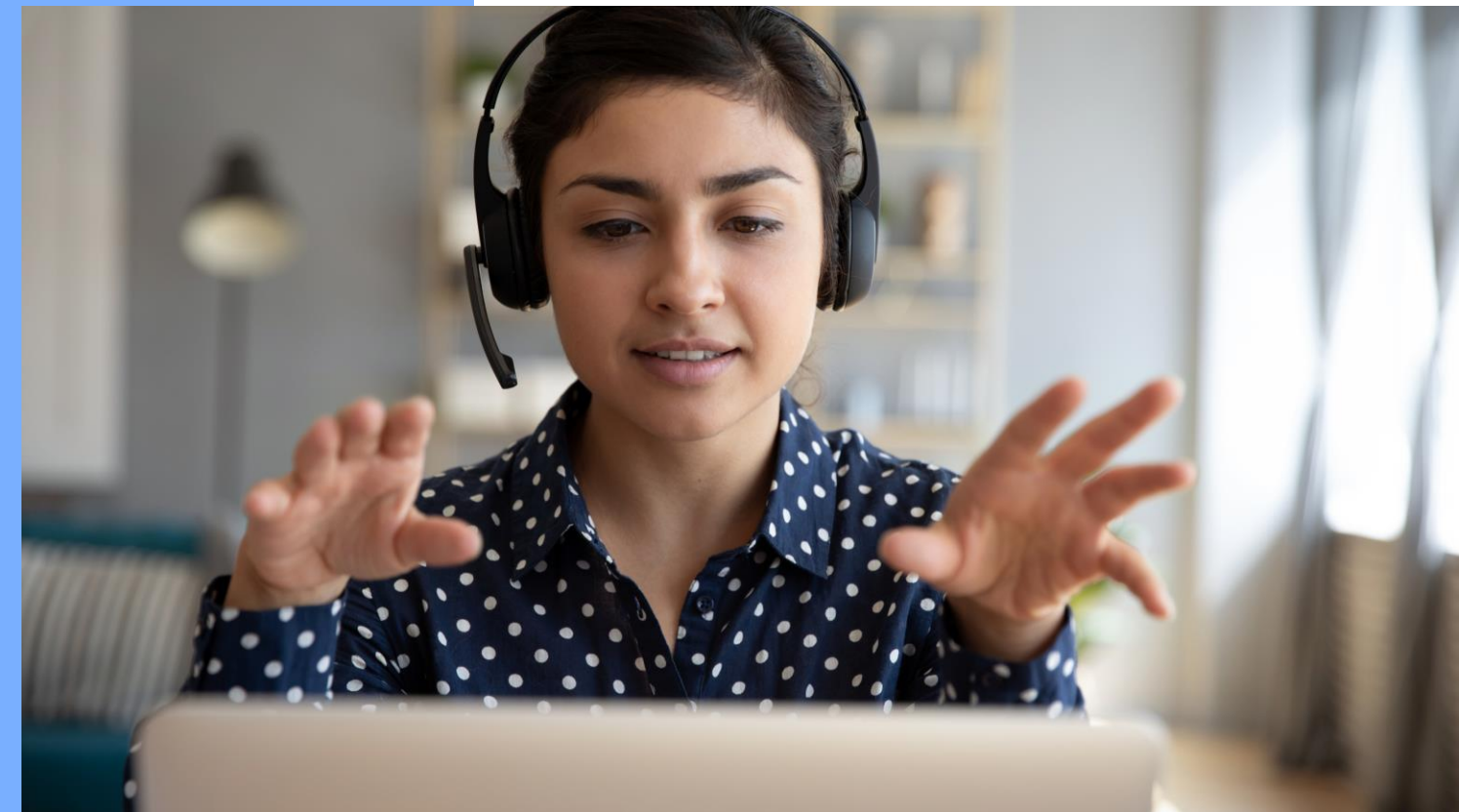
**Wednesday:**



**Thursday: Sport and higher education policy**

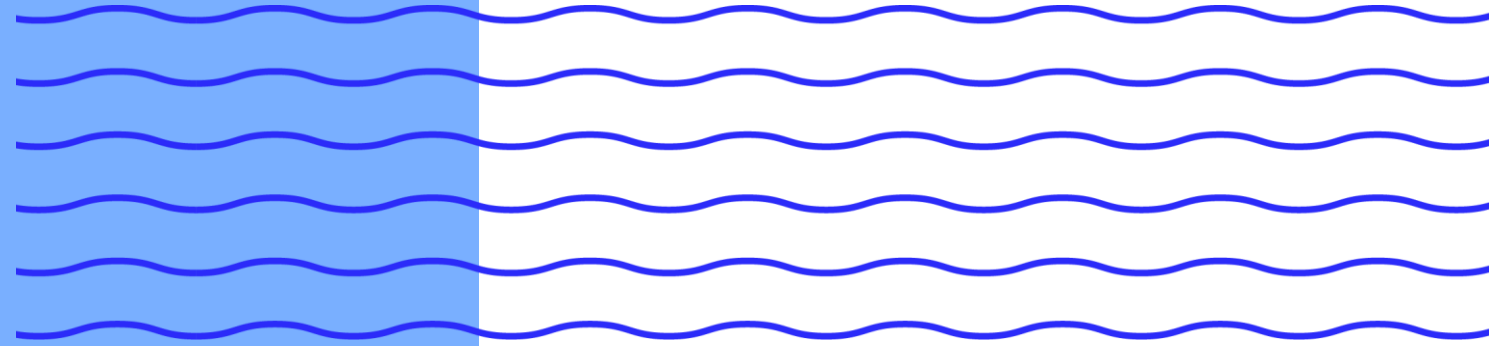
**Friday: Understanding the TEF, NSS and LEO**

- Designed to get you up to speed over the summer
- Around 30-45 mins of content plus questions and guests
- Try to keep your mic muted
- Do have some questions and comments lined up as we go
- Slides, recording and some light further reading available afterwards



**WONKHE**

# Understanding the TEF, NSS and LEO



**WONKHE**

# The year is 2005

- Survey of all final year undergraduate degree students at institutions in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom.
- Designed to assess undergraduate students' opinions of the quality of their degree programmes, with seven different “category” scores published including an "overall satisfaction" mark.
- Results “will be an essential element of the revised quality assurance framework for higher education, as part of a package of new public information on teaching quality”
- The survey “is designed primarily to inform prospective students and their advisers in choosing what and where to study”.





# The NSS

- **The teaching on my course**  
Staff are good at explaining things  
Staff have made the subject interesting  
Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching  
The course is intellectually stimulating
- **Assessment and Feedback**  
The criteria used in marking have been made clear in advance  
Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair  
Feedback on my work has been prompt  
I have received detailed comments on my work  
Feedback on my work has helped me clarify things I did not understand
- **Academic support**  
I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies  
I have been able to contact staff when I needed to  
Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices



# The NSS

- **Organisation & Management**

The timetable works effectively as far as my activities are concerned  
Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively

The course is well organised and is running smoothly

- **Learning Resources**

The library resources and services are good enough for my needs

I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to

I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities, or rooms when I needed to

- **Personal development**

The course has helped me to present myself with confidence

My communication skills have improved

As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems



# The NSS

And the big one...

- **Overall satisfaction**

Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course



# Some features

## Likert

- N/A etc Not applicable and other
  1. Definitely disagree
  2. Mostly disagree
  3. Neither agree nor disagree
  4. Mostly agree
  5. Definitely agree



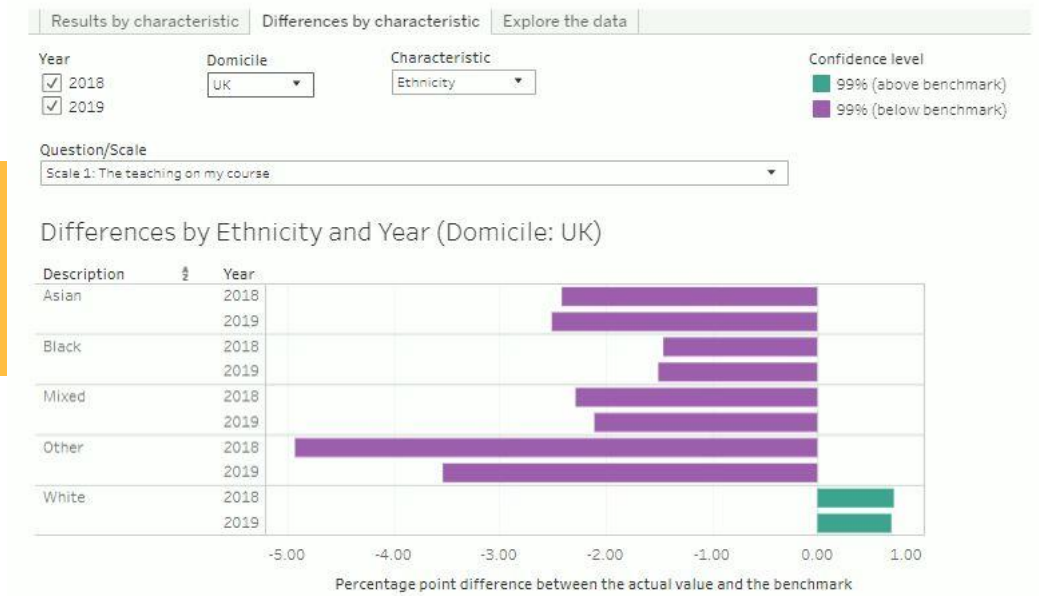
# Issues

- Big focus on overall satisfaction
- Percentage mostly agree or definitely agree
- Statistically insignificant “bunching”
- Focus shift in the mid-OOs with debate over SU question
- SU/NUS support has changed over years
- Shifted focus from reasons to outcomes
- Free text hidden.



# Issues

- Inappropriate influence.
- Bias in respondents.
- Timing of survey.
- Do metrics like this encourage dropping provision rather than improving it?
- Major equality gaps hidden.
- Coverage
- Community



# The SUs question

- Thinking of all the services, including support, activities and academic representation provided by the Students' Union (Association or Guild) at your institution, to what extent do you agree with the following statement: I am satisfied with the Students' Union (Association or Guild) at my institution



26

- The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
- Feedback on my work has been timely.
- I feel part of a community of staff and students.
- The course is well organised and is running smoothly.
- It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on

# Q26

- Reviewed to focus on “academic interests”
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Cognitive testing
- Right at the end
- Not actively dissatisfied
- Link to wider voice issues
- Will it survive?

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# 2009 to 2018

## Labels to aid student 'consumers'

School leavers applying to English universities will get more data about courses under government plans to treat them more like consumers.

A food labelling-style system will flag up teaching hours, career prospects and seminar frequency, says the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

On Tuesday, it will announce a new framework for higher education.

The plan aims to set out priorities for universities ahead of a review of the way students fund their education.

Tuition fees were introduced in 1998 and Business Secretary Lord Mandelson believes this entitles students to act more like consumers.

**Improvement drive**



Students are bracing themselves for an increase tuition fees

## University degree courses to be ranked in 'MoneySuperMarket' style system, minister says

'Universities will no longer be able to hide if quality of teaching is not up to a world-class standard'

Eleanor Busby Education Correspondent | @Eleanor\_Busby |  
Monday 12 March 2018 15:31 | 31 comments





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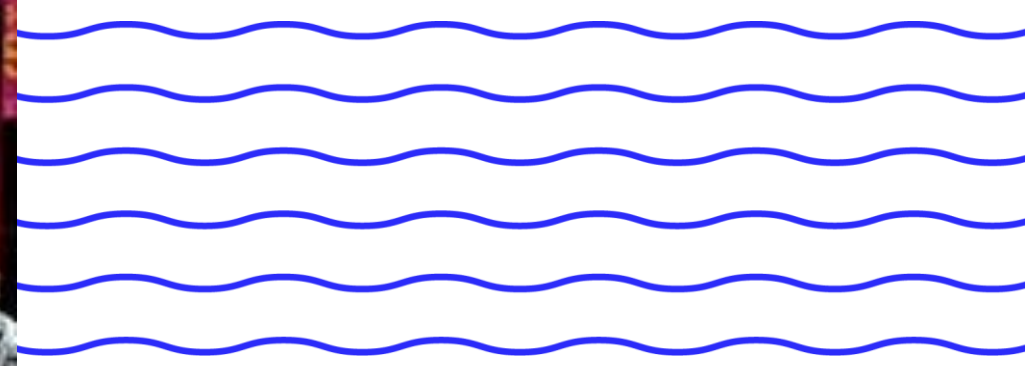


Students are bracing themselves for an increase in tuition fees.

**“In almost every investment we make in our lives, outside of universities, we are able to look at data. You can go to MoneySuperMarket and do that for a whole range of things – but we can’t do that for university courses and I think that is something that needs to be rectified.”**







**WONKHE**



# Back in the day (2010)

- “In our proposals, we are relying on student choice to drive up quality. Students will control a much larger proportion of the investment in higher education. They will decide where the funding should go; and institutions will compete to get it. As students will be paying more than in the current system, they will demand more in return.

## SECURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING & STUDENT FINANCE.  
22 October 2010

[www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report/](http://www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report/)

### PANEL MEMBERS



John  
Browne



Michael  
Barber



Diane  
Coyle



David  
Eastwood



Julia  
King



Rajay  
Naik



Peter  
Sands

For full member biographies,  
please visit our website:  
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# Back in the day

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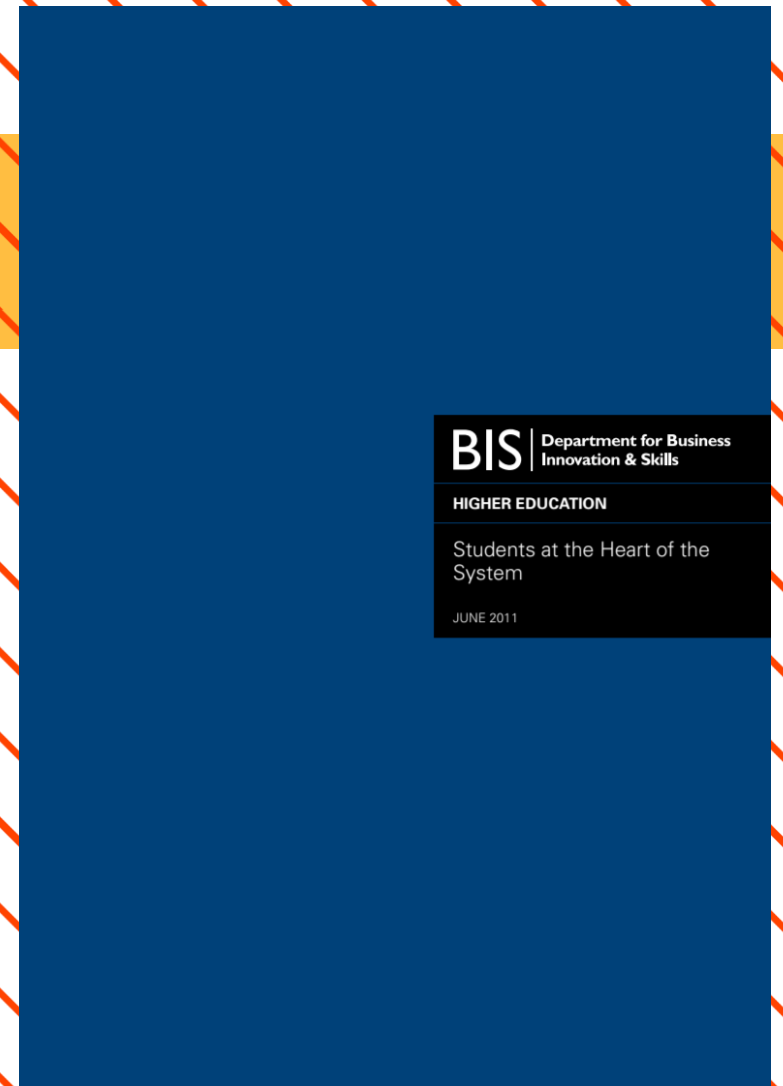
10 October 2010

[www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report/](http://www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report/)



# Story...

- Fees “tripled” (although subsidy wasn’t)
- National scholarship scheme (abandoned)
- White paper 2011
  - “Well-informed students driving teaching excellence”
- Cap starts to be eased off...



## National Student Forum Annual Report 2010

The National Student Forum found that a university is providing a positive teaching and learning experience if a student can say:

- Before I arrived, I knew broadly what to expect
- I feel supported in my learning
- My lecturers are trained, supported and incentivised to teach me well
- I am inspired and challenged
- Assessment and feedback are used to improve my achievement in the future not just to judge my performance to date

# Heart of the system

- We will expect higher education institutions to provide a standard set of information about their courses, and we will make it easier for prospective students to find and compare this information.
- We encourage higher education institutions to publish anonymised information for prospective and existing students about the teaching qualifications, fellowships and expertise of their teaching staff at all levels.
- We invite the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group (HEPISG) to consider whether a National Student Survey of taught postgraduates should be introduced, and whether to encourage institutions to provide a standard set of information for each of their taught postgraduate courses.
- We are asking HEFCE to improve Unistats, so prospective students can make more useful comparisons between subjects at different institutions. From summer 2012, graduate salary information will be added onto Unistats.

# Heart of the system

- We will ask the main organisations that hold student data to make detailed data available publicly, including on employment and earnings outcomes, so it can be analysed and presented in a variety of formats to meet the needs of students, parents and advisors.
- We are asking UCAS and higher education institutions to make available, course by course, new data showing the type and subjects of actual qualifications held by previously successful applicants. This should help young people choose which subjects and qualifications to study at school.
- We have asked the Student Loans Company and UCAS to develop a single application portal for both higher education and student finance applications.







# LEO data

- Tracks salaries and measures are then issued on salaries post graduation
- Closest determinants of salary are prior entry class and geography (universities don't make that much difference)
- Officially about choice but also a way of working out
  - How much a student is “costing” the country
  - If we could shift loans onto universities

# 2015: HEFCE Quality Review

- Reduce “burden” of QAA
- Make university governing bodies more explicitly accountable for their own institutions’ quality
- Increase of use of metrics to drive improvements inside universities
- Substantially beefed up external examiner system



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**WONKE**



NIFESTO 2015



**LEADERSHIP  
OMIC PLAN  
SECURE FUTURE**



# 2015: Post election

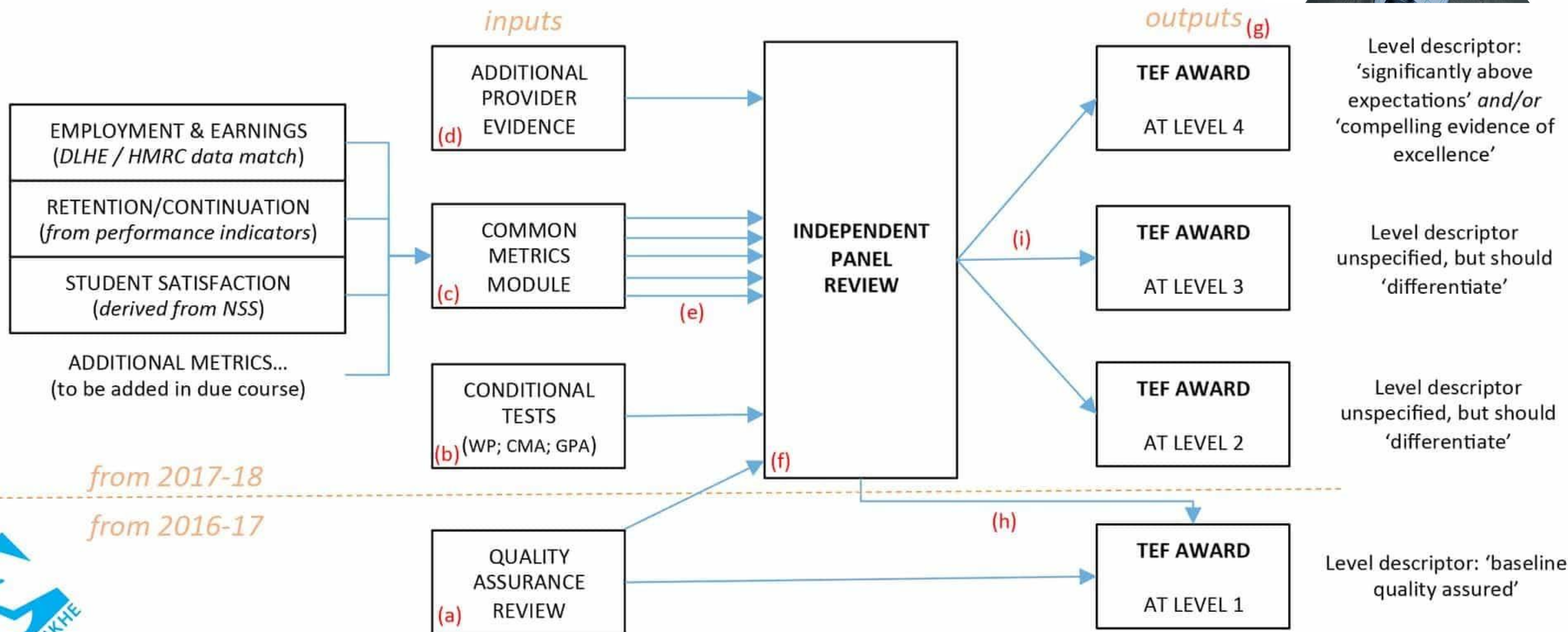
- TEF announced
- Inflationary fees rise linked to success in it
- Grants switched to loans with pocket cash increase
- Easier to get DAP and legislation coming to replace HEFCE

# The TEF

- To ensure all students receive an excellent teaching experience that encourages original thinking, drives up engagement and prepares them for the world of work.
- To build a culture where teaching has equal status with research, with great teachers enjoying the same professional recognition and opportunities for career and pay progression as great researchers.
- To stimulate a diverse HE market and provide students with the information they need to judge teaching quality – in the same way they can already compare a faculty's research rating.
- To recognise those institutions that do the most to welcome students from a range of backgrounds and support their retention and progression to further study or a graduate job.
- I expect the TEF to include a clear set of outcome-focused criteria and metrics. This should be underpinned by an external assessment process undertaken by an independent quality body from within the existing landscape.

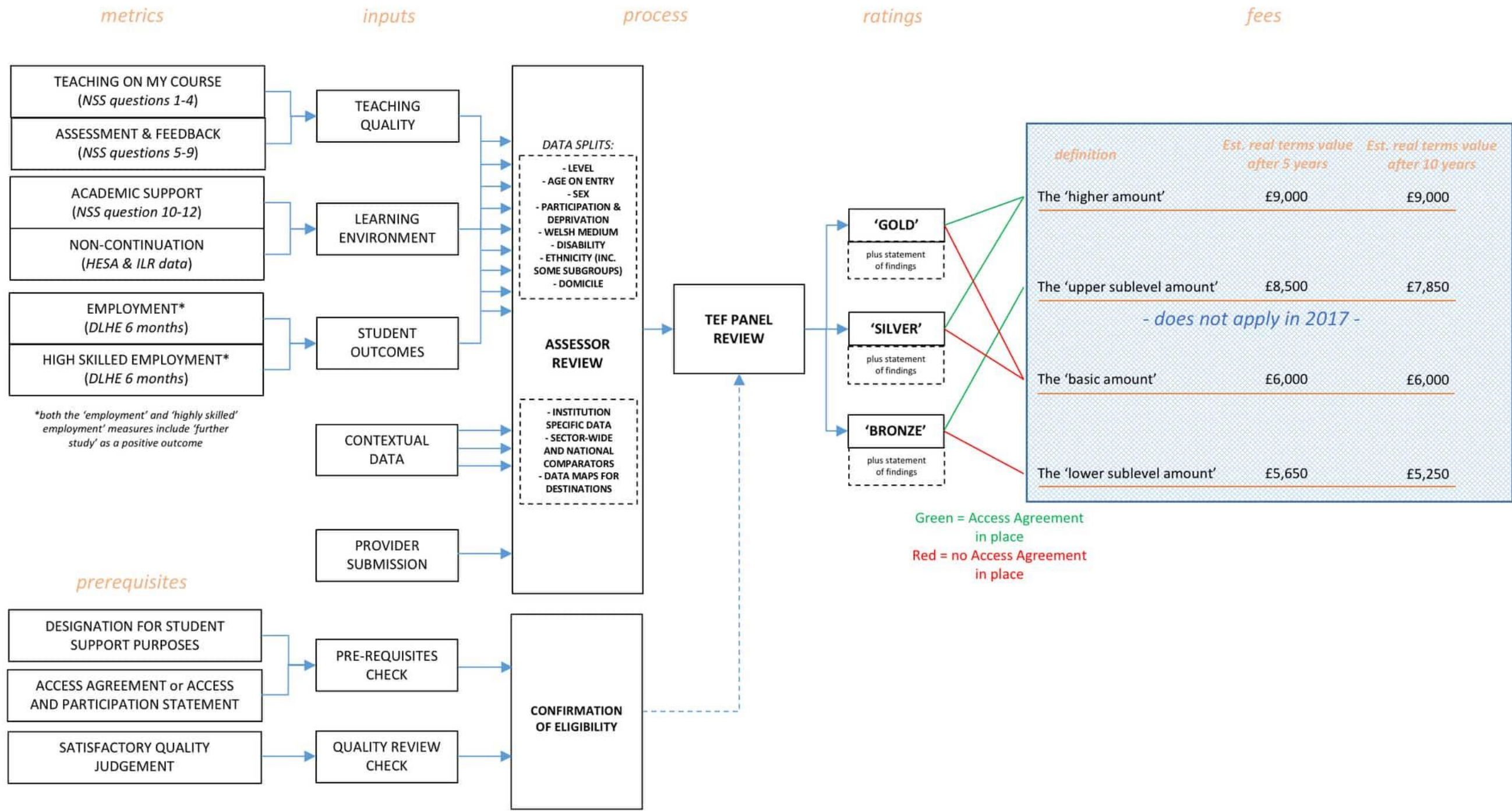


# TEFO





# TEF1



# TEF

- The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is a national exercise, introduced by the government in England. It assesses excellence in teaching at universities and colleges, and how each higher education provider ensures excellent outcomes for their students in terms of graduate-level employment or further study.
- The TEF assesses at ‘provider-level’, which means that each provider of higher education (normally a university or college) is given a single award for their undergraduate provision.
- There are systems in place to help ensure that all UK colleges and universities meet national quality requirements.
- The TEF looks at what they are doing in addition to these requirements, and participating universities and colleges can achieve either gold, silver, bronze, or a provisional award (meaning that they do not yet have enough data for a full assessment).





# HERA

- “create a new regulatory framework for higher education, increase competition and student choice, ensure students receive value for money, and strengthen the research sector”
- OfS is created
- OFFA folded into OfS
- Lots of interest (especially in the Lords)
- TEF to be subject to an independent review



Higher Education and  
Research Act 2017



# TEF2

- Firstly, halving the weighting of the NSS metrics. The NSS remains an extremely valuable source of information, but the new weighting will give it a more proportionate place in the assessment.
- Secondly, adapting the assessment procedure for providers with large numbers of part-time students so that we recognize excellent in part-time provision appropriately.
- And thirdly, although benchmarking will remain at the heart of TEF assessment, we will be explicitly indicating where providers have very high or very low absolute values, and allowing this to inform initial hypotheses where there are no flags.



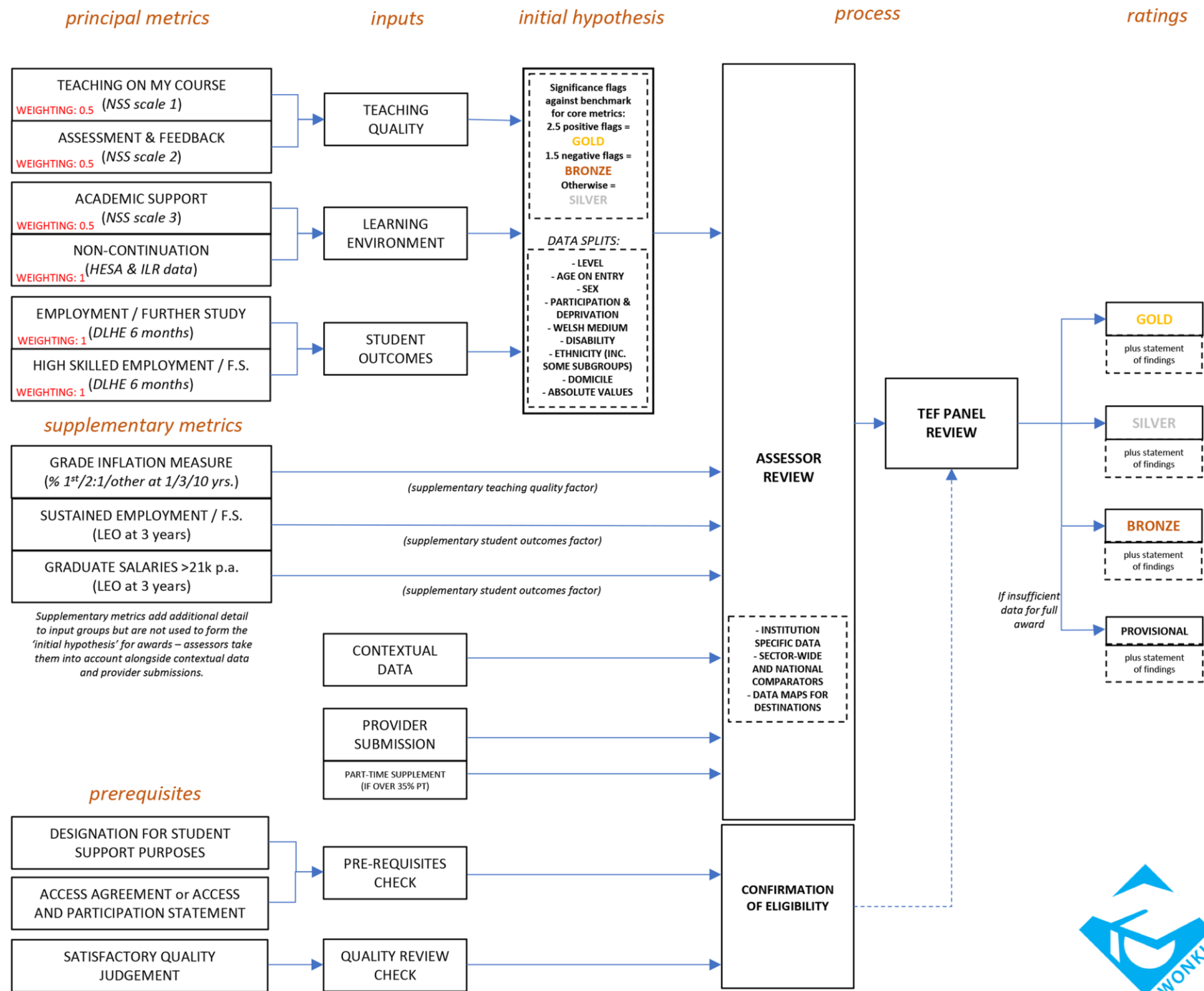
# TEF2 continued

- New metrics:
- A new measure designed to tackle grade inflation.
- A new measure designed to take account of student labour market outcomes based on the powerful LEO datasets.
- Alongside this, as I announced in July, we will be moving ahead with the subject pilots, **including the piloting of a new metric on weighted contact hours.**
- As I've said before, the purpose of these pilots is not to test whether to proceed to subject assessment, but to determine how best to do so.



# TEF3

## TEF3: The Incredible Machine remixed





# Subject pilots

- Some debate about how to arrive at an institutional TEF award
- “Bottom up” or “Top Down”
- UUK = What an expensive endeavour!
- Mild horror at the averages issue
- Lots of debate about what a subject is...
- Complete absence of debate on bronze subjects in Gold institutions
- Research emerges on use value of TEF to applicants...

# Early 2019: TEF Review

Section 26 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

1. The process by which ratings are determined under the scheme [for assessing quality in Higher Education] and the sources of statistical information used in that process;
2. Whether that process, and those sources of statistical information, are fit for use for the purpose of determining ratings under the scheme;
3. The names of the ratings under the scheme and whether those names are appropriate;
4. The impact of the scheme on the ability of higher education providers to which the scheme applies to carry out their functions (including in particular their functions relating to teaching and research);
5. An assessment of whether the scheme is in the public interest; and
6. Any other matters that the appointed person considers relevant.





# TEF Review

Completed last summer

- The Office for National Statistics has had a close look at the metrics.
- The British Council has carried out some work on international attitudes to the exercise.
- UCAS has been helpful in gathering the views of applicants on the usefulness of the exercise, and the information they need to make good choices.
- Debates about relevance, cost, usefulness, fairness (benchmarking), statisticality, impact (+tive and -tive)



# TEF review

We will get:

- a reflection on learning gain;
- a look at how the metrics can be improved (LEO's lack of geographical context was mentioned);
- some thoughts on the balance between absolute and relative values;
- a response to widespread student concerns about their input into the process;
- and some views on the “balance” between provider and subject-TEF.

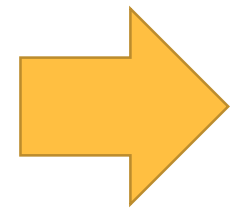
We appear to be looking at refinement here rather than anything particularly dramatic.



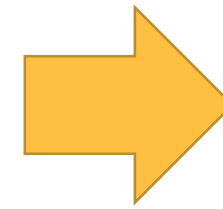
# Politics...

- Brexit and the winter election
- Jo Johnson kills Augar and punches up TEF (and then resigns)
- Williamson “announces” subject-TEF ahead of review publication
- Election happens and kills everything
- Big majorities means that ministers can basically ignore independent reviews, select committees, etc etc

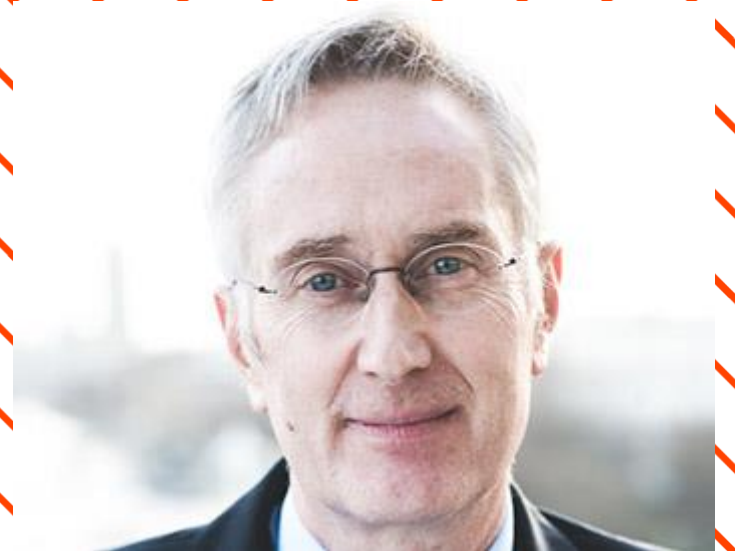
# Relationships



Department  
for Education



Office for  
Students





## 1. Initial provider registration process

- Governance/Finances and “Baseline” outcomes

## 2. Access and Participation regime

- “Trajectories”, “Autonomous” targets, monitoring and fining regime

## 3. Teaching Excellence (and Outcomes) Framework

- Inherited, subject pilots etc



# Clues...

- Manifesto: “We will continue to explore ways to tackle the problem of grade inflation and low quality courses”
- OfS: “We set numerical baselines for indicators such as continuation, completion and employment as part of our assessment of the outcomes delivered for Students. Our view is that a minimum level of performance should be delivered for all students, regardless of their background or what and where they study. We will consult on raising these baselines so that they are more demanding, and on using our regulatory powers to require providers to improve pockets of weak provision.”





# Clues

- We are also actively seeking to align our regulation of access and participation more closely with other elements of the regulatory framework such as the TEF and the quality conditions in the regulatory framework, to ensure that these different aspects of our regulation work consistently and coherently with one another. Our consultation on the TEF during 2020 will explore how it can more effectively support access and participation priorities.

# Clues

- With that in mind, I would like the OfS to publish subject level TEF in 2021. This should be alongside the implementation of a new TEF model to be developed following the publication of the government response to the Dame Shirley Pearce's Independent Review of TEE undertaken under Section 26 of HERA 2017.
- This new model should ensure the TEF is seamlessly integrated into OfS's approach to the regulation of quality more broadly.



# Clues

- The proposed framework that's coming soon for recurrent funding is to be based around three themes.
- First is courses, where the proposed (but not yet fully disclosed) approach will support the “quality” of provision, the “choice and experience” available to students, and the “wider economic and social benefit” of higher education. Understanding costs within this theme “would be important”, as would “driving value”.
- The second theme will be students, where investment is to be focussed on “where it can most effectively reduce gaps in equality of opportunity in access, success, and progression”, moving towards an “explicit link” between funding and the commitments in access and participation plans.
- And the third will be providers, where investment will “protect and promote world leading provision”.



# So...

- What if the Augar response takes back some of the subsidy and distributes it via OfS?
- What if OfS brings together its activities into a mega machine at subject level?
- What if they ditch “student voice” at subject level?

# Subject TEF

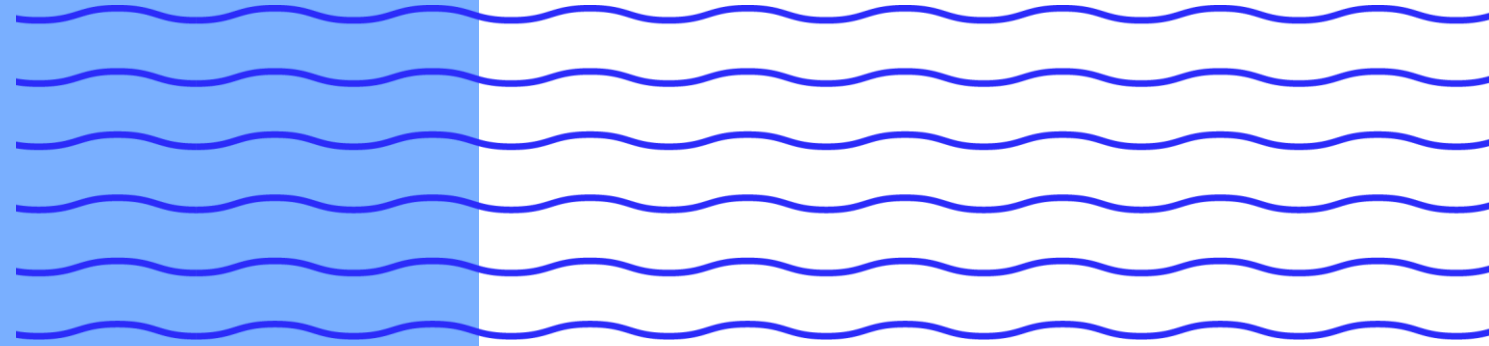
- It could matter massively to funding
- Watch out for unintended/intended consequences (ie killing provision)
- Departmental accountabilities
- I ain't got no levers though
- Do you know which bits might struggle?
- Will student voice survive at subject-level, and what are the implications for SUs?  
(accountability & independence not preconditions)

# Where does that leave us

- People love metrics and often senior people are judged on them
- They never tell us “why”
- Interrogating from multiple perspectives can reveal things
- They can be a lever but can also prevent sharing and cause dangerous competition



# Understanding the TEF, NSS and LEO



**WONKHE**

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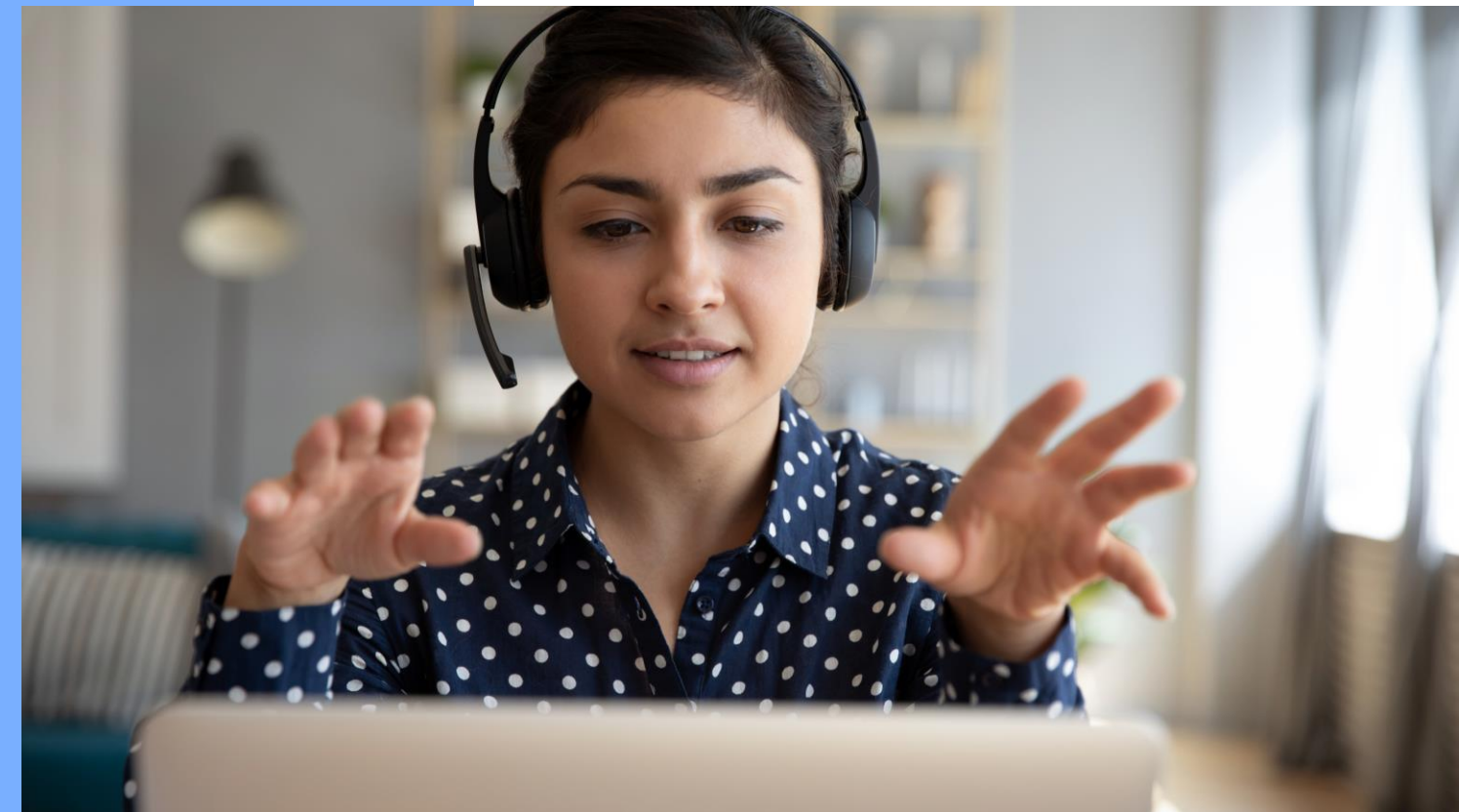
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