

# Medium-sized issues?

What's coming for SUs to consider in their strategy work?

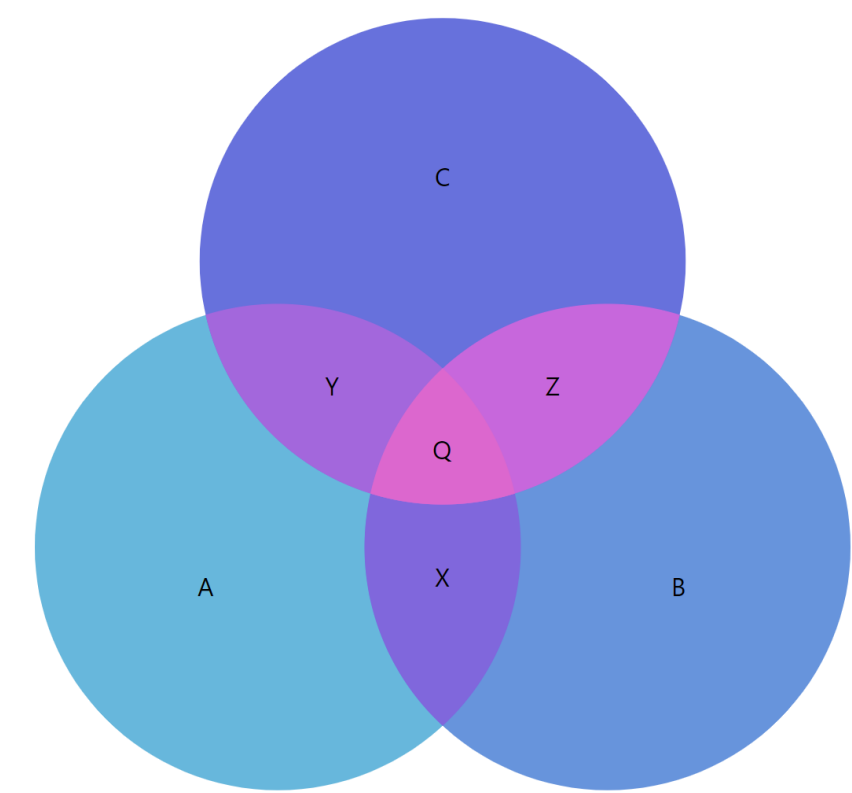
JIM DICKINSON, WONKHE SUs



**WONKHE**  
SUs

# Money

- Fiscal drag and the £25,000 threshold
- Inflation (student inflation)
- Energy bills
- Rent and demand for housing
- Pressures on university hardship funding
- Worsening unit of resource in the university



# This academic year

- RT to campus and “living with” Covid
- Post pandemic – how blended?
- Mental health and anxiety – inc hesitancy – belonging
- Teaching and learning and M/H
- Assessment
- Augar response (fees and the triangle)
- Spiking and student health
- The “market” and clustering in the RC
- Outcomes (coming up)

# Minimums and maximums

- Two major (sets) of consultations
- The first concerns the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) which in England is compulsory but that Nations providers usually take part in.
- The second concerns B3: Student Outcomes which is England only (but likely to have long term implications on nations)
- Major student voice changes and implications (and opportunities) in TEF





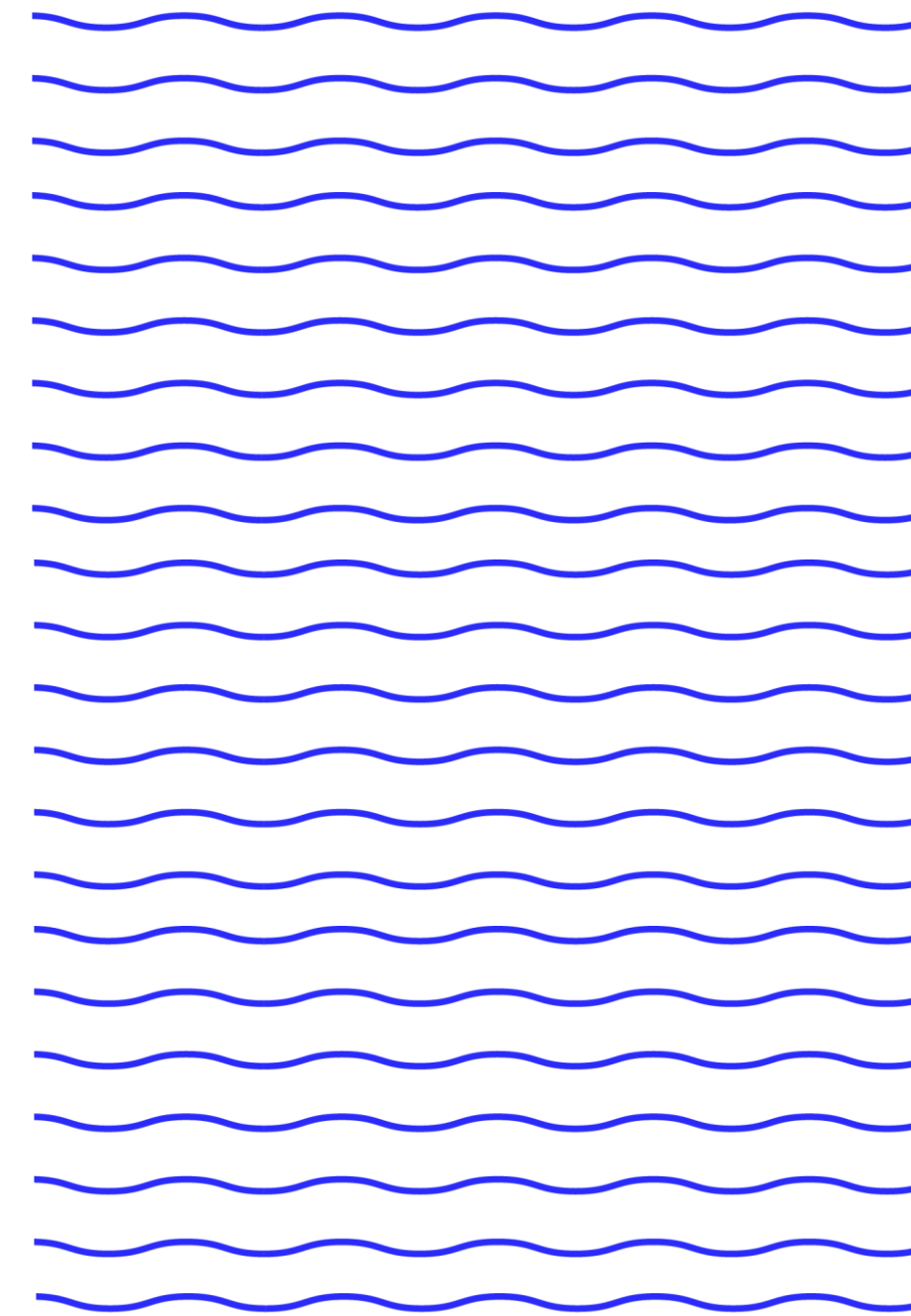
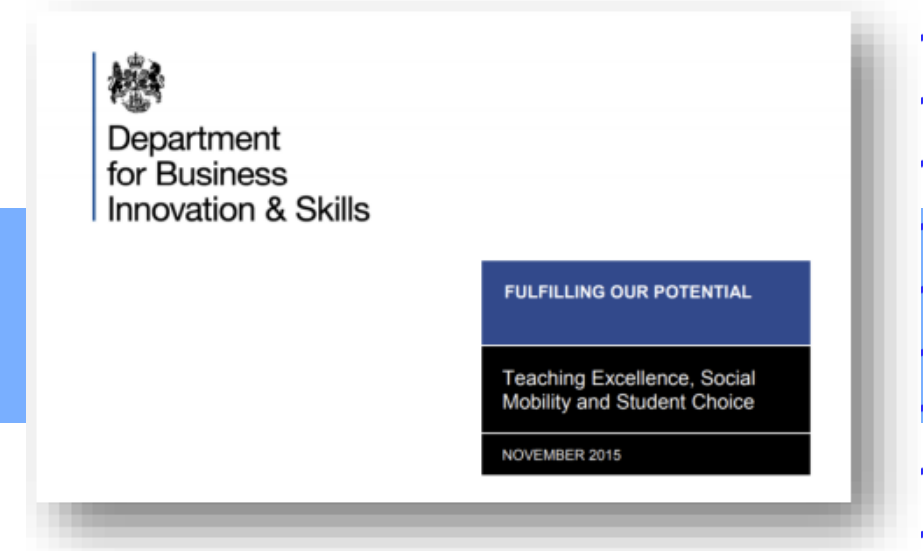
# The TEF

- “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” (p35)



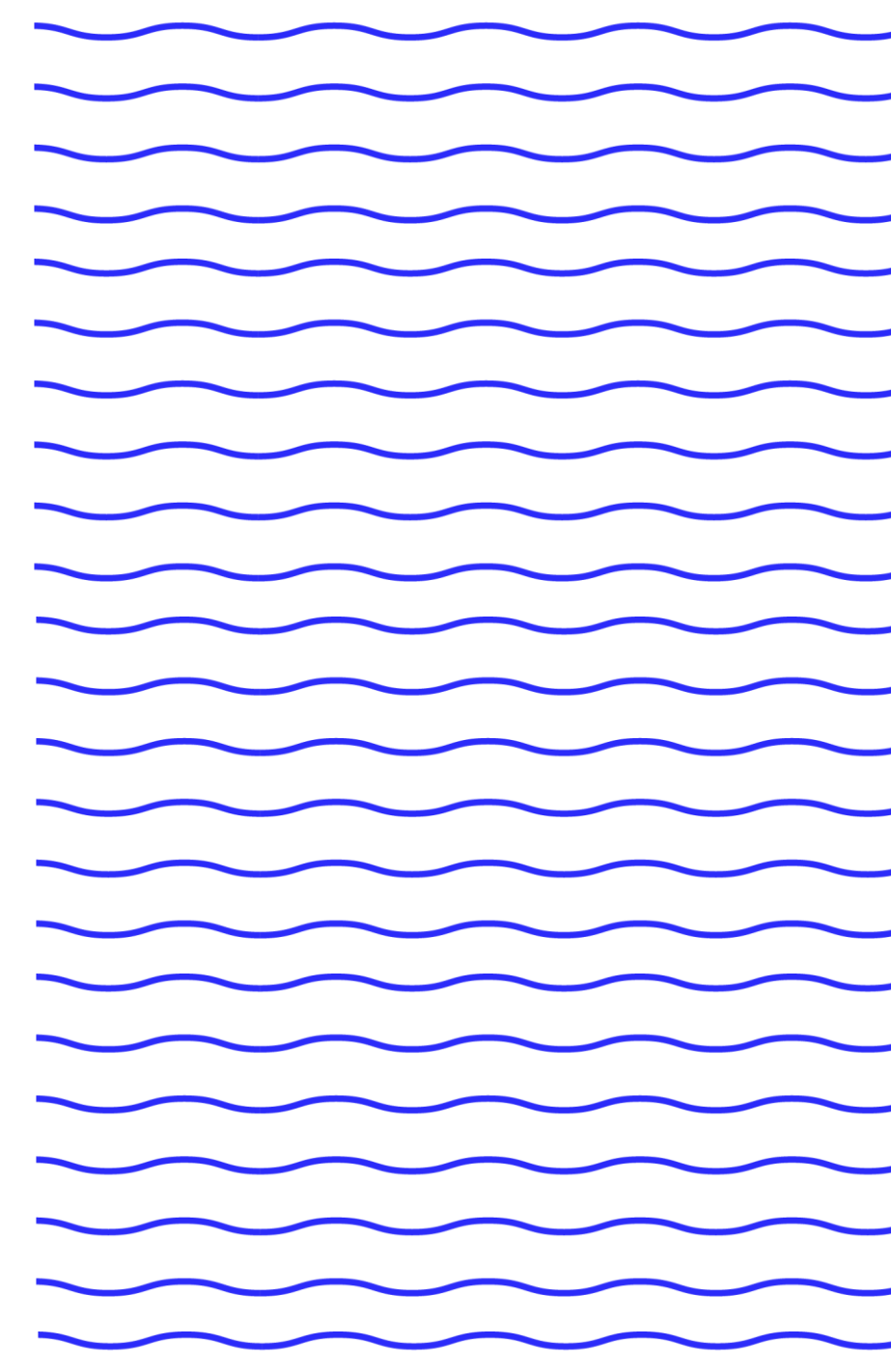
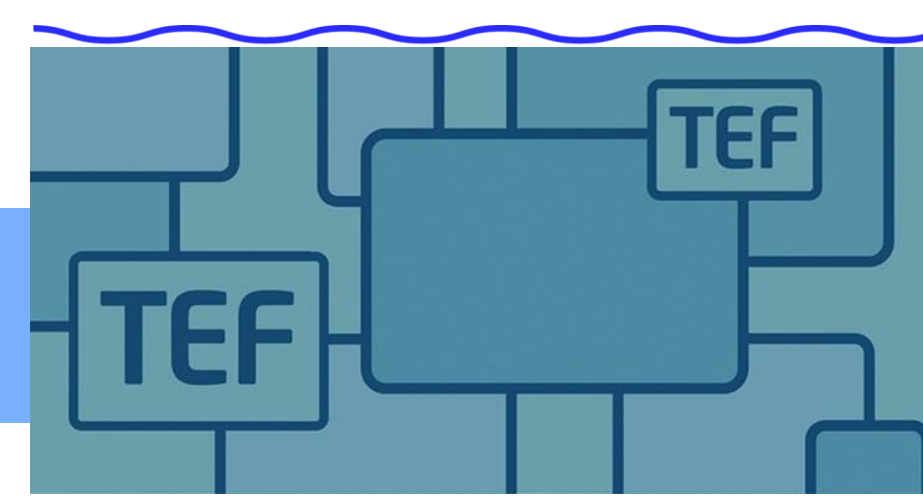
# The TEF

- “It will identify and incentivise the highest quality teaching to drive up standards in higher education, deliver better quality for students and employers and better value for taxpayers”



# The TEF

- Taking part is a requirement in England
- It is optional (based on the permission of the Minister) in devolved nations.
- Unregistered English providers can also apply if desired.
- Doing well in it was originally linked to being able to raise fees – which generated major controversy
- (Boycott, and deprioritising of NSS in calculations)





# University achieves Silver status in Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

22 Jun 2017

Result acknowledges our tremendous progress in recent years to bring about significant improvements in the student experience



The University has today (Thursday, 22 June) been awarded Silver status in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

This result acknowledges the tremendous progress our University has made in recent years to bring about significant improvements in the student experience particularly across teaching quality, assessment and feedback.

The University delivers teaching and learning which is informed by research that has global impact and is given added purpose through our commitment to social responsibility which is unparalleled in UK higher education.



## Provider name

## Award type

- Gold 77
- Silver 136
- Bronze 61
- Provisional 16

## Nation

- England 277
- Wales 8
- Scotland 5

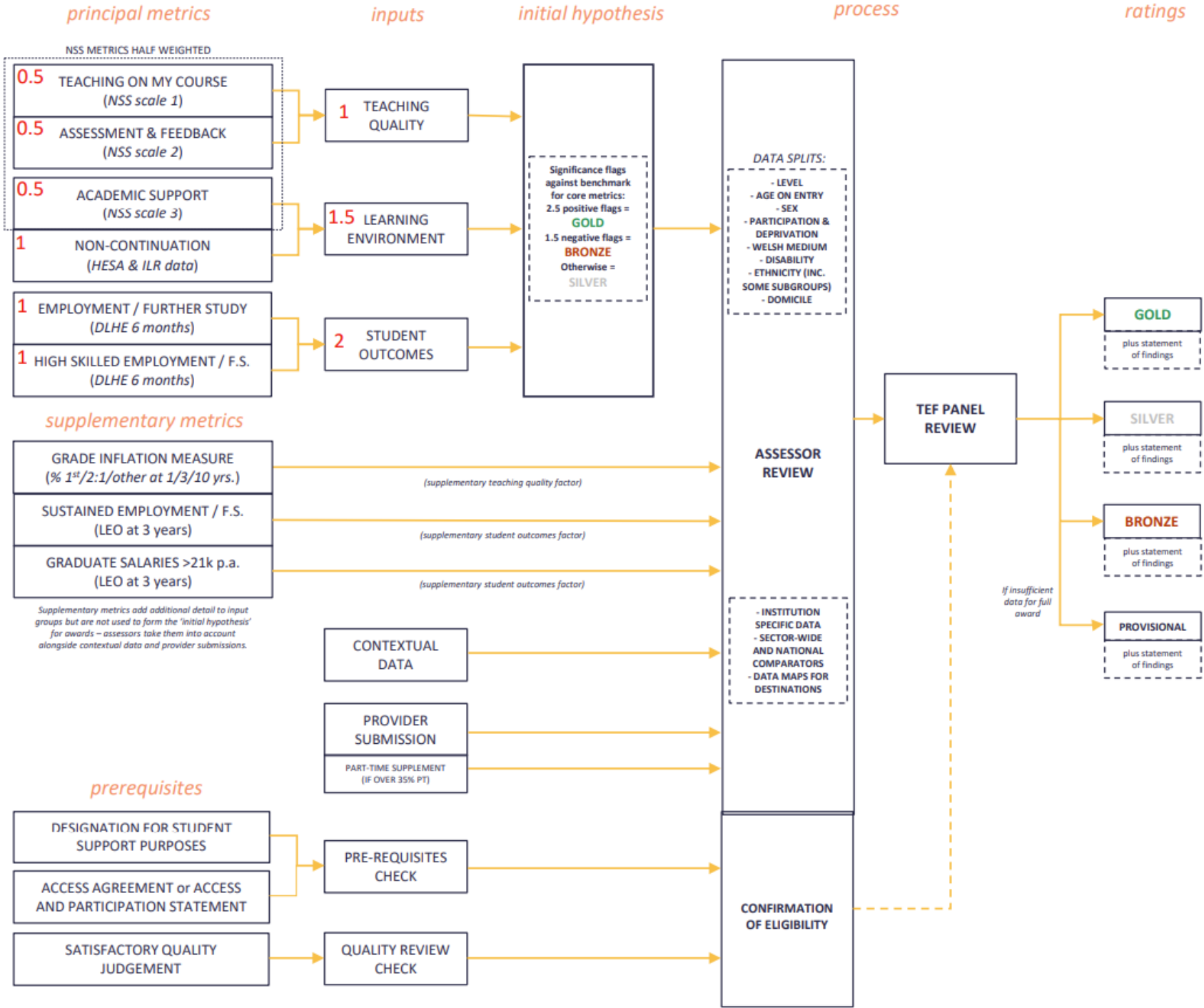


Higher education provider	Award year	TEF rating
<a href="#">University of Abertay Dundee</a>	June 2017	TEF Silver
<a href="#">Aberystwyth University</a>	June 2018	TEF Gold
<a href="#">Abingdon and Witney College</a>	June 2018	TEF Silver
<a href="#">ACM Guildford Limited</a>	June 2019	TEF Bronze
<a href="#">Activate Learning</a>	June 2017	TEF Silver
<a href="#">AECC University College</a>	June 2017	TEF Silver
<a href="#">ALRA</a>	June 2019	TEF Silver
<a href="#">Anglia Ruskin University Higher Education Corporation</a>	June 2017	TEF Silver
<a href="#">Arden University Limited</a>	June 2019	TEF Provisional
<a href="#">Arts Educational Schools(Tho)</a>	June 2019	TEF Gold





# The machine



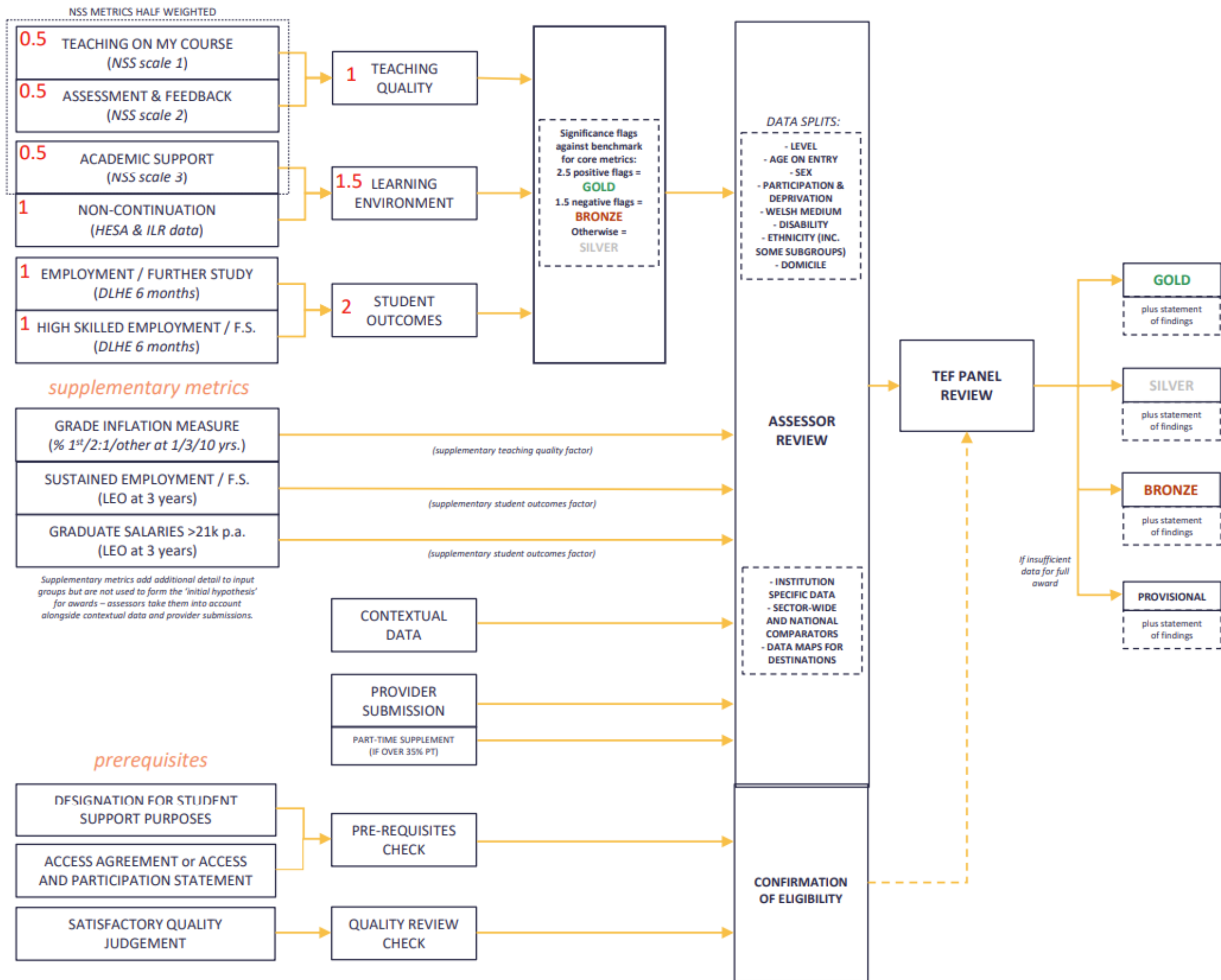
## principal metrics

## inputs

## initial hypothesis

## process

## ratings





# Review!

- During the passage of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA2017) members of the House of Lords were particularly concerned about the TEF as – effectively – a government mandated ranking.
- There were worries about linking it to fee levels. The statutory review was added to the Bill in order to placate the Lords.
- Section 26 provided for an independent review of a “section 25” scheme (basically TEF) within a year of the Act becoming Law.
- Dame Shirley Pearce was the reviewer, her report was submitted in August 2019 and published in January 2021.
- It’s a fantastic report. It convinced the government not to continue with plans to run TEF at subject level – changed the frequency that TEF will run to every 4-5 years, ditched the award names.
- Though she found that neither employers nor students/applicants take any notice of ratings, the government is still committed to these use cases. Pearce recommended that TEF should become a means to identify, celebrate, and learn from high quality teaching.
- She also sought to see TEF make more use of qualitative data alongside metrics, noting the statistical weakness of TEF (there’s a parallel, and also excellent, ONS review that informed the report



# Scales in use

- a. The teaching on my course.
- b. Assessment and feedback.
- c. Academic support.
- d. Learning resources.
- e. Student voice.

# Student voice

- Student members of TEF panels
- Student input into the narrative submission
- Use of student opinion in the NSS





# Student voice

- Student members of TEF panels
- Student narrative submission
- Use of student opinion in the NSS



# The student submission

- In QAA processes of old (England) and to some extent now (elsewhere) opportunities to submit separate and independent submission
  - Leverage over process of making that a good process
  - Leverage over issues raised in that report
- See also student submissions into Access and Participation evaluation

STUDENT  
WRITTEN  
—SUBMISSION—

# Great news!

- Students contributing evidence to the panel directly
- Process that OfS says should strengthen voice locally and internally
- Recognition that views of students may differ from those of provider so leverages honesty
- The evidence may also be more contemporary than lagged indicators





# How it will work

- One submission per university
- One “TEF student contact”
- Template and guide will be issued
- The latter has to have experience of representing students...
- Subtle warnings against ending without a submission

# The SWS

1. How students' views and other evidence presented in the submission were gathered, whether through existing student representation processes, or any additional evidence gathering activity, or both.
  - This should indicate the range of students the evidence applies to and how far the evidence is representative of the whole undergraduate student population.
  - The implication is that to be impressive and helpful, this will need to have been resourced properly via the block grant discussion - including things like research capacity if the SU doesn't currently have it.
2. Evidence and feedback addressing the features related to the student experience and student outcomes, as determined by students as relevant to their own context.
  - submissions to be based primarily on evidence and feedback gathered directly from students (although it could also reference other evidence, such as the TEF indicators or evidence referred to in the provider submission).
  - OfS says it wants evidence gathered directly from students to supplement the provider submission and the NSS data by providing important additional insights into students' views.

# Examples of evidence...

- Summaries of evidence gathered through existing student representation arrangements
- Analysis of bespoke student feedback gathered via surveys, focus groups or workshops
- Where relevant, the submission should refer to the size of the samples and the categories of students involved in feedback gathering activities
- Quotes, but only where they illustrate points that are supported by a wider evidence base
- OfS will even set out expectations that a provider has to work with the TEF student contact to provide access to any other relevant information required to complete the student submission.



# Also to note

- No word yet on overlap with wither QA or QE processes in nations
- OfS is proposing that a “feature of excellence” when making a TEF award will be “The provider effectively engages with its students, leading to improvements to the experiences and outcomes of its students”. SUs may want to feed back on the need in that description to differentiate between surveying students and having students as representatives or partners.
- Panel guidance: “Evidence would be more compelling, and greater weight placed on it, where it clearly articulates the views of students, and is broadly representative of all student groups and courses within the scope of the TEF assessment.

# Next steps

- There's an official chance for SUs to respond to these proposals until 17 March 2022.
- From there in theory the timeline is as follows:
  - August 2022: OfS appoints TEF panel
  - Early September 2022: The provider and student submission window opens: OfS publishes guidance on submissions and assessment; OfS publishes TEF indicators
  - Mid November 2022: Submission window closes
  - Late November 2022 to March 2023: TEF panel carries out the assessments
  - April to May 2023: Providers notified of the panel's provisional decisions about their ratings ; Opportunity for providers to make representations
  - May 2023: Outcomes published for providers that do not make representations









# 'Mickey Mouse' university courses could have student loans removed

Programmes with high drop-out rates and low levels of graduate employment will be under scrutiny

By Camilla Turner, EDUCATION EDITOR

15 January 2022 • 8:08pm

Universities are facing a crackdown on “Mickey Mouse” degrees as the watchdog threatens to withdraw student loan funding from [low-quality courses](#).

Vice-chancellors will be warned by the Office for Students (OfS) that they risk being hit with sanctions - including financial penalties - if their degrees fail to deliver for students.

The higher education regulator had pledged to take a more “robust” approach to quality assurance, which will include launching investigations where bad practice is reported.

Degrees with high drop-out rates and low rates of [graduate employment](#) will be targeted by the OfS for scrutiny.

The regulator will publish proposals this week which set out the series of “minimum requirements” they expect degree courses to meet in terms of student outcomes.

If courses are deemed to consistently fall below these they could be barred from receiving student loan funding which would most likely render them financially unviable.

# WONKHE

Tuesday 17 November 2020

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and The Crown

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My shock  
at getting  
cancer  
at 38

Celia Walden  
No10 battle  
of the sexes  
demeans  
them  
and us

## The Daily Telegraph

### Lockdown looms over Christmas

England could remain shut beyond Dec 2 as effect on virus cases is not yet clear

By Gordon Rayner POLITICAL EDITOR

absolutely hope to be able to replace the national lockdown with a tiered system.” The Prime Minister’s spokesman earlier took a more positive stance, saying: “Those measures will be coming to an end on Dec 2. They will expire in law. We are committed to setting out next week what the replacement regime will be.” Mr Hancock refused to say whether lockdown would simply be “rebranded”. But Dr Susan Hopkins, chief medical adviser to NHS testing, said even if lockdown ended in England, a tougher tier system would be likely to replace it. She said that while Tier 3 and “Tier 3 plus” in the North West had reduced cases, Tier 2 had done “not so well” and “we saw very little effect from Tier 1.” Another 21,363 people tested positive for the virus yesterday. There were 14,915 Covid patients in hospital, up nearly 2,000 in a week, and 215 deaths were reported, taking the daily average to 413, up from 322 a week ago.

Up to 70 Tory MPs have joined the newly formed Covid Research Group to pressure the Government into finding alternatives to lockdowns to safeguard the economy. Mark Harper, chairman of the group, said: “It’s time for a new way to live with the virus.”

Although the rebels are likely to vote against extending lockdown, Labour would almost certainly support it. It came as Nicola Sturgeon confirmed she was “likely” to announce today a return to near-full lockdown for swathes of Scotland to pave the way for easing of the strict Christmas. The First Minister will this afternoon disclose which council areas will be placed “for a limited period” in Level 4, the highest tier of restrictions, with western Scotland expected to be targeted.

In Germany Angela Merkel was facing a coronavirus rebellion as regional leaders tore up her proposals for new lockdown restrictions. And Mr Johnson’s self-isolation meant he would be unable to hold face-to-face meetings with EU leaders as Brexit trade talks entered their most crucial phase, resorting instead to video conference calls.

Hancock won’t rule out mandatory vaccine

By Harry Yorke and Laura Donnelly

MATT HANCOCK has refused to rule out making a coronavirus vaccine mandatory, suggesting ministers could consider it if initial take-up was lower than expected. The Health Secretary yesterday insisted the Government was not “proposing” compulsory vaccination, pointing out that a number of people would be unable to take it for medical reasons. But when asked whether he could rule it out in future, Mr Hancock said he had learnt “not to rule things out” during the pandemic, adding: “We have to watch what happens and you have to make judgments accordingly.” Asked later at a Downing Street press conference whether other candidates – including Pfizer’s – expected to be available more quickly in the UK, by 1pm, the Government had secured five million doses, enough for 2.5 million people to receive the required two doses.

Vaccines are not mandatory in the UK, with official guidance stating that individuals must be allowed to make an informed choice. However, there is concern that anti-vaxxers – who are spreading unimaged claims about the safety of Covid-19 vaccine – candidates on social media – could undermine efforts to encourage widespread inoculation. Meanwhile, research by YouGov yesterday suggested that while 67 per cent of Britons were likely to take the Pfizer vaccine, one in five respondents was unlikely to and 12 per cent were unsure.

Mr Hancock also hit out at hundreds of health and care staff who had formed a group opposed to vaccinations on social media, describing it as “entirely inappropriate”. In the end, Mr Obama wore a cardigan over her dress, “ensuring First

Matt Hancock said at the Downing Street media briefing that lockdown might not end on Dec 2 as its effects were not clear in the data

Bring in rapid tests to end self-isolation, ministers told

By Laura Donnelly and Gordon Rayner

SCIENTISTS and MPs are calling for urgent changes to isolation rules, saying the confinement of Boris Johnson demonstrates the folly of the UK’s testing regime.

A total of 12 MPs, including the Prime Minister, are now self-isolating after coming into contact with Lee Anderson, the Tory MP. Six of them, including Mr Johnson, came into contact with him during a meeting in Downing Street last week, and a further six came into contact with him elsewhere, including in Parliament.

Last night, scientists said the situation showed that the system was not “fit for purpose” and it would be far more sensible to offer rapid tests to those at risk of exposure.

They said Mr Johnson, who was treated for Covid-19 in hospital in April, was extremely unlikely to contract

Boris Johnson told the nation via a Twitter video that he had been instructed to self-isolate by NHS test and trace

the virus again and even less likely to transmit it. None the less, rapid tests should be used for anyone at risk, allowing the vast majority of those exposed to a positive Covid case to be freed far more quickly, they said. They said the situation demonstrated the urgent need to introduce rapid testing for contacts of positive Covid cases. Prof Tim Peeto, professor of medicine at Oxford University, said: “There is a simple way to take a belt-and-braces approach – we should be operating a system which allows the Prime Minister to take a rapid test and be back in Parliament the next day.”

The current system simply hasn’t adapted to the knowledge that we have got. We need to be using these tests to let people out of quarantine far more quickly.” Prof Peeto led trials by Oxford University and Public Health England which last week found that the instant tests known as lateral flow tests – identified more than 77 per cent of people infected with Covid. Crucially, they identified 95 per cent of those with a high viral load, meaning they were at their most infectious.

Prof Peeto said those at risk of Covid, because of close contact with an infected person, should be given the 25

Continued on Page 6

Editorial Comment: Page 19

Queen ‘didn’t mind’ Obama protocol breach

By Ben Riley-Smith US EDITOR

BARACK OBAMA has waved away an old row about whether the first lady broke royal protocol by placing a hand on the Queen’s shoulder on a state visit, writing in his new memoirs that Her Majesty “didn’t seem to mind”.

The incident took place when the Obamas visited Britain alongside other world leaders for a G20 summit in April 2009. The former US president discusses the incident in his book *A Promised Land*, which is published today.

Mr Obama, who then had only been in the White House for three months, recalls how Michelle Obama caused “her own lot of controversy” at the reception in Buckingham Palace.

“She was photographed with her hand resting on Her Majesty’s shoulder – an apparent breach of royal protocol,” Mr Obama writes.

Report: Page 6

‘Blue wall’ protests against petrol car ban

NEWS

Voters in new Conservative “blue wall” seats think a ban on diesel and petrol cars would be unfair, according to a survey. Climate change concerns hit 88 per cent among the group with the highest proportion of northern Leave voters, and those who swung from Labour to the Tories last year. But 70 per cent said a petrol and diesel car ban would add extra cost to daily life. The Government is expected this week to bring forward the date to phase out new petrol and diesel cars to 2030.

Page 10

Timing of US job data release questioned

BUSINESS

Moderna, the US drugmaker, released crucial data on the Covid vaccine under embargo before the results were made public, prompting calls for new rules over how trial information is announced in the market. It briefed journalists on data showing its job is almost 95 per cent effective against coronavirus, almost an hour before publishing the details – with a midday embargo meaning this lifted before US trading opened. There is no suggestion Moderna broke any rules.

Business: page 1

Stewart leads drive to knight Hamilton

SPORT

Sir Jackie Stewart last night led calls for Lewis Hamilton to be knighted after he sealed a record-equalling seventh Formula One world title. Sir Jackie told *The Daily Telegraph* there was “no question” Hamilton deserved to join him in becoming only the second world champion to receive the honour. It may require Boris Johnson to intervene, as the deadline for nominations has passed. Otherwise, Hamilton has no time to wait until next year or even until he retires.

Sport: page 1



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If courses are deemed to consistently fall below these they could be barred from receiving student loan funding which would most likely render them financially unviable.

NEWS

## £500,000 fines for ‘Mickey Mouse’ courses

Universities that run “Mickey Mouse” degree courses face being fined up to £500,000, under plans by the watchdog to “stamp out” bad practice. The Office for Students is to crack down on degrees with high student dropout and low graduate employment rates, as well as those with significant grade inflation. Under proposed reforms, the OfS could investigate university departments and faculties if there is evidence that individual courses are not up to scratch.

Page 4

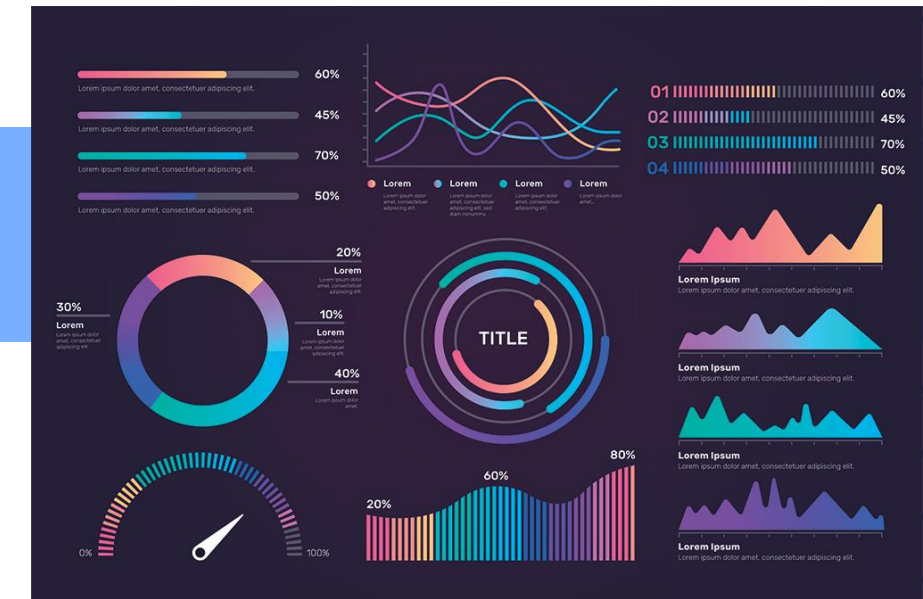
WONKHE

# Stages

- The condition is assessed in two stages.
- The first considers the absolute outcomes delivered by the provider for its students.
- The second gives consideration of the context in which these outcomes are achieved.
- Regulatory interventions, such as a specific condition, mitigate risks of future breach.

# We will get baselines

- **Continuation** rates help it understand whether a provider is recruiting students able to succeed through the early stages of its courses, with the appropriateness of recruitment and student support under the spotlight;
- It says **completion** is similar and provides a look over the whole student lifecycle. This difference in focus means that there will not be a direct, linear, relationship between a provider's continuation rate and its completion rate.
- Meanwhile **progression** tells OfS whether a provider's students have successful student outcomes beyond graduation.





# How?

- Performance “in aggregate”, over a “time series” (for the number of years up to a five year period for which indicators could be derived from available)
- Across splits for different demographic groups – broken down by mode (full or part-time) and level of study (for example “other undergraduate”, first degree), as well as by age, participation of local areas (POLAR), English indices of multiple deprivation (IMD), ethnicity, disability, sex and domicile.





# New!

Splits by

- Subject level (level 2 of the Common Aggregation Hierarchy is proposed)
- Course type
- Views of a provider's student population
  - Franchise? Awarding?



# Blame it on the baseline

- Baseline for each indicator (in each mode and level of study that the provider delivers) and published stats.



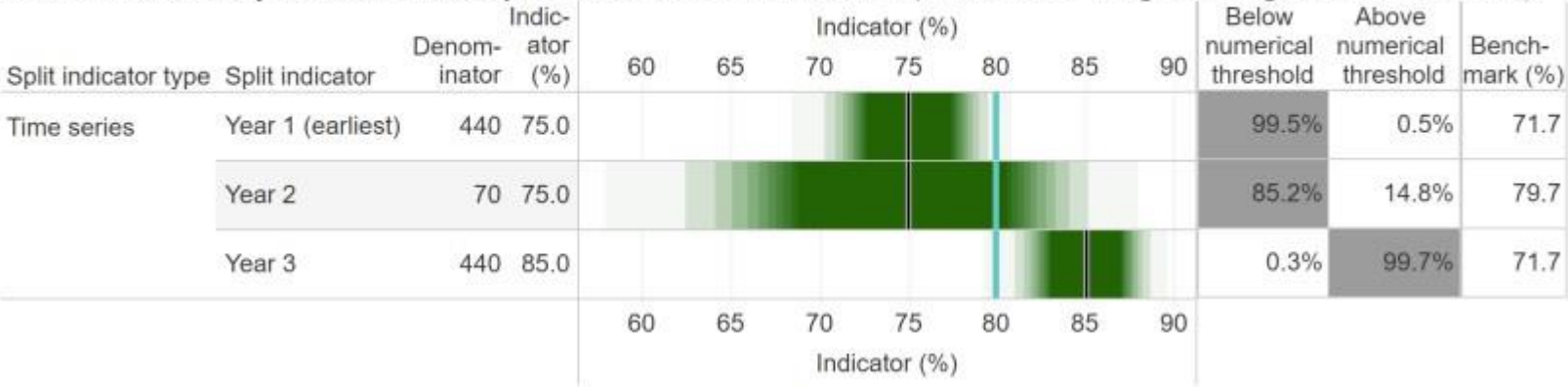
Table 1: Summary of proposed numerical threshold levels

Level and mode of study	Continuation	Completion (cohort tracking)	Completion (composite indicator)	Progression
FT Other UG	75%	65%	65%	45%
FT First Degree	80%	75%	75%	60%
FT UG / PG border	85%	85%	80%	80%
FT PGCE	85%	85%	85%	85%
FT PG Taught Masters	80%	80%	80%	70%
FT PG Other	80%	80%	80%	85%
FT PG Research (PhD)	90%	75%	75%	85%
PT Other UG	55%	55%	55%	65%
PT First Degree	60%	55%	55%	75%
PT UG / PG border	60%	60%	60%	80%
PT PGCE	75%	75%	75%	85%
PT PG Taught Masters	65%	65%	65%	85%
PT PG Other	65%	60%	65%	85%
PT PG Research (PhD)	70%	60%	60%	85%
Apprenticeship – UG	70%	55%	55%	75%
Apprenticeship – PG	80%	80%	80%	80%

Note: 'FT' = 'full-time'; 'PT' = 'part-time'; 'UG' = 'undergraduate'; 'PG' = 'postgraduate'.

Figure F1: Examples of assessing indicators and split indicators

Student and study characteristic split indicators: *Continuation (Other UG, Taught or registered, Full-time)*





# Blame

- Baseline level of published

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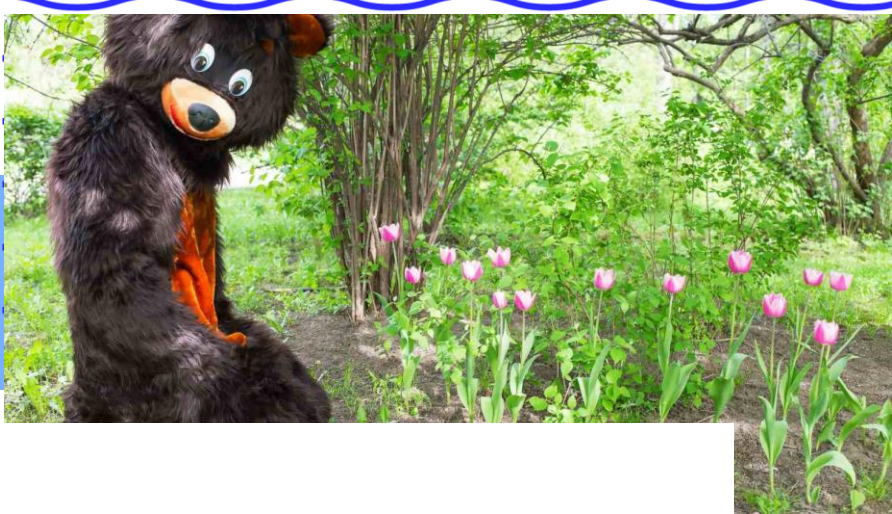
## icators

3, Taught or registered, Full-time)

85	90	Below numerical threshold	Above numerical threshold	Benchmark (%)
		99.5%	0.5%	71.7
		85.2%	14.8%	79.7
		0.3%	99.7%	71.7
85	90			

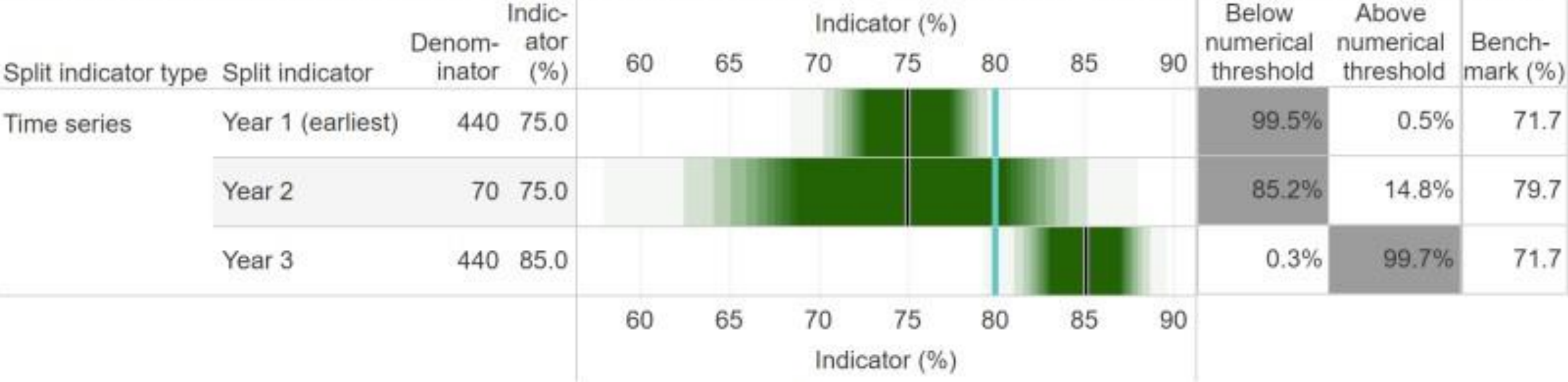


# Blame it on the baseline



- Figure F1: Examples of assessing indicators and split indicators

Student and study characteristic split indicators: *Continuation (Other UG, Taught or registered, Full-time)*



PT PG Other	65%	60%	65%	85%
PT PG Research (PhD)	70%	60%	60%	85%
Apprenticeship – UG	70%	55%	55%	75%
Apprenticeship – PG	80%	80%	80%	80%

Note: 'FT' = 'full-time'; 'PT' = 'part-time'; 'UG' = 'undergraduate'; 'PG' = 'postgraduate'.

# Then...

- Publish the information via a dashboard on the website
- Explore the possibility of linking the information directly to an individual provider's entry on the register
- Publish sector-wide data analysis on the website, and even
- Consider how to link to the information from Discover Uni to provide a route for interested students to understand the performance of individual providers in more depth.



# Critiques

- Is this a provider's "fault" and what led to the numbers?
- Unintended consequences – provider behaviour
- Hard to know how many/much split-based poor performance will be tolerated, and why
- Lots of focus on what, almost nothing on why
- What if this results in a reduction of choice (esp for local students)
- Quality as "the extent to which we're prepared to take a chance on you"



# Looks at data and then

- If a “red light” and being enforced that year, contextual factors
  - **Historical** (pandemic or course features – See Norland)
  - **Future** (we’ve already started to do something about this)
- then Regulation – letters, conditions, fines, exclusion from register









# What do you do?

- You can **ignore** it because you reckon you can front out contextual reasons or because it's an outlier that might not be in a big theme this year
- You work to actually **improve** the continuation, completion or progression scores, although there's necessarily a long lead time on making a difference
- You **change the students you recruit** by taking fewer risks on otherwise contextually talented students - focussing on the social backgrounds more likely to stay the course and have the family connections to get a graduate job
- You slowly, quietly, carefully **exit** this provision. "It's not one of our strengths" or whatever, and anyway the costs are high and recruitment is poor and...



# Providers have...

- Draft TEF data (UG, benchmarked, plenty of splits)
- Draft B3 data (UG, PGR, PGT, absolute against proposed baselines, all splits)
- Interaction with SNCs for “low value” courses
- Major financial pressures – fees freeze
- Academic and corporate governance?



# What are SUs doing?

Providers considering how to respond now, esp in partnership with students and SUs

- Responding to consultation
- Involved in decision making on main TEF process
- Discussing both B3 and TEF data with university leadership
- Developing plans for the IWS inc capacity to deliver good report
- Helping universities to understand why the scores are the way they are
- Helping to drive improvements (participation associated with improved metrics even when controlling for characteristic) in targeted way - ie belonging, confidence, skills
- Academic societies and characteristics networks and targeting
- Driving improvement processes at (more) granular level

# Medium-sized issues?

What's coming for SUs to consider in their strategy work?



**WONKHE**  
SUs