



Department  
for Education

# **Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework: subject- level**

**Consultation document**

**Launch date 12 March 2018**

**Respond by 21 May 2018**

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# 1 About this consultation

**This is a technical consultation that seeks feedback on the proposed design of the TEF at subject-level.** This consultation assumes the reader is familiar with the concepts of provider-level TEF and focuses on particular aspects of the design of subject-level TEF that we would like to explore in detail and seek feedback on.

**For a more detailed discussion of the topics in this document please refer to the accompanying technical document, in which chapter numbers align.**

The development of subject-level TEF is being informed by three key activities which will run alongside each other:

- a) Subject-level pilots – two years of pilots in 2017/18 and 2018/19
- b) This consultation**
- c) Student research – please see the technical document for more information on the scope of this.

This consultation is an opportunity for all stakeholders to comment on the proposed design of subject-level TEF and for the Department for Education (DfE) to gain further feedback beyond the pilots. The proposals include those currently being piloted, as well as some additional proposals to address known challenges (such as non-reportable metrics) where thinking has progressed since publication of the pilot specification. Evidence from all three activities (the consultation, pilots and student research) will be taken into account when the Government considers its response and when determining the future development of subject-level TEF.

We set out our intention to undertake TEF assessments at a disciplinary (subject) level in the white paper ‘Success as a knowledge economy’ (May 2016). The purpose, therefore, of this consultation is not to determine whether to proceed to subject-level assessment, but how to do so in the best and most proportionate way.

Findings from the consultation will ensure the design of subject-level TEF is informed by a thorough evidence base.

<p><b>How to respond</b></p> <p>To respond please visit the online system at <a href="http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations">www.education.gov.uk/consultations</a>. If you are unable to access this system, please download the word document and email or post your response to: <a href="mailto:TEF.Queries@education.gov.uk">TEF.Queries@education.gov.uk</a>, or Ella Thomas, TEF Team Ground Floor, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT</p>	<p><b>Enquiries</b></p> <p>07384432742 and ask for Ella Thomas or email at <a href="mailto:TEF.Queries@education.gov.uk">TEF.Queries@education.gov.uk</a></p>
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**Deadline: This consultation closes on 21 May 2018**

## 2 Executive Summary

This is a Department for Education (DfE) technical consultation on the proposed design of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) at subject-level. For a more detailed discussion of the topics in this document please refer to the accompanying technical document, in which chapter numbers align from Chapter 4.

To ensure the design of subject-level TEF is informed by a thorough evidence base, we are running three key activities concurrently:

- a) Subject-level pilots
- b) This consultation
- c) Student research.

We believe that for TEF to have the greatest impact on informing student choice, ratings should be produced at subject-level. Students need to know about a provider's teaching quality in the subject they are looking to study. This was recognised by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), who have said that students are 'likely to derive significantly more value from a TEF award that relates to specific disciplines'. Their recommendation is that we move to subject-level TEF as soon as practically possible.<sup>1</sup>

We are consulting on the design of subject-level TEF in order to offer all stakeholders the opportunity to comment. Its purpose is not to determine whether to proceed to subject-level assessment, but how to do so in the best and most proportionate way.

**The proposed design of subject-level TEF is based on the provider-level framework.** We have retained key elements such as the criteria, the use of benchmarked metrics, provider submissions, the independent panel assessment process and the rating system. This includes retaining the framework elements that focus on maintaining high quality teaching and student outcomes for all students, including those who are most disadvantaged, in order to support social mobility and widening participation.

**A provider level assessment and rating is retained.** All providers taking part in the TEF will therefore receive both a provider-level rating and a rating for each subject they teach. We discuss options for how the provider-level and subject-level ratings should interact (Chapters 8 and 9), as well as how long an award should be valid for and how frequently a provider may apply for re-assessment (Chapter 5).

We propose that subject-level TEF **assesses 35 'subjects'**, based on level 2 of the HESA Common Aggregation Hierarchy (Chapter 4).

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<sup>1</sup> Andrea Coscelli, Acting Chief Executive, Competition and Markets Authority, Letter to Minister Jo Johnson, 27 July 2016, 'Higher Education and Research Bill: CMA recommendations to ministers'. Available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-and-research-bill-letter-from-cma-to-jo-johnson>

**Two alternative models** (Chapter 6) are being considered:

- **Model A:** A 'by exception' model giving a provider-level rating and giving subjects the same rating as the provider where metrics performance is similar, with fuller assessment (and potentially different ratings) where metrics performance differs.
- **Model B:** A 'bottom-up' model fully assessing each subject to give subject-level ratings, feeding into the provider-level assessment and rating. Subjects are grouped for submissions, but ratings are still awarded at subject-level.

We are also consulting on specific technical aspects of each of the proposed models (Chapters 7 to 9).

**The metrics are the same under both models** (Chapter 10). We are proposing that the subject-level metrics and benchmarks will be the same as those used in provider-level TEF. We are consulting on how some aspects of the metrics are used in subject-level TEF, for example whether grade inflation should only be applied in the provider-level metrics.

We are consulting on whether to **allow the distribution of ratings to vary between subjects**, or if we should force the same distribution for all subjects (Section 10.3). We discuss various factors that, despite benchmarking, could cause different subjects to have different distributions of ratings, including clustered metrics, very high and low absolute values and varying levels of external regulation and standardisation between subjects.

**Non-reportable metrics** (Section 10.4) are TEF metrics that are not able to be reported because the data does not meet certain reportability thresholds, such as having at least 10 students contributing to it, or meeting certain response rates. Non-reportability is more common at subject-level because the metrics are disaggregated and reported separately for each of the 35 subjects. To address this issue we are proposing an alternative approach to treating and assessing subjects with non-reportable core metrics. Under this approach, some subjects would not be assessed or rated, and where assessment does go ahead, the panel would rely on provider- or group-level metrics.

Some sources of **additional evidence** (Chapter 11) may be more relevant at subject-level than they were in provider-level TEF, for example, accreditation or recognition of courses by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). While we recognise the importance of this evidence in subject-level TEF, we are not proposing to make this evidence compulsory. We propose that providers should continue to be free to choose what and how they present additional evidence in their submissions, both at provider- and subject-level.

In terms of how **interdisciplinary provision** is treated (Chapter 12), we are proposing specific approaches for joint and multi-subject programmes. For joint programmes, the two subjects which make up a course would be treated in a similar way as their

equivalent single-subject programmes. To capture multi-subject (or combined) programmes, we are proposing to use three broad 'general' subjects for assessment and ratings.

**As part of subject-level TEF, we are also consulting on whether to introduce a new measure of teaching intensity** (Chapter 13). This measure could be used as part of the TEF assessment process, or be presented as stand-alone information for students. The Government is aware that factors such as contact hours matter to students' perceptions of their studies and considers that excellent teaching is likely to demand a sufficient level of teaching intensity in order to provide a high quality experience for the student. We have set out options on how teaching intensity could be measured and used as part of subject-level TEF.

Findings from this consultation, the first year of the subject-level pilots and the student research will be used to inform the design of the second year of subject pilots, as well as to refine the overall design of subject-level TEF as we move towards full implementation, with the first assessment round expected to take place in 2019/20 ('TEF Year 5'). Once implemented, subject-level TEF would replace the current provider-level TEF process. Providers would receive both a provider-level rating and subject-level ratings from the subject-level TEF assessment process.

The Government response to this consultation will also incorporate our response to the first year of pilots and the TEF student research. We will consider responses to this consultation alongside the findings from the pilot and student research, bringing together all three sources of evidence to inform the Government response.

When considering responses to this consultation and the findings from the pilot and research, we will take account of how they contribute to social mobility and widening participation. We will consider how they impact on all students, including those who are most disadvantaged. To allow time for us to bring the findings from all three exercises together, we expect to publish a single Government response in autumn 2018.

## Summary of consultation questions

- 1 To define 'subjects' in subject-level TEF, do you:
  - a) agree with using level 2 of the Common Aggregation Hierarchy as the classification system (CAH2, with 35 subjects), and if not, what other systems could be used and why?
  - b) think that specific changes or tweaks need to be made to the definition of the 35 subjects in CAH2, or to the 7 subject groups used in Model B, and if so, please explain why?
- 2 Do you agree that we should have a longer duration and re-application period in subject-level TEF?
- 3 Should subject-level TEF retain the existing key elements of the provider-level framework (including the 10 TEF criteria, the same suite of metrics, benchmarking, submissions, an independent panel assessment process and the rating system)?
- 4 For the design of subject-level TEF, should the Government adopt:
  - A 'by exception' approach (i.e. a form of Model A), or
  - A 'bottom up' approach (i.e. a form of Model B), or
  - An alternative approach (please specify)?
- 5 Under Model A, do you agree with the proposed approach for identifying subjects that will be assessed, which would constitute:
  - a) the initial hypothesis rule for generating exceptions from the metrics?
  - b) allowing providers to select a small number of additional subjects?
- 6 In Model A, should the subject ratings influence the provider rating?
- 7 In Model B, do you agree with the method for how the subject ratings inform the provider-level rating?
- 8 Do you agree that grade inflation should only apply in the provider-level metrics?
- 9 What are your views on how we are approaching potential differences in the distribution of subject ratings?





- 10 To address the issue of non-reportable metrics:
- a) do you agree with the proposed approach?
  - b) when assessment occurs, do you prefer that assessors:
    - rely on group metrics alongside any reportable subject-level metrics?
    - rely on provider metrics alongside any reportable subject-level metrics?
    - follow an alternative approach (please specify)?
- 11 Do you:
- a) agree that QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and PSRB accreditation or recognition should remain as a voluntary declaration, and if not, why?
  - b) think that there are any subjects where mandatory declaration should apply?
- 12 Do you agree with our approach to capturing interdisciplinary provision (in particular, joint and multi-subject combined courses)?
- 13 On balance, are you in favour of introducing a measure of teaching intensity in the TEF, and what might be the positive impacts or unintended consequences of implementing a measure of teaching intensity?
- 14 What forms of contact and learning (e.g. lectures, seminars, work based learning) should and should not be included in a measure of teaching intensity?
- 15 What method(s)/option(s) do you think are best to measure teaching intensity? Please state if there are any options that you strongly oppose and suggest any alternative options.
- 16 Do you have any other comments on the design of subject-level TEF that are not captured in your response to the preceding questions in this consultation?

Please note that the Higher Education and Funding Council for England (HEFCE) have made institutions' own subject-level metrics directly available to providers via the HEFCE extranet. Providers may wish to use this resource to inform their consultation response. Please contact your provider's TEF contact for details.



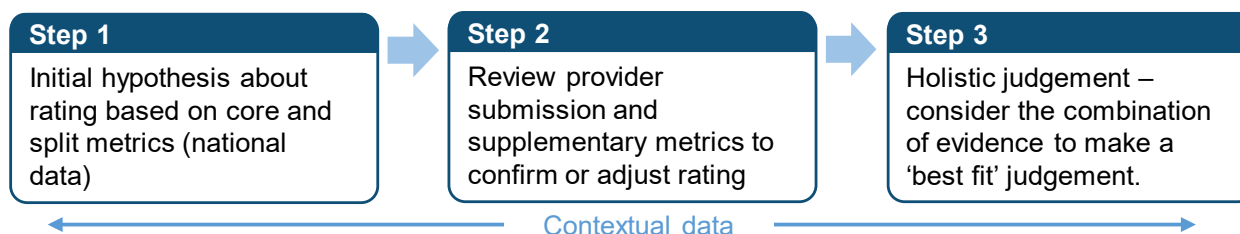
### 3 What is TEF?

The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) aims to recognise and reward excellence in teaching, learning and student outcomes in higher education providers in the UK. The current framework (shown below) assesses undergraduate provision at a ‘provider-level’ (across the whole institution). TEF awards are intended to help inform students’ choice about where to study.

Aspects of quality:	Teaching Quality	Learning Environment	Student Outcomes and Learning Gain
<b>Evidence:</b>	Teaching; Assessment and feedback (NSS)	Academic support (NSS); Continuation (HESA/ILR data)	Employment / Highly skilled employment or further study (DLHE)
• Core metrics	Core metrics split into sub groups reflecting widening participation priorities		
• Split metrics	Provider submission (additional evidence written by the provider), and Supplementary metrics: Grade inflation (provider declaration) and Sustained employment / Above median earnings or further study (LEO)		
• Submission and Supplementary metrics			
<b>Outcome:</b>	TEF award & Statement of findings		
			 

TEF assessments are undertaken by an independent panel of experts (see Figure 1). Please see Annex A for a glossary of TEF terms and for more information, the [TEF Specification](#) published in October 2017.

**Figure 1: Current provider-level TEF assessment process**



### Purpose of subject-level TEF

**We believe that for TEF to be most useful to students, ratings should be produced at subject-level.**

Students need to know how a provider's teaching quality will relate to them in the subject they are looking to study. Subject-level TEF is intended to provide this for students by producing TEF ratings at both provider- and subject- level.

The value to prospective students of subject-level TEF awards was recognised by the Competition and Markets Authority, who made a recommendation that we move to subject-level TEF as soon as practically possible.

**Subject-level TEF will award both provider-level ratings and subject-level ratings.**

## 4 Subject classification system

We will use a subject classification system to define what a ‘subject’ is for the purpose of assessment and ratings. Given the diversity of the sector, choosing a single classification system is difficult. As autonomous institutions, providers define their own subjects and we recognise that no single system will be perfect for every institution and for every student.

The subject classification system needs to strike a balance between being meaningful for students and, on a practical level, having a manageable level of aggregation for the assessment process. Ideally it should be based on an existing system of subject classification, to avoid proliferation of systems and consequent confusion.

### Common Aggregation Hierarchy Level 2

**We propose a system of 35 subjects for subject-level TEF.** This is based on the second level of the Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH2). The 35 subjects are listed in Annex B. This would be applied to both model A and B (see Chapter 6).

The CAH is a new coding system that will, by the time subject-level TEF is in place, be used by Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and Unistats on their websites and by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) when reporting data. It also aligns with the system of subject benchmarking currently used in TEF. The CAH has been designed around teaching and with student information purposes in mind, so should be meaningful to students. Our student research will test this with students.

### 7 subject groups

**In Model B we propose to group the 35 CAH2 subjects into 7 groups for the purpose of submissions** (see Chapter 5). These 7 groups are shown in Annex B. This should reduce the burden of the assessment process for both panel members and providers. We understand that these groups will not suit every provider’s structure, so we propose to allow providers to move one subject in and out of each group. Individual subjects will still receive individual ratings: the groups are therefore administrative constructs for the purpose of assessment and will not be used in communicating ratings to students.

**Q1 To define ‘subjects’ in subject-level TEF, do you:**

- a) agree with using level 2 of the Common Aggregation Hierarchy as the classification system (CAH2, with 35 subjects) and if not, what other systems could be used and why?**
- b) think that specific changes or tweaks need to be made to the definition of the 35 subjects in CAH2, or to the 7 subject groups used in Model B and if so, please explain why?**

## 5 Duration of award

**We propose extending both the award duration and the re-application period.**

The provider-level TEF award is currently valid for a period of up to 3 years, subject to a provider continuing to meet the eligibility requirements, and depending on how many years of core metrics data they have. A provisional TEF award, given to a provider that does not have suitable metrics, lasts for 1 year. The assessment process runs every year and providers are able to re-apply each year if they wish to do so.

In subject-level TEF, extending the duration and re-application periods would reduce the overall administrative and financial burden placed on providers and assessors. It would ease the burden of the application and assessment process so that the costs remain proportionate and the exercise continues to offer value for money both for the sector and for taxpayers. Preventing reapplication every year would have a similar impact on cost, and would respond to concerns about potential game-playing, in which a provider reapplies every year to try to get a higher rating, placing more effort on improving its submission than in making genuine improvements for students.

There is one principal disadvantage to this proposal. In its fourth or fifth year, an award would be based on less recent data and may not fully represent the current student experience.

On balance, we believe that extending the duration and re-application periods **would deliver value for money for the sector and be a proportionate approach to use for subject-level TEF.**

### Options for a longer duration

For subject-level TEF, we previously anticipated that awards would move to a five-year duration and 3 year re-application period (providers may only re-apply from the third year of their award), with an annual assessment cycle.

However, early feedback from the pilots indicates that the full assessment process (including familiarisation, assessment at subject-level, application and any appeals) may take slightly longer than a year, and it may be more efficient to run the process every two years. Therefore, we are considering two options for a longer duration and re-application period, depending on how frequently the assessment is conducted. See Table 1.

**Table 1: Options of extending the duration and re-application periods**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Assessment process</b>	<b>Maximum duration</b>	<b>May reapply</b>
<b>1</b>	Annually	5 years	After 3 years
<b>2</b>	2 yearly	6 years	After 4 years

These periods would apply for providers with three years of core metrics at provider-level. Shorter periods would, as now, be likely to apply to providers that have only one or two years of provider-level core metrics.

We have chosen the proposed durations of 5 or 6 years to be longer than the current 3 years, whilst not being too long to minimise the disadvantage discussed above. For a full discussion of these options, please see the technical document.

**Q2 Do you agree that we should have a longer duration and re-application period in subject-level TEF?** The focus of this question is on whether we should extend the duration. However, please also provide as much detail as you can on your preferred length for the duration and/or re-application period.

## 6 Overview of subject-level TEF design

**The design of subject-level TEF is based on the provider-level framework.**

We have retained the criteria, the use of benchmarked metrics, provider submissions, the independent panel assessment process and the rating system.

### Provider-level versus subject-level TEF

Under subject-level TEF, we would retain the provider-level assessment and rating. Therefore, participating providers would receive **both**:

- a provider rating, and
- a rating for each subject they teach (subject-level rating).

Once fully implemented, subject-level TEF would entirely replace the existing provider-level TEF process. We intend, at this point, for existing provider-level awards to continue to be valid for the remainder of their duration until the provider applies to subject-level TEF (subject to a provider continuing to meet eligibility requirements). However, TEF will be subject to a statutory independent review and we cannot prejudge the recommendations of the independent reviewer.

**Two alternative models** are being proposed for subject-level TEF (see Figures 2-5):

- **Model A:** A 'by exception' model giving a provider-level rating and giving subjects the same rating as the provider where metrics performance is similar, with fuller assessment (and potentially different ratings) where metrics performance differs.
- **Model B:** A 'bottom-up' model fully assessing each subject to give subject-level ratings, feeding into the provider-level assessment and rating. Subjects are grouped for submissions, but ratings are still awarded at subject-level.

	Model A	Model B
<b>Metrics</b>	The metrics are the same under both models	
<b>Subject-level assessment</b>	Assessment is of exception subjects only, plus a small number of additional subjects chosen by the provider.	Each subject is fully assessed to give subject-level ratings. These ratings feed into the provider-level assessment and rating.
<b>Provider submissions</b>	A provider-level assessment and rating is retained in both models	
	A provider-level submission of up to 15 pages, covering all 10 TEF criteria.	A provider-level submission of up to 10 pages, focusing on 3 TEF criteria (TQ2, LE1 and SO3).
<b>Subject submissions</b>	Written for exception subjects or those chosen as additional subjects. Up to 5 pages per subject.	Written for 7 subject groups, with the page limit dependant on the number of subjects in the group.
<b>Subject ratings</b>	Ratings are awarded for each of the 35 subjects under both models	

**Q3 Should subject-level TEF retain the existing key elements of the provider-level framework (including the 10 TEF criteria, the same suite of metrics, benchmarking, submissions, an independent panel assessment process and the rating system)?**

Please see the TEF Specification for an explanation of the elements of the existing provider-level framework.

**Q4 For the design of subject-level TEF, should the Government adopt:**

- **A 'by exception' approach (i.e. a form of Model A), or**
- **A 'bottom up' approach (i.e. a form of Model B), or**
- **An alternative approach (please specify)?**

When answering this question, please consider the underlying principles that define Model A (a 'by exception' approach) versus model B (a 'bottom up' approach), and which principle you think we should adopt for subject-level TEF. Whilst we are also interested in detailed comments on the specific design of each model, the final design will likely be a refined version of those presented in this document. This question is therefore seeking views about which underlying approach you prefer.

In your response, you may wish to consider the evaluation criteria set out in the specification for the first year of pilots. These are:

- **Meaningfulness for students** – the ability of the models to generate subject-level ratings that are meaningful for students and are more useful than the outputs of provider-level TEF.
- **Value for money** – the proportionality of cost of participation for providers and cost of delivery for Government.
- **Robust processes and metrics** – how well the models allow assessors/panels to make robust assessments, including how the metrics and submissions are used.
- **Supporting diversity of provision** – the capability of the models to recognise diverse and innovative forms of excellence.
- **Effects on provider behaviour** – how the models incentivise focus on and improvements to learning and teaching relative to provider-level TEF, and the extent to which the models avoid driving unintended consequences and minimise vulnerability to gaming.
- **Supporting widening participation and social mobility** – how the models encourage providers to deliver positive outcomes for students from all backgrounds.

## 6.1 Model A: 'by exception'

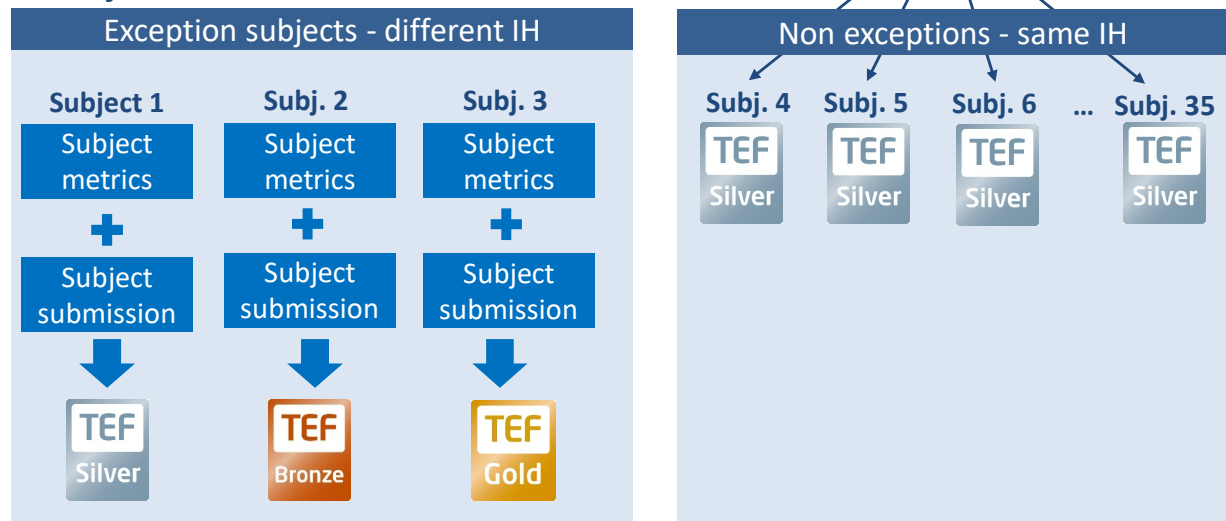
The figures below show the design and process for Model A.

Figure 2: Model A design

### 1. Provider-level assessment

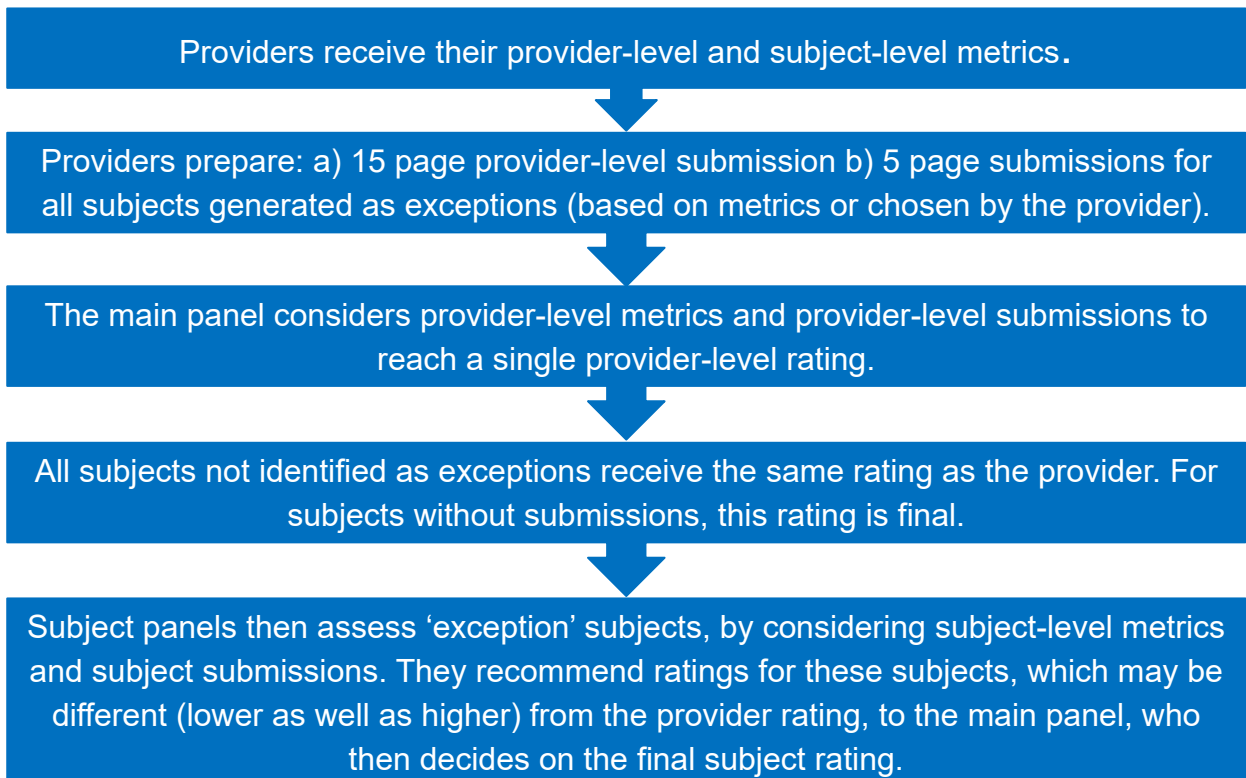


### 2. Subject-level assessment



IH: initial hypothesis

Figure 3: Model A process

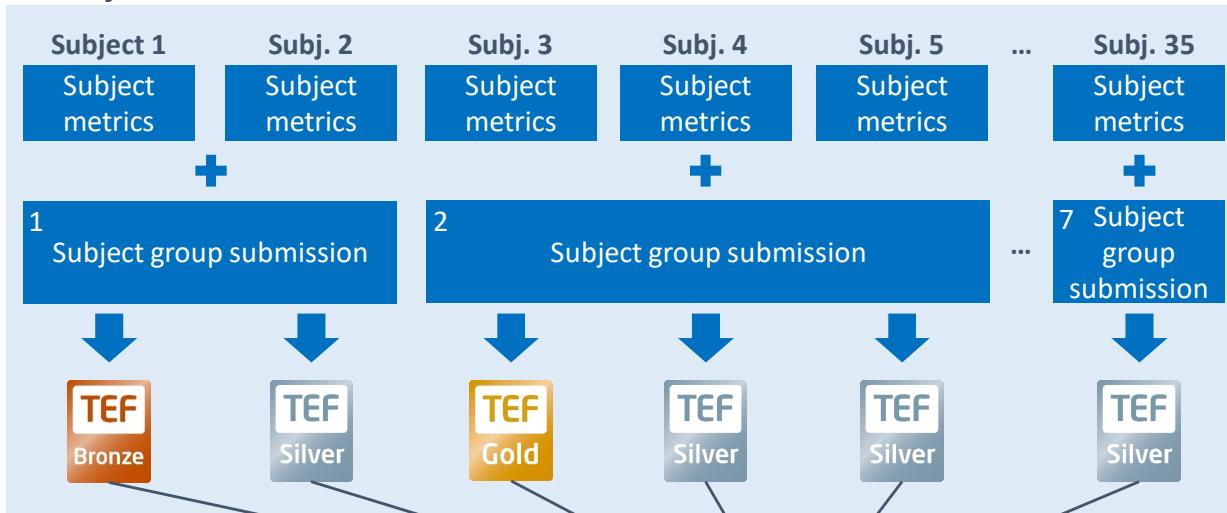


## 6.2 Model B: 'bottom up'

The figures below show the design and process for Model B.

**Figure 4: Model B design**

### 1. Subject-level assessment

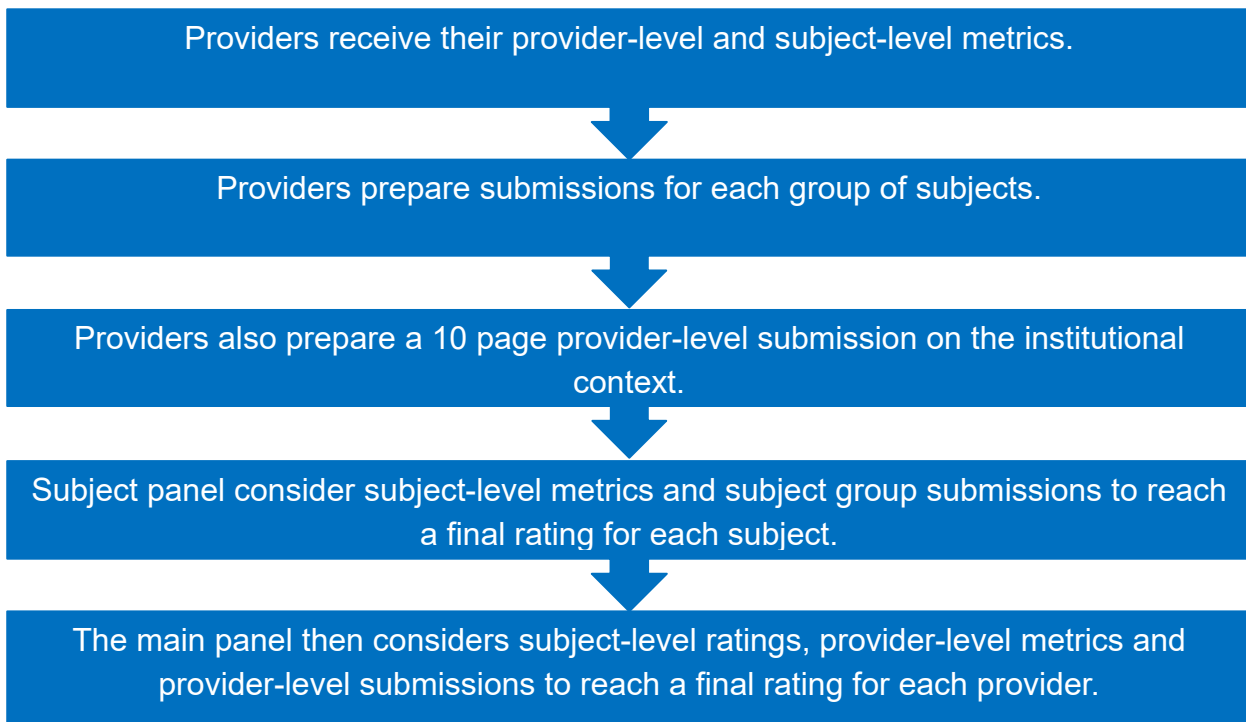


### 2. Provider-level assessment



IH: initial hypothesis

**Figure 5: Model B process**





## 7 Model A: Generating exceptions

In Model A it is assumed that the provider-level rating is indicative of the teaching quality and student outcomes in most subject areas. There will be some subjects however, where this assumption does not apply, and these are deemed to be 'exceptions' to the assumption. Under Model A, only subjects that are identified as exceptions would be assessed. Model A therefore requires a method for identifying or generating such exceptions. We propose to generate exceptions by applying both of the following:

- **Comparing the metrics at provider- and subject-level**, using the following rule: subjects whose metrics would cause the initial hypothesis (IH) for that subject to be different from the provider-level IH are treated as exceptions. When calculating the IH for this purpose, we will follow the existing rules set out in the TEF Specification, including accounting for very high and low absolute values.
- **Allowing providers to select a small number of additional subjects.** We recognise that metrics, though providing a robust evidence base, can only go so far in identifying exceptions. Providers may wish to put forward a subject which they believe deserves greater scrutiny and which, with further evidence, may not match the provider-level rating despite having the same initial hypothesis.

### Comparing the metrics

When comparing the provider- and subject-level metrics, there are alternative rules that could be considered for determining exception subjects. For example, a viable alternative could be 'subjects where metrics differ from the provider-level metrics by at least 2 flags (but not to neutral)'. The pilots will be testing alternative rules, but stakeholders are also welcome to provide their views and offer other alternatives.

### Provider selection

We are exploring two options for selecting the small number of additional subjects:

- **Option 1:** Each provider is allowed the same number of additional subjects. This could be 1, 2, or 3 additional subjects, to be decided.
- **Option 2:** The number is dependent on the number of subjects provided, using a formula such as  $n$  subjects divided by 10, rounded up, where  $n$  is the number of subjects at the provider. For example, a provider with 17 subjects would get an additional 2 subjects. This would mean that the additional subject allowance was proportionate to the range of provision in an institution.

**Q5 Under Model A, do you agree with the proposed approach for identifying subjects that will be assessed, which would constitute:**

- a) the initial hypothesis rule for generating exceptions from the metrics?**
- b) allowing providers to select a small number of additional subjects?**

You may wish to comment on the options for identifying these.

You may wish to comment on any variations or options we have not mentioned.

## 8 Model A: Relationship between provider and subject assessment

In Model A, subject-level assessments do not influence the provider-level rating. As the model is currently proposed, the provider-level assessment feeds into the subject-level assessment and ratings, however, the subject-level assessment and/or rating does not in feed back into the provider-level (see Figure 2).

We are consulting on whether subject assessment should influence provider-level ratings.

One option would be to incorporate a 'feedback loop' in which the provider rating was looked at again, after the subject ratings had been determined. This would mean that if a provider had a large number of exceptions, and these were consistently moved up or down, the provider rating itself could alter.

- **Advantages:** this would strengthen the holistic character of the assessment by allowing assessors to take into account all relevant information when determining the final rating and would allow additional information from the subject ratings to impact the provider-level rating.
- **Disadvantages:** this would add complexity and length to the assessment process and could give undue weight to the 'exception' subjects. It could also create a potential inconsistency between the provider-level rating and the ratings for non-exception subjects.

**Q6 In Model A, should the subject ratings influence the provider rating?** Please provide as much detail as you can on why and how this relationship should be brought about.

## 9 Model B: Relationship between provider and subject assessment

**In Model B, the provider-level rating is derived from subject-level ratings.**

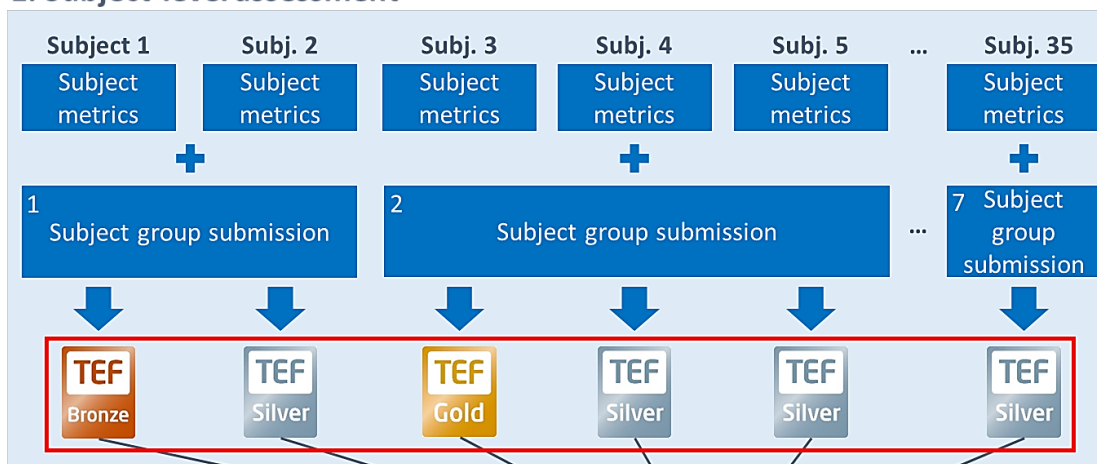
The subject-level assessment is the first stage of assessment and is fully completed before the provider-level assessment takes place. There is thus an opportunity for the subject-level ratings to influence the provider-level rating.

In Model B, subject submissions are written for 7 subject groups, but subject ratings are still awarded to the 35 subjects being assessed. The provider-level rating is influenced by the final subject ratings through an element called the ‘subject-based initial hypothesis’. This is considered alongside the existing elements of the provider-level assessment. The provider rating is therefore based on a holistic judgement using 3 sources of evidence (see the diagram below):

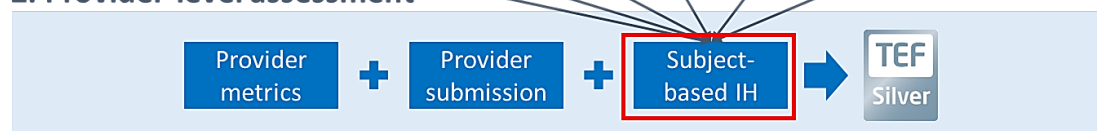
- Provider-level metrics – as in provider-level TEF, with an initial hypothesis
- Provider-level submission – limited to 10 pages, focusing on 3 criteria
- Subject-based initial hypothesis** – The final subject ratings are weighted by the number of students studying each subject and combined to reach an initial hypothesis (IH) for the provider rating of Gold, Silver or Bronze.

**Figure 6: Subject-based initial hypothesis in Model B**

### 1. Subject-level assessment



### 2. Provider-level assessment



**Q7 In Model B, do you agree with the method for how the subject ratings inform the provider level rating?** You may wish to comment on the method for calculating the subject-based initial hypothesis, as well as how it is used in the assessment process. We also welcome alternative approaches that do not use a subject-based initial hypothesis.

# 10 Metrics

## 10.1 Introduction

**Both provider-level and subject-level metrics are used in subject-level TEF.**

- **Provider-level metrics** will be calculated and reported in the same way as in current provider-level TEF.
- **Subject-level metrics** will be reported for each of the 35 subjects in the CAH2 and will be based on the same suite of metrics as provider-level metrics.

Below, we set out how we propose to apply the provider-level metrics in the subject-level metrics. The grade inflation supplementary metric is addressed separately, as we are proposing to treat this differently at provider- and subject-level. The remaining metrics apply in the same way in both provider- and subject-level metrics. This follows the overarching principle that the design of subject-level TEF is based on the provider-level framework. We seek views on this principle in Chapter 6 of this consultation. Potential measures of teaching intensity are addressed separately in Chapter 13.

### Subject-level metrics

#### Core and split metrics

We have proposed the use of existing TEF criteria to assess individual subjects. The core metrics and splits used to demonstrate evidence against these criteria at provider-level thus remain relevant at subject-level, and will be calculated in the same way.

#### Benchmarking

We propose to benchmark subject-level metrics in the same way as provider-level metrics, using the existing factors and groupings across all 35 subjects. Benchmarking will occur **within each subject**, meaning it will not judge the relative worth of different subjects.

#### Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) supplementary metric

Subject-level metrics will include the LEO supplementary metrics<sup>2</sup>, to be considered by assessors alongside submissions. When calculating the salary metric for each subject, we are proposing that the median salary threshold of £21,000 would remain, as per provider-level metrics. The threshold of £21,000<sup>3</sup> is based on the median salary for taxpayers aged 25-29 and so provides an indication of how likely it is that a student's investment in obtaining a degree in a particular subject will lead to an above average level of earnings. All metrics, including those based on LEO, are benchmarked by

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<sup>2</sup> At subject level, additional suppression is applied to ensure that no provider is able to identify any individual student's contribution (or lack thereof) to the metrics.

<sup>3</sup> Rounded to the nearest £500. This value will be updated annually in accordance with the relevant dataset.

subject so as to assess performance within subjects. Please refer to the technical document for further detail.

## 10.2 Grade inflation

We propose not to include the grade inflation metric in subject-level metrics and to include it only in the provider-level metrics. This is because we understand that decisions around grade boundaries are often set at an institutional level, and small sample size effects and natural variation from year to year will be stronger at subject-level, making the metric less robust.

**Q8 Do you agree that grade inflation should only apply in the provider-level metrics?** If you are able, please provide information about how grade boundaries are set within institutions to inform whether our rationale applies consistently across the sector. Comments on the potential impacts of applying grade inflation only at provider-level are also welcome.

## 10.3 Distribution of subject ratings

**The distribution of ratings is unlikely to be the same in each subject.**

Benchmarking occurs at subject-level, ensuring fairer comparisons of provider performance by avoiding biases that could arise if subject-specific expectations were not factored in. However, this does not mean that we would expect each subject to produce the same distribution of ratings. Reasons for this include different patterns of very high and low absolute values; the extent to which metrics are clustered in each subject; and different levels of external regulation and standardisation between subjects, which could impact both the metrics and the degree of variation between provider submissions.

### Proposal and rationale

**We are proposing to allow the distribution of subject ratings to vary naturally for each subject, rather than forcing a uniform distribution.**

Under subject-level TEF, we expect that different subjects may naturally have different rating distribution profiles and we are proposing to allow this effect to occur.

This is an appropriate outcome because it rewards excellence where it is found and does not prejudge the 'value' of one subject compared to another. This will give students clear information about where the best teaching and outcomes can be found for each subject.

### Impact of very high and low absolute values

Very high and low absolute values are used in TEF in recognition of the fact that (a) due to the law of diminishing returns, it may be harder to achieve material improvements

when performance is already very high and (b) from a student perspective, a very high (or low) absolute performance represents a positive (or negative) outcome, and should be recognised as such. These principles apply equally at subject-level. As such, these will be marked in subject-level metrics in same way as in provider level metrics: a very high absolute value will be marked with a star (\*) and a very low absolute value with an exclamation mark (!). Subject-level metrics will still be benchmarked within subjects, meaning benchmarked performance within a subject would still be the principal component of the assessment process. To identify very high and low absolute values in the subject-level metrics, we have considered **two options**:

1. Apply the **same thresholds** that are already defined for provider-level metrics.
2. Apply **different thresholds** for each subject, calculating these subject specific thresholds using the same approach as provider-level thresholds.

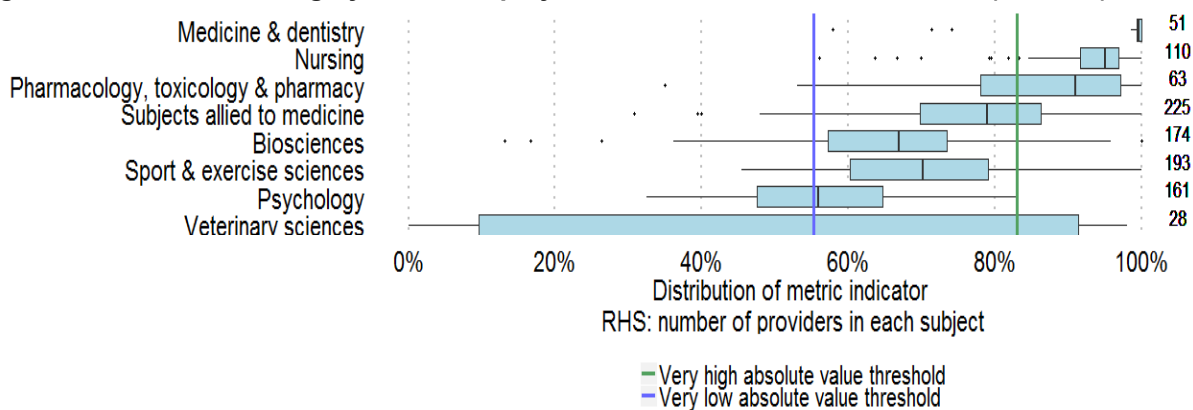
**We are proposing Option 1** because the provider-level thresholds represent how very high and low absolute values have already been defined and, by definition, absolute values should be about absolute, not relative, performance (the latter being addressed by benchmarks). Under this approach, there would be consistency across the provider- and subject-level metrics. We also prefer Option 1 because Option 2 can provide perverse information about absolute outcomes for students. For example, one of the very low subject-specific thresholds under Option 2 would be 99.41% (for continuation), yet from a student perspective, suggesting that a provider with 99% continuation has 'very low absolute performance' is clearly illogical.

We are testing Option 1 in the first year of pilots and this is reflected in the subject-level metrics that HEFCE have made available to providers. Please refer to the technical document for a full discussion of these options.

### **Clustered metrics**

For some subjects, the metrics of providers offering that subject are clustered together within a very small range, often but not always at the top end of the spectrum. An example is shown in Figure 7. This shows the metrics for a selection of subjects based on TEF data from assessments undertaken in academic year 2016/17. The clustering effect can be seen for Medicine & dentistry and Nursing.

**Figure 7: Distribution of highly skilled employment or further studies indicators (full time)<sup>4</sup>**



Clustered metrics make it less likely that a provider’s performance will be flagged as negative or positive as it will be less likely that a provider will differ from its benchmark by more than the materiality test. If the clustering is very high or very low, it may also mean that more providers in that subject, for that metric, will receive a star (\*) or exclamation mark (!) for very high or low absolute values. These effects in turn may impact the initial hypothesis and subsequent rating.

### Regulation and standardisation

Different subjects are placed under different requirements regarding regulation and standardisation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (for example, medical subjects are often highly regulated). This may indirectly influence the metrics (if similar styles of teaching are adopted, the outcomes may be more similar) and on the provider submissions, as providers may be adopting similar practices. This in turn may result in more providers getting the same rating, whether that is Bronze, Silver or Gold.

### Conclusion

In all three of the areas discussed above, we consider that if ratings vary due to these issues, it is because of real, measureable differences in teaching and outcomes that have meaning for students, and not as a result of any comparison between subjects. We consider it is therefore more appropriate to allow the distribution of ratings to vary naturally between subjects, rather than to impose a forced distribution on each subject.

**Q9 What are your views on how we are approaching potential differences in the distribution of subject ratings?** You may wish to comment on our approach to very high and low absolute values, clustered metrics and regulation by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

<sup>4</sup> Please see notes to Figure 6 in the Technical document for further information.

## 10.4 Non-reportable metrics

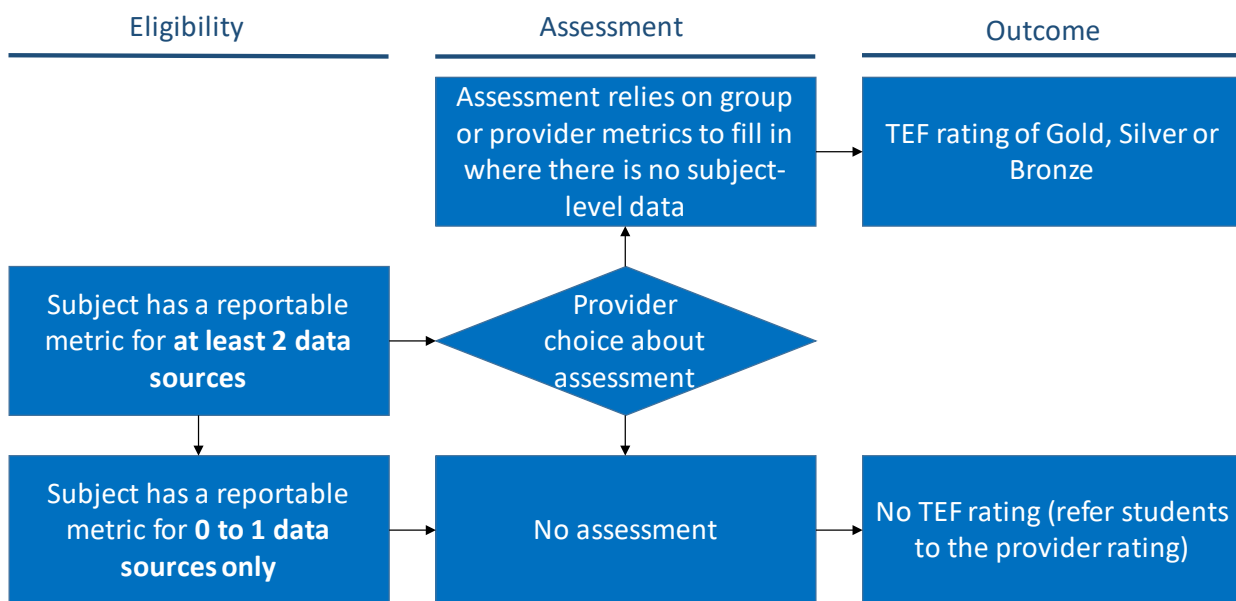
Non-reportable metrics are more common at subject-level because the metrics are disaggregated and reported separately for each of the 35 subjects. TEF metrics must meet reportability thresholds (e.g. at least 10 students, response rates) to be reportable.

Eligibility to take part in TEF will continue to be based on a provider having a suitable set of provider-level metrics. Non-reportable metrics at subject-level will not affect a provider's eligibility for TEF, but will affect how those particular subjects are assessed.

### Core metrics

We believe the existing assessment process should not apply in its current form when a subject has non-reportable core metrics. This is because the assessment process would be less robust and less comparable. Figure 8 shows our proposed approach to this issue. For an options analysis, please see the technical document. Non-reportable metrics is a key area being explored in the pilot, and alternative approaches may be identified through this process.

**Figure 8: Proposed approach to address non-reportable core metrics**



### Split and supplementary metrics

We are not proposing any restrictions or changes to the assessment process as a result of split and/or supplementary metrics being non-reportable.

#### Q10 To address the issue of non-reportable metrics:

- a) do you agree with the proposed approach (see Figure 8)?
- b) when assessment occurs, do you prefer that assessors:
  - rely on group metrics alongside any reportable subject-level metrics?
  - rely on provider metrics alongside any reportable subject-level metrics?
  - follow an alternative approach (please specify)?



## 11 Additional evidence

Some sources of additional evidence may be more relevant at subject-level. Though we welcome views on all additional evidence sources, two key examples are:

- Meeting the standards set out in the [QAA Subject Benchmark Statements](#)
- Accreditation or recognition of courses by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).

While we recognise the importance of this evidence in subject-level TEF, we are not proposing to make this evidence compulsory. We propose that providers should continue to be free to choose what and how they present additional evidence in their submissions, both at provider- and subject-level.

### QAA Subject Benchmark statements

These set out expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. They describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject. We think it would be challenging to establish a consistent way in which we could expect providers to report against these statements for TEF assessments.

### PSRB Accreditation

Accreditation is a process for verifying or approving a higher education programme or provider. Accreditation is usually granted by PSRBs, which are a diverse group of professional and employer bodies, regulators and those with statutory authority over a profession/professionals.

Given the variability in the nature of PSRBs, the value and impact that PSRB accreditation has for students may not be equal across all PSRBs or subjects. Given this, it seems appropriate to allow providers to make their own judgements on how relevant this evidence is and if relevant, how they wish to present it.

### Alternative: mandatory declaration

We acknowledge that there may be particular subjects in which PSRB accreditation should play a greater role in subject assessments. This may be the case for highly regulated subjects where accreditation forms an essential element of a student's progression to employment. It may therefore be worth considering whether to introduce a mandatory declaration about PSRB accreditation for certain subjects.

#### Q11 Do you:

- a) agree that QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and PSRB accreditation or recognition should remain as a voluntary declaration, if not, why?
- b) think there are any subjects where mandatory declaration should apply?

## 12 Interdisciplinarity

DfE recognises that interdisciplinary provision can have a number of benefits, including cross-fertilisation of practice and concepts.

### Joint programmes

For joint programmes, we propose that the two subjects which make up a course be treated the same as their equivalent single subject programmes. A provider would not be given a separate rating for its joint programmes.

To achieve this, students will be counted pro rata against each subject in the subject-level metrics. For an example see Table 2 below.

Table 2: Joint programme example.

Course	Subject	Pro rata
Politics and computing	Politics	0.6
	Computing	0.4

A provider can discuss joint programmes in the submission of each of the individual subjects that comprise it, if those subjects are being assessed.

Students looking to study a joint programme will be able to look at the ratings for each component subject.

### Multi-subject programmes

'Multi-subject' refers to programmes that substantially cover more than 2 subjects. In this case, students may be enrolled in a broad-based degree, possibly choosing their subject after one or two years.

To capture multi-subject programmes, we are proposing to use three broad 'general' subjects for assessment and ratings:

- General and others in sciences
- Humanities and liberal arts
- Combined and general studies.

These subjects would be rated in the same way as other subjects under assessment. We recognise that further work is needed to understand how this would work, including through the pilots.

Students looking to study a multi-subject degree will be able to look at the ratings for these general subjects in order to understand the teaching excellence and student outcomes of these courses.

In the specific case of programmes that cover 3 subjects, these could be treated either as a multi-subject programme, or in the same way as joint programmes (i.e. pro rata).

## Other interdisciplinary provision

The TEF seeks to recognise excellence wherever it is found, be it in interdisciplinary or single-discipline teaching. Providers who choose to pursue an interdisciplinary approach should be able to demonstrate whether and how this approach leads to better outcomes for their students in their TEF submissions. In some subjects, the advantages of an interdisciplinary approach may also be reflected in metrics data and require no further explanation.

**Q12 Do you agree with our approach to capturing interdisciplinary provision (in particular, joint and multi-subject combined courses)?** We want to ensure that providers are not discouraged from taking an interdisciplinary approach as an unintended consequence of subject-level TEF. We therefore welcome feedback on how the proposed approach will impact on providers and students.

## 13 Teaching intensity

### 13.1 Teaching intensity: rationale for measuring

As part of subject-level TEF, we are also consulting on whether to introduce a new measure of teaching intensity. The measures could be used as part of the TEF assessment process, or presented as stand-alone information for students. If used as part of the TEF assessment, measures would only apply to subject-level assessments and would not be used to compare teaching intensity between different subjects.

The Government is aware that factors such as contact hours matter to students' perceptions of their studies<sup>5</sup> and considers that excellent teaching is likely to demand a sufficient level of teaching intensity in order to provide a high quality experience for students. We also recognise that teaching and learning takes place in different ways and understand the complexities of attempting to capture these in a single measure.

If you would like to understand this in more depth, please refer to the technical document for further information, discussion and research on teaching intensity.

**Q13 On balance, are you in favour of introducing a measure of teaching intensity in the TEF, and what might be the positive impacts or unintended consequences of implementing a measure of teaching intensity?**

### Approaches to teaching

The Government accepts the right of providers to decide how teaching should be carried out and does not take a view on whether certain types of teaching methods are better than others. Higher education represents a wide range of philosophies and approaches to teaching, and this diversity is a defining feature of the sector. Teaching and learning activities that could be included in any teaching intensity measure are defined broadly using the QAA taxonomy<sup>6</sup> as a starting point. Examples of some of the factors involved in measuring teaching intensity include size of the teaching group, where the teaching is taking place (e.g. face-to-face in a classroom, online) and structure of the activity (e.g. lecture or demonstration). Options for measuring teaching intensity vary from simply measuring the amount of contact time, to also capturing the level of interaction (e.g. staff/student ratio), external placements and online teaching.

One of the areas in which there appears to be less consensus is whether or not independent study should be included in a measure of teaching intensity. A critical part

<sup>5</sup> Please see: <http://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-Student-Academic-Experience-Survey-Final-Report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> *Explaining Contact Hours: Guidance for institutions providing public information about higher education in the UK*, August 2011, <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=48#.WmiHt2xLHVh>. QAA defines teaching activities to include: lecture; seminar; tutorial; project; demonstration; practical classes and workshops; supervised time in studio/workshop; live online sessions; one-to-one staff time (eg office hour).

of higher education is the ability to learn how to study independently; furthermore, for any given student, the amount of independent study undertaken is likely to correlate, other factors being equal, to the amount learned. The drawbacks, however, of including independent learning as part of a measure of teaching intensity are that it does not actually measure what teaching a student is receiving (and hence does not measure value for money) and is more dependent on the student than on the provider. Furthermore, it is difficult to reliably collect data on students' independent study.

The Government recognises that certain factors not captured in a measure of teaching intensity, such as the quantity and quality of resources, will also be important to students. Any teaching intensity measure should encompass what is most relevant to students.

**Q14 What forms of contact and learning (e.g. lectures, seminars, work-based learning) should and should not be included in a measure of teaching intensity?**

## 13.2 Teaching intensity: measures

We understand that contact hours and teaching intensity are difficult to measure, particularly given the rich diversity of pedagogy and the difference made by both varying class sizes and the efficacy of the teaching. Therefore, we are seeking views on several options for measuring teaching intensity. Methodologies around the first option have been developed by Huxley *et al*<sup>7</sup> and the second option is run by HEA and HEPI<sup>8</sup> (see table on next page). Variations on these themes have been further developed by the Department for Education and HEFCE, and are being tested in the subject level TEF pilot.

For several of the options for measuring teaching intensity (see Table 3), the required data are not currently routinely collected by providers, so introducing a measure would require new data to be collected. Recognising the diversity of the sector, such data collection should be sufficiently flexible so as not to require the adoption of specific software or processes by all providers. Furthermore, the Government considers it important that data collection in this area should not itself drive teaching practices, nor impinge institutional autonomy by mandating activities that a provider may consider unfavourable to students or contradictory to its ethos of teaching, such as mandatory attendance monitoring. We would like to get a view on the burden of data collection for any teaching intensity measure and explore the feasibility of using existing collections whilst teaching intensity measures are explored.

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<sup>7</sup> Huxley, G., Mayo, J., Peacey, M. W. and Richardson, M. Class Size at University. Fiscal Studies. Accepted Author Manuscript. doi:10.1111/j.1475-5890.2017.12149

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2017/06/07/2017-student-academic-experience-survey/>

**Across any measure of teaching intensity, there are general principles that would need to be taken into consideration.** For example, measures should be applicable across different subjects and modes of delivery. Some of these considerations will be explored in the pilots. The higher education sector is diverse, offering a huge range of teaching provision and options for mode of study, including full-time and part-time, sandwich courses, accelerated courses (a full-time course that is completed in less time than a standard full-time course), single/joint honours courses, Higher National Diplomas (HND) and other sub-degree provision and top-ups from sub-degree to honours degree. This is a strength of the sector and any teaching intensity measure should capture this diversity. Teaching intensity measures would be reported at subject-level and therefore would need to factor in joint honours programmes and the aggregation process.

Various options for measuring teaching intensity are outlined in Table 3. For a detailed analysis of these options and a worked example of how the Gross Teaching Quotient is calculated, see the technical document.

**Table 3: Options for measuring teaching intensity**

Option	Description	Comment
1. Gross Teaching Quotient (GTQ); external visits and work-based learning; and online teaching	The GTQ measures not only teaching time but also class size. External visits and work-based learning reflects scheduled learning activity that occurs outside of usual face-to-face teaching. Online teaching is the amount of time spent facilitating online learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures all scheduled teaching time, recognising that this does not always happen face-to-face.</li> <li>• Does not take account of independent learning or quality of those doing the teaching.</li> </ul>
2. Student survey on contact hours	Measure based on asking students about the scheduled teaching received (quantity and perception) and their own personal experience of the teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures students' views are accounted for.</li> <li>• Perception might not reflect actual provision.</li> </ul>
3. GTQ weighted by qualification/ seniority of teacher	Instead of weighting by class sizes, as in option 1, GTQ would also weight contact time by qualification/ seniority of the teacher. The qualification and seniority of the teacher could be seen as proxies for the quality of the teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualification of the teacher is relevant to the student experience of contact time.</li> <li>• No consensus on what would be a good proxy for 'good teacher' (e.g. teaching qualification, PhD, research active, years of experience in industry).</li> </ul>

Option	Description	Comment
4. A measure using quantitative and qualitative information about how a student is expected to spend their time on a course	Measure based on providers stating information on how, for example, each 20 credit module in a course is experienced as learning by students – both taught hours and expectations of independent learning. This type of data used to be collected as part of the Key Information Sets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar to the Key Information Sets (KIS) but aggregated to subject-level.</li> <li>• Variation in module organisation across providers makes it difficult to compare providers.</li> <li>• Independent learning declarations not readily auditable.</li> </ul>
5. A measure of engagement with teaching resources	Measure of engagement with teaching resources using data from a greater range of inputs including use of libraries and digital resources, completion of assignments and other matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes into account different patterns of study.</li> <li>• Data collection may be very intrusive.</li> <li>• Not clear how one would combine the inputs into a usable measure valid across different types of provision.</li> </ul>
6. Measure of staff contracted teaching hours	Measure using the number of hours' staff are contracted to teach, and compare to number of students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In theory, it shows exactly how many hours are devoted to teaching per student.</li> <li>• Highly aggregated and excludes independent study or quality of teacher.</li> </ul>

**Q15 What method(s)/option(s) do you think are best to measure teaching intensity? Please state if there are any options that you strongly oppose, and suggest any alternative options.**

If you have an alternative suggestion, you may wish to consider the following factors:

- Meaningful for students – the ability of the measure/method to provide meaningful information for students.
- Value for money – proportionality of the cost of a measure.
- Generalisability across the sector – how a measure can be applied and work across the sector.
- Accuracy/validity of measures – how accurately data can be collected and verified.
- Supporting diversity of provision –the capability of the models to recognise diverse and innovative forms of excellence.

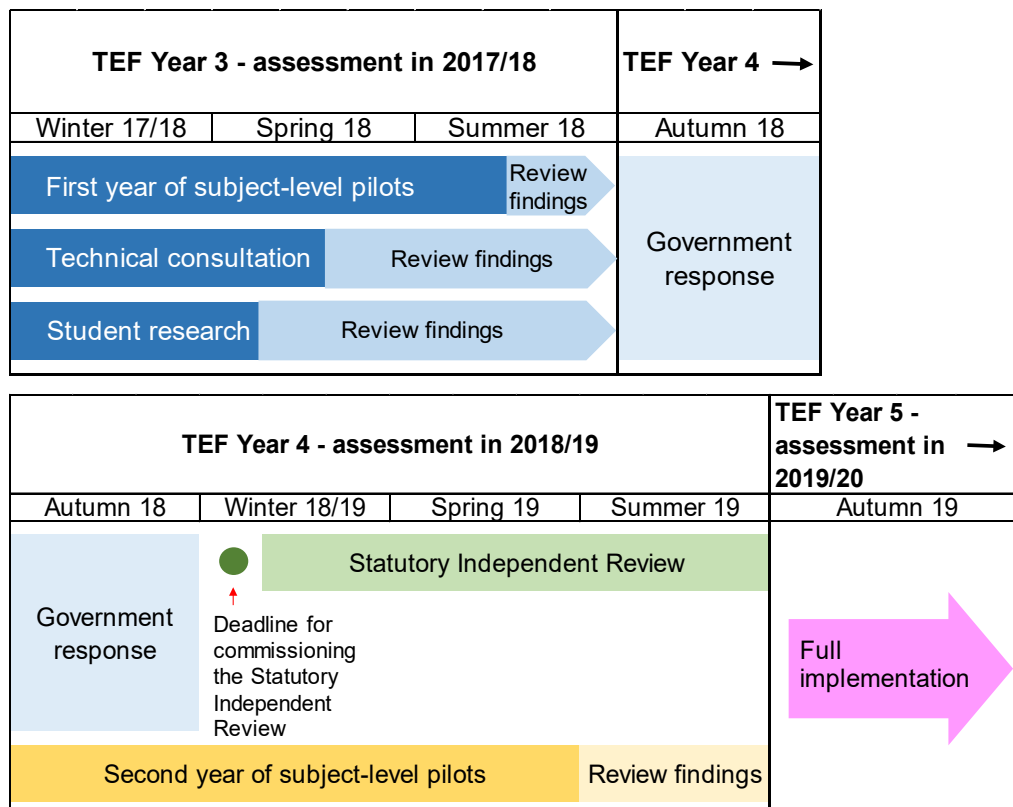
## 14 Next steps and independent review

This consultation was published on 12 March 2018 and closes on 21 May 2018. During this period we will be holding several events to engage the sector in this consultation. We encourage stakeholders to provide their views at these events as well as through our online response form. While this consultation seeks input on specific topics, respondents are also welcome to comment on any aspect of the detailed design of subject-level TEF, as set out in the [TEF subject-level pilot specification](#).

**Q16 Do you have any comments on the design of subject-level TEF that are not captured in your response to the preceding questions in this consultation?**

**We will bring together the findings from this consultation, the first year of the subject-level pilot and the student research to form a single Government response document that will be published in autumn 2018.** We will consider responses to this consultation alongside the findings from the pilot and student research, bringing together all three sources of evidence to inform the Government response. This will enable us to give full consideration to the consultation responses in the context of the findings from the pilot and student research. When considering responses, we will also take account of how they contribute to social mobility and widening participation, including how they impact on students from all backgrounds.

The findings from this consultation will also be available to the Statutory Independent Review of TEF, which will occur during the academic year 2018/19. The expected timeline for subject-level TEF is shown below.





## Annex A: TEF Glossary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Additional evidence</b>	Evidence on teaching and learning quality included in the submissions. Additional evidence can be quantitative or qualitative and should address the criteria
<b>Assessment framework</b>	The assessment framework sets out how judgements about excellence will be made. It refers to the aspects of quality, the criteria, the nature of the evidence and how the evidence will be assessed against the criteria to determine the ratings.
<b>Benchmark</b>	The benchmark is a weighted sector average where weightings are based on the characteristics of the students at the provider. A unique benchmark is calculated for each provider, metric and split: it is calculated solely from the data returns informing the metric derivations.
<b>Contextual data</b>	Data on the nature and operating context of a provider, such as their size, location and student population, which is used by panellists and assessors in interpreting performance against the core metrics and additional evidence but does not itself form the basis of any judgement about excellence.
<b>Core metrics</b>	Measures deriving from national surveys and data returns which have been defined, benchmarked and reported as a key part of the evidence used in TEF assessments. For each provider, there are six core metrics, reported separately for the provider's full-time and part-time students, and averaged over three years.
<b>Criteria</b>	Statements against which panellists and assessors will make judgements.
<b>Eligibility</b>	The requirements that must be met in order for providers to be eligible to receive a TEF rating.
<b>Flag</b>	Metrics include flags when the difference between the indicator and the benchmark is significant and material. Flags denote either a positive or a negative difference.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Higher education provider</b>	A higher education provider (or provider or institution) is an organisation that delivers higher education. A provider can be an awarding body or deliver higher education on behalf of another awarding body. The term encompasses higher education institutions, further education colleges providing higher education and alternative providers.
<b>Indicator</b>	The provider's value for a particular metric, expressed as a proportion, such as the percentage of students that indicated they were satisfied with teaching and learning.
<b>Provisional TEF award</b>	A TEF rating given to a provider that opts into the TEF but who does not have suitable metrics to inform assessment. These providers meet all other eligibility requirements and are prevented from achieving a rating above the first level on procedural grounds.
<b>Splits</b>	Categories by which core metrics are sub-divided in order to show how a provider performs with respect to different student groups and/or in different years.
<b>Statement of findings</b>	A brief, high level written statement that outlines the reason for the rating awarded to a particular provider.
<b>Submission</b>	<p>The submission is prepared and submitted by the provider and used by panellists and assessors to inform their TEF judgement. The additional evidence included in the submission should address the criteria and can be qualitative or quantitative. In subject-level TEF there are two submissions:</p> <p><b>Subject-level submissions</b> can contain contextual information that explains the performance against metrics and additional evidence to support the case for excellence.</p> <p><b>Provider-level submissions</b> can contain information on a provider's mission and characteristics, contextual information that explains performance against the metrics and additional evidence to support the case for excellence.</p>

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Suitable metrics</b>	The minimum set of core metrics required to be eligible to make a provider submission and receive a TEF rating of Bronze, Silver or Gold.
<b>Supplementary metrics</b>	These do not form part of the eligibility requirements for a TEF assessment, but are always displayed when a provider has them.
<b>TEF assessor</b>	TEF assessors consider the evidence available to them and work with panellists to recommend make a provisional judgement about the TEF rating a provider should receive. The provisional outcome is recommended to the TEF Panel. Assessors are experts in teaching and learning or students.
<b>TEF award</b>	A TEF award is made up of the TEF rating (see other definition) and a brief statement of findings. Awards made in academic year 2016/17 ('TEF Year Two') are valid for up to three years.
<b>TEF Panel</b>	The TEF Panel is the decision-making body for TEF assessments. It will be responsible for reviewing the recommendations made by TEF panellists and assessors and deciding the final rating a provider will receive.
<b>TEF ratings</b>	A TEF rating is the level of excellence achieved by a provider under the TEF. There are three possible ratings: Bronze, Silver and Gold.
<b>Very high and very low absolute values</b>	Very high or very low values are defined to be those absolute indicator values that fall within the top or bottom 10 per cent of providers for that metric (in the given mode).

## Annex B: Subject groupings

Table 4 shows the subject classification system proposed for subject-level TEF. The 7 subject groups would be used for submissions in Model B and could be used for metrics when assessing a subject with non-reportable core metrics.

**Table 4: Subject groups for Subject-level TEF**

<b>7 subject groups</b>	<b>CAH2 Codes</b>	<b>35 CAH2 subjects</b>
Medical and health sciences	CAH010-010 CAH020-010 CAH020-020 CAH040-010 CAH020-090 CAH050-010 CAH030-020	1. Medicine & dentistry 2. Nursing 3. Pharmacology, toxicology and pharmacy 4. Psychology 5. Subjects allied to medicine 6. Veterinary science 7. Sport & exercise sciences
Engineering and technology	CAH110-010 CAH100-010 CAH100-070	8. Computing 9. Engineering 10. Technology
Natural sciences	CAH060-010 CAH030-010 CAH070-020 CAH090-010 CAH070-010 CAH070-030 CAH080-010	11. Agriculture, food and related studies 12. Biosciences 13. Chemistry 14. Mathematical sciences 15. Physics and astronomy 16. Physical, material and forensic sciences 17. General and others in sciences
Social sciences	CAH130-010 CAH150-020 CAH120-010 CAH150-030 CAH150-010 CAH220-010 CAH150-040	18. Architecture, building and planning 19. Economics 20. Geographical and environmental studies 21. Politics 22. Sociology, social policy and anthropology 23. Education and teaching 24. Health and social care
Business and law	CAH170-010 CAH160-010	25. Business and management 26. Law
Arts	CAH210-010	27. Creative arts and design
Humanities	CAH190-020 CAH180-010 CAH190-010 CAH190-040 CAH200-010 CAH140-010 CAH200-020 CAH230-010	28. Celtic studies 29. Communications and media studies 30. English studies 31. Languages, linguistics and classics 32. History and archaeology 33. Humanities & liberal arts 34. Philosophy & religious studies 35. Combined and general studies



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