

Case for teaching excellence

Overview

1. The University of Sussex provides a consistently excellent student academic experience. Our approach to teaching and learning engages students as co-creators of new knowledge and pedagogy. This is reflected in our graduate destinations, which are outstanding for all students, irrespective of background. The TEF metrics show that Sussex is 11.9% above benchmark for highly-skilled employment and further study, with exceptional performance across all TEF splits. We consider this to be the hallmark of a gold standard institution.
2. The University's founding mission and values are as vital today as when Sussex was founded in 1961. We foster a spirit of social, intellectual and pedagogic challenge in a distinctive, inter-disciplinary learning environment. Institutional culture recognises and rewards excellent teaching and enables students to work closely with our internationally-renowned academic staff, and to inform and shape their research.
3. Our highly skilled graduate destinations stem from a University-wide programme of major curriculum reform which was implemented from 2012. This new curriculum is flexible and inter-disciplinary in structure and content, and empowers students to tailor their studies to meet their academic and career goals.
4. We provide opportunities for all students to participate in work and research placements, study abroad, elective modules and pathways leading to major/minor awards. Teaching and learning at Sussex is enhanced by major investment in the last five years to create a world-class physical and digital learning environment.
5. We operate a contextual admissions policy, which has resulted in a diverse student population. In 2014/15 19% of our UK-domiciled undergraduate entrants (with known data) came from polar quintile 1 and 2 neighbourhoods; 43% were first generation to study for a degree; 18% described themselves as BME; 14% declared a disability; and 87% came from state schools (Source: HESA UKPI).
6. The University's reputation for the quality of its provision is demonstrated by our standing in international and national league tables (Top 150 in Times Higher Education (THE) World Tables; and top 20 in National THE Table of Tables 2016 & 2017) and reflected in student demand to study at Sussex. Home & European Union applications to Sussex for 2017 entry are currently up 40% compared to the sector¹. This enables us to be confident that applicants recognise that Sussex offers excellence in education and delivers outstanding graduate destinations, both of which are the hallmark of a gold standard institution.
7. This document sets out our case for a TEF rating of gold for the University of Sussex, based on our evaluation of the TEF metrics and additional evidence. We have structured the document to correspond to the TEF aspects of quality, in the following order: student outcomes and learning gain, teaching quality and learning environment.

¹ UCAS data at 17th January 2017

Student outcomes and learning gain

Employment and further study (SO1)

8. The University of Sussex TEF metrics verify the outstanding levels of learning gain achieved by all of our graduates. **Table 1** shows the 6 month after graduation destination data for our UK-domiciled UG students for the past 5 years and demonstrates year on year improvement in Highly skilled and further study destinations.

Table 1 Sussex UK-domiciled Undergraduate (UG): Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) 6 months after graduation

UG DLHE 6 month data	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Positive destinations	90%	96%	96%	96%
Highly skilled & further study	64%	78%	85%	87%

Source: HESA PIs/ DLHE data supply

9. The core TEF metrics show that Sussex is + 11.9% above benchmark for progression to highly skilled employment and further study, with the z score of 19.9% indicating the high statistical significance of this metric.
10. The split metrics show exceptional performance across all groups. Disadvantaged students are 15.8% above benchmark for highly skilled employment or further study, compared with 9.9% above benchmark for non-disadvantaged.
11. Other groups that have outstanding outcomes for highly skilled employment and further study are: mature graduates at 15.5% above benchmark; disabled graduates at 10.9% above benchmark; and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) graduates at 14.3% above benchmark.
12. **Table 2** provides a breakdown of progression to highly skilled employment and further study amongst BME students, with notably excellent outcomes for all sub-groups.

Table 2 Progression to highly skilled employment and further study by ethnicity by graduate cohort 2013-2015

BME Ethnicity	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Average 2012/15
Asian	85.7	87.2	88.4	87.1
Black	81.8	83.6	91.4	85.6
Other	84.9	83.8	88.2	85.6
White	78.2	86.1	87.5	84.0

Source: Sussex TEF individualised data 2012, 2013 and 2014

13. Our average non-continuation rate of 4% (0.6 below benchmark) as presented in the core TEF metrics is an outstanding achievement given the diversity of the student body. Our mature students have a significantly lower non-continuation rate, 2.6% better than benchmark; and BME students have a non-continuation rate of 1% better than the benchmark.
14. Our contextual data show that only 34% of our students enter the University with a high UCAS tariff (>390 points). This equates to 39% of our home EU students. The remainder have medium and low tariff entry profiles. **Table 3** compares the destinations of low, medium and high tariff entrants for 2013 to 2015. The parity of outcomes between high tariff entrants

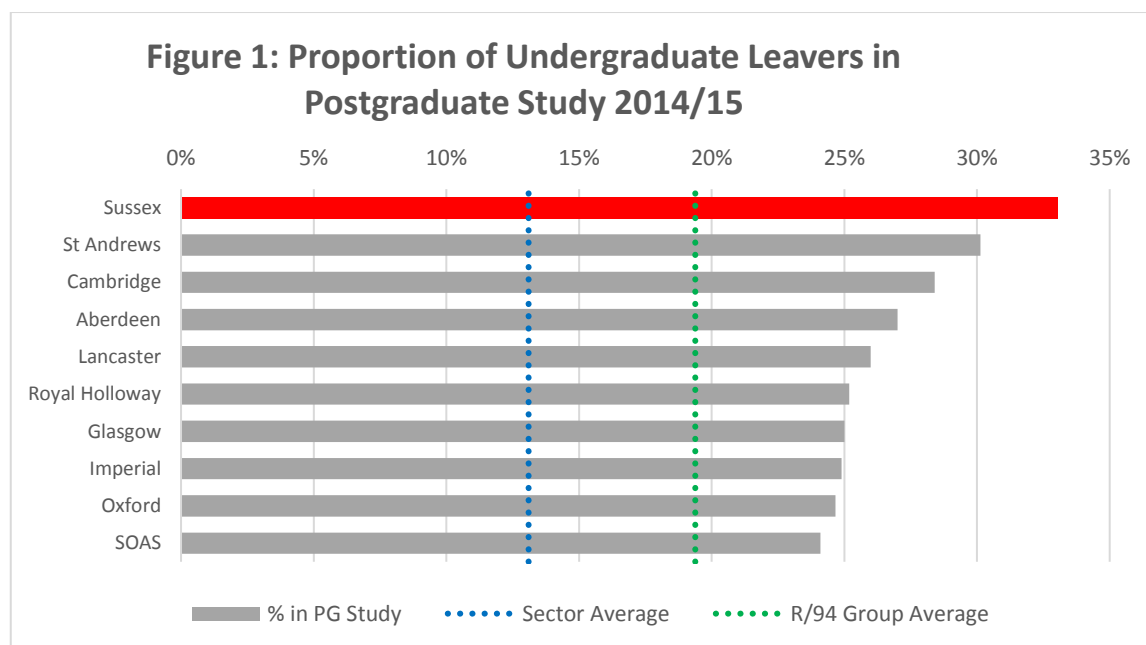
(84.2% highly-skilled employment or further study) and low tariff entrants (84.5%) is evidence of significant learning gain by the latter group.

Table 3 Progression to highly skilled employment and further study by entry tariff by graduate cohort 2013-2015

Entry tariff	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Average 2012-15
High >390	80.2	84.8	88.0	84.3
Medium ≥280≤390	75.7	85.6	86.8	82.7
Low <280	81.4	80.5	91.7	84.5
None	86.9	95.0	89.4	90.4
Overall	79.1	85.9	87.7	84.2

Source: Sussex TEF individualised data 2012, 2013 and 2014

- In 2015/16, 23% of undergraduate students received a first class honours degree and 79% received a good degree (first or 2:1). Good degree outcomes for students graduating in 2010-11 to 2015-16 are broadly consistent, ranging from 76% to 80%. The latest sector average of 'Good degrees' is 72%² and increases to 81% for Russell and former 1994 group members. This enables the University to be confident that it upholds rigorous academic standards, performs well in relation to the sector and benchmark whilst avoiding grade inflation.
- Over the last three years more than 30% of our graduates have immediately transitioned onto postgraduate study. **Figure 1** illustrates that 33% of our 2015 graduates continued to full time postgraduate study within 6 months of graduation giving Sussex a ranking of 1st for this measure³.



Source: HEIDIPlus – Destinations (Undergraduates – Type of Further Study: Postgraduate). Sector: All multi-faculty HEI.

² Source (2010/11 – 2014/15): HEIDIPlus - Student Record; Source (2015/16): Standard Registration Population, HESA Student 2015-16 - Data Supply

³ Source: HEIDIPlus – Destinations (Undergraduates – Type of Further Study: Postgraduate). Sector: All multi-faculty HEIs

Employability and transferable skills (SO2)

17. Our consistently outstanding graduate destinations provide evidence that our students acquire the knowledge and skills that are highly valued by employers. This is achieved by designing transferable employment skills into the curriculum across all subjects, and by the creation of a range of services and activities that provide optional extra-curricular opportunities for skills development and work readiness.
18. The University's flagship skills and employability initiative is *Sussex Plus*. Careers advisers work with academics to design key employment skills into module learning outcomes, which in turn ensures that skills acquisition is formally assessed. Each course has a *Skills Cloud*, which sets out the employability and transferable skills that a student can expect to develop throughout their course. The Skills Cloud enables students to plan their development proactively and to create an electronic CV (the CV is directly linked to verifiable activity and academic feedback held in the student record which can be securely accessed by an employer).
19. Students have the opportunity to share their CV with one of our network of volunteer alumni, who are listed by discipline and industry in our database. Alumni provide critical feedback, suggestions for skills development and coaching to assist transition from university to work.
20. The University recognises that not all skills are developed in the curriculum and that some softer skills are better developed through discrete activities including sports, clubs and societies, and specially designed careers events. There are high levels of student satisfaction with clubs and societies, with a 2 year average of 82% of students satisfied with the range of activities on offer, compared to the sector average of 73% (NSS additional question banks, question B4.2 Source: NSS supplied reports 'NSS2016_MyData_T_10007806').
21. Scheduled extra-curricular skills development activity is managed by the Careers and Employability Centre (CEC). CEC is nationally recognised through its achievement of the Matrix quality standards for information, advice and guidance (last accredited in October 2013). CEC annually delivers approximately 300 events involving an average of 250 employers and Sussex alumni, and attended by approximately 8,000 students each year.

Positive outcomes for all (SO3)

22. The University provides a world-class education with a range of extra-curricular opportunities that achieve excellent outcomes for all of our students.
23. In this section we draw particular attention to the success of our scheme to integrate and support our disadvantaged students from a wide range of backgrounds.
24. Students who qualify for support under our Access Agreement (family income of below £42,600) participate in Sussex's First Generation Scholarship (FGS) Scheme. The Scheme promotes social mobility and empowers disadvantaged students to achieve outcomes that are as good as or better than those of their non-disadvantaged peers.
25. Of the 6,812⁴ UK-domiciled students entering Sussex in 2012, 2013 and 2014, 3,202 (47%) are eligible for inclusion in our FGS Scheme following means testing of income by Student Finance England (2,930 of whom are first in family to attend university).
26. All FGS students have access to additional support from arrival through to graduation. The FGS Scheme includes a tailored package of extra-curricular activities, linked to study stage, delivered by the Careers and Employability Centre (CEC).

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27. FGS students can access work shadowing in year one. Between years 2 and 3, students participate in a range of home and overseas placement options. These fully-funded opportunities include an international summer school; a Junior Research Associate Scheme for 4 or 8 weeks, working on a research project at home or overseas; a 6 week overseas work placement as part of a British Council China Scheme; or a 10 week UK work placement drawing on opportunities from across the whole UK.
28. In addition, we provide a comprehensive package of financial support for those FGS students with a family income of less than £42,600. This financial package includes £1,000 cash for all years of study and £50 per week discount on rent for year 0 and 1 in on-campus accommodation to encourage all students to participate in the full university experience, including those who are based locally and might otherwise choose to live at home.
29. Travel grants are provided to students with a family income of less than £25,000 when they live off campus in subsequent years to ensure that travel costs do not create a barrier to student engagement in learning and wider social participation.
30. The University takes steps to promote integration between different groups of students. In on-campus accommodation we mix home and international students to break down the social barriers that may prevent mobility. We observed that FGS and international students are less likely to participate in team sports. To encourage participation we secured funding from Sport England, match-funded through our Access Agreement, to deliver a volunteer buddy scheme in which FGS and international students take part in team sports facilitated by a volunteer student.
31. The impact of these activities is clearly demonstrated by degree outcomes and rates of progression to highly skilled employment and further study.
32. In 2015, 1,623 UK-domiciled students graduated from Sussex, of whom 700 were the first cohort of students who had received a First Generation Scholarship⁴. 650 (93%) of the 700 graduates received a good degree, compared to 85% for students not eligible for FGS. This difference in degree outcome demonstrates learning gain for our FGS cohort, which is statistically highly significant (chi-squared = 23.5, 1df; $p < .01$).
33. The TEF metrics evidence the exceptional performance of disadvantaged students at Sussex, for whom the split metrics are 15.8% above benchmark for highly skilled employment or further study compared to 9.9% for non-disadvantaged students. Conversely, in the sector as a whole, negative differences in employment outcomes tend to be evident at 6 months and reduce for most UK-domiciled groups between 6 and 40 months after leaving higher education, but are likely to persist for disadvantaged students⁵.
34. The University has won two national awards in recognition of our retention and success of our First Generation Scholars: National Education Opportunities Network Widening Access Initiative (Retention and Success), 2016; Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services Student Engagement Award, 2016.
35. Sussex is proud of the success of our First Generation Scholarship Scheme, which was designed to mitigate the negative effects of increased tuition fees becoming a barrier to participation for disadvantaged groups. We believe that our distinctive success in learning gain for all our students, in particular our FGS students, supports our self evaluation that our performance is gold standard in accordance with TEF criteria.

⁴ Our OFFA Access financial support was delivered through Student Finance England in 2014/15, which allows us to separately measure degree outcomes for FGS students from the wider cohort

⁵ Differences in employability Outcomes: Equality and Diversity Characteristics, HEFCE September 2015/23

Teaching quality

Student engagement (TQ1)

36. Teaching and learning at Sussex engages students as partners in the learning process and enables us to recruit and retain internationally-renowned academics who are attracted to working with students who critically engage in their learning.
37. The University's greatest asset in providing excellent teaching is its faculty who are leaders in their field, working at the forefront of research and pedagogy. Our teaching-only faculty are heavily engaged in scholarship and lead pedagogic developments in the earlier years to support the transition from school to university. 87% of staff entered in the REF2014 teach at undergraduate level,⁶ which is evidence of the opportunities provided to students to engage with the latest research and scholarship as they progress through their course.
38. 92% of students agree that staff are good at explaining things (2% above benchmark) and 89% agree that staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching (1% above benchmark). (Source: NSS supplied reports 'NSS[YYYY]_MyData_T_10007806'). For the past 3 years 90% of students have agreed with the NSS question *I have been able to contact staff when I, needed to*, which is 3% above benchmark demonstrating that our research active academy, are equally committed to their teaching responsibilities.
39. The International Student Barometer (October 2016) provides further evidence of high levels of satisfaction amongst international students, as shown in **Table 4** below. The University considers this to be particularly encouraging, given that the TEF split metrics show that the University is below benchmark for international student satisfaction with teaching. We have identified lack of confidence in the use of English for academic purposes as a key factor despite our high standard ELTS requirement of 6.5 for undergraduate and 7.0 for postgraduate study. We have addressed this issue by embedding English language modules targeted at international students and applied to their subject of study to build this confidence. This commenced in 2014/15 and the full impact has not yet fed into the NSS.

Table 4 International Student Barometer

Question	2015 satisfaction (%)	2016 satisfaction (%)	2016 UK ranking (/42)
Expert Lecturers	95	96	9th
Quality lecturers	91	92	8th
Good teachers	91	92	13th
Assessment	90	92	13th
Learning support	90	92	15th
Course organisation	90	89	10th

40. Fittingly for an institution whose students have a long tradition of social and political activism, Sussex students are partners in their learning, in the development of the curriculum and academic policy making. As would be expected for a mature institution with an established track record for quality provision, student representation is embedded in all quality assessment activity, from course conception to annual review. However, Sussex goes further

⁶ Of 522 staff entered in REF2014, 454 were teaching undergraduates in 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15.

than this by empowering students to exercise leadership in setting the educational priorities for the institution.

41. Each School has a Student Experience Group chaired by an elected student representative and attended by academic staff and students. The Student Union Educational sabbatical officer chairs the University Student Experience Forum. Membership is drawn from student representatives in each school, all six sabbatical officers and senior officers of the University including the PVC Teaching and Learning and the Academic Registrar. The University Teaching and Learning Committee has a standing item to receive a report from the education officer (the student voice) at each meeting.
42. A significant recent example of a student-led initiative is the ongoing enhancement of our academic advising system. Our 2013 institutional review by QAA commended the 'range, variety and accessibility of academic and personal support available to students' (Source: QAA Institutional Review Report, 2013, paragraph 2.2.2).
43. The University has always required a minimum of 80% attendance at scheduled classes. Students can view and monitor their own attendance and performance data relative to their cohort via the virtual learning environment (VLE), as can their academic advisors. The use of analytics from the VLE informs the work of the academic advisers and ultimately the School Student Progress Committees, who will make positive interventions when patterns of student attendance or engagement in learning drops significantly.

Valuing teaching (TQ2)

44. Sussex creates a culture that values excellent teaching through career progression, professional development and teaching awards.
45. Recruitment and career progression recognises and supports excellence in teaching. All staff with teaching responsibilities applying for promotion are required to demonstrate excellence in teaching, including student feedback and outcomes. In addition, in 2011 the University extended the teaching-only promotion route to include professorial promotion, providing parity of esteem for teaching and research.
46. The University has agreed a framework for the implementation of a new contract which removes zero hours contracts for part-time hourly-paid staff and doctoral students with teaching responsibilities. The contract ensures that all staff who deliver teaching are supported through appropriate training and development. Furthermore, it includes a multiplier of up to 4x for contact hours in addition to paid holidays and sickness leave.
47. Professional development is flexible and tailored to career stage and aims to strengthen pedagogy. All staff new to teaching are allocated a mentor from within their academic school who will engage in peer observation of teaching linked to their course portfolio.
48. All new academics with less than three years' substantive experience are required to complete the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education to become established in post. Successful completion of the PGCert leads to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Our commitment to ensuring that all students experience quality teaching on every course is illustrated by our universal 'Starting to Teach' module which all staff new to teaching take together with doctoral teaching assistants within their first year of teaching. Successful completion leads to Associate Fellowship of the HEA.
49. The University has 7 National Teaching Fellows, including 2 selected during the previous two rounds of the scheme, demonstrating external recognition of the quality of our teaching.
50. The University has its own teaching award scheme which is student-led. Students nominate staff for awards and sit on panels to determine which academic and professional services

staff receive awards in a number of categories. 136 student-led teaching awards have been made since 2013/14. Recipients of student-led teaching awards may bid for funding to the value of £3000 to further enhance and disseminate good practice in teaching and learning.

Rigour and stretch (TQ3)

51. Our approach to teaching and learning is to design curriculum and assessment that is rigorous and stretching, and challenges students to set their own learning objectives.
52. We offer a wide range of opportunities to personalise learning through elective modules, minor pathways, placements at home and abroad, and study abroad. We refer to this range of options as *Sussex Choice*, which enables students to customise the design of their course after entry to meet their academic and career aspirations.
53. Sussex Choice has proved very popular with students. In 2015/16, 11,000 students registered for 174 undergraduate degrees. 5,000 of these students took part in the study of elective modules (1,000 studied a language) and 1,000 registered for elective pathways. 326 students participated in Study Abroad, 71 students were in professional placements and over 100 were in funded 4-6 or 10 week summer internships (46 in China).
54. Teaching timetabling is centrally managed to enable access to these opportunities for all students (except where prohibited by professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements). This approach to course delivery continues to contribute to the Sussex tradition of inter-disciplinarity. For the NSS question 13 '*the timetable works efficiently as far as my activities are concerned,*' the Sussex 3 year average for 2014-16 is 85% compared to 81% for the sector.
55. Students are actively encouraged through a range of support mechanisms and through academic advising to challenge themselves to academic and personal stretch.
56. NSS questions point to student satisfaction with levels of rigour and stretch. For B9.4. *I am generally given enough time to understand the things I have to learn* the Sussex 3 year 2014-16 NSS average is 71.3% compared to the sector average of 68.3, a significant 3% above the sector. (NSS additional question banks, question B9.4 Source: NSS supplied reports 'NSS[YYYY]_MyData_T_10007806').

Feedback (TQ4)

57. The University is disappointed that NSS satisfaction for assessment and feedback has shown little improvement despite numerous institutional and subject-level initiatives designed in partnership with students (please see paragraphs 79 and 80 for a recent example of joint initiative). However, when the NSS evidence is triangulated with our degree outcomes, graduate destinations and the 2016 International Student Barometer a more positive picture may be observed. This demonstrates unequivocally that our students consistently achieve high levels of development, progression and attainment. This is one area where the TEF guidance to panels concerning the singular use of NSS data might be applied (7.21 (b), page 51 of the TEF guidance).
58. In pursuit of positive outcomes for all, the University uses a diverse range of assessment methods to challenge and demonstrate learning. This includes group work, presentations, case studies, team working and social media engagement, recognising employer demand for more transferable skills in addition to knowledge and understanding. The University sees this approach as essential in encouraging student risk taking and personal challenge, but also acknowledges that students do not necessarily welcome being pushed to participate beyond their comfort zones.

59. The University's high rate of students returning for postgraduate study (> 30% of 2015/16 cohort) evidences graduate recognition of the value of the Sussex approach to assessment.
60. Evidence from external scrutiny confirms the effectiveness of assessment and feedback at Sussex. All 74 undergraduate external examiner reports received for the 2015/16 year confirm standards and consistency in assessment and feedback and provided positive comments with no examiner drawing attention to any systemic deficit with assessment and feedback. In particular a third of examiners highlighted exemplary practice as evidenced in **Box 1**.
61. In conclusion, we would argue that consistently high quality teaching and learning at Sussex is evidenced by the outstanding academic and employment outcomes of our students.

Box 1: 2015/16 external examiner comments on assessment and feedback

'Exemplary marking of exam scripts and coursework with some examples of excellent feedback to students.'

Professor John Davies, University of Glasgow, MEng Electronic and Electrical Engineering

'Essay-planning exercises and mini-essays which are used in the modules I have reviewed are a very good way of providing formative feedback to students.'

Dr Ruth Winter, University of Bristol, BA language joints

'Feedback was really impressive across the board. By this I mean that feedback genuinely engaged with the arguments and debates within papers (and so offered significant formative input) rather than focussing on justifying the mark that was awarded.'

Dr Charles Dannreuther, University of Leeds, BA (Hons) Politics

'Students taking the BSc Psychology course at Sussex receive some of the best feedback I have seen. The generic feedback on exams is detailed. The individual feedback for coursework assignments is always carefully customised to the individual piece of work, and demonstrates to the student how the assessment relates both to the stated marking criteria and also to the published learning outcomes of the module.'

Dr Susan Condor, Loughborough University, BSc (Hons) Psychology

'Yet again feedback is outstanding across the board and exceeds best practices I have observed elsewhere in the sector.'

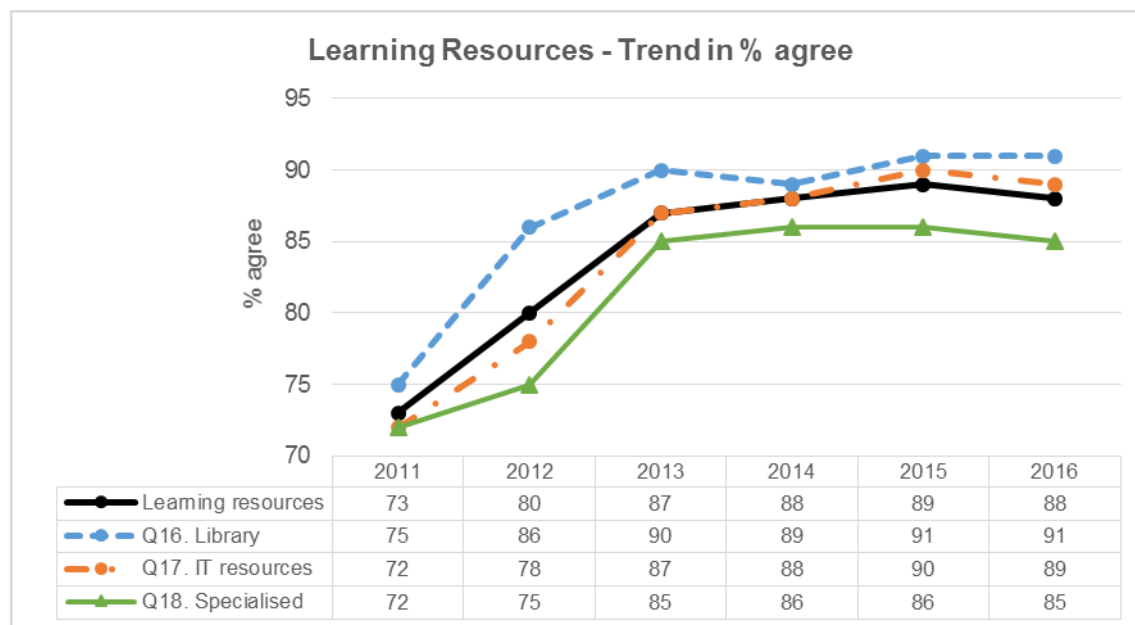
Dr Ian Biddle, University of Newcastle, BA (Hons) Music

The Learning environment

Resources (LE1)

62. Significant investment in the quality and connectivity of the campus infrastructure along with a commitment to technology-enhanced learning has significantly increased students' capacity for engagement and independent self-study.
63. We have invested around £120m during the period 2011 to 2016 in the University's capital estate and infrastructure. Approximately £30m of this is in student housing with the remaining £90m being spent on projects to improve the physical and digital estate to enable access and aid student learning.
64. Some examples of the more financially significant projects completed over this period are: The Fulton teaching building (£10m) which provides a new state of the art lecture and seminar space; A major refurbishment of the University's library building (£7m) delivering reconfigured learning spaces and technology infrastructure; The Jubilee building (£30m), home to our school of Business Management and Economics; The Freeman Building (£9m) providing modern repurposed space housing our School of Law, Politics and Sociology, including a moot court; The Friston Building (£10m) delivering enhanced teaching and learning spaces for international foundation students; The Attenborough Centre for Creative Arts (£11m), a major investment to rejuvenate our Arts Centre as a facility providing a high tech, creative environment for our humanities schools, which is highly used by Media, Film, Music and Drama students.
65. We have also invested over £6m to date in a £10m project to create a centre for computing, robotics, electronics and mechatronics as part of our commitment to STEM subjects and with the support of HEFCE STEM capital funding.
66. Investment in the condition of our estate has been a major priority as a significant number of our buildings, built in the 1960s at or shortly after the University's creation, have required major work to ensure the quality of their condition is improved and that University teaching and learning space is fit for the demands of modern higher education at a leading research university.
67. Our HESA data records that expenditure on repairs, maintenance and space enhancement has exceeded £10m in each of the years 2011 to 2015, more than 5% of total expenditure, and this is in addition to capital expenditure to improve existing spaces. 91% of the University's non-residential space falls within condition categories A and B as a result of this investment and is an increase from 85% since 2011/12. Similarly, over 91% of space falls within functional suitability categories 1 and 2, an increase from 80% in 2011/12. The University is within the upper quartile of its HEFCE Peer Group B in respect of both these statistics.
68. **Figure 2** shows that the University's significant investment in the learning environment has generated a corresponding increase in NSS scores, moving from lowest to top quartile during this period.

Figure 2 NSS student satisfaction with learning resources 2011-2016



69. The University Library provides a flexible, 24/7 study environment, which students value greatly. Our three year average NSS score for 2013/14 to 2015/16 for satisfaction with the Library is 90%, 3% above the sector average of 87%.
70. Our ethos of empowering students to take ownership of their learning through the disintermediation of routine transactions has enabled us to concentrate on value-added activities such as the development of the Skills Hub and the Sussex Mobile App.
71. The Skills Hub, designed in consultation with students, has brought together, under a single interface, all cross-campus academic skills training and support for students. Library and CEC staff work together to offer an extensive programme of face-to-face and online self-service workshops to develop subject mastery, academic integrity and research skills. In the 2015/16 academic year, over 1,000 students attended a Skills Hub workshop and there were over 550,000 page views of Skills Hub materials.
72. Students are increasingly accessing learning resources online. The Sussex Mobile App enables students to locate the nearest free PC or study room for group or individual working.
73. Sussex deploys technology to create dynamic, interactive classrooms that support systematic collection and use of student feedback. For example, Poll Everywhere and Clickers are used in lectures and seminars to continually engage students in the learning process and to give real time feedback to staff on student understanding and critical evaluation of concepts, methods and values relating to the teaching session.
74. Two examples of the use of technology-enhanced learning are lecture recording and electronic assessment submission, marking and feedback, both of which are rooted in using technology to extend the campus and flexibly engage students.
75. Lecture recording is available in all lecture theatres. This technology enables the increasing use of flipped classrooms and supports engagement by allowing students to interact with lecture material at their own pace. The deployment of lecture capture and its use in teaching strategy has been set in an overall institutional policy. Locally, academic staff and students agree how to implement lecture capture in the approach to teaching on the course. This is widely used across all subjects and at all levels of study.

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76. Recorded lectures are published in the VLE and can be streamed or downloaded. £3m investment in campus broadband ensures that students are always connected wherever they are and that there is no barrier to equal access to learning.
77. The ability to check and re-test learning is useful for all students but is particularly helpful for the University's international students or those for whom English is not their first language. Lecturers use engagement with recorded material to understand patterns of learning and adapt methods accordingly.
78. The practice of lecture recording is now well-embedded. From 2010/11 to 2015/16 the number of recorded lectures increased tenfold from 1,992 to 11,996. The viewing figures for uploaded recordings have continued to increase annually, with the most recent figures of 348,000 lectures accessed for the autumn term 2014 growing to 441,000 for the autumn term 2015, an increase of 26% and equating to an average of 3,000 lectures viewed per day 7 days a week, with peaks at assessment times.
79. In a concerted effort to systematically improve assessment and feedback for our students the University has designed a complete end-to-end process for the electronic submission, marking and provision of feedback on assessed work. Over 50,000 (66%) undergraduate text-based assignments (coursework and submitted formal assessments) are now submitted electronically each year and this has reduced the rate of non-submission from 8% to 5% over the past two years. This project was initiated in 2014/15 for all new undergraduate stage 0/1 students and rolled out across all years as this cohort has progressed with no impact likely on NSS results until the first cohort graduate in 2016/17.
80. The e-submission system enables Schools to plan and monitor the timing of feedback, in order to ensure feed forward into future assessments. The system also allows faculty to personalise feedback in a number of ways including audio, video, text-based, individual and group feedback. E-submission enables faculty to use learning analytics to improve curriculum delivery and content. Student evaluations to date have shown significant improvement.

Scholarship, research and professional practice (LE2)

81. Our ethos is to expose students from the outset to research and scholarship at the forefront of their subject discipline. As a research-intensive institution, we do this by enabling students to learn in partnership with our high calibre, research active academic staff in state of the art facilities. Sussex pioneered inter-disciplinarity in the 1960s. We remain committed to a model of teaching and learning based on mastery of a subject discipline as a pre-requisite to rigorous engagement and critical reflection that enables inter-disciplinary scholarship to flourish.
82. 87% of staff entered in REF2014 undertake nationally and internationally-recognised research and teach at undergraduate level. This enables us to provide opportunities for undergraduate projects and student exposure to provision that is at the forefront of scholarship, research and professional practice.
83. Students can participate in our Junior Research Associate scheme which provides them with a funded summer research placement (at home or abroad) between their second and final year. In 2016, 69 students participated in the scheme. Students may choose from a range of research topics, or select their own and this can be continued into their final year dissertation.
84. Each School has a budget to run a discipline-based seminar series and other professional practice workshops, including research seminars, which often feature invited guest speakers from industry, academia and the professions.

Personalised learning (LE3)

85. Our excellent rates of recruitment and retention reflect the way in which we empower students to personalise and manage their learning throughout their course. As their academic and professional aspirations emerge and develop, students have opportunities to take elective modules which may be combined into coherent sub-discipline pathways. This enables students to stretch and challenges themselves, such that the degree with which they exit reflects their intellectual journey (major/minor award).
86. In summary, the learning environment reflects the standards expected of a modern research-intensive institution that is highly ranked and respected internationally.

Conclusion

87. Teaching and learning at Sussex nurtures, challenges and transforms our students. Our graduates, from diverse backgrounds, consistently achieve outstanding outcomes with regard to degree performance and progression into postgraduate study.
88. Course design and assessment practice provides outstanding levels of rigour and stretch. While student satisfaction with assessment and feedback has proved difficult to improve, the effectiveness of assessment at Sussex is confirmed by student development, progression and attainment as evidenced by highly skilled employment destinations.
89. Outstanding physical and digital resources provide a dynamic, interactive and technology-rich learning experience, both in the classroom and in the services provided to empower students to manage and personalise their learning.
90. Above all, teaching is research-led and takes place within a lively and engaging academic culture of debate and intellectual challenge which delivers positive outcomes for all.

Note for TEF panel members

This submission document was produced by the University's TEF Drafting Group. It was critiqued at a joint meeting of the University's Senate and Teaching and Learning Committee, which included undergraduate and postgraduate student committee members, along with three Student Union sabbatical officers.

The University of Sussex Student Union has declined the Vice-Chancellor's offer to comment on the TEF submission, but has provided the following statement for inclusion.

Statement from the University of Sussex Students Union

As the University of Sussex Students' Union we oppose the TEF. Following consultation in 2015/16, 69% of our students opposed the proposed TEF, and 85% of our students disagreed that there should be any link between 'teaching excellence' and fee increases. The Students Union, since 2007 has had a campaigning policy, entitled *Education Not For Sale* which states we will "continue to campaign for a free, popular, democratic and publicly funded education, and launch a campaign to combat the encroachment of private companies into the delivery of the core educational activities of Higher Education institutions." 150 students also signed an open letter calling on the University of Sussex Council not to join TEF 2. We are strongly in support of teaching excellence at the University of Sussex but we do not believe that the TEF metrics accurately measure teaching excellence.