



Advance HE



Learning from the Institutional TEF

Dr Geoff Stoakes, Special Adviser (Degree Standards), Advance HE,
Government Events, 20 October 2020

Plan

- Consider the lessons that might be learnt from the institutional submissions to the TEF.
- Impact of the TEF so far
- Consider the lessons learned about the assessment metrics

Learning from the Institutional TEF submissions

TEF Outcomes (from Years 2,3 &4)



Metrics and the institutional submission

‘Metrics-led not metrics determined’

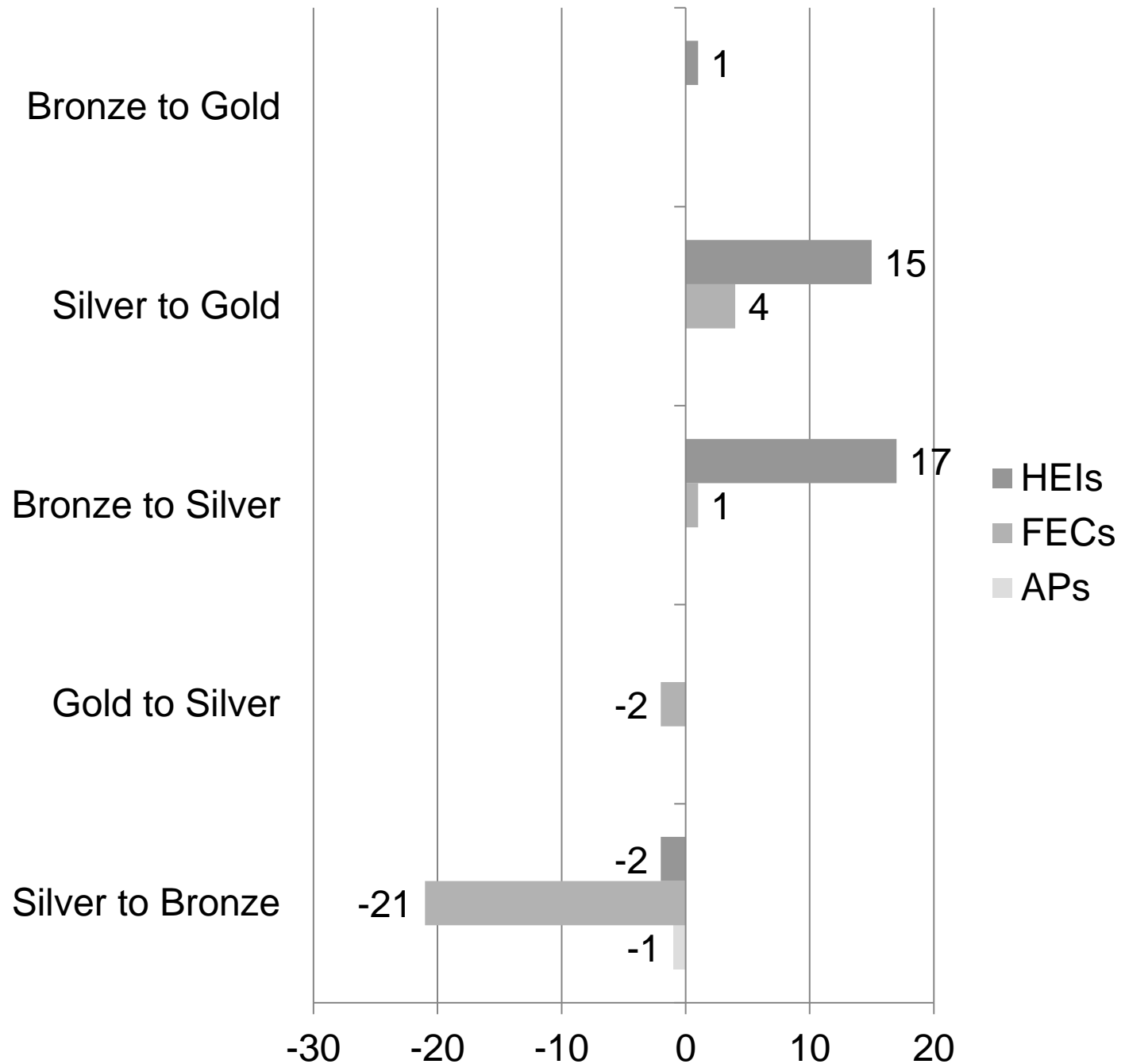
The submission helps in ‘borderline cases’

Chris Husbands, chair of TEF, ‘TEF results – the chair’s post-match analysis’,
23 June 2017

<https://wonkhe.com/blogs/tef-results-the-chairs-post-match-analysis/>

TEF2

- **64 moved from indicative metric-based rating to final rating (28% of awards)**
- 35 HEIs, 28 FECs and 1 AP
- Nb. doesn't include the one successful appeal



Teaching Excellence Framework: Year two



Statement of findings

Name of institution

Ref number

The logo for a TEF Silver award, featuring the letters 'TEF' in a white box followed by the word 'Silver' in a dark blue box.

This award was made in June 2017 and is valid for up to three years.

The TEF Panel reviewed the provider metrics and provider submission according to the process and criteria specified in the TEF guidance.

Assessing the TEF Submission

“In reviewing the provider-level or subject-level submission, panel members should consider:

- Any further **contextual** information it provides.
- The strength of **evidence of excellence** that it provides against all three aspects of quality, and in particular how far the submission demonstrates the **impact or effectiveness** of policies, practices or initiatives.
- How the submission **engages with and explains metrics-based performance**, including potential mitigation of negative flags, and any alternative evidence provided to addresses any unreportable metrics.
- How far **student views** have been incorporated into the submission, and provide panel members with confidence that the submission reflects student views at the provider. Where students have explicitly chosen not to engage with the submission, however, providers should not be disadvantaged.”

[Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework: Subject-level pilot guide]

Research into the TEF submissions

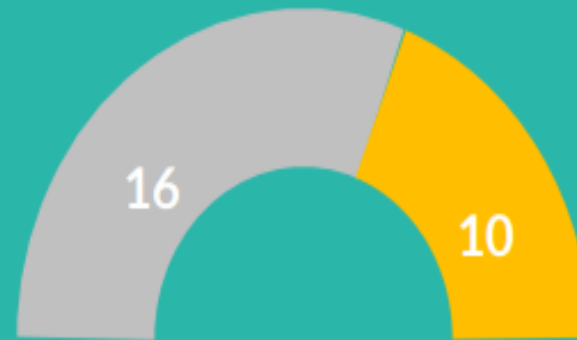
- Beech, (2017) *Going for Gold: lessons from the provider submissions* Oxford: HEPI
- **Moore J. et.al.** (2017) *Evidencing teaching excellence: Analysis of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF2) provider submissions* York: HEA
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/evidencing-teaching-excellence>
- Eales-Reynolds, L-J & Westwood, O. (n.d.) *Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: lessons from the TEF* . Self-published. Amazon
- Vos, L (unpublished research) *TEF 2017: what makes gold?*

Metrics

- Balance between mitigation and correction
- No resting on laurels
- Enhancement-led approach (Moore)

Submissions gave providers the opportunity to draw attention to contextual and other factors affecting their performance in the TEF metrics.

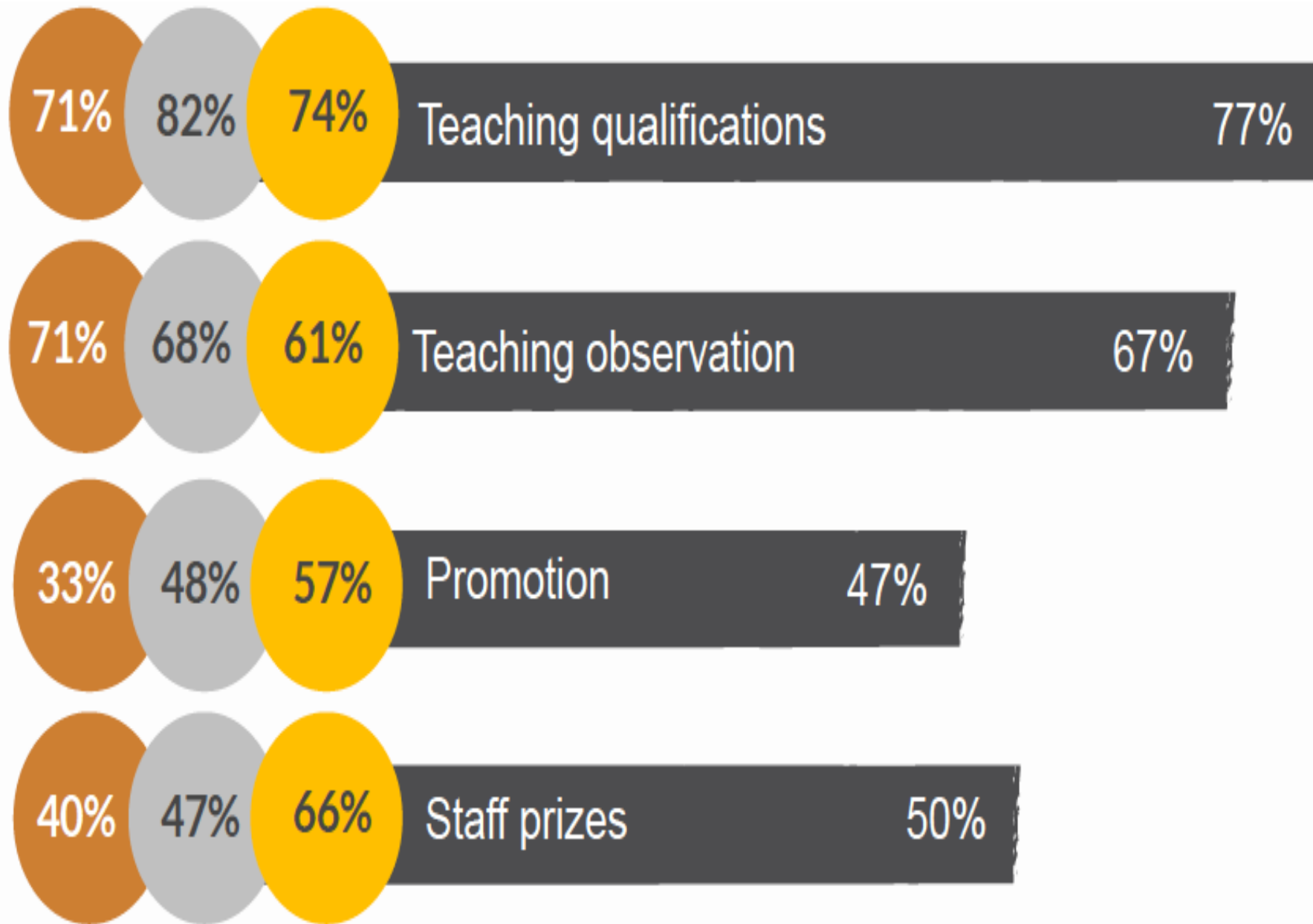
Two-thirds of the statements of findings given to upgraded providers mentioned full or partial mitigation (sixteen to Silver providers, ten to Gold).



Mitigation of metrics

Institutional structures: patterns

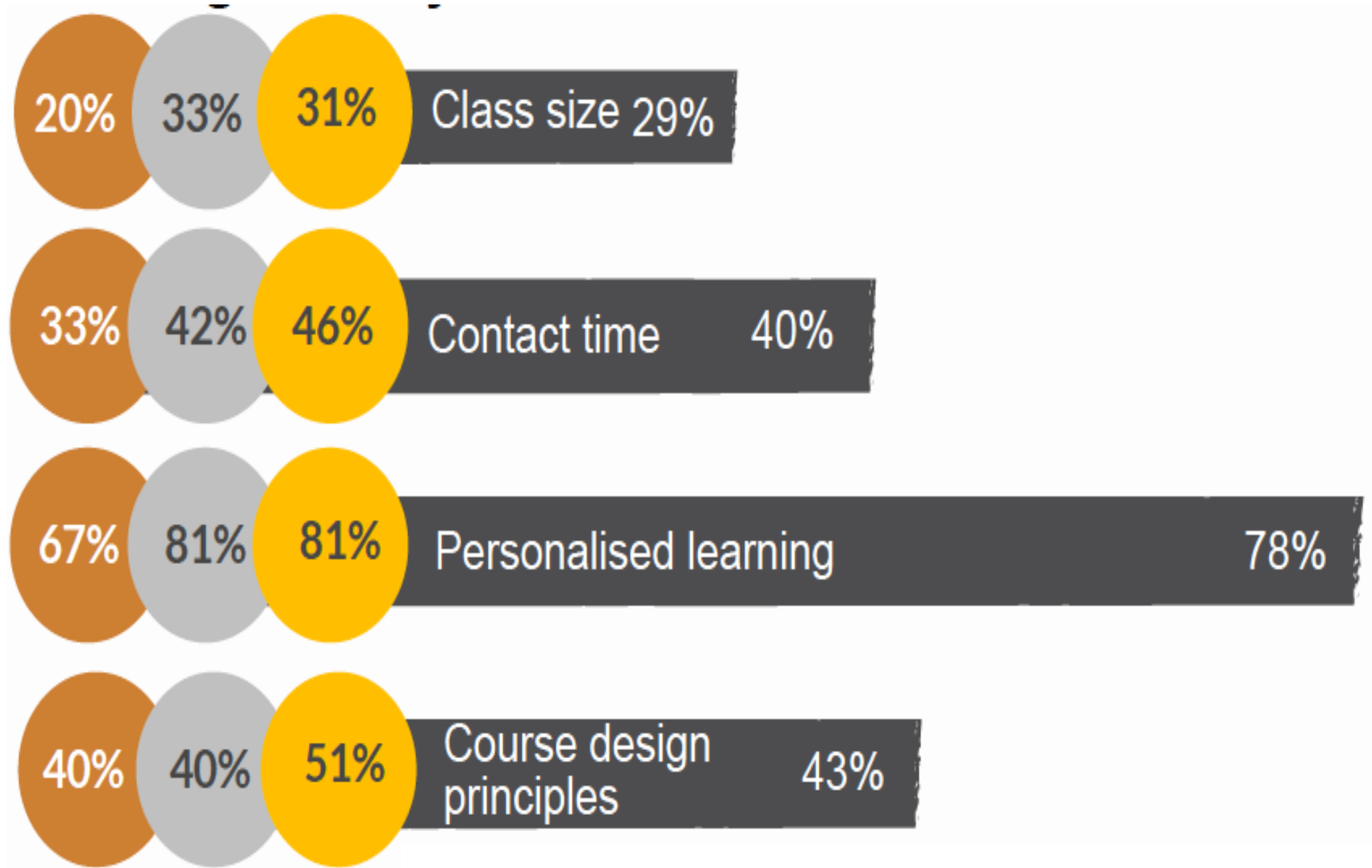
- Narratives which make a **direct link** to how institutional values and ethos support teaching and learning were less prominent within the submissions, but were most prominent amongst Gold award providers. (Moore)
- ‘whilst many submissions mentioned institutional values, few corroborated how they guided their strategy- and policy-making’ (Eales-Reynolds et al)
- Upgraded and/or gold providers tended to illustrate **embeddedness**, linked to how structures **enhanced the student experience** and – occasionally – referred to **students as change agents**. (Moore)



Staffing factors (ARC)

Staffing factors: patterns

- High achieving submissions (and statements of findings) talked about **embedding** the acquisition of teaching qualifications / accreditation of staff into institutional processes and cultures.
- Upgraded submissions tended to discuss **recognition and reward** and the **mechanisms** for developing teaching practice and sharing good practice.
- Gold award providers also described opportunities for staff to develop teaching practice through **scholarship activities** (Moore)



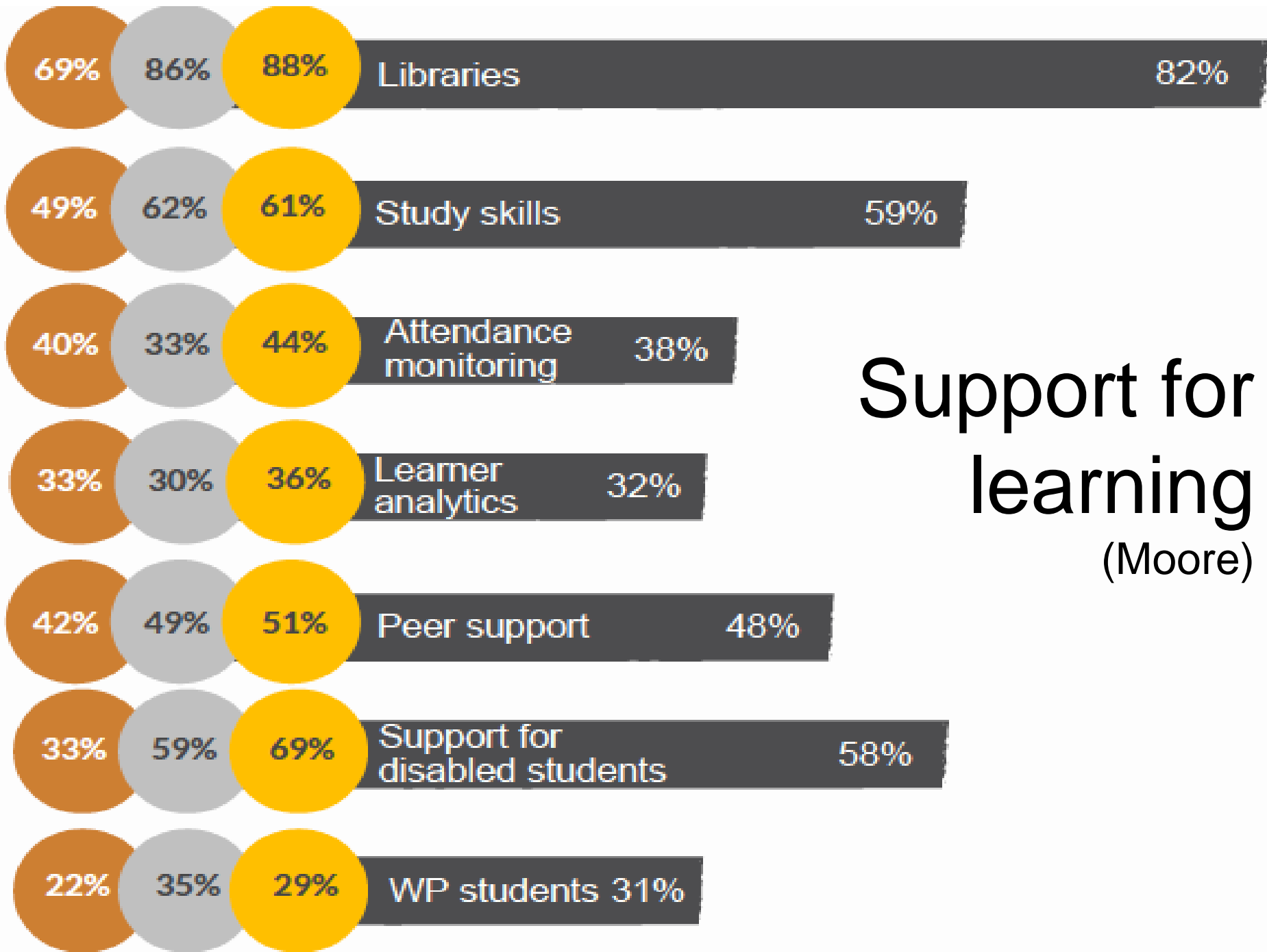
Teaching delivery factors

Teaching delivery factors: patterns

- High achieving submissions tended to discuss **linking** theory to practice, **using technology to enhance the student experience** and how **student feedback** was used to inform developments. (Moore)
- Upgraded submissions tended to include student engagement, course design, personalised learning, employer engagement, research-informed teaching and assessment. (Moore)
- “Universities were rewarded when their statements demonstrated a **genuine commitment to student engagement** and exhibited an understanding of the **needs of different student groups.**” (Chris Husbands, Chair of TEF Panel)

Teaching delivery : Student engagement

- The submissions are designed to provide a case for excellence, with providers being asked to concentrate on “demonstrating the impact and effectiveness of teaching on the student experience and outcomes they achieve” (HEFCE, 2016/32, p.42.).
- “Universities were rewarded when their statements demonstrated a **genuine commitment to student engagement** and exhibited an understanding of the **needs of different student groups.**”
(Chris Husbands, Chair of TEF Panel)



Support for learning (Moore)

Support for learning: patterns

- Upgraded submissions referred mostly to **academic** and **pastoral** support, with 7 out of 9 statements of findings for upgraded Gold providers mentioning how support was being used to provide **personalised learning** (Moore)
- Also mentions of how student support was being tailored to support **different student groups**. e.g. non-traditional groups, at risk students, & for one Gold award provider for students with disabilities.(Moore)
- The best demonstrate **embedded, institution-wide commitment to inclusivity, diversity and equality** (VOS)
- But note the metrics are aggregated for different groups of students



Wider support and experience

Wider support and learning

- Upgraded submissions tended to refer to **embedding employability** and using **employer engagement in course design**. (Moore)
- the best submissions showed the relationship between Learning and Teaching plans and Employability action plans, curriculum design and real-world learning and assessment activities (Eales-Reynolds)
- ‘More than any other component ...discussion of employability is well supported by evidence of how the investment in ... work-related activities has led to increases in the number of graduates in good and highly skilled employment’(Vos on Gold-rated providers)

Evidence and evaluation of impact (Moore)

Output measures

- Student cohort information
- Student feedback and experience surveys
- Qualitative research with students
- Staff feedback

Impact / success measures

- On-course measures
- Attainment measures
- Employment outcomes

Learning gain

- Found to encompass a wide range of approaches

Conclusions on the TEF submissions

- Strike a positive tone (Beech)
- Clear identity and vision for teaching excellence (Moore)
- ‘a clear reflective narrative on the institutional commitment to recognising and rewarding excellent teaching’ (Eales-Reynolds)
- A joined-up approach to curriculum design, delivery, assessment and student support.
- Demonstrating how internal data, review processes and evaluation have supported the development of the provision. (Moore)

‘The best accounts did not describe initiatives but systematically demonstrated the difference they had made’ (Husbands, C)

The Impact of the TEF so far

TEF: Impact on

- Student experience- ‘relatively high’
- Student employability- ‘quite high’
- Teaching staff – low, but before Subject-level TEF (SLTEF)
- Impact on staff morale- dependent on rating
- Teaching practices – ‘quite high’
- Prospective students – ‘low’
- Wider impacts – investment in monitoring

Evaluation of Provider-level TEF 2016-17 (Year 2)

Measuring the initial impact of the TEF
on the Higher Education landscape

Research report

January 2019

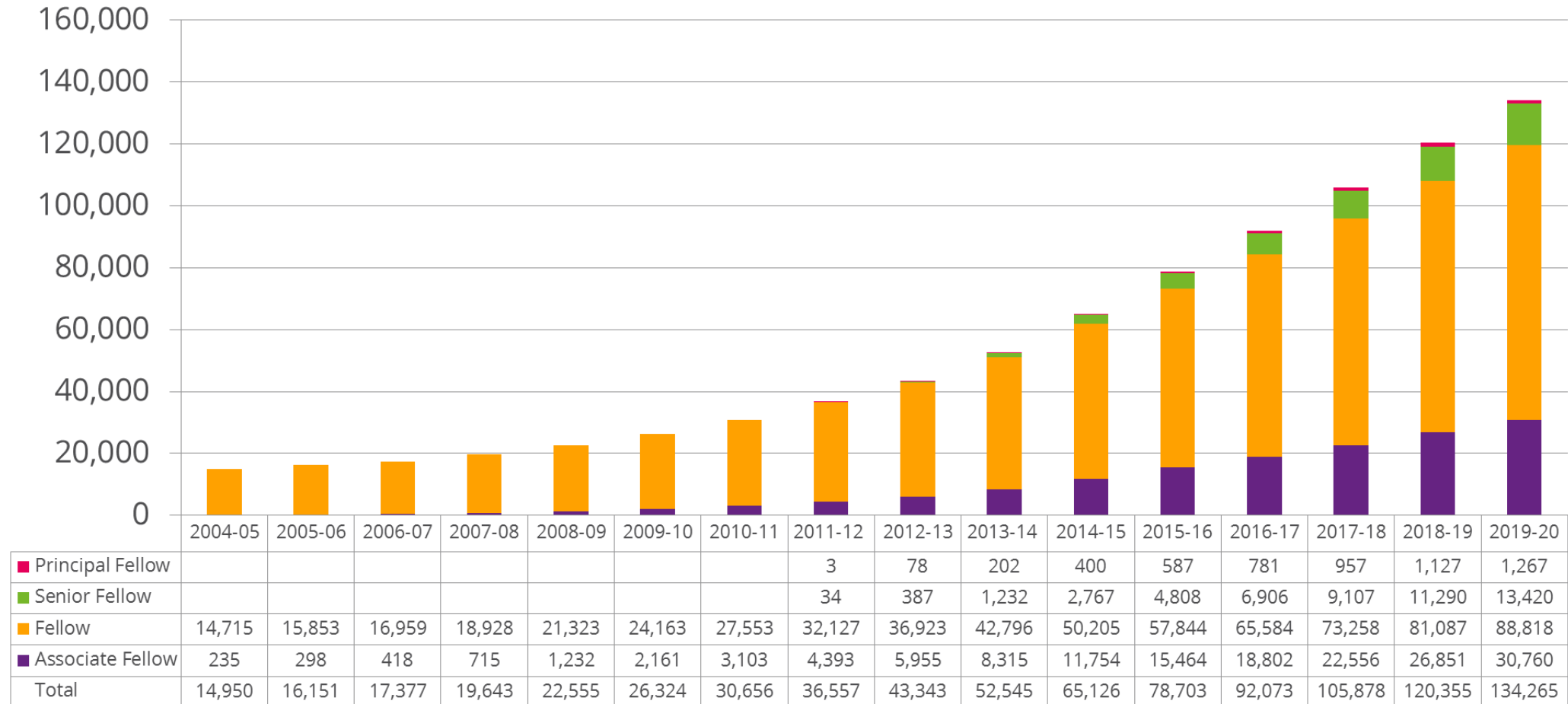
David Vivian, Andrew Skone James, Daniel
Salamons, Zainab Hazel, Jonnie Felton and Sam
Whittaker

IFF Research

TEF: Impact. PVC feedback to Independent Reviewer

- Relative re-balancing of institutional priorities of teaching and research, but there is not parity of esteem yet; e.g. introduction of career route to Professoriate (in Education or Learning & Teaching).
- Greater engagement with data (especially at subject level) about student retention and success.
- Greater engagement with the student voice to better understand and enhance teaching.
- Greater engagement of students in learning and teaching.
- Increased focus on, and investment in, staff qualifications and staff development.

Fellowships – 31 July 2020



Lessons about the assessment metrics

Second pilot: framework

Aspects of quality:	Teaching Quality	Learning Environment	Student Outcomes and Learning Gain
Evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core metrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching (NSS) • Assessment and feedback (NSS) • Student voice (NSS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support (NSS) • Learning resources (NSS) • Continuation (HESA/ILR data) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level (DLHE/GOS) • Sustained employment (LEO) • Above median earnings or further study (LEO)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split metrics 	Core metrics split into sub groups reflecting widening participation priorities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplementary data 	Supplementary data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade inflation (enhanced to include prior attainment data) • Differential degree attainment 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission 	Provider submission (additional evidence written by the provider)		
Outcome:	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>TEF award & Statement of findings</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px; background-color: #f0c000; color: white;">TEF Gold</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px; background-color: #a0c0e0; color: white;">TEF Silver</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px; background-color: #c06000; color: white;">TEF Bronze</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 5px; background-color: #00c060; color: white;">TEF Provisional</div> </div> </div>		

Key lessons

- Importance of strategic clarity and evidence-based planning & impact assessment in the institutional submission
- TEF may not yet be significantly impacting on student choice, or better informing employers etc.
- TEF is affecting changes in institutional culture, but there are other perhaps more powerful drivers (e.g. APP)
- TEF may not be the best or perhaps the only mechanism for solving the perceived ills of teaching & learning in HE
- TEF metrics has been constantly evolving & may not impervious to the pandemic

Thank you.

TEF- changes to core metrics over time

- Introduction of **student voice** metric from the NSS to reflect the greater emphasis on student engagement
- Introduction of **learning resources** metric from the NSS and evidence of pandemic experience
- But NSS metrics have been halved in value.
- Announcement of a **review of the NSS** raises a question mark about the value of the NSS as a driver of enhancement and its role in the TEF.
- Making the **LEO data** core metrics clearly signals the renewed emphasis on long-term value for money, though link to teaching excellence is dubious.

TEF –changes to supplementary metrics

1. Grade inflation

- provider declaration dropped and inclusion of prior attainment data in 2nd SLTEF pilot
- But also embedded in OfS requirements for continued registration that qualifications hold their value over time.(England)

2. Differential grade attainment

- Introduction of differential degree attainment metric;
- But already Key Performance Measure in Access and Participation Plans (KPM4) (in England)

3. Dropping of Teaching Intensity measure in TEF