YouthSight

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Assessing student perceptions of proposed TEF naming and rating options

A report for OfS by YouthSight

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Introduction

Research Objectives

Business objective:

To test options for an optimal naming of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), and rating names in the scheme, from among the recommendations made by the Office for Students (OfS). The research will investigate which are the most appealing, easy to understand and useful naming and rating options for students applying to higher education (HE).

Research objectives:

1. To evaluate the appeal and comprehension of alternative naming options
2. To evaluate understanding of the different levels of attainment proposed under the new TEF scheme and their appeal.

Background

Following an independent review of the existing TEF, OfS has drafted proposals for a revised scheme with the aim of providing an updated framework that improves the benefits to students, HE applicants and the HE system. As part of this, the OfS commissioned YouthSight to conduct a piece of research to aid understanding of how students perceive the different TEF scheme name alternatives and rating names.

Research approach

We conducted a two-stage research process to ensure that the insights generated were comprehensive and covered all the views of students and HE applicants. This consisted of an initial qualitative phase, which was then followed up with a quantitative survey to size these views.

Qualitative stage

Stage one was a qualitative homework task, completed online by 20 respondents over the course of one day and in their own time. The respondents were recruited from the YouthSight student panel and each spent 30 minutes completing the tasks set. You can see a summary of the tasks in Annex A and a breakdown of the sample in the sample structure section.

Broadly the qualitative stage covered the following:

- Ranking, perception, likes and dislikes of the following three naming options for the framework:
    - Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)
    - Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF)
    - Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)
- Ranking, perceptions and impressions of the different three tier rating schemes. The following were tested:

Option A	Option B	Option C
Gold	Outstanding	Outstanding
Silver	Highly commended	Very high quality
Bronze	Commended	Exceeds minimum requirements

- Ranking, perceptions and impressions of the fourth tier classification options. The options tested were as follows:
  - Requires improvement
  - Requires improvement for TEF rating
  - Improvement expected
  - Does not exceed minimum requirements
- Ranking and associations with the fifth tier classification options. The options tested were as follows:
  - Breach of minimum requirements
  - Does not meet minimum requirements
- All of the fourth and fifth tier naming options could be used with Option A, B or C in the OfS' desired scheme.

We used the findings from this stage to inform the design of the quantitative survey. This laid the foundation to ensure we covered a broad range of views of students in relation to the TEF options being tested.

Fieldwork for the qualitative stage took place starting 20th April 2022 and finishing 21st April 2022.

Quantitative stage

We then conducted a 10-minute online survey among 1,112 HE applicants and first-year undergraduate (UG) students. The survey covered all the naming options, perceptions and preferences drawn from the qualitative task in the design phase. A summary of the questions asked can be found in Annex B.

In order to test all of the proposed framework naming options and rating classifications we split the sample. Respondents were allocated to one option based on their stage of study and gender to ensure the sample was balanced across all options tested. Every respondent was shown:

- One from three naming options. They were first asked to rank all three options, before then being allocated to just one option and asked about their perceptions and understanding of that name.
  - Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)
  - Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF)
  - Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

- Subsequently, they were asked to rank the three tier rating schemes proposed (Option A, Option B and Option C as described in the qualitative phase above). Again, they were then allocated to just one of these options and asked about their perceptions, understanding and impact of it.
- We followed the same process for the fourth tier naming options where respondents were first asked to rank all options and then allocated to one and asked about their perceptions and understanding of it. The options tested were as follows:
    - Requires improvement
    - Requires improvement for TEF rating
    - Improvement expected
    - Does not exceed minimum requirements

You can see a more detailed breakdown of the allocation and sample in the sample structure section.

Fieldwork for the quantitative stage took place starting 17th May and ending 27th May 2022.

The findings from both the qualitative and quantitative stages are detailed in this report. However, please note that the findings from the qualitative stage come from a small group of respondents and should be treated with caution. The quantitative stage provides a more robust read on these perceptions. The analysis in this report will clearly indicate the source of the data.

Throughout this report findings will be reported at a total level, and then broken down into the HE applicant and first-year UG groups.

Sample structure

A breakdown of the quantitative sample in figure 0.1 below. Quotas were set on gender with all other demographics falling out naturally.

Figure 0.1 Quantitative sample summary

Category	Options	Total	Applicants	First-year UG students
Sample Size (n)		**1112**	**826**	**286**
Gender	Female	55%	56%	52%
	Male	45%	44%	48%
	I describe my gender in another way (Other)	0%	0%	0%
Ethnicity	White	71%	72%	66%
	BAME	27%	25%	32%
	Prefer not to say	2%	3%	2%
Nationality	UK domiciled	90%	94%	79%
	International	10%	6%	21%
Age	Under 21	91%	93%	87%
	21+	9%	7%	13%
Social grade	ABC1	61%	62%	58%
	C2DE	18%	18%	21%
	Prefer not to say	21%	20%	21%
First in Family	Yes	23%	23%	25%
	No	75%	75%	74%
	Prefer not to say	2%	2%	1%
Disability	Yes	10%	10%	10%
	No	82%	82%	82%
	Prefer not to say	8%	8%	8%

As noted above, the sample is split between HE applicants and first-year UG students. Any differences between the two groups will be noted in the report, although analysis is largely at the total level.

In order to test all of the options proposed, the sample was split across the different options with each respondent seeing just one. Respondents were allocated on a least fill basis with the different options being balanced on student type and gender. You can see a summary of the splits in figure 0.2 below:

Figure 0.2 Quantitative sample allocation

	Applicant	First-year UG	Male	Female
Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)	291	91	181	201
Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF)	261	99	156	204
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)	274	96	160	210
Option A	298	97	194	201
Option B	248	101	145	204
Option C	280	88	158	210
Requires improvement	196	82	118	160
Requires improvement for TEF rating	207	64	115	156
Improvement expected	211	72	129	154
Does not exceed minimum requirements	212	68	135	145

International students were targeted to ensure a robust base for analysis among that sub group.

A more detailed breakdown of the sample can be found in Annex E.

The following is a breakdown of the qualitative sample:

- N=20 HE applicants and first-year UG students
  - N=14 HE applicants
  - N=6 first-year UG students
  - All considering studying or actually studying at a university in England
  - Representation across university type (e.g. Russell Group, Post-92) university group, widening participation (WP), ethnicity and region

Executive Summary

The students surveyed rank "Teaching Excellence Framework" and "Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework" as their favourite naming options.

- Evidence from this research suggests that Teaching Excellence Framework is perceived most positively. The name is viewed as clear and memorable, giving a good descriptor as to the purpose of the scheme.
- Although ranked highly, Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework has some less positive perceptions. Some find the name less memorable, and less to the point than the other options. However, it does give the impression that the scheme is not just limited to academic elements of the student experience.
- Educational Excellence Framework is the lowest ranked option, although it still performs strongly across perceptions. Negative perceptions are generally limited.

The rating scheme viewed most positively is Gold/Silver/Bronze, which is clearly separated from the other options.

- Option A (Gold/Silver/Bronze) is the most positively perceived, and there is little negativity towards it. Broadly it is seen to be clear and provides the clearest distinguishing between categories.
- Both option B (Outstanding/Highly Commended/Commended) and option C (Outstanding/Very High Quality/Exceeds Minimum Requirements) are viewed less positively, although there remain fairly low levels of negativity. These options are generally perceived by respondents to be clear, but there is a higher proportion who suggest it is harder to distinguish between categories compared to option A.

The "Gold" and "Outstanding" categories are viewed equally positively in terms of impact on decision making. However, of the third tier options tested, "Commended" is seen as a much more positive endorsement compared to the other options.

- Gold and Outstanding are both equally likely to make the students surveyed apply to an institution that had this rating.
- Of the third tier options tested, Commended gives the most positive impression with a much higher proportion of respondents suggesting they would be more likely to apply to an institution with this rating and that it suggests the institution offers good quality.

From the fourth tier options tested "Requires Improvement" is the most favourable option among respondents

- In terms of perceptions, Requires Improvement is viewed to be memorable and clear.
- However, across the many perceptions there is little to differentiate the options with most respondents having positive perceptions of the options tested.

- Requires Improvement and Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements are perceived to suggest that a university/college offers poor quality to a greater extent than other naming options.
- Despite generally positive perceptions of the naming options proposed for the category, respondents suggest that all of the four options tested would make them less likely to apply to a HE institution in that category.
- Around one in five favour Improvement Expected and it performs well, in line with Requires Improvement, across different perceptions. It is seen as easy to understand and memorable. Compared to other options, Improvement Expected is more likely to give the impression that the university/college provides an acceptable level of quality, but has a lot of room for improvement.

Overall the students surveyed perceive the potential impact of the TEF scheme as being positive.

- Most respondents believe TEF will have a positive impact on the HE sector and agree that it will help inform decision making on where to study.

Section 1: Ranking of proposed framework naming options

In this first section of the report we look at the preferred naming options among respondents, firstly in the qualitative tasks and then in the quantitative survey. We also assess perceptions of the naming options tested. Finally, we look at what the different naming options mean to respondents.

We tested three separate naming options in the survey:

a. Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)
b. Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF)
c. Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

Qualitative findings

Impressions of the naming options

Participants in the qualitative online community were asked to pick their favourite from the three naming options. They were also asked if there were any names they did not like.

Most students felt that all three options generally make sense and adequately clarify what the award is for.

> ***"I think all of the names make sense and are in context with the theme and represent what the award is"***
>
> *Applicant, Female.*

> ***"I believe all the names work in the context of the scheme well"***
>
> *Applicant, Female.*

The most popular option among participants was Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). It was liked because:

- It is very easy to understand, especially for those that know little about the scheme.
- It is the most memorable with an acronym that made sense.

> ***"It is both the most memorable and makes the most sense too, as it is short and to the point while also being informational enough for students to glance at it and keep in mind what it indicates about a uni"***
>
> *First-year Student, Male.*

> ***"I think I would change the name to Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) as it is short, easy to memorise and the abbreviation actually represents all of the name"***

Applicant, Other

The least favourite name among respondents was Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF). Respondents did not like it for the following reasons:

- It was too broad and did not provide enough detail or explanation.
- Some found it confusing as it was felt it could also fit with schools.
- Some also felt that it did not adequately explain the purpose of the TEF award.

"EdEF as it is too broad and could relate to any sector of education. As a student reading that on a website for a uni advertisement, for example, it would not stick out to me and I would not really know from face-value what it meant unless I was to look into it (which chances are students won't do so.) Also, it's a little harder to remember than just TEF"

First-year Student, Female.

"I particularly hate the EdEF abbreviation - it's a bit ugly due to the simple case used. TEF is definitely the way to go when shortening the letters to avoid it being too complicated"

Applicant, Female.

Around a quarter of participants preferred the current name, Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF). Those that chose this for the following reasons:

- Participants selecting this option felt that it was important to highlight the 'student outcomes' part of the name.
- The award not only assesses universities on their teaching quality, but also on issues like graduate-level employment. Those that chose this option therefore felt this name best encompassed the full nature of the award.

"Option 1 makes the most sense. This is because it outlines all of the framework's roles and aims"

First-year Student, Female.

"I believe keeping the name makes the most sense as it takes into consideration aspects of teaching and the outcome for students. It is the easiest to get a grasp of without knowing too much about previously. I also believe many people who already know about the scheme would find it easier for it to remain the same to avoid confusion, as if it was to be changed some people may assume the basis behind it has also changed"

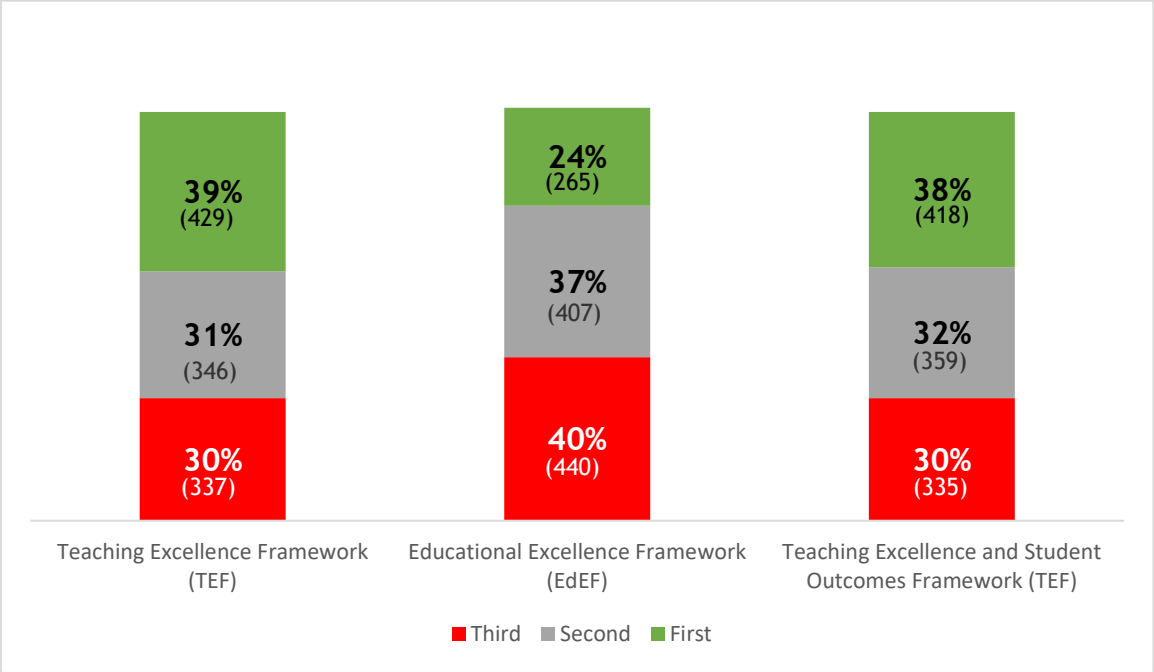
Applicant, Female.

Quantitative findings

Ranking of naming options

When asked to rank the naming options, nearly four out of ten respondents had a preference for Teaching Excellence Framework (39%) or Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (38%), as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Favourite name ranking *(% selected)*[1]



Only a quarter of respondents had a preference for Educational Excellence Framework (24%). Furthermore, four out of ten respondents had the least preference for Educational Excellence Framework (40%).

On the other hand, a third of respondents, ranked Teaching Excellence Framework (30%) and Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (30%) as their least favourite.

[1] Q1. Looking at the three naming options for the scheme below, please assign a rank to each with one being your favourite and three being your least favourite.
Base: All respondents (1,112) HE applicants (826) First-year UG students (286)

(72) (137) YouthSight (77)

Figure 1.11 Ranking of the naming options by student type ***(% selected)***

Green highlighted cells in this table indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group (HE applicants vs first-year UG students)

	Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)		Educational Excellence Framework (EDeF)		Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)	
	Applicants	*First-year UGs*	*Applicants*	*First-year UGs*	*Applicants*	*First-year UGs*
Rank 1	38%	41%	26%	18%	36%	41%
Rank 2	30%	34%	37%	34%	32%	32%
Rank 3	32%	25%	37%	48%	31%	27%

As seen in figure 1.11 a quarter of HE applicants surveyed (26%) had a preference for Educational Excellence Framework, compared to under a fifith of first-year UG students (18%).

At the same time, only a quarter of first-year UG students (25%) rated Teaching Excellence Framework as their least favourite naming option compared to over a third of HE applicants (32%).

Almost half (48%) of first-year UG students interviewed liked Educational Excellence Framework (EDeF) the least compared to just under two in five (37%) HE applicants.

Figure 1.12 Ranking of naming options – sub group differences ***(% selected)***

Green highlighted cells in this table indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group

	Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)			
	Domicile		Age	
	Home	*International*	*Under 21*	*21+*
Most favourite	40% (398)	29% (31)	40% *(405)*	25% *(24)*
Second favourite	31% (309)	35% (37)	31% *(314)*	34% *(32)*
Least favourite	30% (298)	36% (39)	29% (298)	41% *(39)*

From figure 1.12 we can see that respondents domiciled in the UK are more likely to favour Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) as their preferred naming option compared to internationally domiciled respondents. However, we would treat this with caution as there are different factors at play; for instance, in the sample, we can see that the

international students we interviewed are much more likely to be aged over 21 compared to those domiciled in the UK, which could also have an impact. We also have to consider the prospect that significant differences can occur due to chance. Any sub group differences highlighted in this report will share these caveats.

Perceptions of naming options

We asked respondents about their perception of each of the proposed naming options. Respondents were shown a series of nine statements about the naming option they were shown, and for each statement they were asked the extent to which they either agree or disagree on a five point scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree).

We consider each of these statements in turn. Only selected charts are shown here, but the full breakdown is given in **Annex C**. The following perception statements are considered:

a. It is easy to understand
b. It is a memorable name
c. It is to the point
d. It is confusing
e. It is too simplistic
f. It clearly communicates what the scheme is intended for
g. The name makes it clear that that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of teaching at a university/college
h. The name makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of the student experience at a university/college
i. The name makes it clear that the scheme also measures students' success in and beyond their studies. This includes, but is not limited to, academic and employment related achievements.

A. It is easy to understand

Figure 1.2 It is easy to understand ***(% selected)***[2]

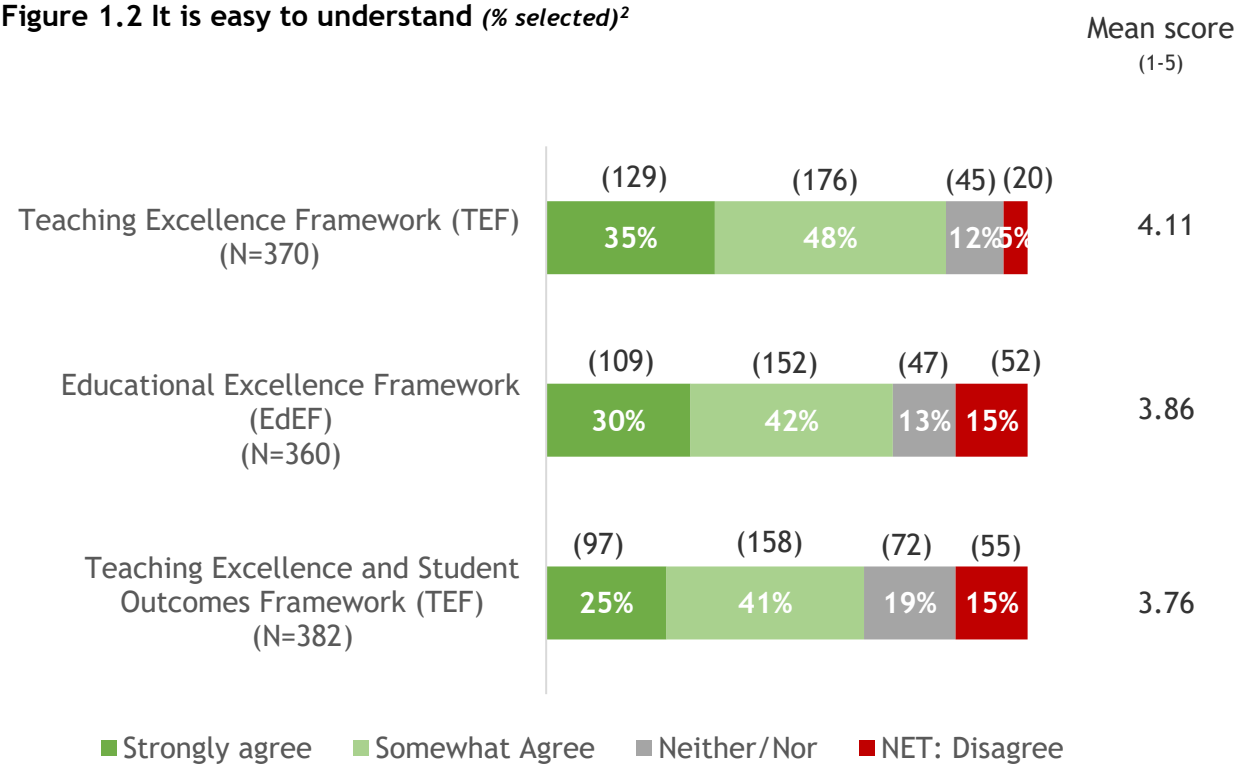


Figure 1.2 shows four fifths (83%) of respondents agree that Teaching Excellence Framework is easy to understand, compared to 66% in agreement that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) and 72% in agreement that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) is easy to understand.

Whilst only 5% of respondents disagree that Teaching Excellence Framework is easy to understand, this triples to 15% for Educational Excellence Framework and Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework.

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) is easy to understand, with over three quarters (76%) in agreement, compared to around two thirds (64%) of first-year UG students.

B. It has a memorable name

Seven out of ten (70%) respondents agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a memorable name, compared to 45% in agreement that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is a memorable name.

[2] Q2. Thinking about the name, please can you indicate the extent to which, if at all, you either agree or disagree with each of the following statements
Base: All respondents; Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (370), Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) (360), Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) (382)

Furthermore, nearly two fifths (37%) of respondents disagree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is a memorable name, compared to 14% in disagreement that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a memorable name.

Differences by study stage

HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that Teaching Excellence and Students Outcomes Framework (TEF) is a memorable name (50%), compared to 31% of first-year UG students.

C. It is to the point

Over four fifths (84%) of respondents agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is to the point, compared to 72% in agreement that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) and 67% in agreement that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is to the point.

Moreover, a fifth (20%) of respondents disagree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is to the point, compared to 5% for Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

D. It is confusing

Over half (55%) of respondents interviewed in this survey agree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is confusing, compared to 31% in agreement that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and 38% in agreement that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) is confusing.

Moreover, over half of respondents interviewed in this survey disagree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (53%) is confusing, compared to 34% for Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) and 41% for Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF).

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is confusing, with half (50%) in agreement, compared to 30% of first-year UG students.

E. It is too simplistic

Around half (50%) of respondents interviewed in this survey disagree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is too simplistic, compared to 36% in disagreement that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and 43% in disagreement that the Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) are too simplistic.

Moreover, over a third (36%) of respondents interviewed in this survey agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is too simplistic compared to under a third (31%) of respondents who agree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) is too simplistic.

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) (34% HE applicants vs. 21% first-year undergraduate students) and Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) (34% HE applicants vs. 22% first-year undergraduate students) are too simplistic, compared to first-year undergraduate students.

F. It clearly communicates what the scheme is intended for

Figure 1.3 It clearly communicates what the scheme is intended for ***(% selected)***

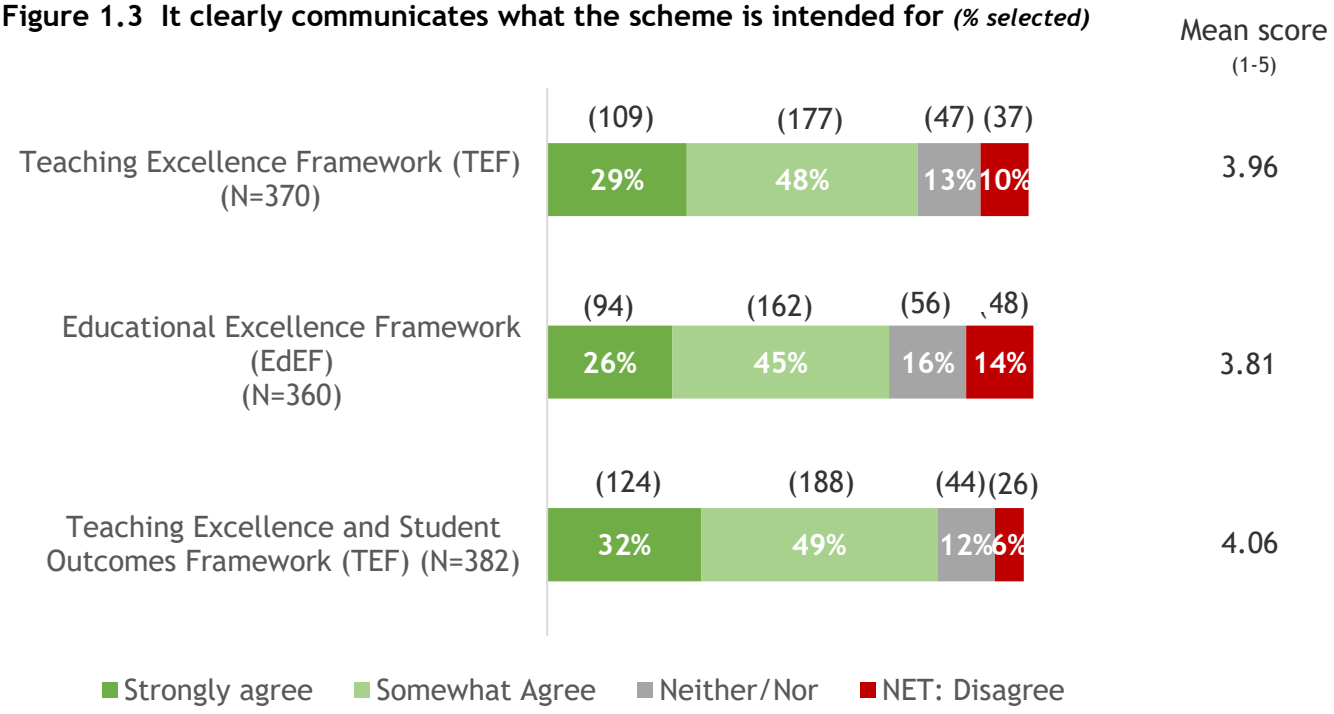


Figure 1.3 shows that over four fifths (81%) of respondents interviewed in this survey agree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) clearly communicates what the scheme is intended for. 77% agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and 71% agree that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) clearly communicate what the scheme is intended for.

More than double the number of respondents interviewed in this survey disagree that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) (14%) clearly communicates what the scheme is intended for, compared to 6% for Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (80%) clearly communicates what the scheme is intended for, compared to first-year undergraduate students (70%).

G. The name makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of teaching at a university/college

Nearly nine in ten (87%) respondents interviewed in this survey agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of teaching at a university/college, compared to 73% in agreement that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) makes it clear.

More than double the number of respondents interviewed in this survey disagree that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) (14%) makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of teaching at a university/college, compared to 5% for Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and 7% for Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (90%) makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of teaching at a university/college, compared to first-year UG students (76%).

H. The name makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of the student experience at a university/college

Nearly seven out of ten respondents interviewed in this survey agree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) (68%) makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of the student experience at a university/college, compared to less than three out of five (58%) in agreement that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) makes it clear.

Furthermore, over a quarter (26%) of respondents interviewed in this survey disagree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of the student experience at a university/college, compared to less than one out five (19%) who disagree that Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) makes it clear.

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (65%) makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of the student experience at a university/college, compared to first-year UG students (48%).

I. The name makes it clear that the scheme also measures students' success in and beyond their studies. This includes, but is not limited to, academic and employment related achievements.

Over two fifths (83%) of respondents interviewed in this survey agree that Teaching Excellence and Student Ouctomes Framework (TEF) makes it clear that the scheme also measures students' success in and beyond their studies, compared to 52% who agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and 58% who agree that Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) makes it clear.

Just under a third (32%) of respondents interviewed in this survey disagree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) makes it clear that the scheme also measures students' success in and beyond their studies, compared to only 6% who disagree that Teaching Excellence and Student Ouctomes Framework (TEF) makes it clear.

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (56%) and Educational Excellence Framework (Ede) (64%) make it clear that the scheme also measures students' success in and beyond their studies, compared to first-year undergraduate students.

Understanding of the naming options

Figure 1.4 Understanding of framework naming options ***(% selected)***[3]

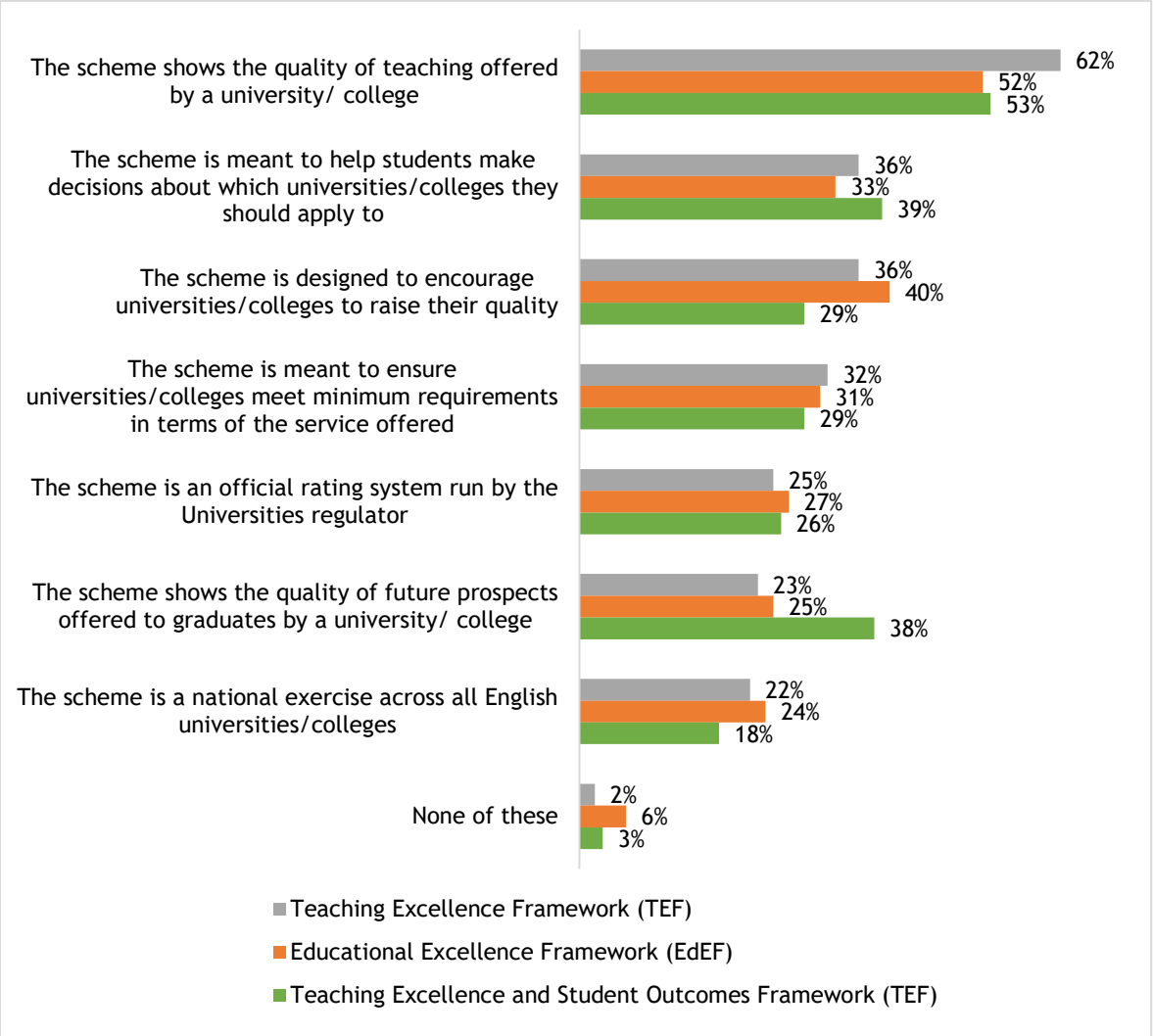


Figure 1.4 shows that over three fifths (62%) of respondents interviewed in this survey think the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) scheme shows the quality of teaching offered by a university/college, compared to just over half who agree that the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) (53%) and the Educational Excellence Framework (Ede) (52%) schemes make it clear.

Nearly four out of ten respondents think the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) (38%) scheme shows the quality of future prospects offered to graduates by a university/college, compared to a quarter for the Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF) scheme (25%) and less than a quarter for the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) scheme (23%). The findings in terms of the meaning of the different naming options to HE

[3] Q3. From the list below, which three of the following, if any, do you think best describes what this name means to you?
Base: All respondents; Teaching Excellence Framework (370), Educational Excellence Framework (360), Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (382)

applicants and first-year undergraduate students are broadly aligned, with no statistically significant differences between the two groups.

Figure 1.41 Understanding of framework naming options - sub group differences *(% selected)*

Green highlighted cells in the table indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group

	Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)		Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)		Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
The scheme shows the quality of teaching offered by a university/college	224	394	74	127	68	118
	45%	64%	41%	63%	44%	58%
The scheme is meant to help students make decisions about which universities/colleges they should apply to	176	224	72	78	49	69
	35%	36%	40%	39%	31%	34%
The scheme is designed to encourage universities/colleges to raise their quality	170	220	56	55	53	91
	34%	36%	31%	27%	34%	45%
The scheme is meant to ensure universities/colleges meet minimum requirements in terms of the service offered	168	175	59	53	53	60
	34%	28%	33%	26%	34%	29%
The scheme shows the quality of future prospects offered to graduates by a university/college	157	162	71	73	43	48
	32%	26%	39%	36%	28%	24%
The scheme is an official rating system run by the universities regulator	144	145	50	49	51	46
	29%	24%	28%	24%	33%	23%

	Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)		Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)		Educational Excellence Framework (EdEF)	
The scheme is a national exercise across all English universities/colleges	115	120	38	29	33	53
	23%	20%	21%	14%	21%	26%

Figure 1.41 shows that when looking at the derived meaning of the naming options tested, we can see that female participants seem to be more focused on the extent to which the framework assesses the quality offered by universities.

Summary: Ranking of naming options

- From the qualitative phase of this research we found that Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was the most positively received of the names tested. Participants found it memorable and easy to understand.
- Evidence from the quantitative survey suggests that Teaching Excellence Framework is perceived most positively. The name is viewed as clear and memorable, giving a good descriptor as to the purpose of the scheme.
- Although ranked highly, Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework has some less positive perceptions. Some find the name less memorable, and less to the point than the other options. However, it does give the impression that the scheme is not just limited to academic elements of the student experience.
- Educational Excellence Framework is the lowest ranked option, although it still performs strongly across perceptions. Negative perceptions are generally limited.
- For all of the naming options, respondents most frequently perceive that the name suggests that the framework shows the quality of teaching offered by a university/ college. However, Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework is significantly more likely to convey the impression that the scheme shows the quality of future prospects offered to graduates by a university/ college.

Section 2: Rating scheme evaluation

This section covers the proposed rating schemes put forward by the OfS. Three options were tested in the survey as shown below:

Option A	Option B	Option C
Gold	Outstanding	Outstanding
Silver	Highly commended	Very high quality
Bronze	Commended	Exceeds minimum requirements

Each respondent in the quantitative survey was asked about just one of the rating schemes, but the sample is distributed evenly across the schemes tested. Respondents were asked the following of each scheme:

1. Which scheme they like the most
2. Their perception of the scheme they were shown

In addition to this, respondents were asked to go into more depth about other aspects of the rating scheme, specifically:

1. They were asked to gauge what each possible accreditation would indicate to them about the quality offered by an institution
2. What influence the gold/outstanding rating would have on decisions to study at an institution
3. The impression respondents get from the bronze/commended/exceeds minimum requirements ratings
4. The influence that an institution being awarded bronze/commended/exceeds minimum requirements rating would have on decision making when considering which institutions to apply to

Qualitative findings

Understanding of proposed ratings

We can see from the qualitative stage of the project that students broadly understand the rating system of all three options.

Option A (Gold/Silver/Bronze) is overwhelmingly the respondents' favourite of the three rating systems. This is because:

- It is clearly understood, with some students referencing Olympic medals as a guidance.
- But students feel there are no grey areas with this simple structure.

> ***"I would argue that option A is the most clear, as there is a clear and well-known distinction between Bronze, Silver and Gold. If, for example, you were on a university website and it said Highly Commended, you may assume that that is the highest level if you are unknowing, whereas if it said silver, it is clear there is a higher category. I believe Gold means outstanding tutor support, career opportunities and guidance, mentoring and quality of teaching. Silver would mean great for the same categories, and Bronze, okay/good"***
>
> *Applicant, Female.*

> ***"Personally Option A is a lot clearer and easier to understand given the fact that the medalling system is something most people are aware of and the others tend to be a less clearer and more unconventional to remember"***
>
> *Applicant, Female.*

Those few that did choose either Option B or Option C as their favourite did so because they felt these ratings offered more description of the awards – something that is not clear in Option A.

On this point, Option C was more popular than Option B for this reason. It was felt that Very High Quality and Exceeds Minimum Requirements explained exactly what the awards were for, which was what these students were looking for.

> ***"I think option C provides the clearest rating system. It refers to quality and is therefore slightly more elaborative in what the ratings mean as opposed to the other two options as I see it"***
>
> *Applicant, I describe my gender in another way.*

Option B was the most disliked option as it was felt that it was too wordy and not memorable enough. Others disliked Option C because it was felt the three tiers were all too close together, that Outstanding is a synonym of Very High Quality.

"Option B – Wordy and still lacking in clarity. Not memorable and not clear. Also, Highly Commended and Outstanding seem too similar"

Applicant, Male.

"Option C, the words and phrases are incredibley vague and too similar, defeating the purpose of ranking as there is almost no distinction between them"

Applicant, Female.

"Very High Quality and Outstanding are quite similar and could be misunderstood if one didn't know the ranking measure"

Applicant, Female.

Quantitative findings

Understanding of proposed TEF ratings

Figure 2.1 Understanding of proposed TEF ratings ***(% Selected)***[4]

Respondents were asked to rate each of the possible rating scheme options on a scale of one to ten. A score of one indicates that the rating would suggest an institution offers the lowest possible quality, while a score of 10 indicated that respondents would infer that an institution with that rating offers the highest possible quality.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mean score
Option A	*Gold*	1%	1%	3%	3%	8%	8%	10%	19%	20%	26%	7.76
	Silver	2%	3%	4%	5%	13%	16%	20%	21%	12%	3%	6.57
	Bronze	3%	5%	10%	12%	19%	19%	12%	9%	8%	3%	5.59
Option B	*Outstanding*	*	1%	2%	3%	7%	8%	11%	16%	29%	33%	8.07
	Highly Commended	1%	1%	2%	4%	9%	11%	19%	24%	18%	11%	7.32
	Commended	1%	2%	4%	7%	16%	22%	19%	16%	9%	4%	6.35
Option C	*Outstanding (see above)*											
	Very High Quality	1%	1%	2%	3%	7%	10%	15%	26%	23%	13%	7.58
	Exceeds Minimum Requirements	2%	6%	11%	13%	15%	17%	9%	11%	10%	5%	5.73
Fourth tier options	*Requires Improvement for TEF Rating*	17%	14%	12%	11%	12%	8%	6%	11%	7%	3%	4.53
	Requires Improvement	9%	14%	16%	14%	13%	8%	7%	9%	8%	3%	4.74
	Improvement Expected	5%	10%	13%	16%	15%	12%	8%	11%	9%	3%	5.21
	Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements	20%	15%	12%	10%	10%	7%	5%	9%	7%	3%	4.31
Fifth tier options	*Does Not Meet Requirements*	33%	14%	8%	7%	8%	6%	5%	7%	8%	4%	3.94
	Breach of Minimum Requirements	23%	12%	11%	9%	10%	8%	8%	8%	8%	3%	4.37

Firstly, looking at the mean scores in figure 2.1 from Option A, B and C, respondents get the least positive impressions about the quality of the university/ colleges offering from Option A. Each of the three tiers give a less positive impression about the quality of the university/ colleges offering than the equivalent ratings from Option B or Option C.

[4] Q4. We're going to show you a list of the possible ratings that could be awarded as part of the scheme. For each of the ratings we would like you to tell us what each would mean to you in terms of the quality of teaching and learning provided by a university/college. Using a 10-point scale where 1 means the lowest quality and 10 means the highest quality, we'd like you to indicate what you think each award means.
Base: Total (1112) HE applicants (826) First-year UG students (286)

However, Exceeds Minimum Requirements (5.73) also gives a fairly low impression when compared to Bronze (5.59). Both of these ratings are not perceived to be much better than the Improvement Expected (5.21) rating from the fourth tier.

From the fourth tier options tested, Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements (4.31) gives the lowest impression of the quality offered by a university. Improvement Expected (5.21) gives the best impression of the quality on offer with a mean score of 5.21

From the bottom tier, of the two options, Does Not Meet Requirements gives a worse impression of the quality offered by an institution (3.94). Breach of Minimum Requirements (4.37) gives an impression of quality offered by an institution aligned more with Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements (4.31), Requires Improvement for TEF Rating (4.53) and Requires Improvement (4.74).

Figure 2.12 Understanding of proposed TEF ratings by student type ***(mean score)***

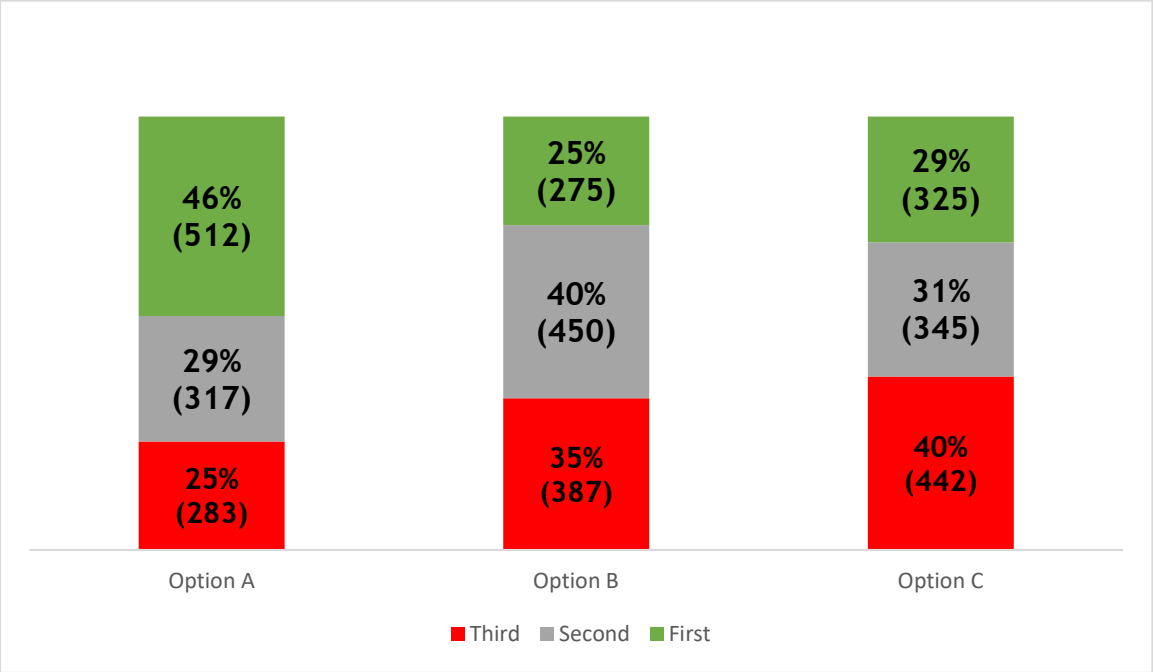
		Mean score	
		Applicant	First-year UG
Option A	*Gold*	7.77	7.73
	Silver	6.60	6.48
	Bronze	5.64	5.44
Option B	*Outstanding*	8.12	7.92
	Highly Commended	7.40	7.09
	Commended	6.41	6.19
Option C	*Outstanding (see above)*	8.12	7.92
	Very High Quality	7.64	7.42
	Exceeds Minimum Requirements	5.85	5.38
Fourth tier options	*Requires Improvement for TEF Rating*	4.67	4.15
	Requires Improvement	4.83	4.48
	Improvement Expected	5.30	4.95
	Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements	4.42	3.99
Bottom rank options	*Does Not Meet Requirements*	4.06	3.58
	Breach of Minimum Requirements	4.50	3.98

Figure 2.12 shows that HE applicants generally have a more positive view of the quality inferred by each rating compared to first-year UG students.

Ranking of proposed TEF award schemes

Figure 2.2 Ranking of the proposed TEF rating schemes ***(% selected)***[5]

Respondents were asked to rank the three proposed options (detailed at the start of this section), from their favourite (first) to least favourite (third).



We can see from figure 2.2 that Option A (Gold/Silver/Bronze) is clearly the option favoured by most of the participants of this research. Almost half (46%) rate Option A as their favourite, compared to only around a quarter for Option B (25%) and Option C (29%).

Option C is the most likely to be ranked ranked bottom, with around two in five (40%) participants rating it third. Participants are most likely to prefer Option B as their second favourite option; two in five (40%) gave it this ranking.

[5] Q5. We would now like you to look at the three rating schemes below. Please rank them with 1 being your favourite and 3 being your least favourite.
Base: Total (1112) HE applicants (826) First-year UG students (286)

Figure 2.21 Ranking of the proposed TEF rating schemes by study stage *(% selected)*

Green highlighted cells in the table below indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group (HE applicants vs first-year UG students)

	Option A		Option B		Option C	
	HE applicants	*First-year UGs*	*HE applicants*	*First-year UGs*	*HE applicants*	*First-year UGs*
Rank 1	42%	57%	27%	19%	31%	24%
Rank 2	31%	22%	38%	47%	31%	32%
Rank 3	27%	22%	35%	35%	38%	44%

Figure 2.21 shows that although Option A is preferred among all participants, first-year UG students (57%) are much more likely to rank it first compared to HE applicants (42%). But first-year UG students (19%) are much less likely to rank Option B as the first choice compared to HE applicants (27%). They are much more likely to rank it second (47%). HE applicants (31%) are also much more likely to prefer Option C compared to first-year UG students (24%).

Perception of the proposed TEF rating schemes

Respondents were presented with a set of statements relating to how they perceive the rating scheme they were shown. They were asked to indicate the extent to which, if at all, they either agree or disagree with each perception.

The following statements were shown:

a. It is easy to understand
b. It is confusing
c. It is too simplistic
d. It is easy to distinguish between the different categories
e. It is easy to understand what each category means about the level of quality offered by a university/college
f. It is easy to understand how a university/college would achieve each rating

For a full breakdown of the charts, please see Annex D.

A. It is easy to understand

Figure 2.3 It is easy to understand *(% selected)*[6]

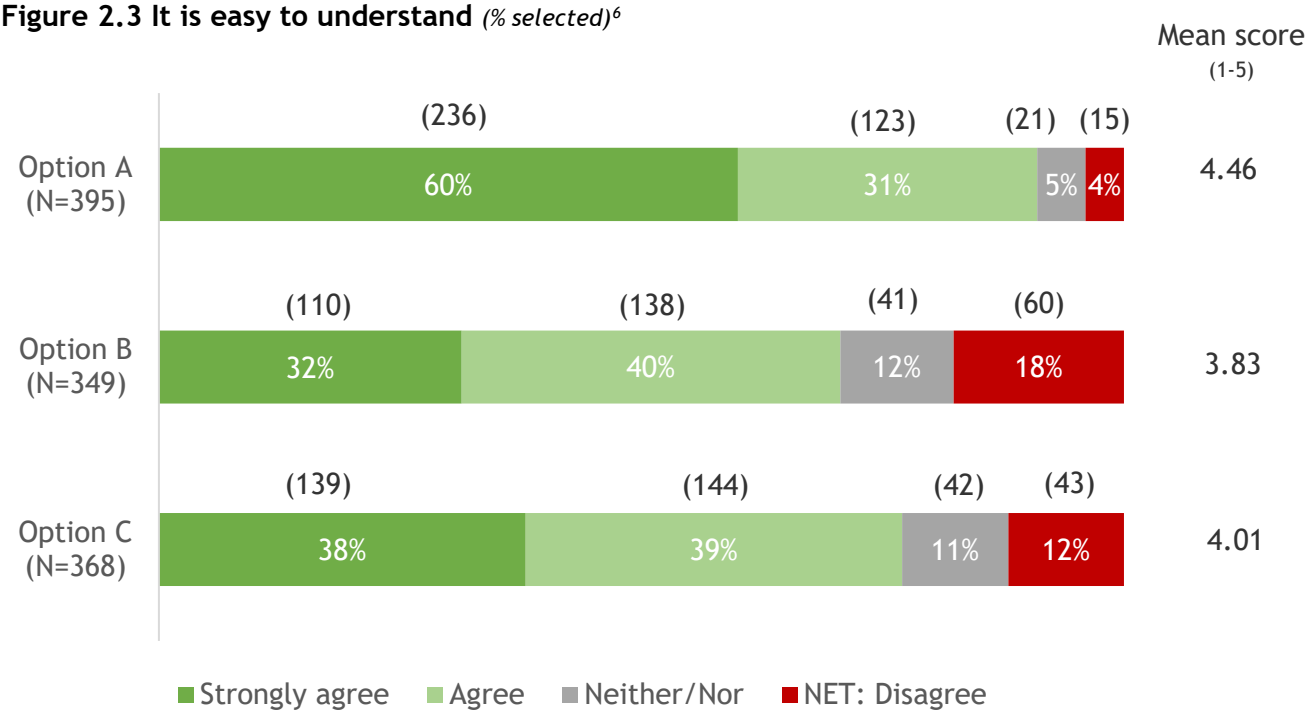


Figure 2.3 shows that respondents found Option A the easiest to understand, with around nine in ten (91%) in agreement. Although most respondents found all options easy to understand they were much less likely to find Options B and C easy to understand, with just under three quarters (72%) in agreement for Option B and just over three quarters (77%) for Option C.

A much higher proportion also found Option B and Option C difficult to understand. Around one in five (18%) disagreed for Option B and one in ten (12%) for Option C.

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that Option B is easy to understand, with three quarters (75%) in agreement, compared to around three in five (62%) first-year UG students that we interviewed.

B. It is confusing

Respondents also feel that Option A is the least confusing with over half (59%) disagreeing that it is confusing. Option B is perceived to be the most confusing, with over two in five

[6] Q6. Please look at the rating scheme shown below; thinking about this scheme, please can you indicate the extent to which, if at all, you either agree or disagree with each of the following statements
Base: All respondents; Option A (395), Option B (349), Option C (368)

(44%) agreeing that it is confusing. Option C is the most polarising, almost two in five (38%) agree that it is confusing, but almost half (47%) disagree.

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey were significantly more likely to agree that Option A is confusing, with a third (33%) in agreement, compared to only 16% of first-year UG students. Please note that although the HE applicants we interviewed appear more likely to find Option A confusing than first-year UG students, a higher proportion also say that both Option B (44%) and Option C (39%) are confusing, which is in line with first-year UG students.

C. It is too simplistic

We have seen already that Option A is the most preferred by respondents and is also percieved to be the clearest. However, almost three in five (57%) respondents feel that it is also too simplistic.

Far fewer feel that Option B and Option C are too simplistic, with just over a third in agreeement for both Option B (35%) and Option C (33%).

Differences by study stage

HE applicants are significantly more likely to feel that Option A is too simplistic compared to first-year UG students. Almost two thirds (62%) of HE applicants agree compared to around two in five (42%) first-year UG students.

The same can be said of Option C; just over a third (36%) of HE applicants find it too simplistic compared to almost a quarter (23%) of first-year UG students.

There is no significant difference in perception between the groups for Option B.

D. It is easy to distinguish between the different categories

Figure 2.4 It is easy to distinguish between the different categories *(% selected)*

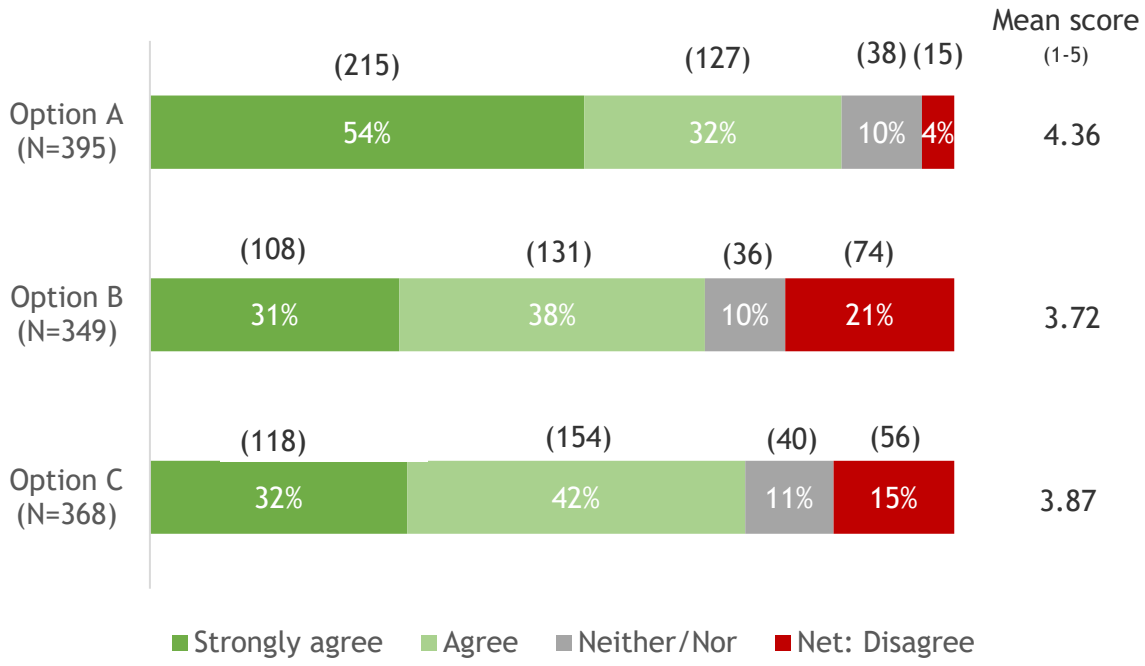


Figure 2.4 shows that option A is also perceived to offer the most clarity between the different categories; almost nine in ten (86%) agree that it is easy to distinguish between categories.

However, other options are also positively perceived, with over two thirds (69%) agreeing that it is easy to distinguish between the categories in Option B and around three quarters (74%) agreeing that it is easy to distinguish between the categories in Option C.

It is important to highlight that Option B has the highest proportion who disagree, with around two in five (21%) disagreeing that it is easy to distinguish between the categories.

Differences by study stage

HE applicants are significantly more likely to agree that Option A and Option B are easy to distinguish between the different categories. Nine in ten (90%) HE applicants interviewed in this research agree that option A is easy to distinguish between categories compared to around three quarters (77%) of first-year UG students for Option A.

For Option B just under three quarters (72%) agree, compared to three in five (60%) of first-year UG students.

E. It is easy to understand what each category means about the level of quality offered by a university/college

Respondents found that it was easy to understand what each category means about the quality offered by an institution across all options. However, Option A performed the best here with four in five (80%) in agreement. Option C also performs well; around three quarters (74%) agree. Slightly fewer agree for Option B; around two thirds (67%) are in agreement, but a higher proportion (19%) disagree.

Differences by study stage

HE applicants interviewed in this research are significantly more likely than first-year UG students to agree that it is easy to understand what each category means about the level of quality offered by an institution for Option B. Almost three quarters (70%) of HE applicants agree compared to just under half (56%) of first-year UG students.

For Options A and C there are no significant differences between the study stages.

F. It is easy to understand how a university/college would achieve each rating

Option C appears to the be the scheme with the highest level of clarity around how an institution would achieve each rating. Around two thirds (68%) agree for Option C. Option A also performs well with, again, around two thirds (66%) in agreement. However, respondents are slightly more conflicted about Option B, over half (54%) agree, however, a large proportion, around a third (31%), disagree.

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants interviewed are significantly more likely than the first-year UG students to agree that it is easy to understand how an institution would achieve each rating for Option C. Almost three quarters (71%) agree, compared to just over half (56%) of first-year UG students.

Although Option B has the lowest agreement rate of the three options, almost three in five (57%) HE applicants agree compared to under half (46%) of first-year UG students.

There are no significant differences between study stage for Option A.

Figure 2.41 Perceptions of framework rankings - sub group differences *(% agree)*

Green highlighted cells in the table below indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group

	Gold/Silver/Bronze		Outstanding/Highly Commended/Commended		Outstanding/Very High Quality/Exceeds Minimum Requirements	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
It is confusing	82	33	78	71	81	60
	42%	16%	54%	35%	51%	29%
It is too simplistic	120	105	77	46	79	41
	62%	52%	53%	23%	50%	20%

In terms of awarding ratings to universities and colleges, figure 2.41 suggest that males are more likely than females to feel that all of the proposed schemes are confusing and simplistic. As stated before, while these findings appear significant, we cannot rule out that they are down to chance or that there are other factors at play, although we cannot see other significant differences that correlate to these.

Summary: Rating scheme evaluation

- From the qualitative phase of this research we can see that option A (Gold/Silver/ Bronze) is clearly the favoured rating system among respondents. It is viewed as very easy to understand. However, some felt that option B and option C provided a more detailed explanation of the possible awards.
- Of the award schemes tested, all three possibilities are perceived to demonstrate that a university offers a higher level of quality for option B (Outstanding/ Highly Commended/ Commended).
- Option A (Gold/Silver/Bronze) is the most positively perceived, and there is little negativity towards it. Broadly it is seen to be clear and provides the clearest distinguishing between categories.
- Both option B (Outstanding/Highly Commended/Commended) and option C (Outstanding/Very High Quality/Exceeds Minimum Requirements) are viewed less positively, although there remain fairly low levels of negativity. These options are generally perceived by respondents to be clear, but there is a higher proportion who suggest it is harder to distinguish between categories compared to option A.

Section 3: Top/third tier classifications

In this section we take a closer look at the top rating category, which includes the following classifications:

- Gold
- Outstanding

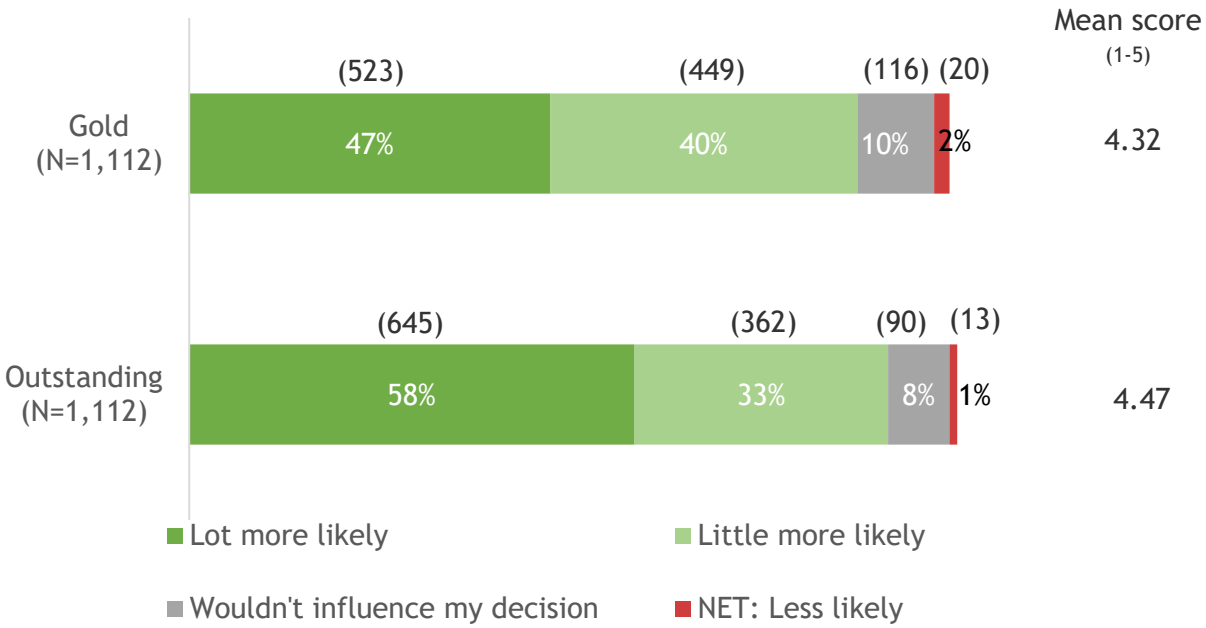
For the third tier categories we will look at impact on decision making and perceptions of quality. The third tier categories tested are as follows:

- Bronze
- Commended
- Exceeds Minimum Requirements

We will look at the impact that the different top tier names and third tier names would have on student decision making.

Impact of Gold/Outstanding awards

Figure 3.1 Impact of Gold/Outstanding ratings on university decision making *(% selected)*[7]



[7] Q7. Looking at each of the awards below, if a university/college was to be awarded it, to what extent, if at all, would it influence your decision about studying there?
Base: All respondents (1,112)

We can see from figure 3.1 that respondents interviewed in this survey are almost equally likely to be positively influenced to study at a university/college if it is rated Outstanding (91%) compared to Gold (87%).

Figure 3.11 Impact of Gold/Outstanding rating on university decision making - sub group differences[8]

Green highlighted cells in the table below indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group		White	BAME	Applicants	First-year UG
Gold	More likely	88%	87%	88%	86%
	Less likely	2%	2%	2%	3%
Outstanding	More likely	92%	86%	92%	86%
	Less likely	1%	3%	1%	2%

Figure 3.11 shows that students from a BAME background were no more likely to be put off by an Outstanding rating than white students; the small difference seen in Figure 3.11 is not statistically significant. There is a statistically significant difference between the percentage of white students being more likely to want to study at an Outstanding university or college and the percentage of BAME students being more likely to want to study at an Outstanding university or college. There is no difference between white and BAME students being put off by a Gold rating, and only a 1% difference between being more likely to want to study there.

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to be influenced to study at a university/college that is rated Outstanding (92%) compared to first-year UG students (86%).

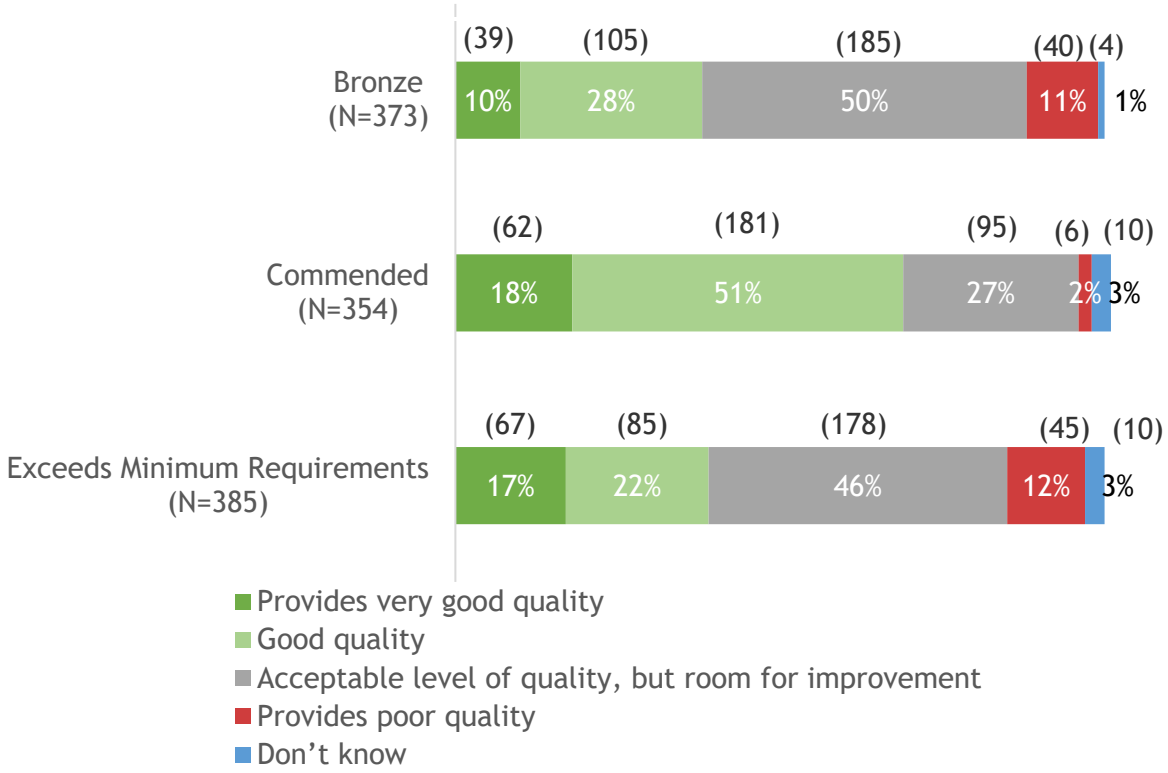
It is also worth noting that among HE applicants responding to the quantitative survey, Outstanding is significantly more likely to have a positive impact on intentions compared to Gold.

Although the chart above suggests that HE applicants are more likely to be influenced to study at a university/college that is rated Gold, compared to first-year UG students, these findings are not statistically significant.

[8] Q7. Looking at each of the awards below, if a university/college was to be awarded it, to what extent, if at all, would it influence your decision about studying there?
Base: HE applicants (826), First-year UG students (286)

Deep dive on third tier options

Figure 3.2 Impressions of quality from third tier ratings *(% selected)*[9]



When asked what impression respondents get from the Commended option in terms of quality of teaching and the student experience offered by a university/college, figure 3.2 shows over two thirds (69%) say very good or good quality compared to 38% for bronze and 39% for Exceeds Minimum Requirements.

More than one in ten say that Exceeds Minimum Requirements gives the impression that the quality of teaching and the student experience offered by a university/college is poor quality compared to 2% for Commended.

Half (50%) of respondents say that the Bronze category gives the impression that the quality of teaching and the student experience offered by a university/college is acceptable but there is room for improvement compared to 27% for Commended.

[9] Q8. And thinking about the name rating, what impression do you get most strongly from this category in terms of the quality of teaching/student experience offered by a university or college? Base: All respondents (1,112)

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely (43%) to have an impression that a university/college ranked as Exceeds Minimum Requirements provides good quality compared to first-year UG students (30%).

HE applicants are less likely to be influenced to study at a university/college that is awarded Bronze or Commended, compared to first-year UG students, although these findings are not statistically significant.

Figure 3.3 Impact on decision making from third tier ratings *(% selected)*[10]

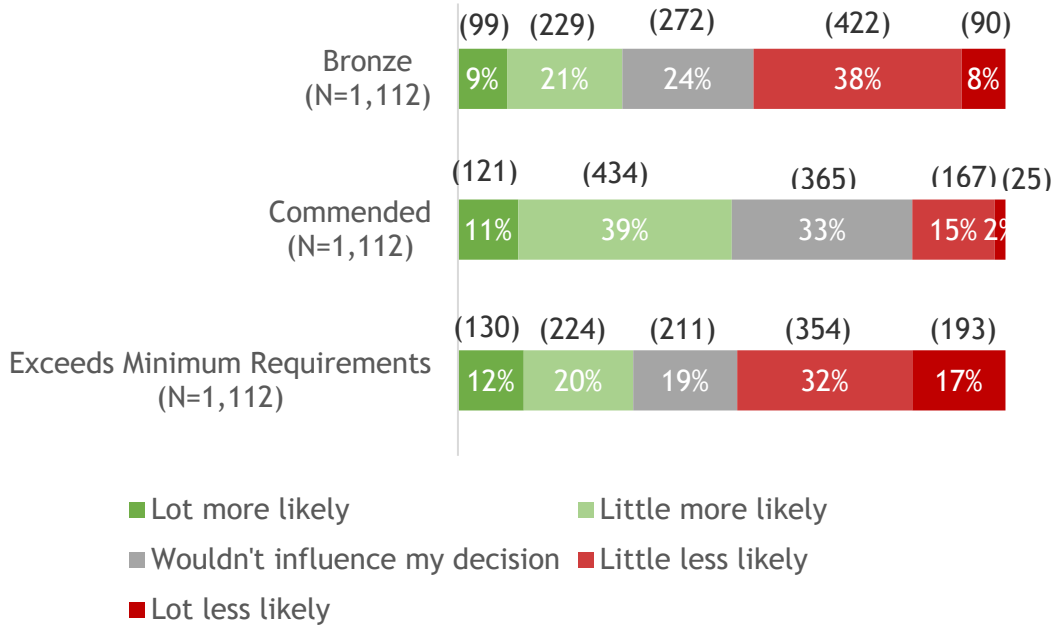


Figure 3.3 shows half of respondents interviewed in this survey said they are more likely be positively influenced to study at a university/college ranked as Commended (50%) compared to a university/college ranked as Bronze (30%) or Exceeds Minimum Requirements (32%).

Over two fifths of respondents said they are less likely to choose to study at a university/college ranked as Exceeds Minimum Requirements (49%) or Bronze (46%) compared to a university/college ranked as Commended (17%).

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants we interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely be influenced to study at a university/college rated Commended (52%), Exceeds Minimum Requirements

[10] Q9. Looking at each of the awards below, if a university/college was to be awarded it, to what extent, if at all, would it influence your decision about studying there?
Base: All respondents (1,112)

(34%), and Bronze (31%) compared to first-year UG students (Commended 45%, Exceeds Minimum Requirements 24%, Bronze 24%).

Figure 3.31 Impact on decision making from third tier ratings – sub group differences

Green highlighted cells in the table below indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group

		Gender		Social Grade		Domicile	
		Male	*Female*	*ABC1*	*C2DE*	*Home*	*International*
Bronze	*More likely to study there*	219	109	262	63	287	41
		44%	18%	33%	21%	29%	38%
	Less likely to study there	186	326	272	117	472	40
		37%	53%	40%	57%	47%	37%
Commended	*More likely to study there*	299	256	411	133	501	54
		60%	42%	52%	45%	50%	50%
	Less likely to study there	61	131	104	45	176	16
		12%	21%	15%	22%	18%	15%
Exceeds Minimum Requirements	*More likely to study there*	229	125	266	85	313	41
		46%	20%	34%	29%	31%	38%
	Less likely to study there	184	363	324	101	508	39
		37%	59%	48%	49%	51%	36%

Figure 3.31 suggests that female respondents and those in socio-economic grade (SEG) C2DE are more likely to be put off applying to universities with third tier ratings, while males and those from ABC1 backgrounds are more likely to see these ratings in a positive light. As before, these findings are caveated by random chance and the possibility of other factors being at play.

Summary: Top/ Third tier classifications

- Gold and Outstanding are both equally likely to make the students surveyed apply to an institution that had this rating.
- Of the third tier options tested, Commended gives the most positive impression with a much higher proportion of respondents suggesting they would be more likely

to apply to an institution with this rating and that it suggests the institution offers good quality.

Section 4: Fourth tier classifications

In this section we will look at the options tested for the fourth tier classifications under the proposed TEF scheme. Four options were tested in the survey as follows:

- Requires Improvement for TEF Rating
- Requires Improvement
- Improvement Expected
- Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements

Specifically, respondents were asked:

- To rank the options from their most favourite to least favourite
- Their perceptions of the options
- What the options mean to respondents
- How decision making could be impacted if a respondent was to be given this rating

As in previous sections, quantitative survey respondents were only presented with questions about one naming option.

Qualitative findings

Immediate reactions to the fourth tier options

All the options for the fourth tier had bad connotations regarding the teaching at an institution. Opinions were split about the best name for this tier. Although Requires Improvement for TEF Rating was the most popular overall, it was not a clear majority.

> ***"I think option 1) and 2) have the right tone and idea for a fourth rating. They seem like suggestions and therefore more likely to motivate an institute to seek to improve themselves. Option 3) seems a bit too forceful from where I stand and option 4) on the other hand is too passive and will not result in much improvement."***
>
> *Applicant, Female.*

> ***"My first impression is positive of names 1,2,3 as they sound more constructive rather than simply stating name 4. None the less other categories such as bronze would also require improvement hence it can be vague. Hence I quite like the tone of name 2."***
>
> *First-year Student, Male.*

Students noted very bad connotations from most options, enough put them off going to an institution with this rating.

> ***"I would think very lowly of a university if it was awarded one of these, and I think that is an OK tone in terms of the names, because the people have a***

right to be aware of the standards of the teaching within the university if this is the case"

First-year Student, Female.

"I would be extremely put off going to a place that requires improvement and this would probably sway my decision massively as someone who values my education. This is because I believe the value of teaching is necessary for engagement of students"

Applicant, Male.

Others say they do not think it would be a good idea because a bad rating might lead to people withdrawing their applications which would affect the entire higher education sector.

"I don't think it's a particularly good idea - if I was applying to uni and saw that the university had this 4th category, I would disregard it without further thought - I think implementing this will lead to a huge under-demand for these universities, and more demand for better universities leading to more application rejections. This is not what we want - we want to get more young people into university, not put them off certain unis"

First-year Student, Female

They note that getting such a rating would probably lead to universities improving drastically as it would really hit their reputation.

"'Improvement Expected' is a lot more encouraging, suggesting that it can change how the university is doing. I hate 'Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements' which is too long and complicated"

Applicant, Male.

Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements is perceived to be the harshest in tone.

"I would think pretty badly of a uni that 'Does not exceed minimum requirements' as it seems to not hit the basic criteria for it to be a decent uni to go to. It appears very negative and undesirable as a result"

Applicant, Female.

"It would give me a pretty poor impression and cause me to steer away from them and similarly if they only met the minimum requirements"

Applicant, Female.

Quantitative findings

Ranking of fourth tier options

Figure 4.1 Ranking the fourth tier options *(% selected)*[11]

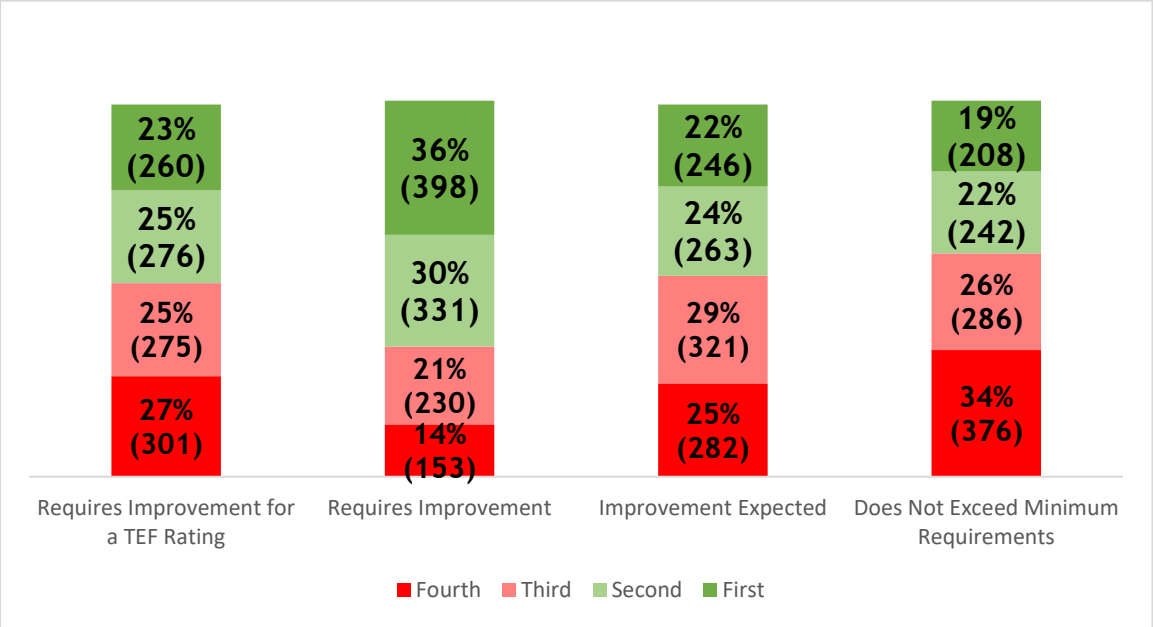


Figure 4.1 shows that Requires Improvement is the naming option most likely to be ranked first or second by respondents, with two thirds (66%) putting this option in their top two from the four tested. Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements was the least favoured option, with a third (34%) of respondents placing this at the bottom and a further quarter (26%) ranking it third.

Respondents are almost equally likely to place Requires Improvement for TEF Rating and Improvement Expected in their top two. Almost half (46%) of respondents rank Improvement Expected in their top two compared to 48% for Requires Improvement for TEF rating. They are both polarising, however, as respondents were equally likely to rank them third or fourth.

[11] Q10. We would now like you to look at the four naming options relating to the fourth category below. Please rank them with 1 being your favourite and 4 being your least favourite.
Base: Total (1112) HE applicants (826) First-year UG students (286)

Perceptions of fourth tier options

Figure 4.2 The name is easy to understand *(% selected)*[12]

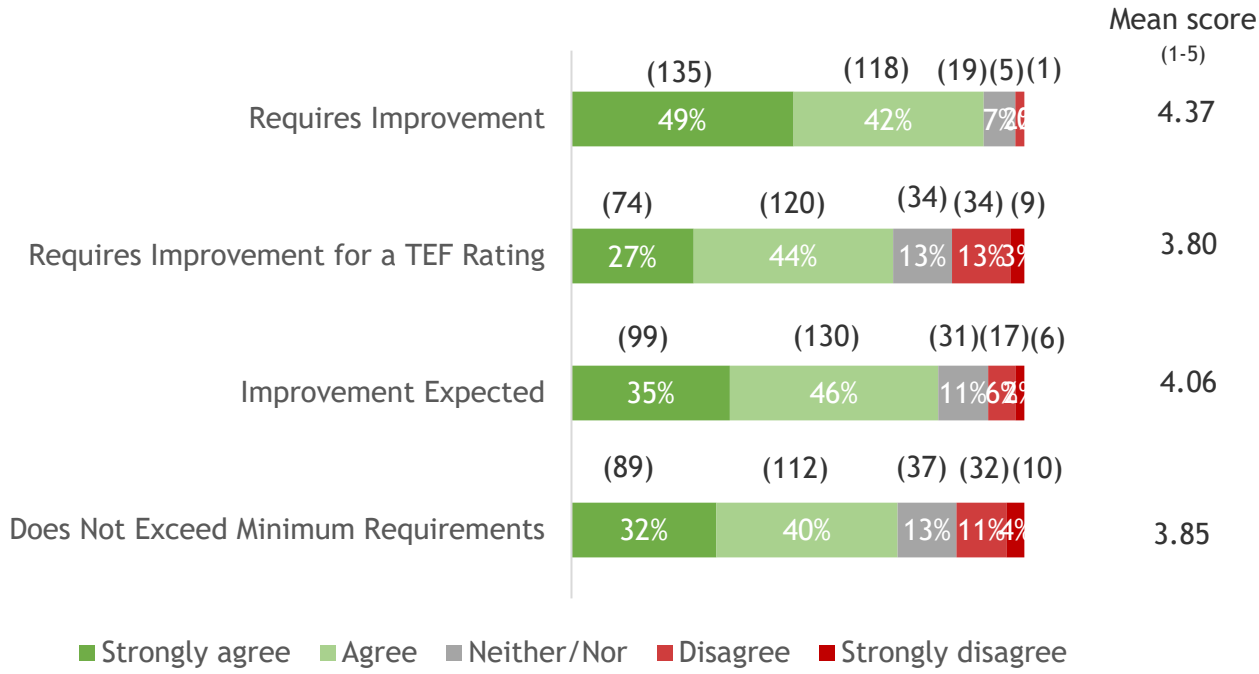


Figure 4.2 shows that respondents found that all the options tested were easy to understand. Requires Improvement has the highest level of agreement with around nine in ten (91%) agreeing that the name is easy to understand. Improvement Expected also has a very high level of agreement with around four in five (81%) agreeing that is easy to understand.

Requires Improvement for TEF Rating and Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements also see high levels of respondents agreeing they are easy to understand. Around three quarters agree for both of these options.

[12] Q11. Thinking about this name, please can you indicate the extent to which, if at all, you either agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
Base: Requires Improvement (278), Requires Improvement for TEF Rating (271), Improvement Expected (283), Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements (280)

Figure 4.3 The name is memorable *(% selected)*

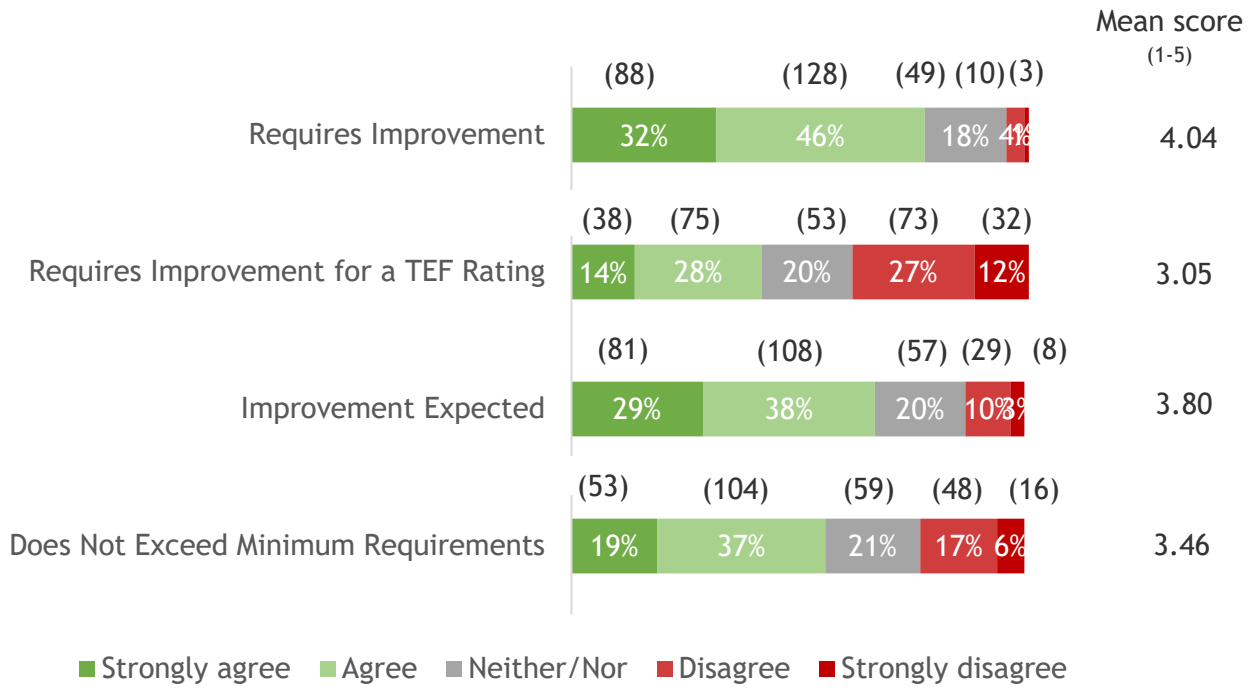


Figure 4.3 shows that requires improvement is perceived to be the most memorable name among respondents. Around three quarters (78%) agree that it is memorable. Improvement Expected is also perceived to be memorable by many respondents with around two thirds (67%) agreeing.

Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements is perceived to be less memorable. Just over half (56%) agree, but almost a quarter (23%) disagree. Requires Improvement for TEF rating is the least memorable option with around two in five (42%) agreeing, but a further two in five (39%) disagreeing.

Figure 4.4 The tone of the name seems harsh *(% selected)*

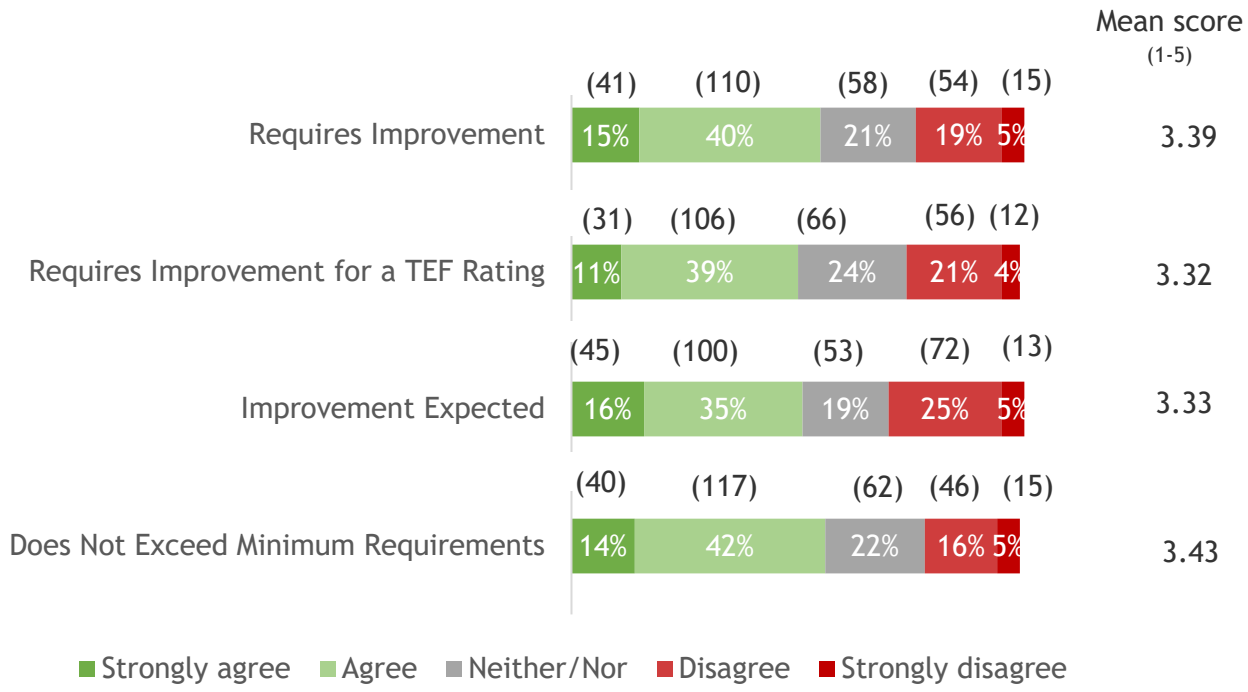


Figure 4.4 shows that each of the naming options has a relatively equal proportion of respondents who feel that it is harsh. Over half (56%) agree that Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements sounds harsh, with around the same proportion (55%) agreeing for Requires Improvement. A further 50% agree for Requires Improvement for TEF Rating and 51% for Improvement Expected.

Figure 4.5 The name suggests the university/college still provides an acceptable level of quality *(% selected)*

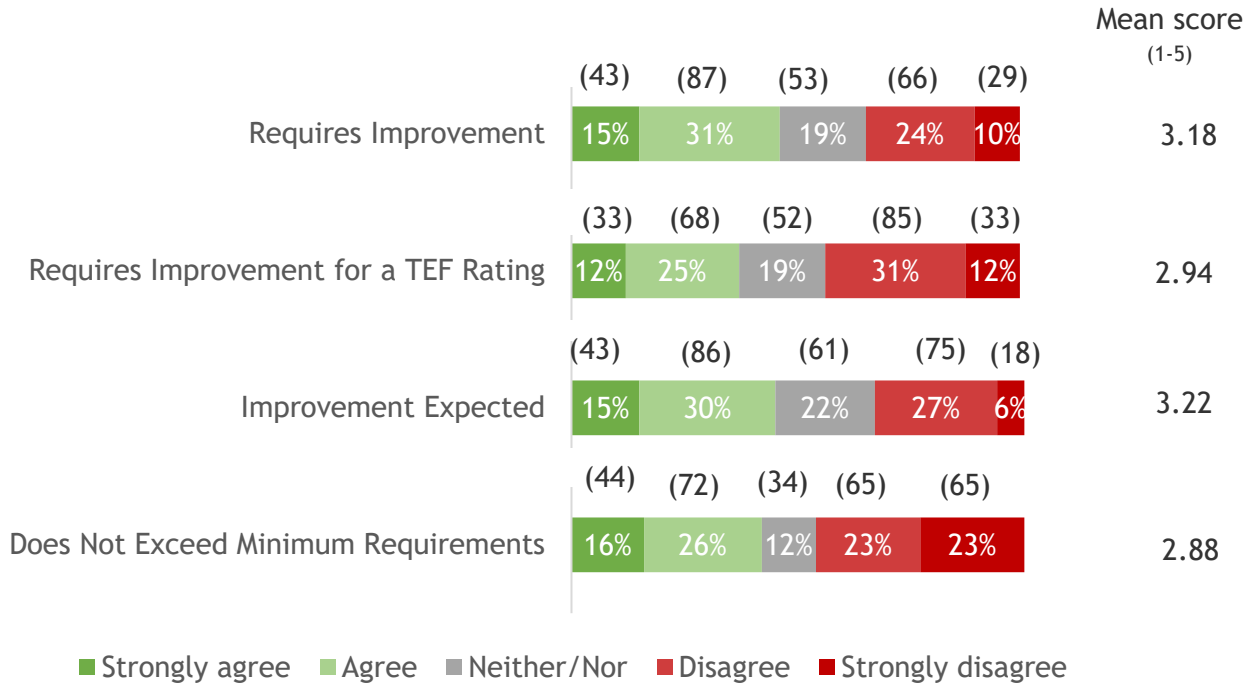


Figure 4.5 shows that both Requires Improvement (46%) and Improvement Expected (45%) have higher levels of agreement that the name suggests a university/college still provides an acceptable level of quality. Requires Improvement for TEF Rating (43%) has a higher proportion of respondents who disagree along with Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements (46%).

Figure 4.6 The name suggests that the university/college falls below the acceptable level of quality *(% selected)*

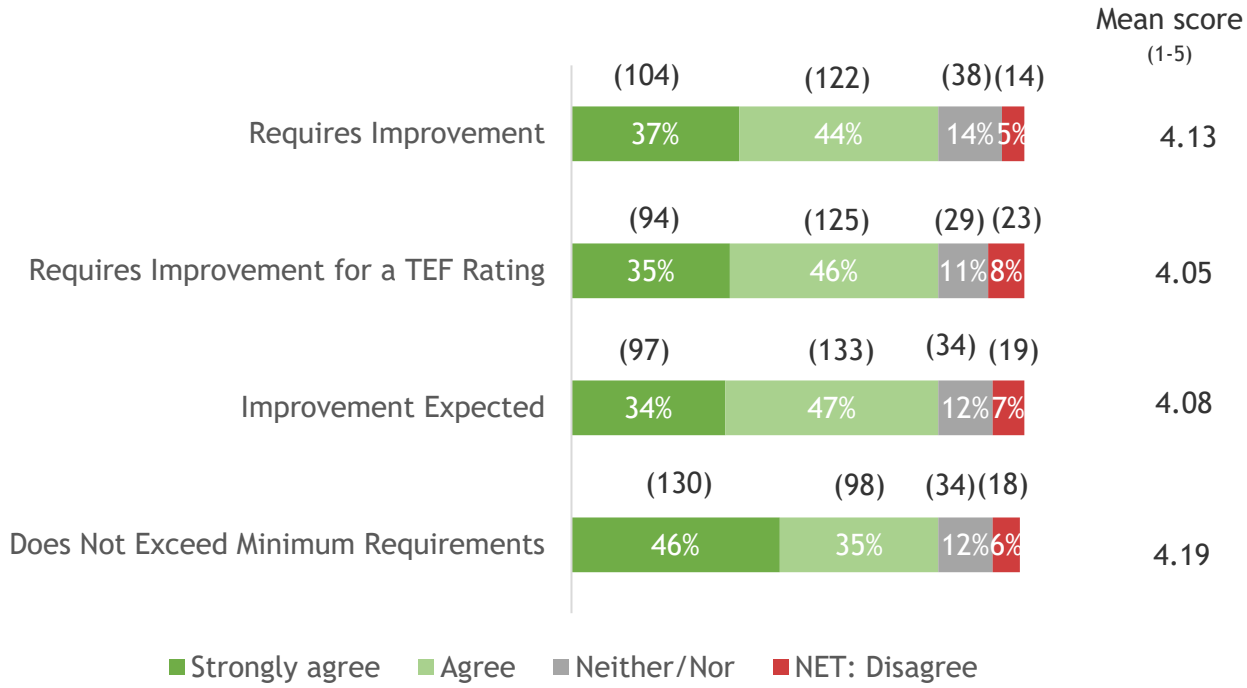


Figure 4.6 shows that although we have already seen that some respondents agree the fourth tier ratings suggest that a university/college offers an acceptable level of quality, a higher proportion agree that they suggest a university/college falls below an acceptable level of quality.

Almost four in five (81%) agree across all fourth tier naming options that they suggest a university/college falls below the acceptable level of quality.

Figure 4.7 Perceptions of fourth tier naming options by study stage

		Does Not Exceed Minimum requirements	Improvement Expected	Requires Improvement for TEF Rating	Requires Improvement
The name is easy to understand	*Applicant*	73%	85%	73%	92%
	First-year UG	68%	69%	67%	89%
The name is memorable	*Applicant*	57%	74%	45%	79%
	First-year UG	53%	46%	31%	74%
The tone of the name seems harsh	*Applicant*	61%	54%	53%	57%
	First-year UG	41%	43%	42%	48%
The name suggests the university/college still provides an acceptable level of quality	*Applicant*	44%	50%	40%	52%
	First-year UG	32%	33%	28%	34%
The name suggests that the university/college falls below the acceptable level of quality	*Applicant*	83%	82%	83%	84%
	First-year UG	75%	81%	75%	76%

When looking at perceptions of the fourth tier naming options we can see from figure 4.7 that the HE applicants interviewed are significantly more likely than first-year UG students

to agree that the Improvement Expected option is both easy to understand and memorable.

HE applicants are also significantly more likely than first-year UG students to agree that each of the fourth tier naming options tested sounds harsh. However, they are also significantly more likely to believe that a university/ college given one of these ratings still provides an acceptable level of quality.

Figure 4.71 Perceptions of fourth tier classifications - sub group differences *(% agree)*

Green highlighted cells in the table below indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group

	Requires Improvement		Requires Improvement for TEF Rating		Improvement Expected		Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
The tone of the name seems harsh	75	76	67	70	84	61	75	82
	64%	48%	58%	45%	65%	40%	56%	57%
The name suggests the university/college still provides an acceptable level of quality	72	58	60	41	70	59	70	46
	61%	36%	52%	26%	54%	38%	52%	32%

From Figure 4.71 we can see that the male students interviewed are generally more likely to feel that the fourth tier naming options sound harsh. However, they also tend to feel that they suggest that a university offers an acceptable level of quality.

Understanding of fourth tier options

Figure 4.8 Impressions of quality from fourth tier naming options *(% selected)*[13]

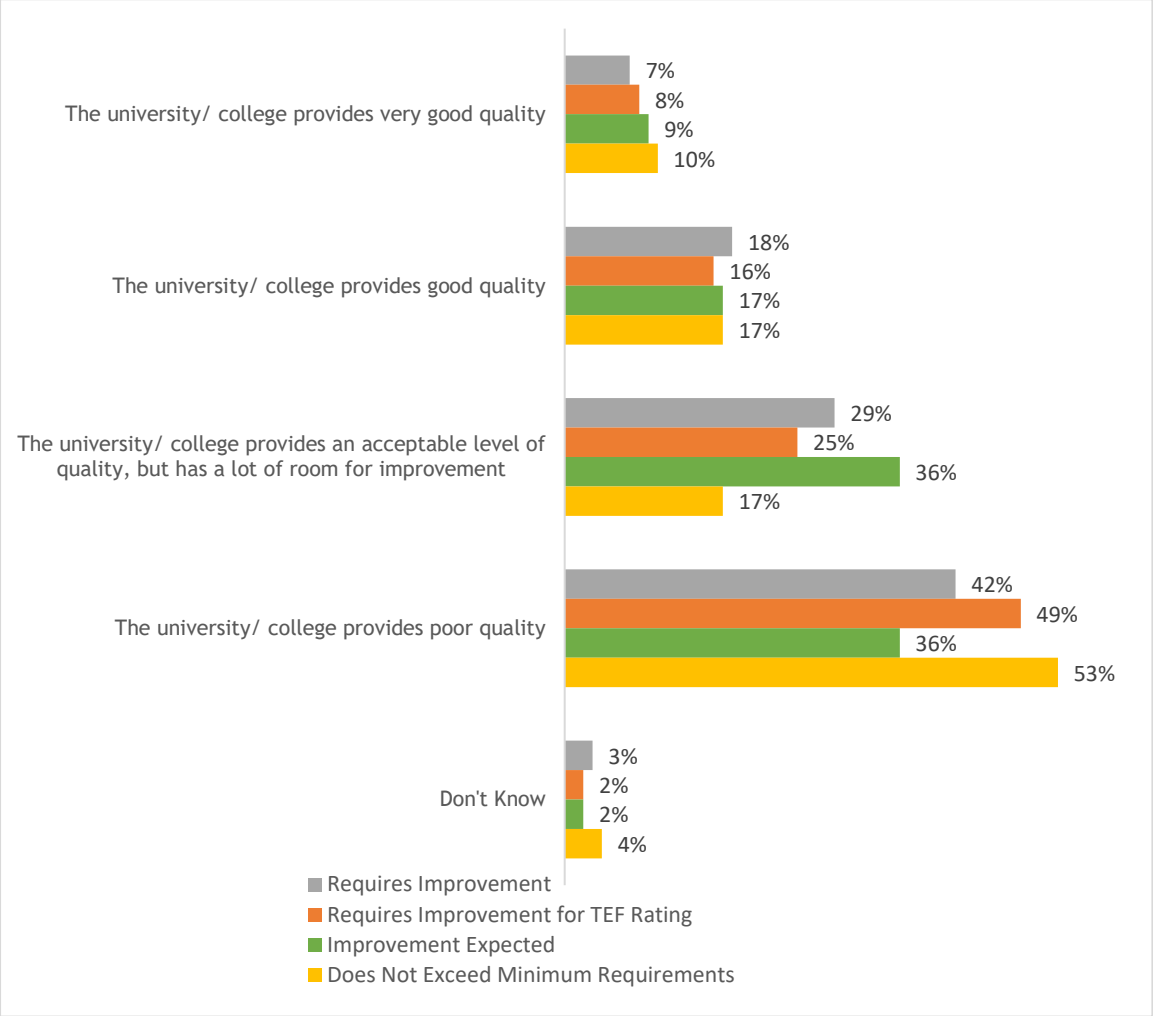


Figure 4.8 shows that Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements gives the worst impression of the level of quality offered by a university/college, with around half (53%) thinking it suggests that the university/college provides poor quality. Requires Improvement for TEF Rating also gives a low impression; again, around half think it suggests a university/college provides poor quality.

Improvement Expected tends to suggest to respondents that a university or college offers either poor quality (36%) or an acceptable level of quality with a lot of room for improvement.

[13] Q12. And thinking about this name, what impression do you get most strongly from this category in terms of the quality of teaching/student experience offered by a university or college?
Base: Total (1112) HE applicants (826) First-year UG students (286)

Figure 4.81 Impressions of quality from fourth tier naming options *(% selected)*[14]

Green highlighted cells in the table below indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group (HE applicants vs first-year UG students)

	Requires Improvement		Requires Improvement for TEF Rating		Improvement Expected		Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements	
	HE applicants	First-year UGs	HE applicants	First-year UGs	HE applicants	First-year UGs	HE applicants	First-year UGs
The university/ college provides very good quality	7%	9%	9%	6%	12%	1%	11%	6%
The university/ college provides good quality	18%	18%	17%	11%	19%	10%	17%	15%
The university/ college provides an acceptable level of quality, but has a lot of room for improvement	28%	34%	26%	22%	34%	42%	19%	9%
The university/ college provides poor quality	43%	38%	46%	58%	33%	44%	50%	65%
Don't Know	4%	1%	2%	3%	2%	3%	3%	6%

Figure 4.81 shows that there is little difference in impressions of Requires Improvement between HE applicants and first-year UG students. However, first-year UG students are much more likely than HE applicants to perceive that Requires Improvement for TEF Rating suggests that a university/college provides poor quality. Almost three in five (58%) first-year UG students perceive this compared to under half (46%) of HE applicants.

HE applicants are significantly more likely than first-year UG students to have a positive perception of Improvement Expected. Almost a third (31%) suggest it gives them the impression that a university/college provides very good or good quality compared to around one in ten (11%) first-year UG students. Over two in five (44%) of first-year UG students suggest an institution given this rating would provide poor quality compared to a third (33%) of HE applicants.

First-year UG students are also significantly more likely than HE applicants to get the impression that a university/college rated as Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements

[14] Q12. And thinking about this name, what impression do you get most strongly from this category in terms of the quality of teaching/student experience offered by a university or college?
Base: Total (1112) HE applicants (826) First-year UG students (286)

provides poor quality compared to HE applicants, who are more likely to get the impression that an acceptable level of quality is provided but with room for improvement.

Influence on decision making

Figure 4.9 Influence of fourth tier classification on decision making *(% selected)*[15]

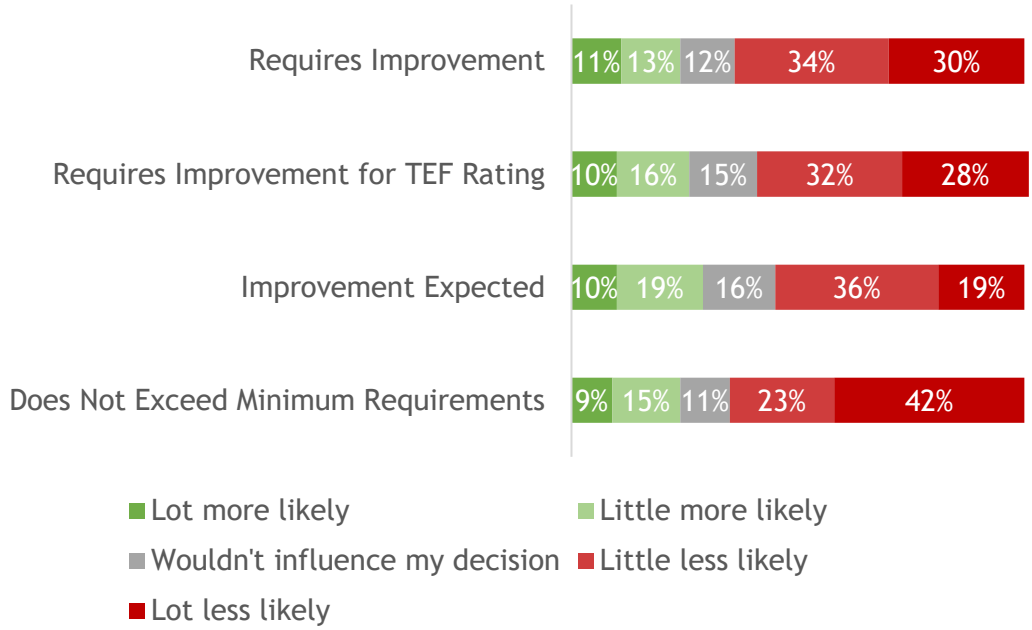


Figure 4.9 shows that respondents suggest that all of the fourth tier classifications would make them less likely to apply to a university/college. Requires Improvement (64%) and Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements (65%) are the options with the highest level of respondents suggesting they would be less likely to apply to an institution. However, almost three in five would also be much less likely to apply if an institution was awarded Requires Improvement for TEF Rating (60%) or Improvement Expected (55%).

[15] Q13. Looking at each of the awards below, if a university/college was to be awarded it, to what extent, if at all, would it influence your decision about studying there?
Base: Total (1112) HE applicants (826) First-year UG students (286)

Figure 4.91 Influence of fourth tier classification on decision making by study stage ***(% selected)***

Green highlighted cells in the table below indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group (HE applicants vs first-year UG students)

	Requires Improvement		Requires Improvement for TEF Rating		Improvement Expected		Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements	
	HE applicants	*First-year UGs*	*HE applicants*	*First-year UGs*	*HE applicants*	*First-year UGs*	*HE applicants*	*First-year UGs*
Lot more likely	13%	6%	10%	7%	11%	7%	11%	4%
Little more likely	15%	10%	18%	9%	21%	13%	16%	12%
Wouldn't influence my decision	12%	12%	14%	16%	15%	18%	10%	14%
Little less likely	32%	41%	30%	36%	34%	43%	23%	23%
Lot less likely	29%	32%	27%	31%	19%	19%	40%	48%

Figure 4.91 shows that the influence of the fourth tier naming options is broadly aligned among HE applicants and first-year UG students. However, first-year UG students are more likely to suggest that they would be less likely to apply to an institution if it were rated Requires Improvement with almost three quarters (73%) selecting these options compared to three in five (61%) HE applicants.

The same can be said of Improvement Expected where around two thirds (62%) of first-year UG students suggest they would be less likely to apply compared to around half (53%) of HE applicants.

There are few other notable significant differences.

Figure 4.92 Influence of fourth tier classification on decision making - sub group differences ***(% selected)***

Green highlighted cells in the table below indicate a significant difference vs the opposing sub group

		Gender		Ethnicity		Domicile	
		Male	*Female*	*White*	*BAME*	*Home*	*International*
Requires Improvement	*Less likely to study there*	221	489	476	210	652	58
		44%	80%	61%	71%	65%	54%
Requires Improvement for TEF Rating	*Less likely to study there*	203	463	445	200	611	55
		41%	75%	57%	67%	61%	51%
Improvement Expected		196	413	413	177	569	40

	Less likely to study there	39%	67%	53%	60%	57%	37%
Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements	*Less likely to study there*	224	499	479	219	661	62
		45%	81%	61%	74%	66%	58%

Looking at Figure 4.92 we can see that there are certain groups for whom the fourth tier ratings appear to be more likely to have a negative impact on their decision making. The female students we interviewed appear significantly more likely than their male counterparts to be deterred from applying to an institution with one of these ratings. Participants from BAME backgrounds appear to be significantly more likely to report that the fourth tier naming options would have a negative impact on their decision to study at a particular institution – for all fourth tier naming options – compared to participants from white backgrounds.

Home students are more likely than international students to be deterred from applying to a university by the naming options Requires Improvement and Improvement Expected.

Summary: Fourth tier classifications

- From the fourth tier ratings tested in the qualitative phase of the research we found that they all gave a negative perception regarding the quality of teaching at an institution. Opinions were mixed on naming preference, although Requires Improvement for TEF Rating had the highest level of preference.
- Moving on the quantitative findings, Requires Improvement was the option that was most likely to be ranked first by respondents from the options tested. It is viewed to be memorable and clear.
- However, across the many perceptions there is little to differentiate the options with most respondents having positive perceptions of the options tested.
- Requires Improvement and Does Not Exceed Minimum Requirements are perceived to suggest that a university/college offers poor quality to a greater extent than other naming options.
- Despite generally positive perceptions of the category, respondents suggest that all of the four options tested would make them less likely to apply to a HE institution in that category.
- Around one in five favour Improvement Expected and it performs well, in line with Requires Improvement, across different perceptions. It is seen as easy to understand and memorable. Compared to other options, Improvement Expected is more likely to give the impression that the university/college provides an acceptable level of quality, but has a lot of room for improvement.

Section 5: Initial reaction to bottom tier naming options

The bottom ranking options were tested in the qualitative phase of the research only. Presented below are the participants' initial reactions to the options tested.

The options tested are as follows:

1. Breach of Minimum Requirements
2. Does Not Meet Requirements

Qualitative findings

Initial reactions to the bottom tier naming options

Among respondents to the qualitative stage, Does Not Meet Requirements was the favourite of the two options. It is seen to be straightforward and easy to understand. Does Not Meet Requirements is seen to be clear, straightforward and less harsh/serious than use of the term "breach".

> ***"Breach of Minimum Requirements sounds more harsh and breach is a word often used within the law so may be extremely off-putting. Whereas, Does Not Meet Requirements sounds more as if there is room for improvement"***
>
> *Applicant, Female.*

> ***"Breach of Minimum Requirements… would suggest that they need to make that improvement quickly. It would also be more likely to make me discard the university as an option to go to at all, whereas Does Not Meet Requirements does not have the same initial reaction"***
>
> *Applicant, Female.*

Breach of Minimum Requirements is perceived to be unnecessarily complicated language. Students state that they don't know how, or why, an institution has breached requirements, what those requirements are, or what breach actually means. This leads to confusion.

> ***"Does Not Meet Requirements fits nicely… [It] gives a clear negative rating of a university, signalling a lack of good teaching. Breach can be misinterpreted as just passing minimum requirements"***
>
> *Applicant, Female.*

> ***"I don't know what to associate with the first name. For me, 'breach' doesn't quite make sense in this context"***
>
> *Applicant, I describe my gender in another way.*

Students state that either award would lead them to think that an institution is of a poor standard and has committed a serious violation that must be corrected.

> ***"Associate them with ofsted reports for schools. If a school didn't meet requirements then it would be bad"***
>
> *First-year Student, Female.*

> ***"I associate low standards with both names, which is quite clear to see I think, and it really drives home that this university needs to fix-up in the long term and that you might want to reconsider going here"***
>
> *Applicant, Male.*

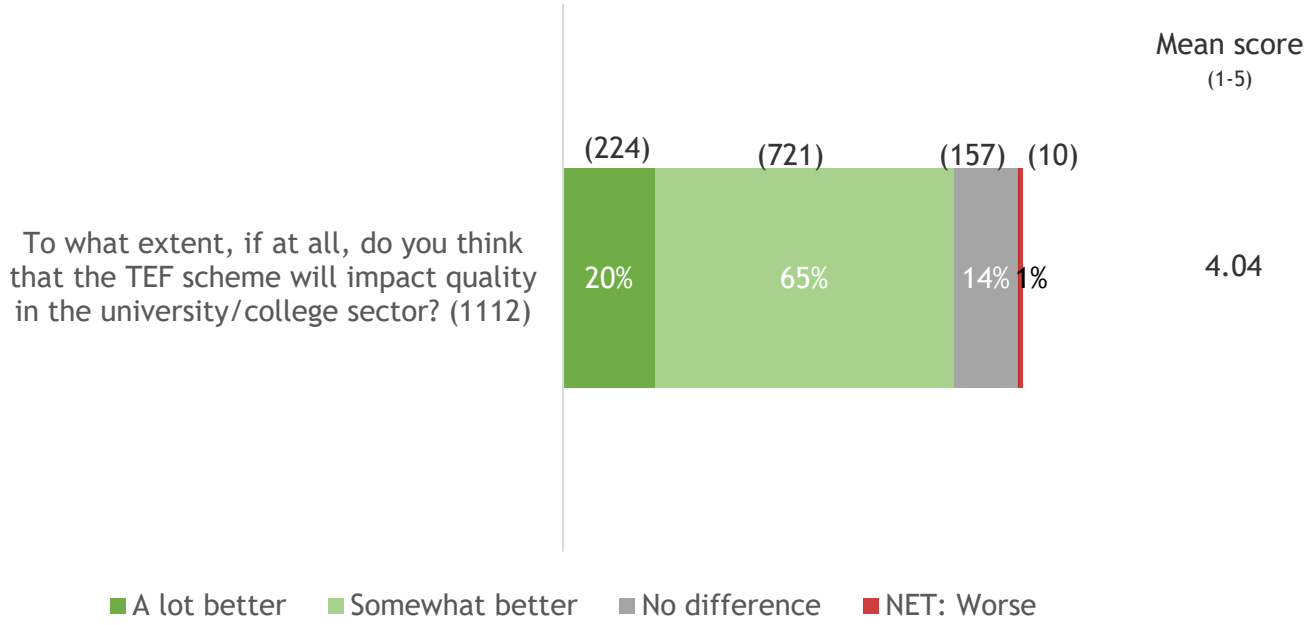
Section 6: Assessment of the TEF scheme

This final section presents broad perceptions of the TEF as a concept, specifically:

1. The impact of TEF on quality in the HE sector
2. The extent to which TEF will help to inform student decision making

Impact of TEF on HE sector

Figure 6.1 Impact of TEF on HE sector (% selected)[16]



From figure 6.1 we can see clearly that over four fifths (85%) of respondents interviewed in this survey think the TEF scheme will make quality in the university/college sector better.

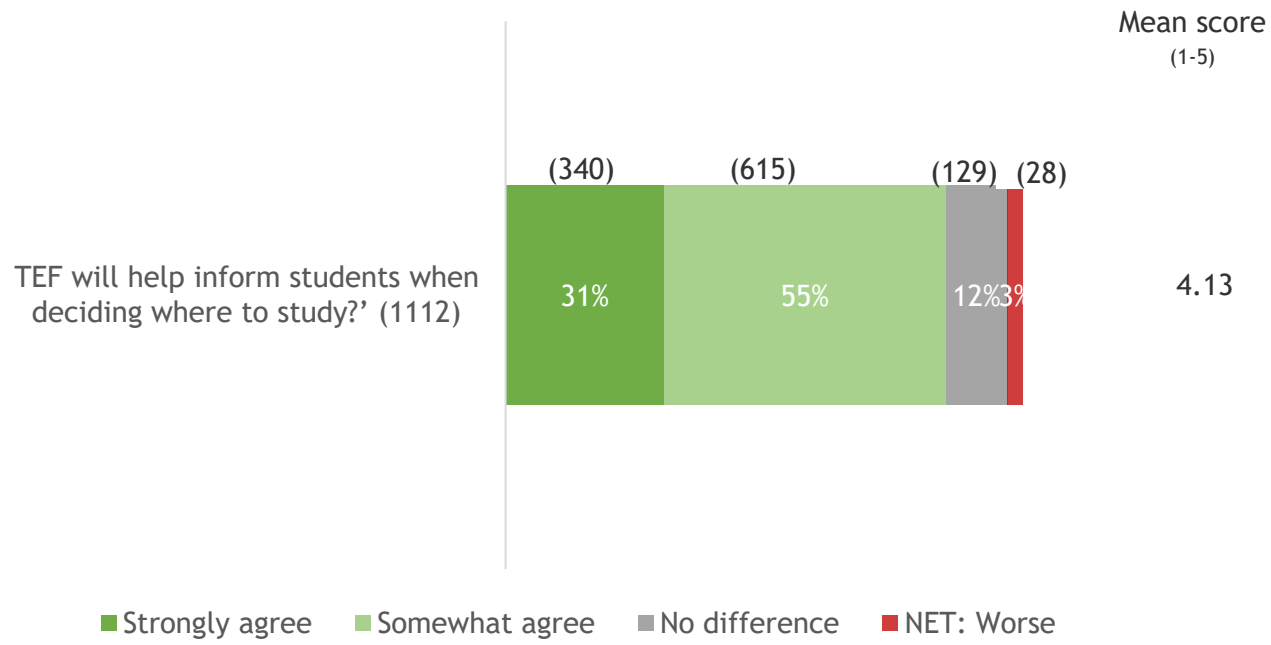
Differences by study stage

The HE applicants interviewed in the quantitative survey are significantly more likely to think the TEF scheme will make the quality in the university/college sector better (86%) compared to first-year UG students (81%).

[16] Q15. To what extent, if at all, do you think that the TEF scheme will impact quality in the university/college sector?
Base: All respondents (1,112)

Impact of TEF scheme on student decision making

Figure 6.2 Impact of TEF scheme on student decision making (% selected)[17]



From figure 6.2 we can see that over four fifths (86%) of respondents surveyed were more likely to agree that the TEF scheme will help inform students when deciding where to study.

Differences by study stage

The HE applicants interviewed in the survey are significantly more likely to agree that the TEF scheme will help inform students when deciding where to study (87%) compared to first-year UG students (82%).

[17] Q16. To what extent, if at all, do you either agree or disagree with the statement below: TEF will help inform students when deciding where to study?
Base: All respondents (1,112)

Annex A - Qualitative discussion guide content

1. Introduction
   - Tell us your name
   - What was the best teaching experience you have had in school/university and why?

2. Name evaluation task
   - Have you ever heard of the TEF (Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework) before taking part in this project?
   - If you were aware of the TEF, does this description match what you thought it was for?
   - If not, what did you think it was for before today?
   - What do you think of the existing TEF?
   - Do you think it is fit for purpose? Why/Why not?
   - As a student/applicant, would you personally make use of the TEF ratings? Why/Why not?
   - If you were to decide, which of the names would you pick and why?
   - Which is the most memorable, and why?
   - Which makes the most sense, and why?
   - Is there any of the names you dislike?
   - Which don't you think make sense or don't work in the context of the scheme? Why do you think this?

3. Accreditation evaluation
   - Which of the three rating options do you prefer and why?
   - Why do you think this was the clearest rating system?
   - Of the set of rating options you prefer, what do you think each of the three categories mean? What would they be awarded for?
   - Which do you think are your least favourite names for the ratings and why?
   - Are any of the names particularly unclear? If so, why do you think this?
   - What impression do you get from your least favourite set of ranking options?
   - Do you feel that your least favourite names mean something different, or give a different impression, to your favourite ones?
   - Are there any that you wouldn't associate with the TEF, or ratings for teaching?
   - Can you suggest any improvements to the rating name options, or would you do anything differently?
   - What is your impression of the names for this proposed fourth category, and why do you think this?
   - What would you think of a university/HE college that was awarded one of these scores? Why/why not?
   - Would you think the university or college meets the minimum quality requirements or not?
   - Do you think that the tone of the names are correct, why/why not?
   - The OfS may go with one of four naming options for this fourth category (Options 1 to 4), which approach do you think works best and why?
   - What makes the name you have chosen stand-out from the other three?
   - Is there any of the names that you dislike, why?

4. Assessing the 5th tier
    - Which of the two names do you prefer and why?
    - Which of the names best suits this category?
    - What do you associate both names with? Why?

5. Closing thoughts
    - We'd like you to summarise your overall thoughts based on everything you've seen today, and provide any advice you have for OfS.

Annex B - Quantitative questionnaire content

- Q1. Looking at the three naming options for the scheme below, please assign a rank to each with one being your favourite and three being your least favourite.

- Q2. Thinking about the name [INSERT NAMING OPTION HERE], please can you indicate the extent to which, if at all, you either agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- Q3. From the list below, which three of the following, if any, do you think best describes what [INSERT NAME FROM Q2] means to you?

- Q4. We're going to show you a list of the possible ratings that could be awarded as part of the scheme.

  For each of the ratings we would like you to tell us what each would mean to you in terms of the quality of teaching and learning provided by a university/college. Using a 10-point scale where 1 means the lowest quality and 10 means the highest quality, we'd like you to indicate what you think each award means.

  Please note, we are not looking at which options you prefer, just where each would sit on the scale from lowest to highest quality.

- Q5. We would now like you to look at the three rating schemes below. Please rank them with 1 being your favourite and 3 being your least favourite.

- Q6. Please look at the rating scheme shown below, thinking about this scheme, please can you indicate the extent to which, if at all, you either agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- Q7. Looking at each of the awards below, if a university/college was to be awarded it, to what extent, if at all, would it influence your decision about studying there?

- Q8. And thinking about the [INSERT RANK NAME: Bronze OR Commended OR Exceeds minimum requirements] rating, what impression do you get most strongly from this category in terms of the quality of teaching/student experience offered by a university or college?

- Q9. Looking at each of the awards below, if a university/college was to be awarded it, to what extent, if at all, would it influence your decision about studying there?

- Q10. We would now like you to look at the four naming options relating to the fourth category below. Please rank them with 1 being your favourite and 4 being your least favourite.

- Q11. Thinking about the name [INSERT NAMING OPTION HERE], please can you indicate the extent to which, if at all, you either agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- Q12. And thinking about [INSERT NAMING OPTION HERE], what impression do you get most strongly from this category in terms of the quality of teaching/student experience offered by a university or college?

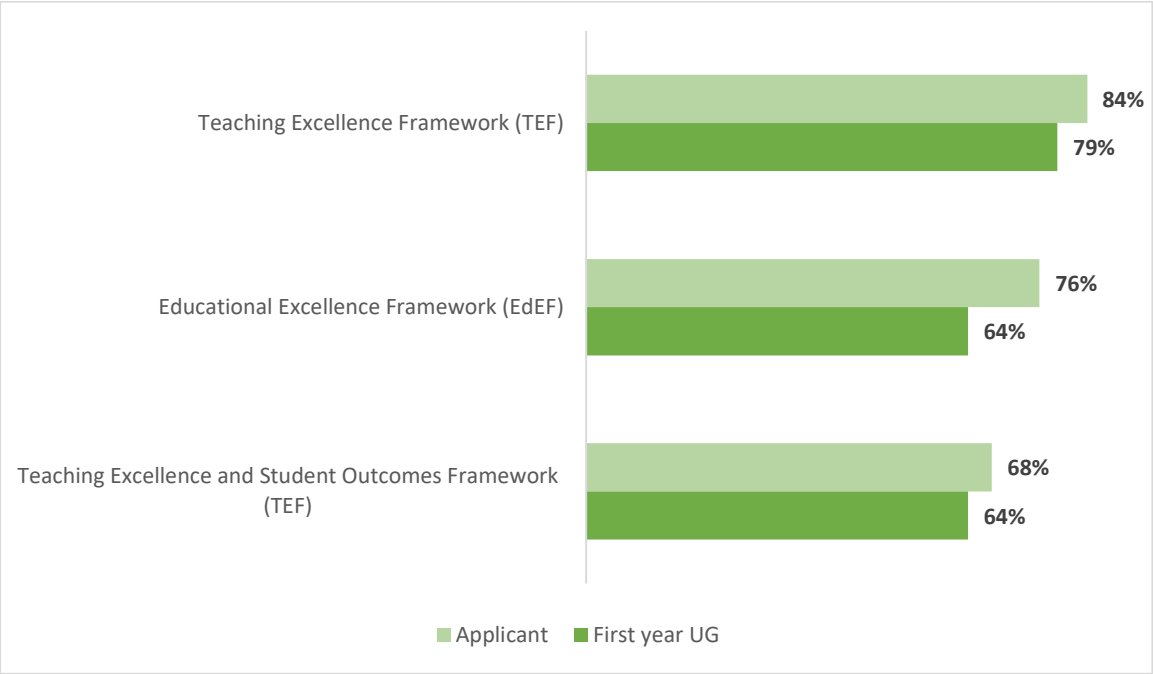
- Q13. Looking at each of the awards below, if a university/college was to be awarded it, to what extent, if at all, would it influence your decision about studying there?

  Q15. To what extent, if at all, do you think that the TEF scheme will impact quality in the university/college sector?

- Q16. To what extent, if at all, do you either agree or disagree with the statement below: TEF will help inform students' when deciding where to study?

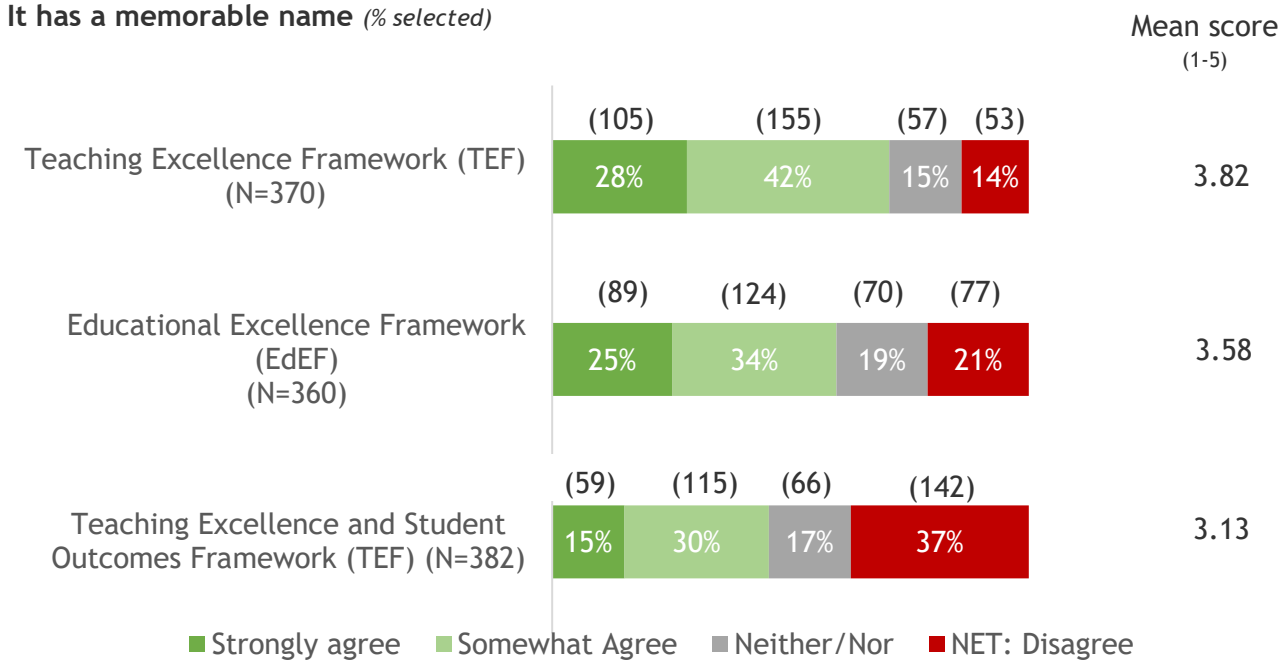
Annex C - Perceptions of the TEF naming options, charts

It is easy to understand by study stage *(% selected)*[18]

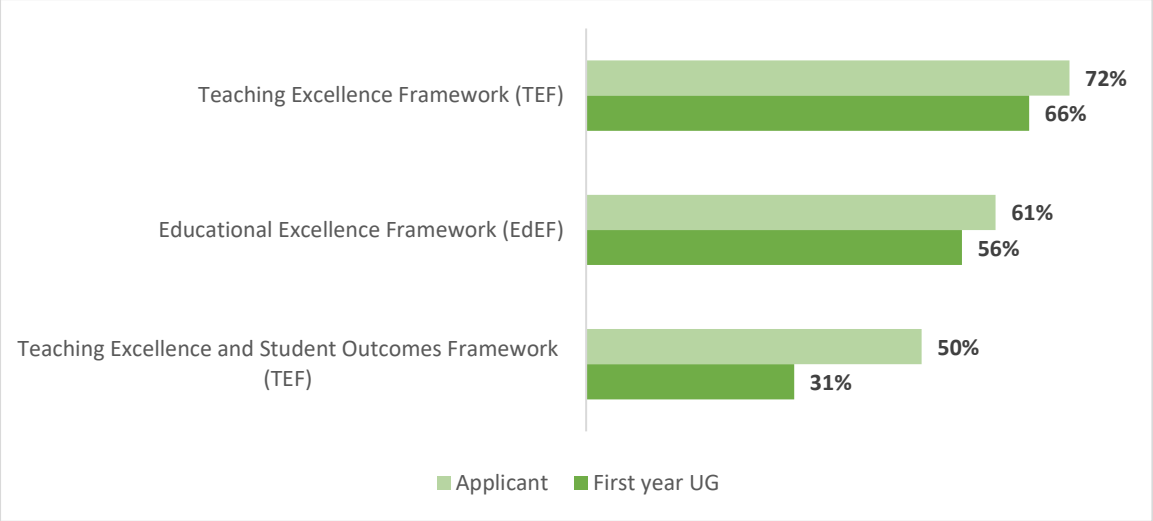


[18] Q2. Thinking about the name, please can you indicate the extent to which, if at all, you either agree or disagree with each of the following statements
Base: Teaching Excellence Framework; HE applicants (274), First-year UG students (96), Educational Excellence Framework; HE applicants (261), First-year UG students (99), Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework; HE applicants (291), First-year UG students (91)

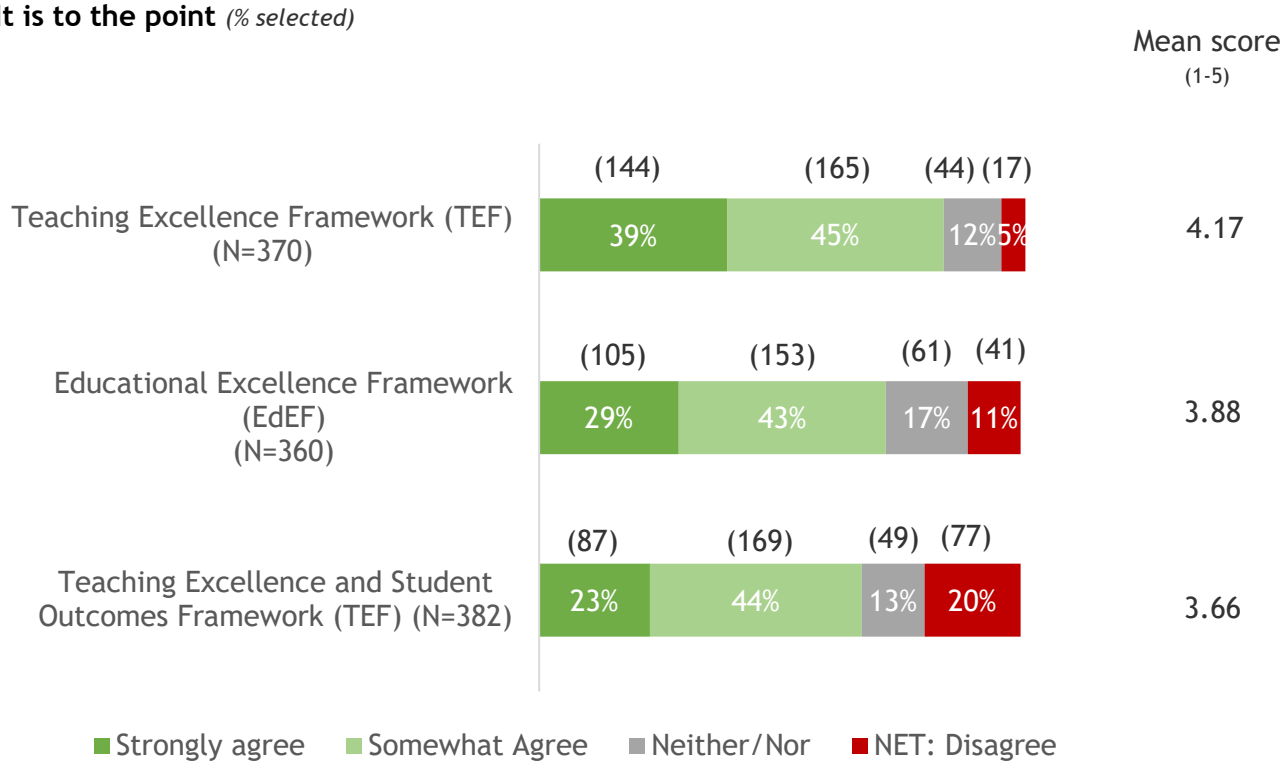
It has a memorable name *(% selected)*



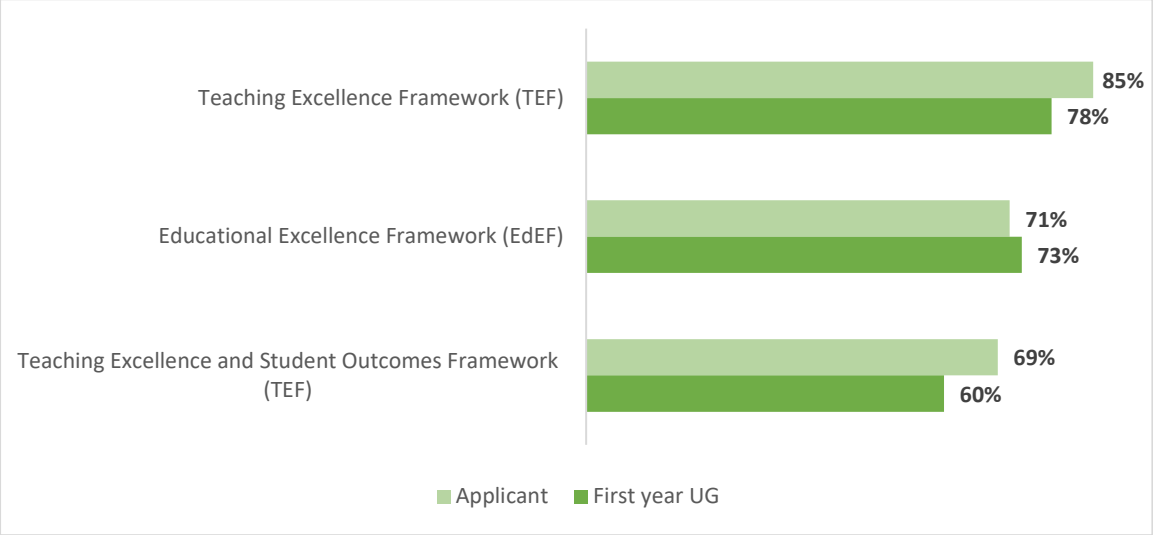
It has a memorable name by study stage *(% agree)*



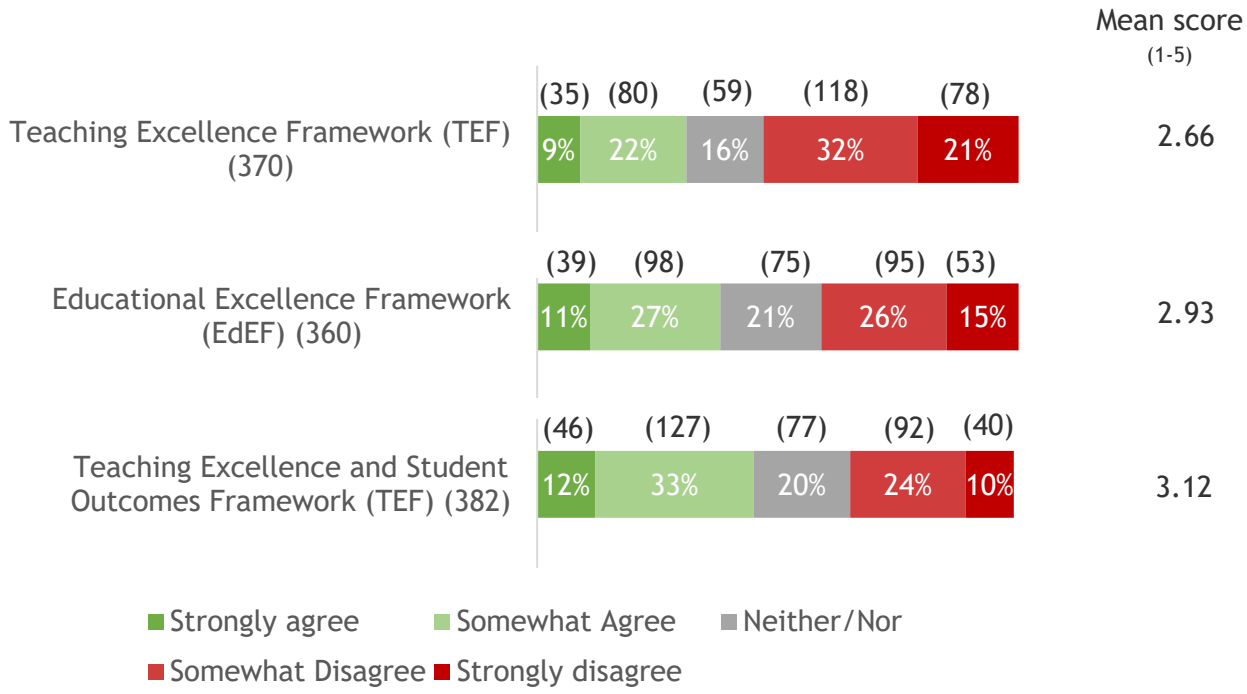
It is to the point *(% selected)*



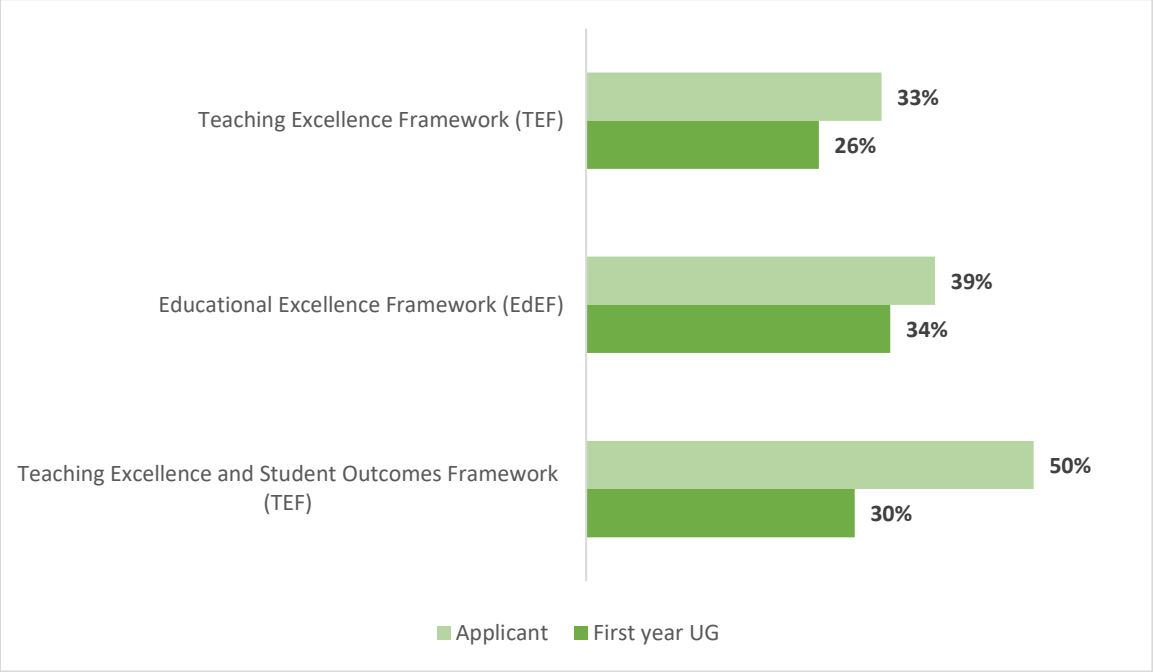
It is to the point by study stage *(% agree)*



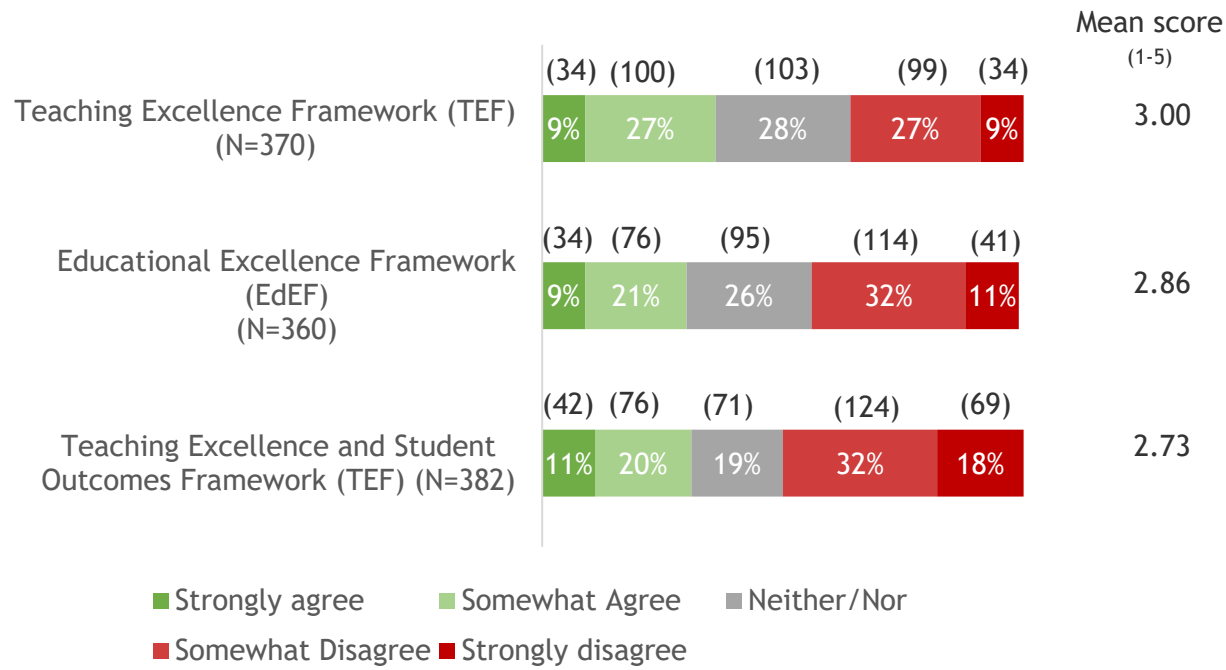
It is confusing *(% selected)*



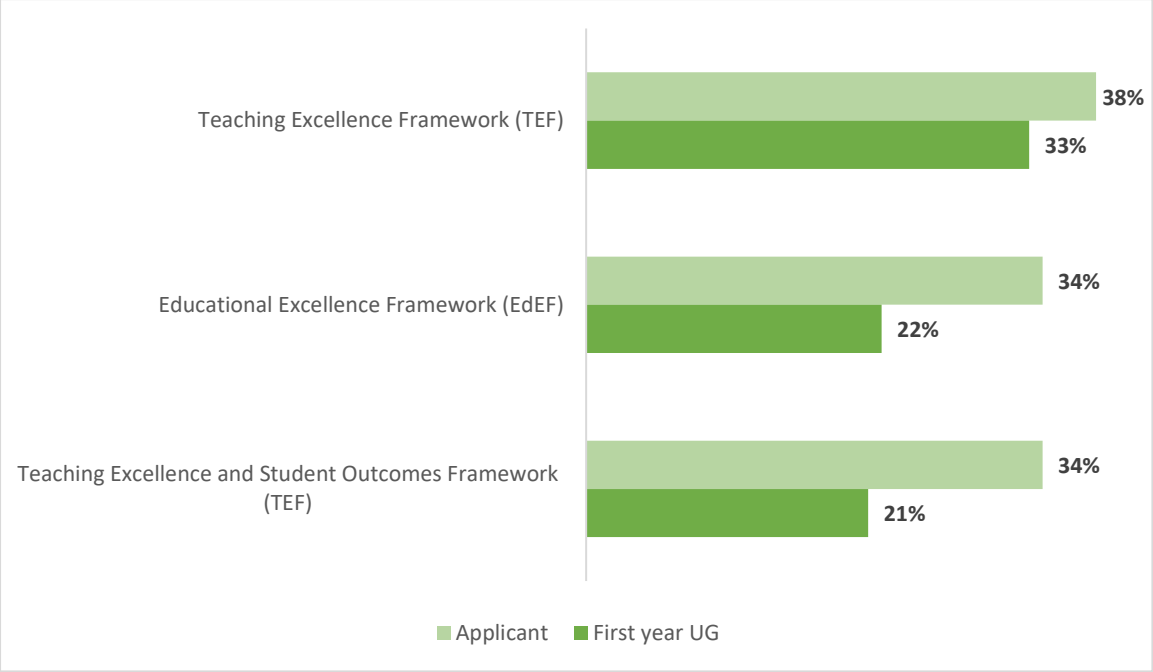
It is confusing by study stage *(% agree)*



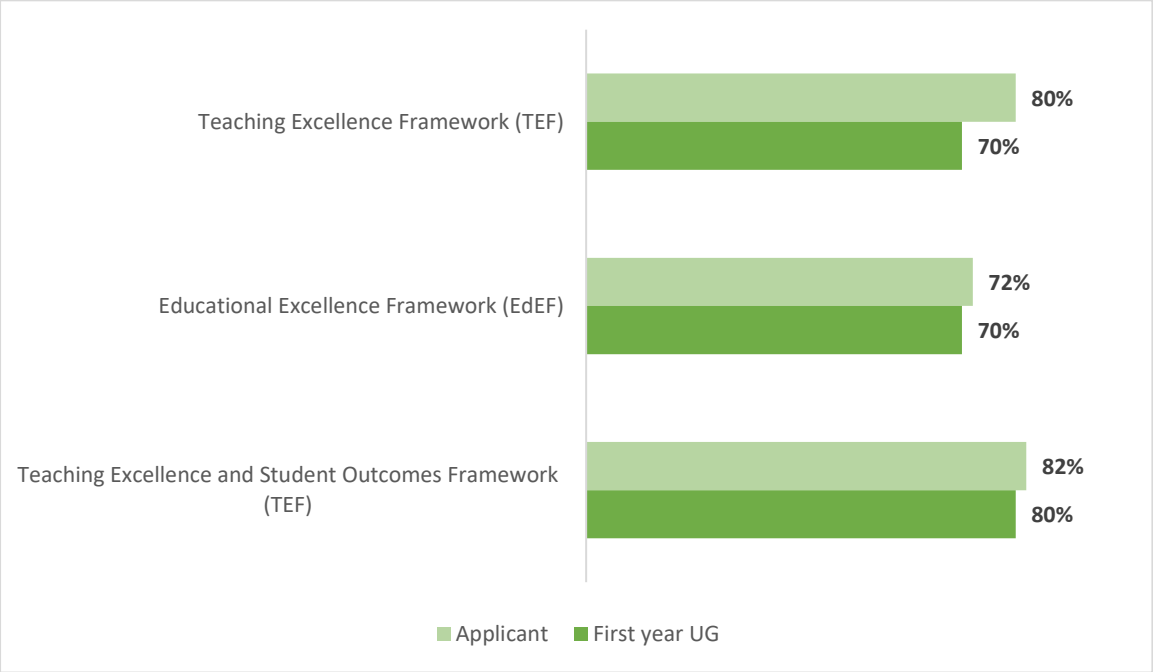
It is too simplistic *(% selected)*



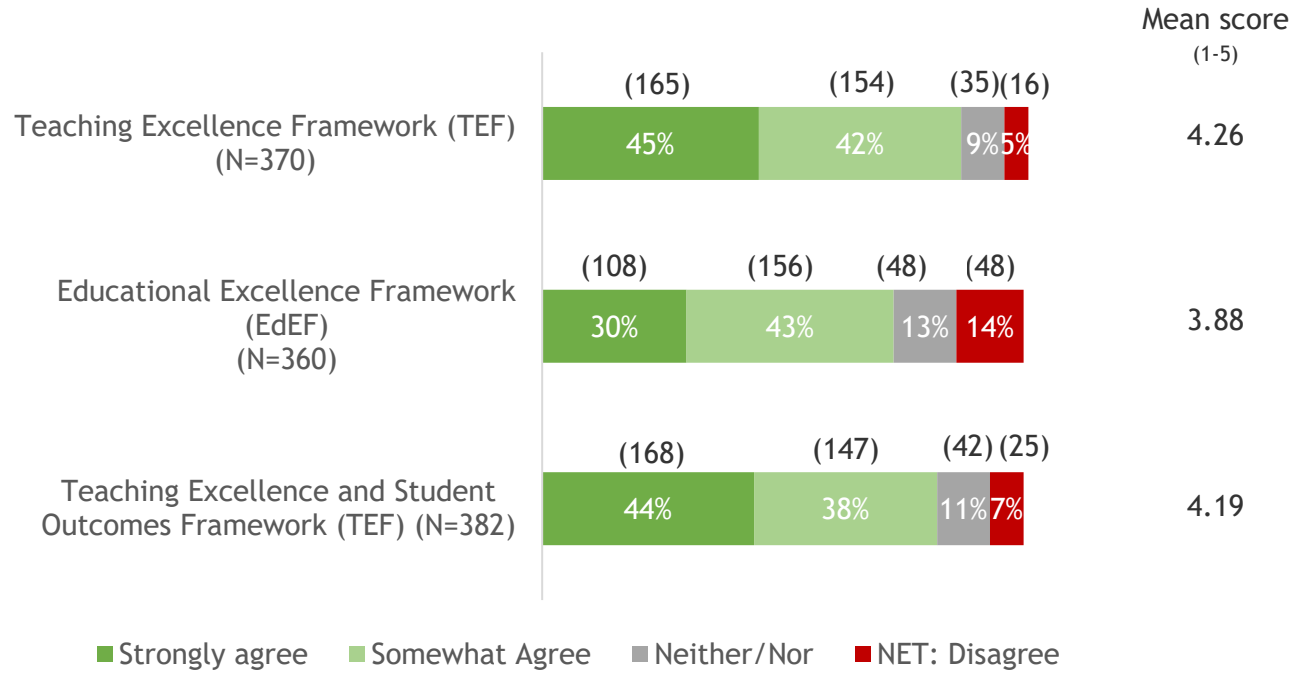
It is too simplistic by study stage *(% agree)*



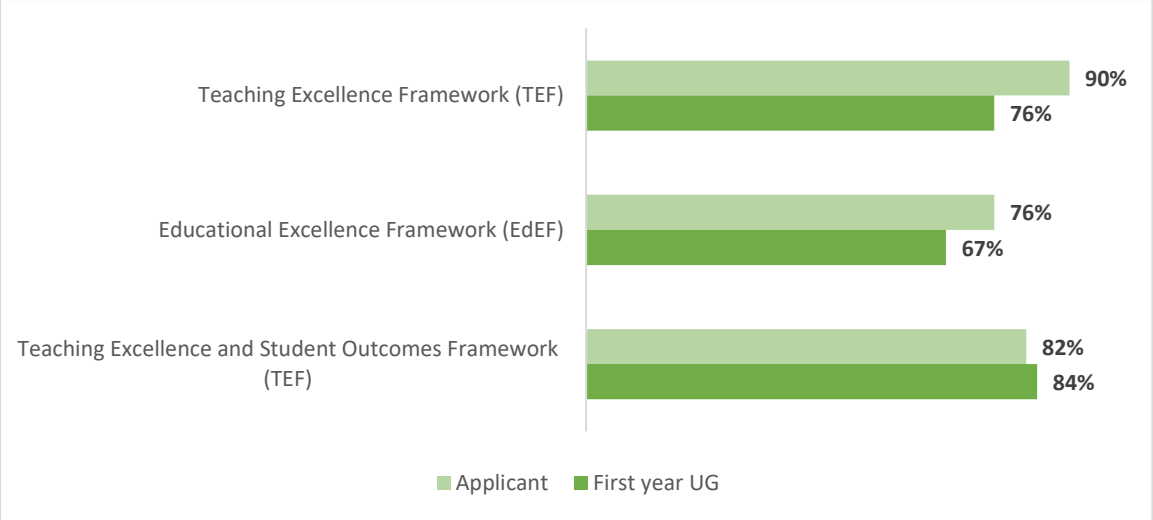
It clearly communicates what the scheme is intended for by study stage *(% agree)*



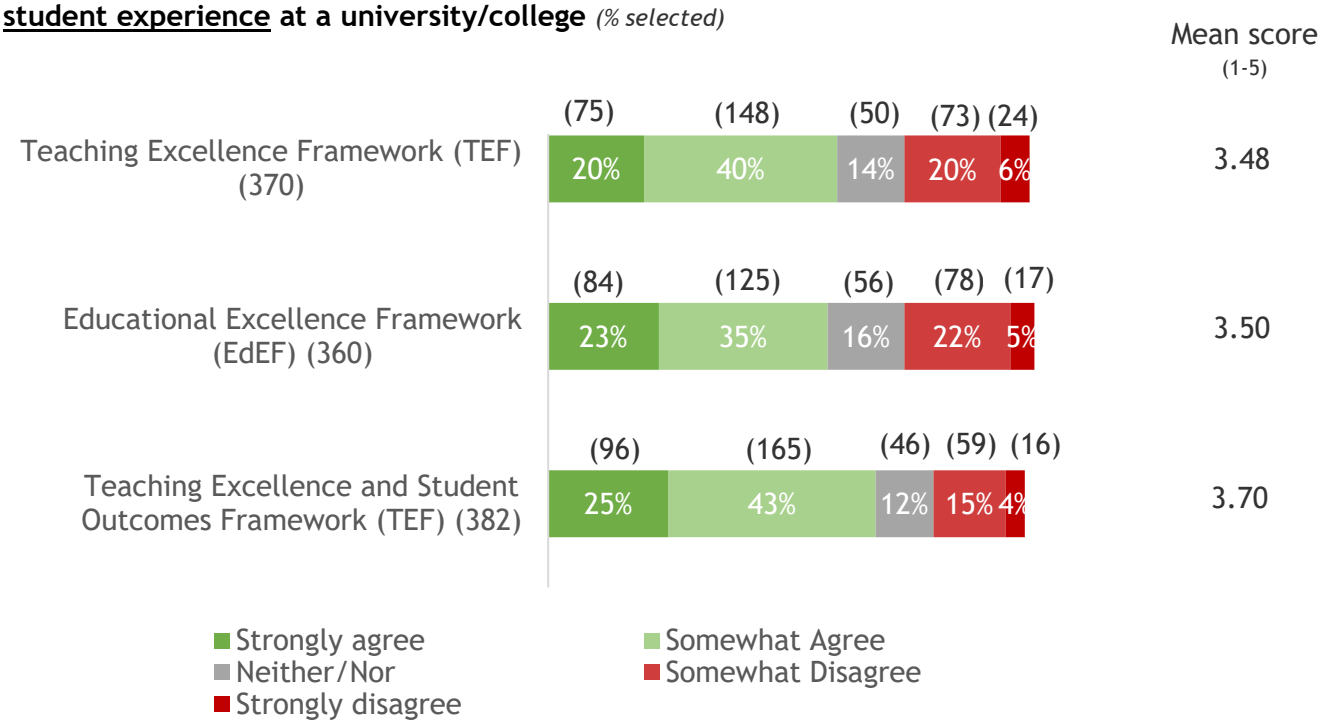
The name makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of <u>teaching</u> at a university/college *(% selected)*



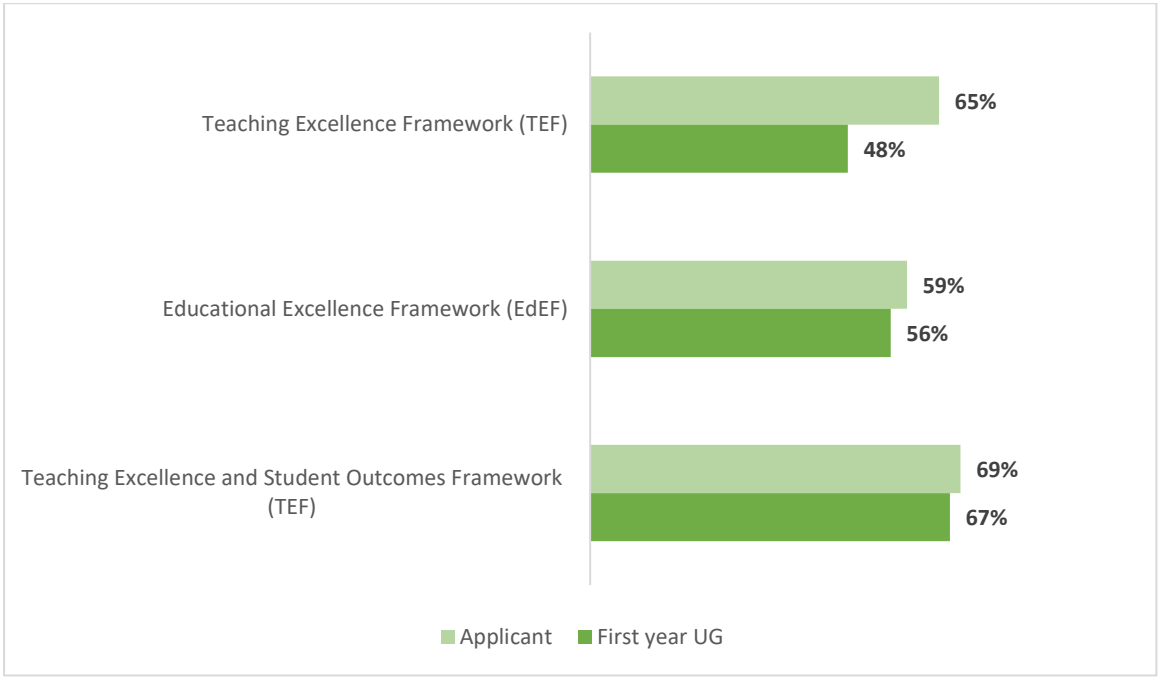
The name makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of <u>teaching</u> at a university/college by study stage *(% agree)*



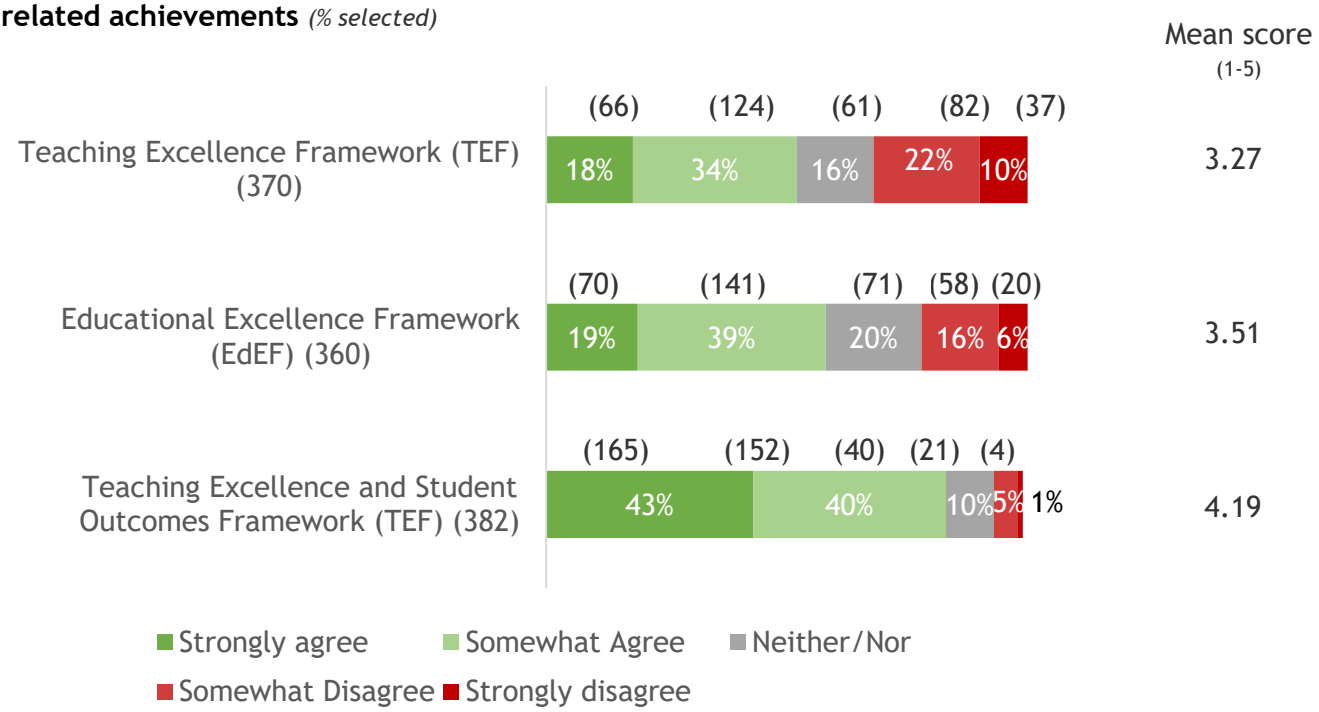
The name makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of the student experience at a university/college *(% selected)*



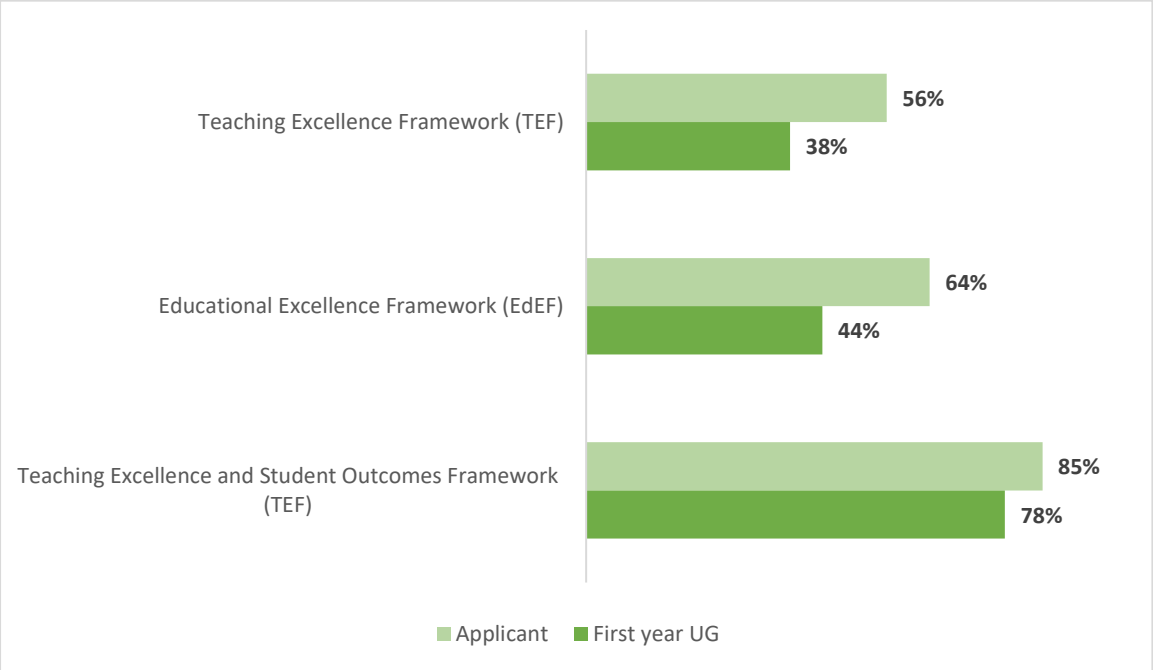
The name makes it clear that the scheme provides an indication of the quality of the student experience at a university/college by study stage *(% agree)*



The name makes it clear that the scheme also measures students' success in and beyond their studies. This includes, but is not limited to, academic and employment related achievements *(% selected)*

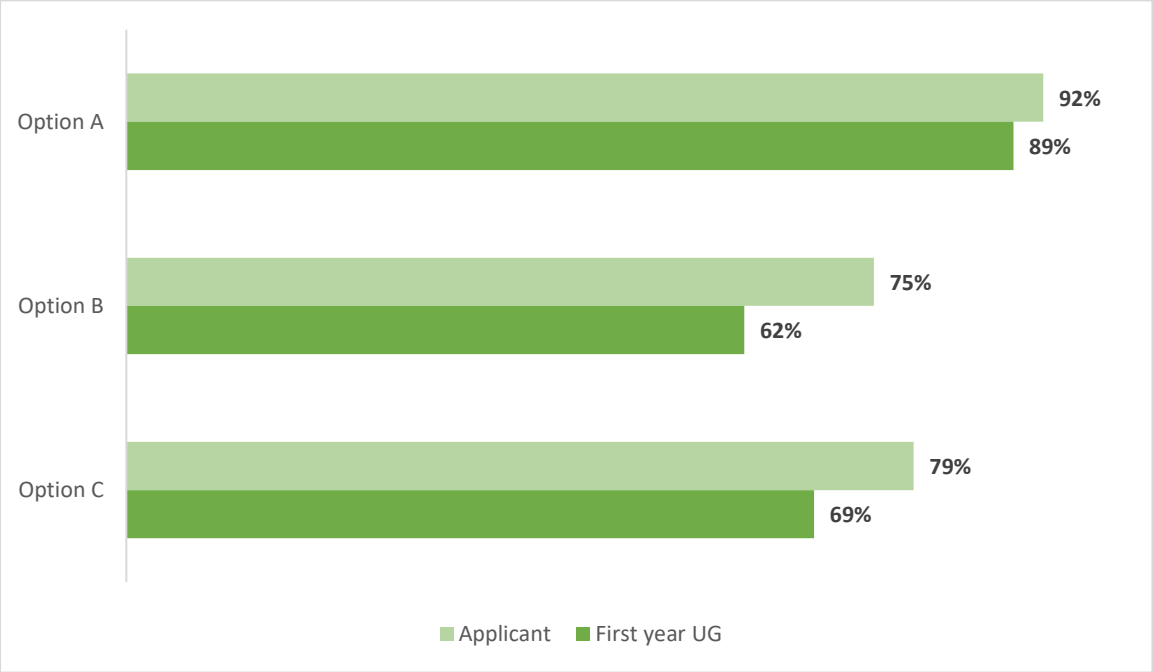


The name makes it clear that the scheme also measures students' success in and beyond their studies by study stage. This includes, but is not limited to, academic and employment related achievements *(% agree)*



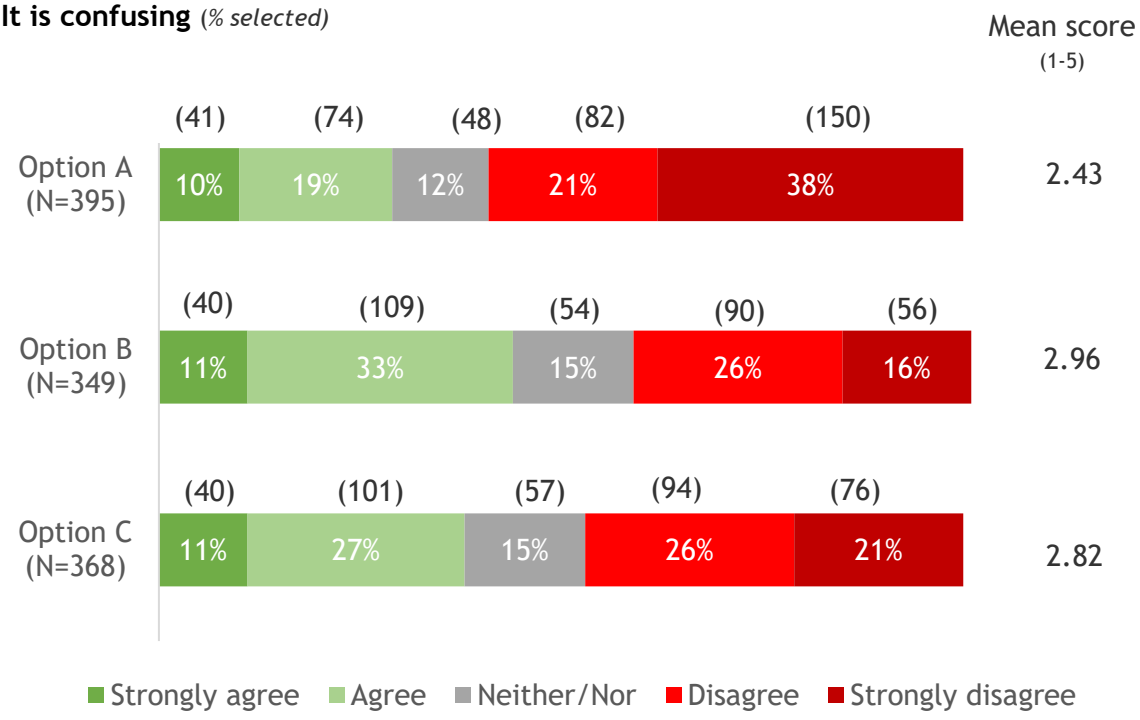
Annex D - Perceptions of the TEF rating options, charts

It is easy to understand by study stage *(% agree)* [19]

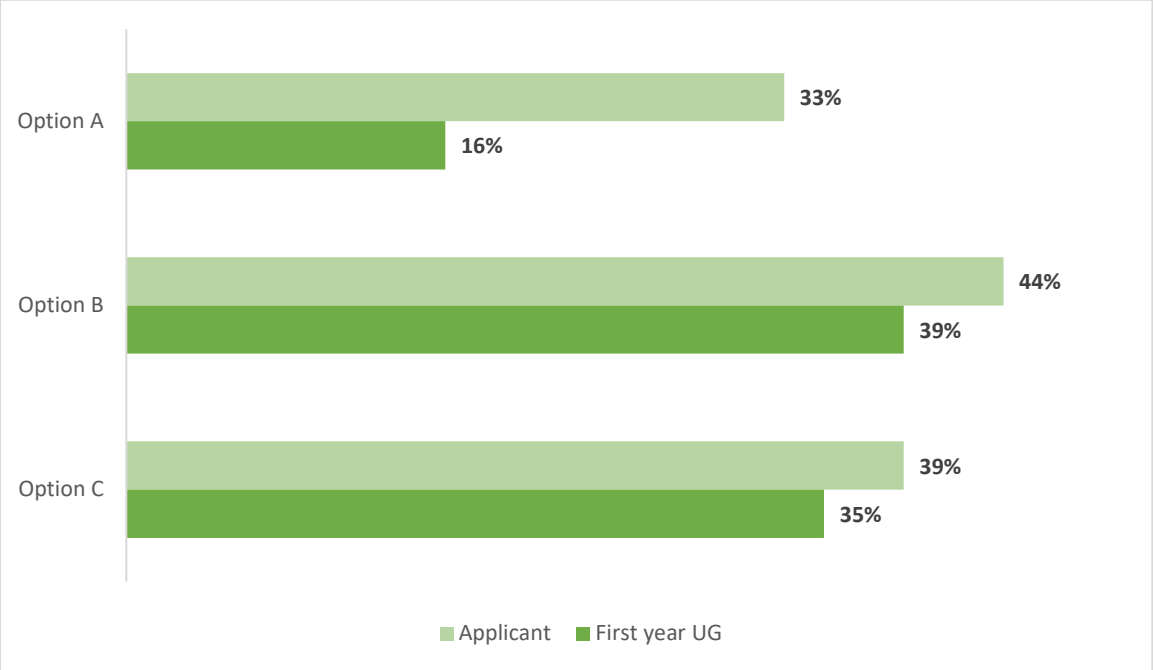


[19] Q6. Please look at the rating scheme shown below, thinking about this scheme, please can you indicate the extent to which, if at all, you either agree or disagree with each of the following statements
Base: Option A; HE applicants (298), First-year UG students (97), Option B; HE applicants (248), First-year UG students (101), Option C; HE applicants (280), First-year UG students (88)

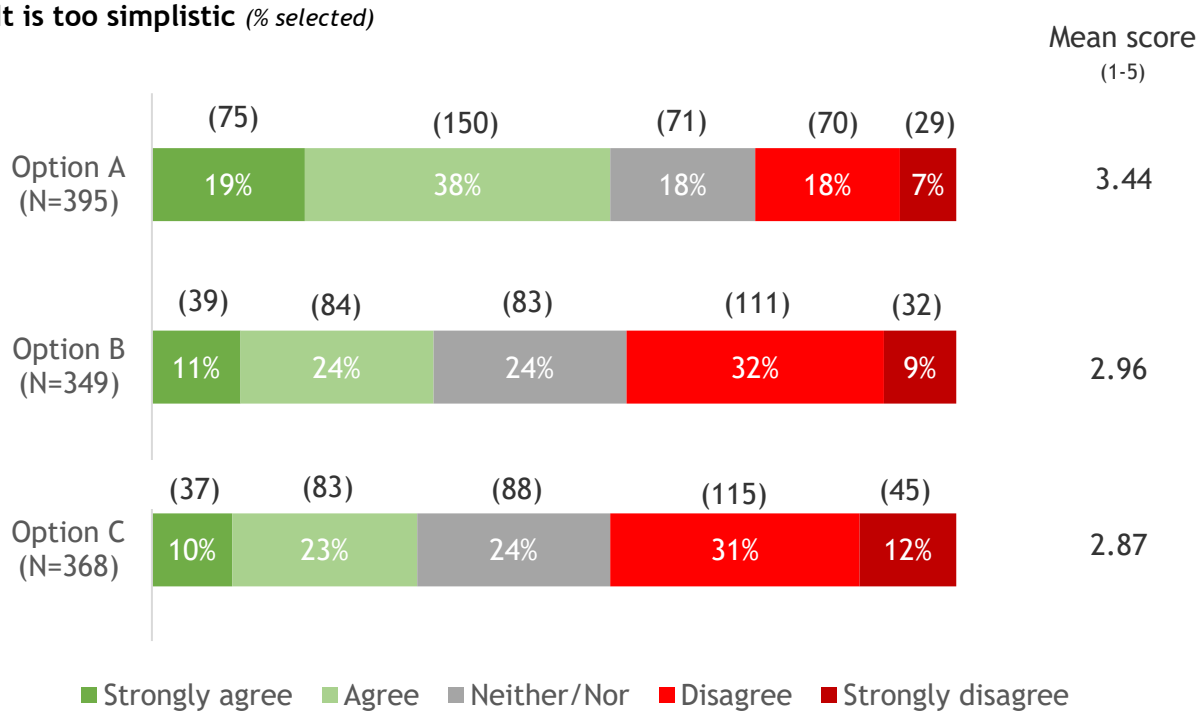
It is confusing *(% selected)*



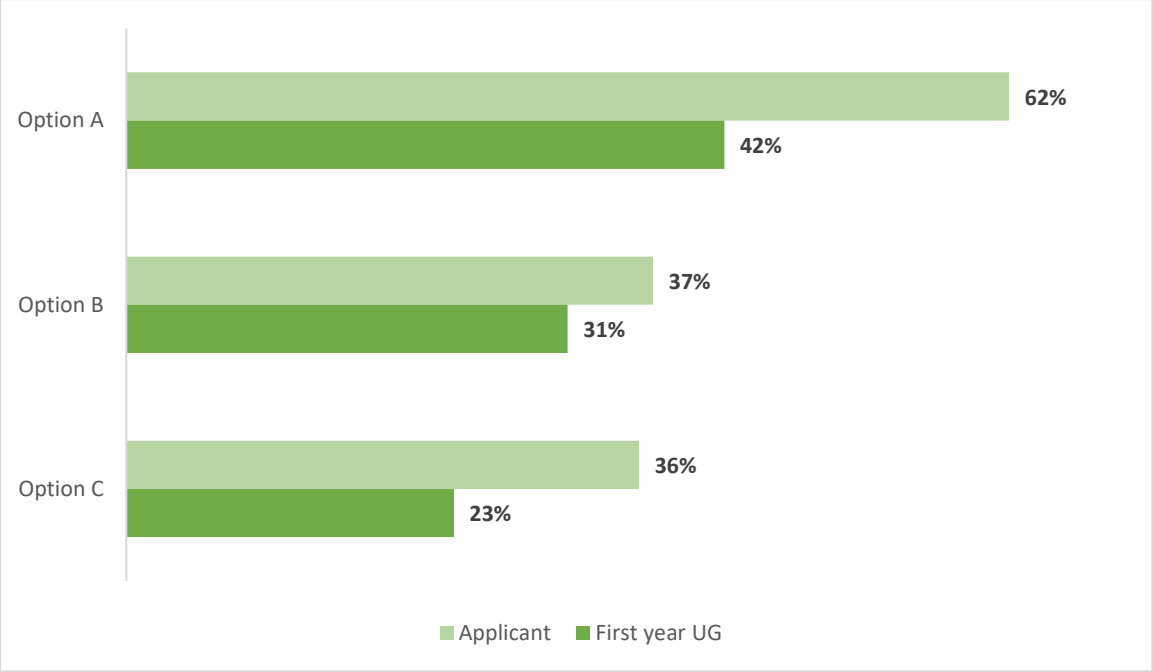
It is confusing *(% agree)*



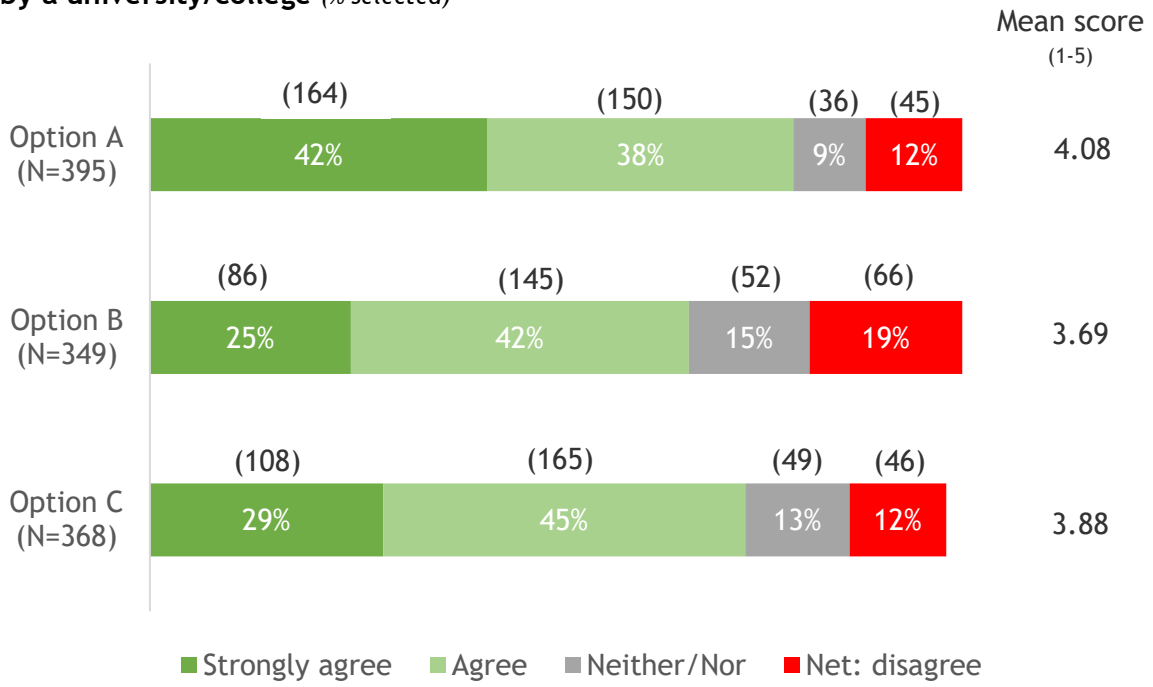
It is too simplistic *(% selected)*



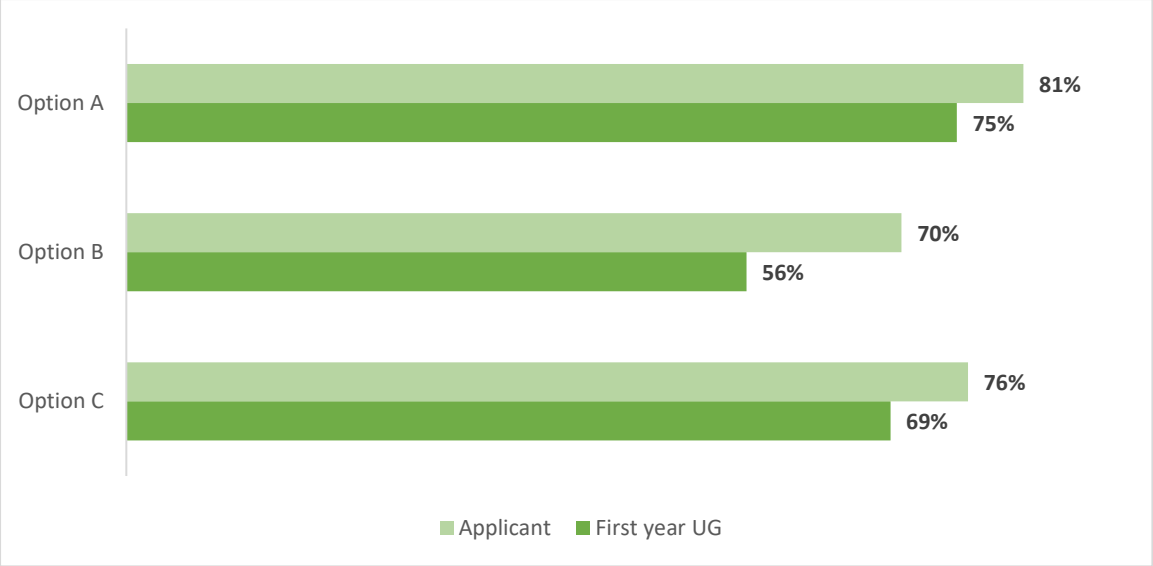
It is too simplistic by study stage *(% agree)*



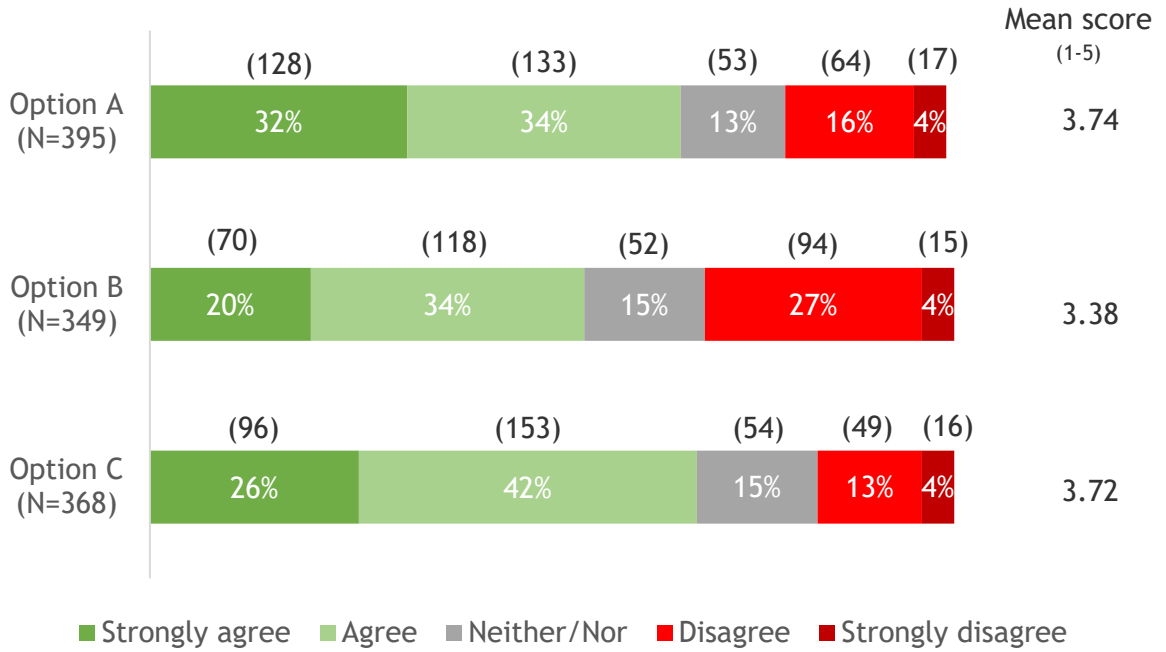
It is easy to understand what each category means about the level of quality offered by a university/college *(% selected)*



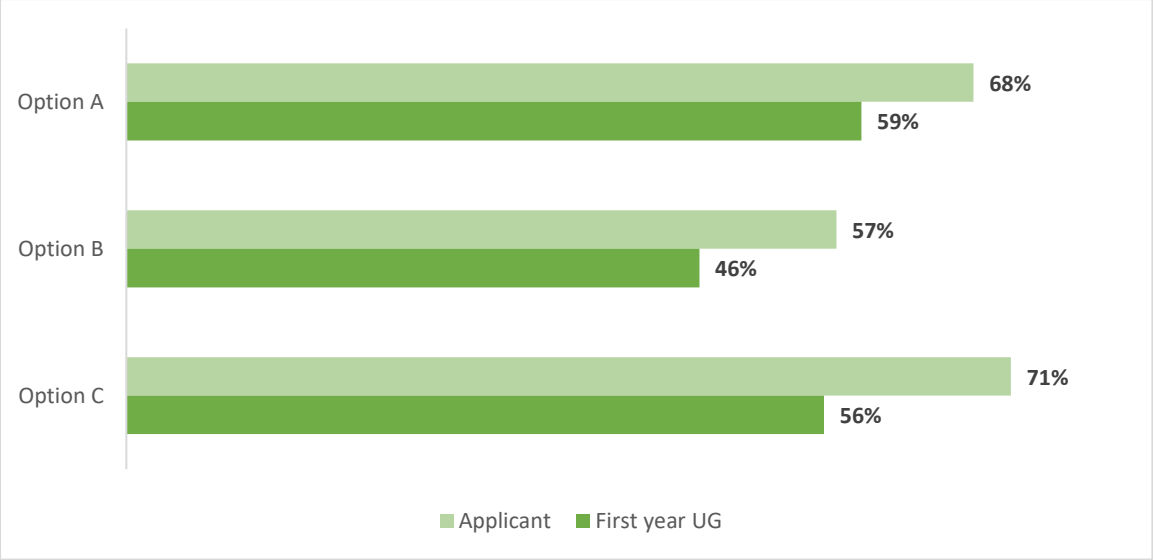
It is easy to understand what each category means about the level of quality offered by a university/college by study stage *(% agree)*



It is easy to understand how a university/college would achieve each rating *(% selected)*



It is easy to understand how a university/college would achieve each rating by study stage *(% agree)*



Annex E - Full sample breakdown

		Total	App	First-year Undergraduate
	Total	1112	826	286
Gender	Male	497	360	137
		45%	44%	48%
	Female	615	466	149
		55%	56%	52%
Age	Under 21	1017	768	249
		91%	93%	87%
	21+	95	58	37
		9%	7%	13%
Ethnicity	White	785	597	188
		71%	72%	66%
	Net: BAME	297	206	91
		27%	25%	32%
Domicile	Home	1005	778	227
		90%	94%	79%
	International	107	48	59
		10%	6%	21%
SEG	ABC1	678	513	165
		61%	62%	58%
	C2DE	205	145	60
		18%	18%	21%
Region	North	187	127	60

		17%	15%	21%
	South	564	448	116
		51%	54%	41%
	Midlands	161	126	35
		14%	15%	12%
	International	107	48	59
		10%	6%	21%
	Wales	25	22	3
		2%	3%	1%
	Scotland	4	4	0
		<1%	1%	0%
	NI	10	9	1
		1%	1%	<0%
First in Family	Yes FIF	259	188	71
		23%	23%	25%
	Not FIF	832	620	212
		75%	75%	74%
Disability	Yes	115	85	30
		10%	10%	10%
	No	916	681	235
		82%	82%	82%
Subject area	Medicine & dentistry	383	361	22
		34%	44%	8%
	Subjects allied to medicine	270	249	21

	24%	30%	7%
Biological sciences	144	109	35
	13%	13%	12%
Veterinary sciences, agriculture & related subjects	8	6	2
	1%	1%	1%
Physical sciences	26	10	16
	2%	1%	6%
Mathematics	16	4	12
	1%	*%	4%
Engineering	103	46	57
	9%	6%	20%
Technologies	4	3	1
	*%	*%	*%
Architecture, building & planning	11	6	5
	1%	1%	2%
Social studies	47	18	29
	4%	2%	10%
Law	14	4	10
	1%	*%	3%
Business & administrative studies	38	13	25
	3%	2%	9%

	Mass communications & documentation	8	3	5
		1%	*%	2%
	Linguistics, classics & related subjects	19	7	12
		2%	1%	4%
	Historical & philosophical studies	15	7	8
		1%	1%	3%
	Creative arts & design	38	19	19
		3%	2%	7%
	Education	12	5	7
		1%	1%	2%