Subject-Level TEF:
Getting ahead without losing your head

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We’ll come back to the cakes...
Our journey

- What is Subject-level TEF?
- Why did York get involved in the pilot?
- York’s approach
- Our role in the process as liaison librarians
- Stories for impact
- What next?
What is Subject-Level TEF?
Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) – run by Office for Students (OfS)

- Designed to inform applicants’ choice of University and ‘raise esteem for teaching’
- Results in Gold, Silver and Bronze ratings
- Currently provider level only, but subject-level TEF is thought to better inform applicants; compares subject to subject
- Subject-Level TEF will be published in 2021, starting in 2020
- Participation will be mandatory for all institutions in England: a condition of our registration with OfS and thus ability to award degrees
Why did York get involved in the pilot?
The University volunteered to take part in the Office for Students’ pilot of Subject-Level TEF in 2019.

Subject-level TEF will be rolled out nationally from 2020.

The aim of taking part in the pilot was to help us to:

- Learn lessons, both departmentally and centrally, to prepare us for the real thing.
- Reflect on the metrics presented to us by OfS.
- Influence the development of Subject-Level TEF through feedback to OfS.
- Allowed us to consider what Library metrics might be needed for Subject-Level TEF: what is our impact across the institution?
York’s approach
A Z-score measures the number of standard deviations a number is from the mean (benchmark).

A Z score of 1.96 is one standard deviation. This means that we can be 95% confident the difference from the mean is not due to chance.

- If the difference from the benchmark is 2% or greater, Z Scores of 1.96 or over are flagged (+) or (-).

A Z score of 3 or above / below is evidence of very strong or weak performance, very unlikely to be due to chance.

- If the difference from the benchmark is 3% or greater, these are double flagged (++) or (--) – they count double.
Our role

DO SOMETHING GREAT
Promises, promises...
How we did it (how we coped!)

- Teamwork
- Communication
- Organisation
How we did it
(how we coped!)

Teamwork
- Weekly meetings and ad hoc discussions between Clare, Tony and Vanya
- Fortnightly Faculty group meetings
How we did it
(how we coped!)

Communication

- Weekly updates from Project Manager (and additional updates when needed)
- Regular emails and phonecalls from Faculty Project Leaders
- Keeping in touch with the dept
How we did it
(how we coped!)

Organisation

● Google Team Drive for templates, data, submissions, OfS guidance, Careers, Library and so on...
● Fantastic Admin support to organise meetings and keep the Team Drive up to date
Stories

More ideas

Do one thing at a time

The brain is a sequential processor, unable to do two things at the same time. Bullet points and underlining are not helpful. Try creating an interruption-free environment, turn off your phone, and social media notifications. You need to clear your mind and focus on a single task.

Divide presentations into 10-minute segments

Remember my students who said they got distracted? They use five minutes into a lecture to think about the lecture. The brain needs time to process information. The next hour would be useless. And I have long passed the point of no return without taking the audience where my presentation is going. The audience is trying to drive while talking on the phone and looking at a series of million-dollar slides. When did I stop paying attention to ANY two minutes before the next hour?

Is the audience's attention being held by the speakers? If something isn't done quickly, it will be lost in the flow of information.

Conclusions

Don't combine single ideas into one statement. The brain needs time to process information. The next hour would be useless.
Working with the Sciences
Challenges for the department:

- Timescale, fitting into already heavy workload at a very busy period for academics
- Keeping it succinct - strict rules on length of submission, only 5 pages
- Focusing on historic activity rather than looking ahead
- The ‘so what’ factor - focus on impact rather than a report of activity (as well as telling the story)
Challenges for me!

- Timescale (delay in OfS data being released)
- Balancing with Business as Usual activities
- Balancing with other work and being part-time - some activities had to be pended to allow for Subject-level TEF work
- **Metrics!! Very challenging for an English graduate!**
Working with the Social Sciences
Challenges for the department:

- Concerns about the metrics and what they were really measuring
- Time pressures
- Demonstrating impact
Challenges and positives for me

- Lead author
- Lots of data
- Need to be concise!
- Enhanced level of support for department
- Additional knowledge about my department
Impact
Impact

● Direct Library involvement in a University project - Liaison Librarian role as key player not just consultative role

● Librarian role at the helm to steer dept to their Subject-TEF submission (leading workshops, writing submission, proof-reading)

● Recognition of our contribution by senior management in the Library and the University
Where next?
Any questions?