



SUBMISSION TO THE

# Teaching Excellence Framework

A SUMMARY



# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

DMU has been awarded a GOLD rating in the Government's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

**This singular achievement of our staff and students is a testament to DMU's ability to provide excellent teaching that encourages and inspires original thinking.**

The assessors came to this judgement by assessing a range of metrics, and they have published a most gratifying statement of findings which highlights:

- the way employability is embedded in the curriculum in every faculty
- the significant contribution 'DMU Square Mile' makes to the social and economic development of Leicester
- the way that research is fed into the curriculum
- our comprehensive strategy of support for retention
- the outstanding and personalised study support given to students
- the involvement of students to support changes to assessment methods and teaching delivery
- the excellent physical and digital resources that enhance learning, retention and employability
- an institutional culture that encourages, recognises and rewards excellent teaching

You can read the full TEF statement of findings on the next page.



The assessors also considered our written submission to the TEF, which it is my great pleasure to introduce to you here.

Our student-focused approach, emphasis on personal and professional development and employability has earned us a reputation as a university which transforms and empowers its students.

All our students have the chance to study overseas as part of our sector-leading #DMUglobal programme, thousands choose to support community projects through #DMUlocal and all can gain valuable experience through our industry placements.

In this document you will find many other factors that have contributed to our Gold award, including our

unswerving commitment to equality and diversity, our personalised approach to tutoring, our significant investment in support and much more.

Together, they tell a story of excellence in the student experience and of a thriving learning community to which all at DMU have contributed and of which we are immensely proud.

**Professor Dominic Shellard**  
Vice-Chancellor

# STATEMENT OF FINDINGS FROM THE TEF PANEL

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

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

2 The provider metrics, supplemented by the submission, indicate that students from all backgrounds achieve consistently outstanding outcomes, in particular with regard to employment and highly skilled employment or further study, and assessment and feedback.

The Panel considered the University submission in relation to the TEF criteria and its judgment reflects, in particular, additional evidence of:

- employability that is embedded into the curriculum, with each faculty having specific and dedicated staff resource to help students with careers guidance and placements
- volunteering through the 'DMU Square Mile', which is focused on local changes to make a significant contribution to the social and economic development of its city

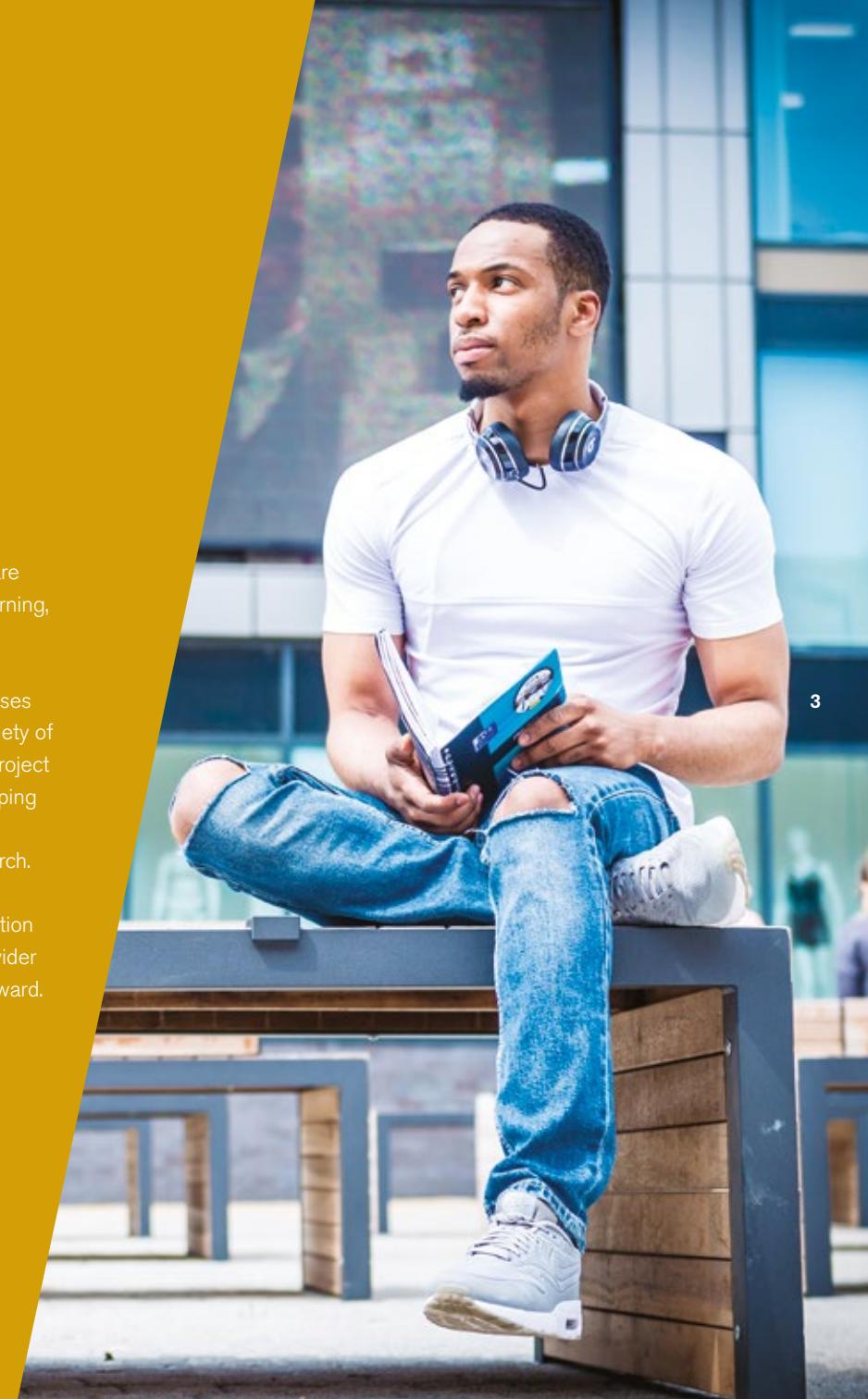
- research that is fed into the curriculum through a focus on application to real-world settings and research-led work placements
- a comprehensive strategy of support for retention throughout the student journey from pre-arrival to graduation
- optimum levels of contact time and stretch, including outstanding personalised provision that secures the highest levels of engagement and active commitment to learning and study from students
- outstanding support for students' learning, involving them in changes to support assessment methods and teaching delivery

- excellent physical and digital resources that are actively and consistently used to enhance learning, retention and employability
- an institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching through a variety of methods, including the Teaching Innovation Project (TIP), which supports teaching staff in developing projects that develop innovative teaching and learning practices, including pedagogic research.

Overall, the TEF Panel judged that the combination of evidence in the provider metrics and the provider submission best fits the descriptor for a Gold award.

For further information see:

[www.hefce.ac.uk/TEFoutcomes](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/TEFoutcomes)



# TEF SUMMARY SUBMISSION

The UK government has introduced a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), designed to recognise and reward excellent teaching and learning within higher education institutions.

4 As part of the TEF process DMU submitted comprehensive details of its university teaching initiatives and evidence about how we work with students in pursuit of continued excellence.

We were assessed against a set of criteria covering our teaching quality, learning environment, and our students' outcomes and learning gain.

Assessors were able to judge institutions by looking at data covering, among other things, student satisfaction, and graduate outcomes and retention rates, alongside additional qualitative evidence detailed in each institutions' submission document.

Please note that this document is a summary of De Montfort University's full submission to the Teaching Excellence Framework. The full submission can be found at [www.dmu.ac.uk/TEF](http://www.dmu.ac.uk/TEF)



# TEACHING QUALITY

As highlighted within our TEF metrics, we perform above benchmark levels for teaching quality measures; significantly above for assessment and feedback. The following activities contribute to our success in these areas and drive continuous improvements:

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

6 Student engagement is essential to the development of our Student Experience Strategy, which provides a clear statement of our commitment to our students. The DMU Student Charter, which is jointly reviewed and produced by students, DMU and De Montfort Students' Union (DSU) staff, expresses our commitment to listening and responding to the student voice. It sets out commitments from the university and DSU to students and from students to the university.

We see students as drivers of change and student representation is a key element of our engagement processes. Our students provide feedback through student representatives, surveys, focus groups and directly to staff on their educational experience. The views of students help to inform all aspects of the university from quality management systems to library developments.

Students are represented by School Representative Co-ordinators (SRCs) – appointed through a joint DMU and DSU recruitment and selection process – and by course representatives who are elected by their peers.

We ensure that student input into decision-making processes occurs via our boards and committees from the very top university level to more local, but equally important, committees.



7 Students are often consulted on a range of things, either through surveys or consultation groups. This makes me feel that my opinions are valued and my thoughts are appreciated. By having a say, and seeing suggestions actioned, I feel that we are all actively shaping the student experience. This is really important to me.

**Pritesh Nathubhai**

Strategic Digital Marketing, 2016 and Ambitious Futures graduate trainee at DMU



### VALUING TEACHING

Our Vice-Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Awards (VCDTAs) recognise and celebrate academic staff who provide students with an inspirational learning experience. We ask students to nominate those staff who have made a difference to them and we have received more than 4,000 nominations since 2005, increasing from 142 in 2011 to 638 in 2016.

In addition to recognition from students, our academic staff are recognised and rewarded for their teaching excellence both internally and externally through our DMU Teacher Fellowships, Higher Education Academy (HEA) recognition and HEA National Teaching Fellowships (NTFs). We are particularly proud that 17 HEA NTFs have been awarded to academic staff at the university; this is the third highest number awarded to any university since the scheme began in 2000.

We continuously invest in teaching and learning, creating new senior university posts in 2014 and 2016 to increase our focus in these areas and to drive continuous improvement and enhancement across all of our faculties and directorates.

### PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES (PSRBs)

Currently, 40 PSRBs accredit 113 undergraduate programmes. This accreditation forms part of the many ways that we ensure professional standards and quality are maintained, that students gain the skills and knowledge required by employers and that programmes remain relevant to industry.



# LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Again, our TEF metrics show that our performance for ‘learning environment’ is above benchmark levels. We are particularly proud of the ‘above benchmark’ achievements of our Disability Enhancement Programme (DEP) which offers a range of academic support for disabled students.

## PERSONALISED LEARNING

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an innovative framework underpinning teaching, learning and assessment at DMU. This ambitious curriculum development ensures that all programmes are accessible and provide equal learning opportunities for every DMU student.

We encourage our staff to keep up with UDL changes via a series of learning and development courses, and more than 1,500 staff members have now learnt how to facilitate universal learning and teaching methods.

One particular technology enhancement is the introduction of DMU Replay. This system provides students with anytime access to audio and/or visual material which the member of academic staff has recorded before, during or after a lecture or other taught session.

The availability of, and easy access to, DMU Replay means that our students are able to review or revisit the content of sessions at their own convenience.

## RESOURCES

Results from the National Student Survey (NSS) highlight the strength of our learning resources. In the three surveys 2014-2016 we performed within the top quartile for the set of learning resources questions. For ‘access to specialised equipment and facilities’ we have consistently performed 2-3% above the top quartile.

Our library resources are designed to help our students get the most out of their studies, and in 2015/16 there were more than 1.4million visits to our libraries. We offer 1,600 study places, more than 700 open access computers (both Macs and PCs) and a wide range of study environments to suit everyone’s needs.

We made changes in 2015/16, as a result of student feedback, including offering longer opening hours in our Kimberlin Library – which is now open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year – and providing support and advice on assignments, via the Centre for Learning Support and Study (CLaSS). Evidence is showing us the value of CLaSS in enhancing performance and closing the attainment gap.

We also offer all of our students extra help with maths and statistics via the Maths Learning Centre (MLC) and provide specialist support for students with dyslexia, dyscalculia and other neurodiverse learning styles, as well as for those who are highly anxious or maths phobic. Feedback shows high levels of satisfaction with the service, with 98% of comments being positive.

### **SCHOLARSHIP, RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

DMU's learning environment is enriched by research and our academics champion research-led teaching.

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Our VC2020 lectureship programme underlines this emphasis on research as we focus on recruiting excellent researchers with a passion for innovative teaching. These lectureships integrate research and teaching equally, providing opportunities to create new modules which, in turn, means that teaching on students' degree courses is underpinned by the latest cutting-edge research.

We introduced the Early Career Academic Fellows (ECAAF) scheme in 2017 to underpin the VC2020 scheme. ECAAFs are appointed initially for one year at the end of which they are expected to progress to a permanent VC2020 lectureship.

We introduced the Future Research Leaders (FRL) Programme across the university in 2013 to identify and nurture our next generation of research leaders; people we can then promote to Readerships, Professorships, Associate Director and Director roles.

### **STUDENT RETENTION**

We know that personal and/or health difficulties can have an adverse impact on a student's academic performance. With this in mind we introduced a range of initiatives to mitigate the risk of premature withdrawal, and in our Student Retention and Attainment Strategy we outline how we aim to improve student outcomes.

We provide alternative routes into higher education, via our Leicester International Pathway College (LIPC), for international students who need additional academic or English language support.

And, when any student joins us we offer financial capability workshops during their induction period.

Our aim is to support students who may be experiencing difficulties for a variety of reasons. With this in mind, our Disability Advice and Support team (DAS) offers group dyslexia screening in programme areas where, historically, there have been large numbers of students with undiagnosed dyslexia.

We also recognise the need to offer a diverse range of approaches for our students, so our counselling and wellbeing team offers face-to-face, e-counselling and life coaching services to support students who may be managing a range of personal life issues. Increasing numbers of students access our team's service and, in 2015/16, 72% said that it helped them to stay at university, 92% said that it helped them to achieve greater academic success, and 84% felt it improved their overall university experience.



## PERSONAL TUTORING

Helping students to make a smooth transition to life at DMU is just one of the many roles that our personal tutors fill. During the first three weeks of study, all new students are offered the chance to meet their own personal tutor and begin to build a positive relationship with them. As well as helping with 'settling in', personal tutors are there to provide advice and guidance, feedback on general academic progress, assistance with action-planning and reflective learning, and 'signposting' to other specialist support or advice services.

14 During 2013/14, following our own regular monitoring and feedback from DSU, we undertook a major review of the personal tutor system and produced a refreshed policy, Principles of Personal Tutoring Practice. This encompasses a shared partnership approach between each student, their personal tutor and the university.

Used alongside our Early Intervention Policy personal tutors can alert teams in the Student Gateway – a one-stop shop for students in need of advice, information and support – about students they believe to be in need of assistance. As someone who engages with students on a regular basis, a personal tutor is often best placed to facilitate an early intervention.

**I benefited hugely throughout my university journey from the support I received from my personal tutor. She assisted me greatly, especially through my final year, when I had concerns over my dissertation, other workload pressures and looking for employment at the same time. If it wasn't for my personal tutor I don't know how I would have got through.**

**Lucy Booth**

English Language and Media, 2016

## DMU SQUARE MILE AND #DMULOCAL

DMU Square Mile is our innovative volunteering programme that delivers more than 100 activities and projects. Students volunteering with DMU Square Mile develop skillsets that will help them to assimilate seamlessly into working life. The Square Mile project has been recognised as an exemplar programme, and has won multiple national and international awards, including a Guardian University Award 2014: Contribution to Local Community and The Mahatma Gandhi International Award 2013. We were highly commended for a Times Higher Education Award 2013: Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community.

Our #DMUlocal programme was created in November 2015 following the success of DMU Square Mile. Through the programme – and with local and national partners – staff and students are making a significant contribution to the social and economic development of Leicester and bringing positive changes across the city. With more than 70 projects we focus on three core areas: education, health, and regeneration, and some of our projects require students to undertake specialised training.

As a result of this increase in key skills, 87% of volunteers surveyed believe they have new skills that employers will value.





Further evidence of these developed skills is the increased employment rates for graduates engaged with DMU Square Mile. The subsequent positive impact on retention rates was 100% for students engaged during 2014/15 and 2015/16.

### #DMUGLOBAL

As part of our dedication to providing an unrivalled student experience and excellent employability we established #DMUglobal to become the most comprehensive international experience programme available at any UK university.

Our success is already recognised via the Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award (THELMA), for Outstanding International Strategy, which we won in June 2016.

A key factor in the programme's success is that #DMUglobal opportunities are linked to all undergraduate academic programmes and are embedded in the curriculum, thereby 'internationalising' all undergraduate programmes and ensuring that there is at least one international-assessed component with a range of learning outcomes. #DMUglobal's aims include: enriching students' studies; broadening their cultural horizons; increasing their awareness and understanding of global citizenship; and helping participants to develop key skills that will be valued by employers.

In 2015/16 1,900 of our students benefited from #DMUglobal bursaries and participated in more than 135 visits. In January 2017 alone, 1,087 of our students and staff visited New York.

Evidence shows that participation in #DMUglobal experiences has a positive effect on both our students' retention and success.

### DMU SQUARE MILE INDIA

DMU Square Mile India offers our students an unforgettable and potentially life-changing experience that gives them the chance to put their skills and learning into practice in a new and challenging environment.

Officially launched in January 2016, this initiative sees DMU drawing on research and academic excellence to transform the livelihoods of people living in poverty.

Evaluation so far shows that students taking part in this project have developed both personally and professionally and 100% felt their communication skills had improved, their confidence in their own abilities had increased and their ability to work as part of a team had increased. These are all skills and attributes that we know employers value.



# STUDENT OUTCOMES AND LEARNING GAIN

Our commitment to achieving positive outcomes for all students is clear in our TEF metrics, with performance in both the 'employment or further study' and 'highly skilled employment or further study' categories significantly above benchmark. Performance for each category of student is also significantly above benchmark, a testament to the transformative experience we offer at DMU. Beyond performance in the metrics, we have worked to improve the employability of all ethnicities of students. Evaluation shows a significant reduction in the gap between the employment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) graduates compared to white graduates between 2012/13 and 2014/15 leavers.

## EMPLOYABILITY AND TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Through placements, internships and volunteering activities with some of the city's most iconic sporting, cultural and other organisations, our students are able to put their skills and expertise into practice in real-world, professional environments.

As a result, we can see our students growing in confidence, developing leadership skills, and learning new ways to communicate and work together in teams. We believe these attributes will enable our students to fulfil their potential at university and excel in the graduate job market. Our strong links with industry have enabled DMU graduates to help Leicester match London for new business success, according to The Economist (June 2015).

A focus on employability is embedded within the curriculum across all four faculties and during two annual 'Enhancement Weeks' we provide our students with the opportunity to focus on developing employability and enhancing personal development.

## ENTERPRISE

Our focus on enterprise is coordinated by the Enterprise Team. Staff provide information, advice and guidance to students who are interested in starting their own business or freelancing. In addition to start-up surgeries and workshops, the team runs a number of activities to support and encourage enterprise and entrepreneurship.

We continue to offer support to our entrepreneurs beyond graduation from our Innovation Centre.

Sport is important to so many at the university. It brings people together and we have great times. Life at DMU is not just about your course. It is about the whole experience while you study here and being in a sports society is really beneficial.

**Rhian Morley**

Third year Accounting and Business Management student, and rowing club member



**MUSIC AT DMU**

We cultivate a programme of music making and performances in partnership with professional artists, ensembles and organisations from across Leicester, the UK and the world. Our partners include the internationally-renowned Philharmonia Orchestra; the Guildhall School of Music and Drama; and Leicester Jazz House, a promoter of modern jazz concerts at venues across the city. Students and staff have the opportunity to learn from and perform with leading musicians, pick up additional skills and attributes, and enhance their existing programme of study.

**SPORT AT DMU**

Over the past few years, we have made major investments in sports facilities. This includes the £8million Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Leisure Centre; a £1million home for DMU rowing; and a £2million project to open a permanent home for our football teams which provides them and the local community with FA-standard pitches.

We have introduced sports scholarships to support exceptionally talented and committed students to pursue both sporting and academic excellence.

**POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR ALL**

DMU Freedom is our equality and diversity charter. It represents a commitment to continue cultivating an environment in which staff, students and partners have freedom: freedom to be, freedom to inspire and freedom to succeed. Our objective is simple, that we produce a clear and proud declaration of our commitment to putting inclusivity at the heart of everything we do at DMU.

We are already recognised for our work in equality and diversity – receiving commendations and awards – and other successes include the launch of a new disabled student support service, the DMU Centre for Accessibility Needs, run by a specialist team to perform needs assessments.

**RACE EQUALITY**

We are one of just eight universities in the UK to be awarded a Race Equality Charter award by the Equality Challenge Unit. The award has been created to recognise the work universities are undertaking to improve the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education.

BAME staff represent 19.1% of our total workforce against a sector average of 11.3%.

**LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS AND QUEER (LGBTQ)**

Our dedication to equality and diversity has seen the university rise from 75th place in 2015 to 39th place in 2017 in the Stonewall Top 100 Employers league table, an annual audit of workplace culture for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff. This now places us as the third highest ranked post-secondary education institution.

We have also signed Stonewall's #NoBystanders campaign pledge – a promise to do all we can to challenge and end bullying and discrimination – and we celebrate LGBTQ pride every year with our month-long DMU Pride celebrations.

**DISABILITY**

Here at DMU we support the 'social model of disability' which says that disability is caused by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference.

DMU is recognised for its excellent support for disabled students. Our Disability Enhancement Programme (DEP) was described by the Department for Business, Industry and Skills (BIS) as 'inspirational' and is viewed as an example of good practice to be encouraged across the sector.

# STATEMENT FROM DE MONTFORT STUDENTS' UNION

**DSU prides itself on the relationship we have with DMU and our collaborative approach to jointly support the achievement of key objectives such as student retention and employability which feature strongly in the TEF.**

Advice for students is free, confidential and our independent advice service is staffed by a team of four full time Advisers.

22 We offer advice covering a range of areas including: immigration, academic issues, finance and housing. During the 2015/16 academic year there were almost 7,000 advice queries and 400 visa applications processed, enabling students to study/continue studying at DMU. Our advice resulted in students retaining or saving over £125k and 38 students remained on their course as a direct result of our involvement.

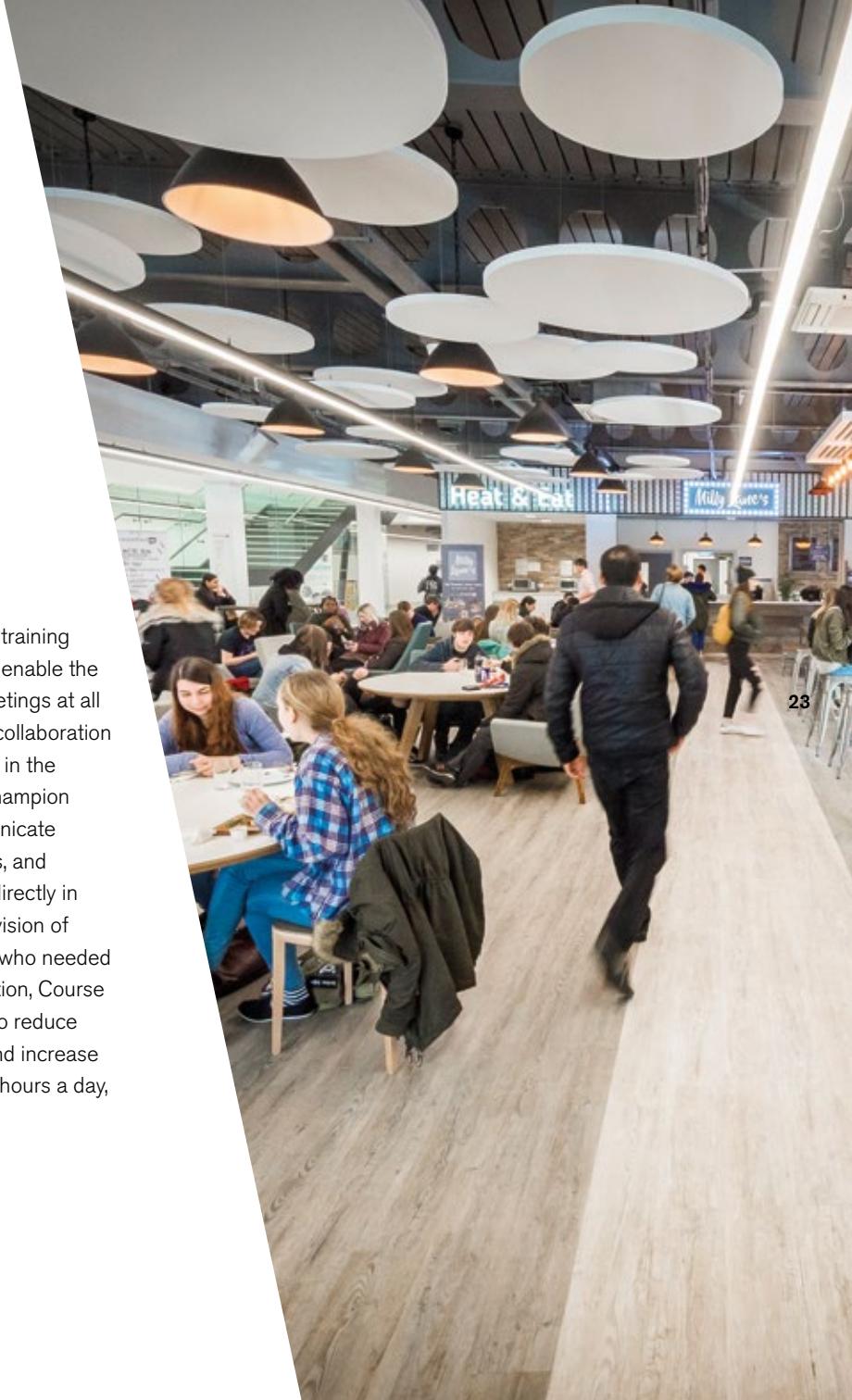
We are extremely proud of our volunteering provision. We have relationships with over 300 voluntary organisations across Leicestershire, providing a fantastic range of developmental opportunities for thousands of DMU students. During 2015/16 academic year, over 24,000 hours of volunteering were logged by our students, equating to almost £200k being directly put back into the local community (volunteering hours x living wage). Our volunteering opportunities enable our students to develop numerous skills and enhance their employability and all of our volunteers who

register their hours are automatically included in the Higher Education Achievement Reports (HEAR) scheme and last year, over 270 Course Reps gained accreditation last year which also fed into the HEAR.

At the end of the 2015/16 academic year there were 110 registered societies comprising over 3,000 student members. In addition to offering a unique platform to make friends, learn new things and have fun, being part of a society enables students to increase their skills and become more employable.

MyUniPal is a peer mentoring project that supports the transition of students into Higher Education. During 2015/16, over 160 student mentees were supported by over 50 mentors. Feedback showed almost three quarters enjoyed being a mentor and eight mentees went on to become Course Representatives (Course Reps) and an additional 15 became society leaders.

DSU works in collaboration with DMU to provide training and annual support for over 650 Course Reps to enable the student voice to be heard at a wide variety of meetings at all levels within the university. Course Reps work in collaboration with the staff on programmes and are embedded in the course to improve the learning experience and champion positive change. Course Reps record and communicate any changes through to the DSU and other peers, and last year's feedback from Course Reps resulted directly in the realignment of several deadlines and the provision of additional teaching sessions to support students who needed even further additional academic support. In addition, Course Reps worked together and lobbied successfully to reduce printing and material cost across the university and increase the opening times of the University Library to 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.





# CONCLUSION

The TEF submission process has provided an opportunity to review the impact of our practices and programmes and to reflect on, and celebrate, the often innovative and creative transformations taking place on campus. Student engagement has played an important role through the process. A member of the DSU executive sits on our TEF project board, and in addition to drafting a section of our submission they have also provided an essential perspective throughout the review and finalisation process.

We are justifiably proud of our ground-breaking initiatives such as the #DMUglobal, DMU Square Mile, #DMUlocal, DMU Square Mile India and the Disability Enhancement Programme. We recognise that some of our projects and programmes are at earlier stages of maturity and, as such, highlight not only our present achievements, but represent our ambitious aims for the future and our continual push for improvement.

Named as one of the 150 best universities under 50 years old in the world by the Times Higher Education (THE) and being one of the top 25 UK universities for graduate employability, according to DLHE results, means that we have a forward momentum as we continue to invest in our students.

At DMU we are lucky enough to be able to enjoy the benefits of a diverse scholarly community, where students from 135 countries come together on campus. It is only by continuing to listen to and by working more closely with these students than ever before, while continually improving our campus facilities, that we can continue to move towards our goal of becoming an ever more accessible, influential and global institution.



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