



# UNIVERSITY *of* WORCESTER

## Value for Money Report – 2023/24

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## 1. Introduction

The question of what is 'Value for Money' in the context of Higher Education is open to interpretation.

For many years demonstrating value for money has been linked to financial efficiencies and savings with universities demonstrating how they have managed public funds through efficient procurement strategies. With the introduction of higher tuition fees in 2012 the question of what value students derived from their investment in higher education has moved to consider the quality of the education being provided, student outcomes and more recently whether the employment graduates enter is graduate level employment. In recent years, with the cost of living crisis impacting students as well as the wider population, the importance of the value students derive from their higher education experience has grown further.

Equally, there is an expectation that universities also address the value of higher education to the taxpayer who subsidise the student loan system and, through the OfS Capital Teaching Grant, make direct contributions to some institutions. This calls into question the broader value of a university education and ignores the wider benefits an individual is afforded from entering higher education. The student experience, a contested concept, is broader than lectures and assessment. It is also about the opportunity to learn, explore, and challenge ideas and concepts, develop a sense of self, as well as the skills to research, analyse, summarise and articulate ideas.

Universities also receive taxpayer money through Research England in the form of QR funding, HEIF funding and research capital funding and therefore, not only educate students but provide a wider public benefit, and value, to their local community and society as a whole.

## 2. Student Experience and Opportunities at University of Worcester

The University is ranked first in the UK for sustained employment and/or further study five years after graduation (excluding specialist institutions) in the 2024 Government-published Longitudinal Educational Outcomes survey and 96% of our graduates are in work or further study 14 months after graduating (Graduate Outcome Survey 2024). Our students are supported in achieving their successes through the quality of education they receive at the University of Worcester and the wider support and opportunities they can access whilst studying at Worcester.

These opportunities arise both in the formal teaching setting and the informal social learning setting, clubs, societies and personal relationships. A good university experience gives the individual the opportunity to explore who they are, expand their knowledge, develop their aspirations, and gives them the tools to achieve their goals. The value of a university education is different for each student which makes defining it and measuring it challenging, however, attending university is universally transformative

– a period of growth during which students learn how to learn. The development of critical, analytical and reflective skills is applied to every aspect of their lives, and it is this power of education that contributes so significantly to global citizenship and creating a healthy and socially just future.

The quality of the education provided to students is evidenced by the University currently being ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the UK for Quality Education in the Times Higher Education's University Impact Rankings 2024; it has been in the top 5 every year since the ranking's inception in 2019. In May 2023, the University received arguably the best Ofsted report of any teacher training provider in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; the University's primary and secondary programmes were rated 'Outstanding'.

In the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025, five of the University's degrees were ranked in the top 10 for teaching quality, including Accounting and Finance (2<sup>nd</sup>), Computer Science (7<sup>th</sup>), Criminology (2<sup>nd</sup>), Geography & Environmental Science (5<sup>th</sup>) and Sociology (1<sup>st</sup>). Six courses were ranked in the top 20 for student experience, including Criminology (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Sociology (2<sup>nd</sup>) and four courses were ranked in the top 20 for graduated prospects, including Sports Science (7<sup>th</sup>).

The University has for many years taken a whole institution Earn As You Learn approach which provides a positive contribution to the excellent employability rates of our graduates (see Section 3: Student Outcomes – Progression Data). This approach involves:

- Encouraging and supporting students to earn additional qualifications, for example, in coaching and more recently tutoring;
- Integrating work placements, work experience and work-based projects into students' studies on as many courses as possible;
- Employing a significant number of students at the University; in 2023/24 there were c500 students employed in a range of casual roles across the University.
- Encouraging active participation in student representation (over 335 reps in 2023/24), student societies and the Students' Union. Participation in these activities help to develop vital employability skills.

Outside of their academic timetable students can join a wide range of clubs and societies giving them opportunities to engage in activities such as: sports, drama, dance as well as meeting other students with shared interests and/or backgrounds.

The Students' Union also provides resources to support students who wish to volunteer outside of work and studies. In 2023/24 the Students' Union recorded 6904.4 hours of volunteering (5905.5 in 2022/23) undertaken by students. In 2023/24 the students' Raise and Give activities raised a total of £15,631.77 for the students' Charity of the Year, Behind the Smile. Whilst a decrease from £16,607 in 2022/23, given that the Students' Union also introduced a Community Cupboard to support students struggling with the cost of living in 2023/24, this is a significant achievement.

Through participating in these activities, students gain a wide range of skills and experience giving them a well-rounded student experience and supporting them into the next stage of their lives.

### 3. Teaching Quality and Outcomes

In September 2023 the official ‘Silver’ Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) report on the University described Worcester as “An engine of opportunity – supporting its students to benefit from an educational experience that is personally transformative and allows them to succeed in their chosen career”.

The quality of teaching is the primary concern for the majority of students, as evidenced in the OfS report ‘[Value for Money: the student perspective](#)’. This is closely followed by ‘fair assessment’ and ‘helpful feedback and learning resources’. Graduate outcomes i.e. high salaries, securing a job within six months also feature in the top six areas of concerns for students in the report.

In considering how to report on Teaching Quality and Outcomes there are a wide range of metrics available to the University including external metrics such as: the outcome of the National Student Survey (NSS) and Graduate Outcomes Survey. The OfS publishes data dashboards on its [website](#) which are constructed from the various data returns submitted by universities to HESA and other statutory bodies, the outcomes of NSS and Graduate Outcomes Survey. Two of these dashboards: [Student Outcomes Data](#) (relating to OfS Condition B3) and [TEF Data](#) (this latter includes data and responses to the NSS and relates to undergraduate students only) relate directly to student outcomes and experience. In addressing the question of Value for Money in terms of Teaching Quality and Outcomes the University proposes to use the data published by the OfS which are readily available to all and provides opportunities for both students, and the taxpayer, to consider the University’s performance against other universities.

The OfS TEF dashboard compares university performance with benchmarks (i.e. what might be expected given the particular mix of students and courses at the University). The University’s performance against the benchmark is shown graphically in the dashboard. The OfS B3 dashboard for the Student Outcomes (B3) measures performance is against a set threshold for each mode and level of study (i.e. Full Time First Degree). Data is provided as an aggregate as follows:

TEF Data – 2023 to 2024 (based on the updated NSS survey launched in 2023)  
Continuation – 2018/19 to 2021/22  
Completion – 2015/16 to 2018/19  
Progression – 2018/19 to 2021/22

The data set out in the following tables provides a high-level overview of TEF Student Experience outcomes as measured by the NSS (undergraduate students only), and student continuation, completion and progression data in the primary modes of study. The [OfS datasets](#) can be further analysed by course and by gender, ethnicity, disability, age on entry, those studying at partner organisations. Dashboards are usually updated annually, with the most recent data published in July 2024. A three-year overview of B3 outcomes is now provided in this report to show trend data over the period from the first publication of B3 data in September 2022 to the latest update in July 2024.

### 3.1 Students' views of Teaching Quality Measures as evidenced in the NSS responses (TEF Data)

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Benchmark Value July 2024</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value July 2024</b>
The teaching on my course	85.2%	85.2%
Assessment and feedback	79.6%	77.9%
Academic support	82.6%	80.7%
Learning resources	86.7%	88.2%
Student voice	73.2%	74.2%

The TEF measures are provided using results from the updated NSS launched in 2023, and therefore only two years of combined data are available. Scores for the NSS remain strong, however there are some measures where the benchmark is above the institutional outcome. NSS outcomes and benchmarks are monitored and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to provide a high-quality student experience and to reduce any gaps in performance against benchmark.

### 3.2 Student Outcomes – B3 Continuation Data (Students continuing their studies in higher education e.g. retention data)

<b>Continuation</b>	<b>Numerical Threshold</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value Sept 2022</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value July 2023</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value July 2024</b>
Full-time First Degree	80%	86.5%	85.8%	84.7%
Full-time Other Undergraduate	75%	83.3%	81.2%	80.2%
Full-time PGCE	85%	92.0%	92.8%	91.8%
Full-time PG Taught Masters	80%	87.4%	89.8%	90.3%
Part-time First Degree	55%	65.5%	70.3%	71.7%
Part-time Other Undergraduate	55%	76.0%	75.8%	76.4%
Part-time Taught Masters	65%	87.4%	69.3%	71.0%
Apprenticeship UG	70%	80.4%	81.4%	89.4%

### 3.3 Student Outcomes – B3 Completion Data (Students completing a higher education qualification)

<b>Completion</b>	<b>Numerical Threshold</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value Sept 2022</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value July 2023</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value July 2024</b>
Full-time First Degree	75%	87.7%	87.4%	87.5%
Full-time Other Undergraduate	65%	81.0%	81.2%	80.8%
Full-time PGCE	85%	93.2%	93.4%	92.7%
Full-time PG Taught Masters	80%	90.9%	91.2%	90.2%
Part-time First Degree	40%	47.4%	69.9%	68.5%
Part-time Other Undergraduate	55%	82.3%	83.1%	82.1%
Part-time PG Taught Masters	65%	71.0%	71.0%	69.0%
Apprenticeship UG	55%	-	62.5%	82.3%

### 3.4 Student Outcomes – B3 Progression Data (Students progressing to professional or managerial TEF, for further study)

<b>Progression</b>	<b>Numerical Threshold</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value Sept 2022</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value July 2023</b>	<b>Institution Overall Value July 2024</b>
Full-time First Degree	60%	72.7%	73.4%	73.9%
Full-time Other Undergraduate	45%	70.6%	70.6%	71.6%
Full-time PGCE	85%	90.4%	90.3%	91.0%
Full-time PG Taught Masters	70%	80.7%	81.9%	84.2%
Part-time First Degree	70%	90.8%	92.0%	94.0%
Part-time Other Undergraduate	65%	72.6%	72.1%	76.6%
Part-time PG Taught Master	85%	92.7%	93.2%	92.9%
Apprenticeship UG	75%	Reporting threshold not met due to small number of students in reporting period.		

B3 data has now been provided for three years, and for many modes of study this shows a stable or improving picture. Continuation remains an area of focus for the undergraduate population. A comprehensive programme of interventions and data analysis has been developed to help improve retention, with internal data showing encouraging results and an improving picture, which will in time flow through to the B3

outcomes data. This is vitally important both from the students’ personal perspective but also in relation to the sustainability of university finances.

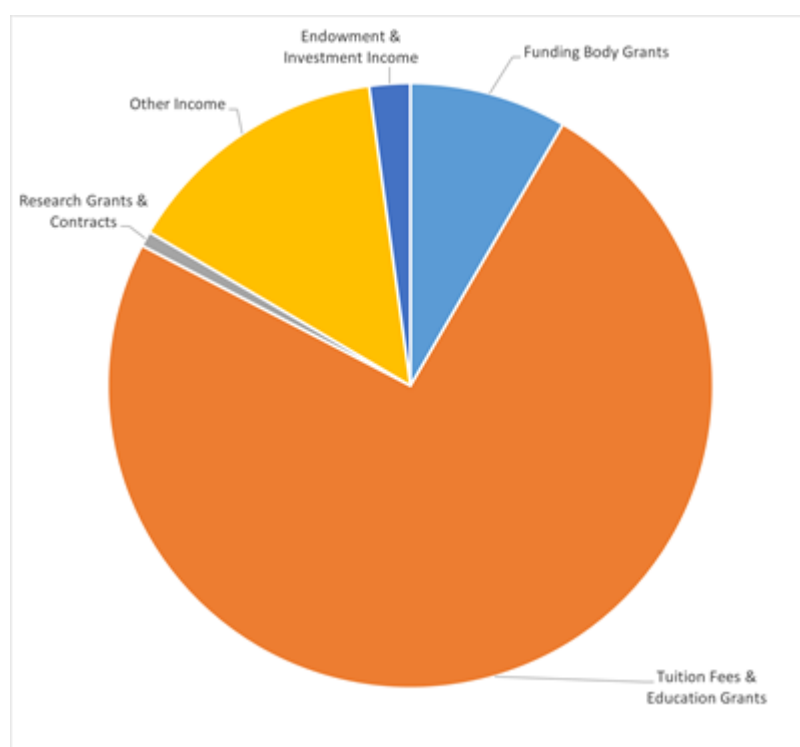
## 4. Economies and Efficiencies

### 4.1 Breakdown of income and expenditure

The University publishes, [on its website](#), a breakdown of its income and expenditure each year once the Annual Accounts have been audited. The breakdown is intended to help students understand how their tuition fee is spent.

The data for 2023/24, based on the last set of audited accounts, is as follows:

#### University Income 2023-24



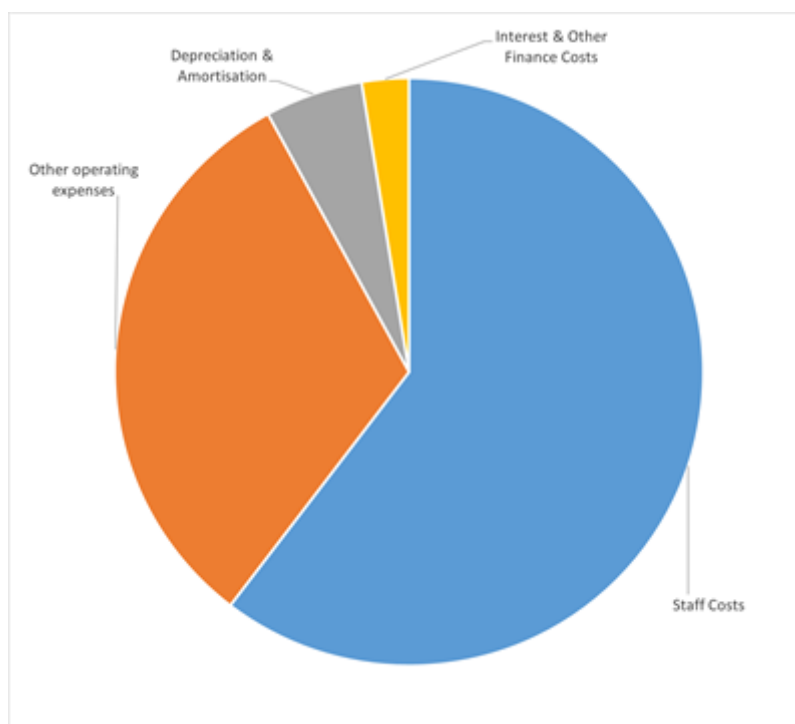
Income	£'000
Funding Body Grants	8,135
Tuition Fees and Education Grants	71,932
Research Grants and Contracts	786
Other Income (see below)	13,891
Endowment and Investment Income	2,116
<b>Total</b>	<b>96,860</b>

The main areas within the ‘Other Income’ section of the University Income chart above are as follows:

Area	Value (£000s)
Student Accommodation	5,768

Conference, Catering and Hire of Rooms	2,786
Project Income – ad hoc initiatives that Schools/Departments undertake for external organisations	650
Car Parking and Permits	537
NHS Placement Income	1,071

### University Expenditure – 2023/24



Expenditure	£'000
Staff Costs	59,789
Other Operating Expenses (see below)	31,345
Depreciation and Amortisation	5,321
Interest and Other Finance Costs	2,555
<b>Total</b>	<b>99,010</b>

Included in 'Other Operating Expenses':

Area	Value (£000s)
Grant to Students' Union	600
Catering Expenditure – costs of providing onsite catering facilities	2,545
Electricity, Gas and Water for all University properties including Student Accommodation	3,281
Repairs and General Maintenance to all University properties and equipment, including Student Accommodation	2,725
Partner Colleges – cost of courses affiliated to the University, e.g. Halesowen College	4,329
Student Bursaries	690
Library Services (including The Hive)	1,966
IT Services	2,313



## 4.2 Student Financial Support

The figure for Student Bursaries (see 4.1 above) relates to a range of funding and financial support provided to students during the year including:

- Access to Learning Fund 2023/24:  
365 non-standard awards: paid when a student has an unforeseen situation or exceptional costs such as essential repairs, emergency payments or priority debts;  
73 standard awards: paid to help towards a recognised shortfall between income and expenditure.
- 41 Academic Scholarships in 2023/24.

## 4.3 Investment in support services for students

The University has invested heavily over many years in facilities and support for students with a disability. The University's Disability and Dyslexia Service offers a range of initiatives aimed at ensuring every student with a disability joining the University has the maximum opportunity to get all the information, advice and support they need to ensure a smooth and successful transition into university life. These include online programmes, face to face appointments, and specific summer schools for those with additional needs to prepare them for life at university – including taster events for [visually impaired students](#) to help aid their transition into Higher Education.

We have continued to invest in technology including upgrading our infrastructure with advanced lecture capture, accessibility software and increasing the number and quality of student loan laptops – particularly important to ensure all students have an equal opportunity of access to information technology. We have invested in [free core software](#) (including Microsoft 365) and discounted software for our students.

Our investment in the Hive and our digital estate are positively rated by our students – 93% (91% in 2022/23) overall positivity for library resources and 88% (85% in 2022/23) overall positivity for IT resources facilitating learning in the [2024 National Student Survey](#).

## 4.4 Procurement Efficiencies

Each year the Audit Committee receives an Annual Report on the University's Purchasing. The latest report received by the Committee, which reviews purchasing in 2023/24 identifies achieved savings as a percentage of impactable spend of 5.19%.

Not all savings, efficiencies and benefits achieved by the Procurement Team are monetary. Examples of non-monetary savings, efficiencies and benefits in 2023/24 are:

- Sports Clothing – Kukri have provided Gift Of Kit (GOK) to the value of £35k, this benefited students as it was invested heavily in new playing kits and for uniform for sports students, and PGCE PE students. Kukri also provided £7k of sponsorship to student athletes, to provide opportunities to students by both the Dual Career Scholarship and Performance Potential pathways.
- Managed Launderettes – 1% of commission to be given to a student giving fund (student food bank was discussed as an option); current student offered a summer placement.
- Medical School Furniture – The contract was awarded to a supplier who gave a lot of thought to inclusive design not just physical accessibility but sensory sensitivity/impairment as well as neurodiversity. Furniture was selected looking at all of these with the result being an environment which was welcoming and navigable to all students.

## 4.5 Capital Developments and efficiencies

- **The Duke's Building**

Construction on a new teaching facility on the University's Severn Campus, the Duke's Building, commenced in February 2024 and is due to be completed in March 2025. The new building will provide sports performance laboratories, clinical skills spaces, seminar rooms and staff accommodation and benefits from £3.3m OfS Strategic Capital Priorities Grant.

The construction contract was let to Speller Metcalfe, who were appointed from the University's contractors framework. Part of the terms of their contract requires them to meet social value objectives and as of the July 2024 a total of £3.8m social value had been achieved against an agreed target (to be achieved by March 2025) of £3.14m. This has been achieved through a number of initiatives including: use of the local supply chain (48); weeks of apprenticeships or T-levels provided (203); amount spent with the supply chain within 30 mile radius (£3.1m), reduction in waste through reuse of products and materials (2,188 tonnes), and hard to recycle waste diverted from landfill or incineration (10 tonnes).

- **Demolition of Bredon Building**

During 2023/24 the Bredon Building on the University's St John's Campus was emptied and demolished. The building was constructed as one of a number of temporary Air Ministry office buildings during the Second World War. Despite serving the University as teaching facilities, office space and at one time a student hall of residence its lack of energy efficiency meant in 2022/23 it accounted for approximately 8% of the University's emissions from energy consumption on its campuses. The area will be used as green space and as a temporary car park in the immediate future.

## 5. Public Benefit and Social Value

The University's impact on its community and wider society is set out in the Public Benefit Statement in the [Annual Accounts](#) each year. The Statement demonstrates the many different ways in which the University has benefitted communities, local, regional, national and international, through its education, its research, its engagement with the public and its management of its estate.

For almost three decades, the University of Worcester has been educating professionals to work in the health and social care sectors, from Nurses and Midwives to Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists, Paramedics to Physician Associates. The University is now graduating more than 1,000 health professionals every year, who go on to make a significant contribution to society. The University's new medical school welcomed its first cohort of students in September 2023. The Three Counties Medical School will help to address the pressing need for more doctors in this left-behind part of the Country.

The University has been ranked in the top 10 in the UK for Gender Equality in all years of the Times Higher Education's University Impact Rankings. The University has been shortlisted three times as the Times Higher Education's University of the Year (2016, 2019, and 2020) and three times for University of the Year in the UK Social Mobility Awards (2019, 2020, and 2024).

The University's strategic vision for its research is to engage in high-quality, cutting-edge research which makes a difference to people's lives, economically, socially and culturally. Thus, much of our research is translational or applied in nature, co-designed and delivered with stakeholders and potential research users and intended to impact on policy and practice. Examples of our research in 2023/24 which have clear benefits to specific communities, groups and organisations or to the general public include:

- research on Dementia Meeting Centres, community-based interventions to support people living with dementia and their carers, which improve wellbeing and potentially reduce local-authority costs;
- research to better understand the needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities in accessing health services in order to improve health outcomes for these communities;
- research to develop and implement EPROMS (Electronic Patient-Reported Outcome Measures) for sufferers of long term conditions, improving their health outcomes but also reducing costs in the NHS;
- research focused on developing pathogen resistant plant strains which reduce the need for pesticide use and improve productivity.

The Hive, Europe's first integrated university and public library, provides the University's students with an outstanding library facility, which is also open to members of the community. This approach to collaborative working with the local County Council provides cost-efficient resources for the University and encourages community learning:

<b>Hive Library</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Total number of visits	381,499	508,822
Teenage library memberships	10,977	16,732
Number of children and adults participating in community events	32,679	53,392
Number of people attending public lectures	706	1,308

The University has been awarded First Class Honours for environmental sustainability in the latest [People and Planet national rankings](#). This is the 14<sup>th</sup> straight year that the University has earned First Class Honours. In 2023/24 People & Planet's University League placed the University 9<sup>th</sup> out of 151 UK institutions, this has since risen to 6<sup>th</sup> in the 2024/25 rankings. The University was awarded two 'Highly Commended' in the [Green Gown Awards 2023](#), the first in the Nature Positive category, based around its initiatives to promote biodiversity, such as wildflower planting and the second in the Reporting with Influence category, which assesses how sustainability is reported. The University won an International Green Apple in the Conservation and Wildlife Project category for protecting and enhancing biodiversity at the University of Worcester for over a decade.

More detailed illustrations of the public benefit and societal value of the University are set out in the Public Benefits Statements in the [Annual Accounts](#).

## 6. Conclusion

The Annual Value for Money Report for 2023/24 demonstrates that the University of Worcester continues to ensure that it provides a good experience for its students, with good graduate outcomes, as well as ensuring that it manages its resources efficiently and effectively and to the benefit of its students and the wider community.