

Value for Money Report – 2021/2022

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 for 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. 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 changing dynamic 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.

2. Student Experience and Opportunities at University of 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 them. The value of a university education is different for each student which makes defining it and measuring it challenging, however, 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 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 in coaching and more recently tutoring;
- Integrating work placements and word based projects into students' studies on as many courses as possible;
- Employing a very significant number of students at the University
- Encouraging active participation in student representation (over 300 reps in 2022/23), 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 meet other students with shared interests or backgrounds. The Students' Union also provides resources to support students, who wish to volunteer outside of work and studies; in 2021-22 the Students' Union recorded 5543 hours of volunteering undertaken by students. In 2021-22 the students' Raise and Give activities raised a total of £31,497 for the students' Charity of the Year, Worcestershire Animal Rescue Service. Through participating in these activities' students gain a wide range of skills and experience which giving them a well rounded student experience and supporting them into the next stage of their lives.

3. Teaching Quality and Outcomes

The quality of teaching are the primary concerns 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 Outcome Survey. The OfS publishes a range of data via 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 Outcome Survey. The OfS has recently launched two additional dashboards: Student Outcomes Data (relating to OfS Condition B3) and [TEF Data](#) (this later includes data and responses to the NSS and relates to Undergraduate students only). 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 dashboard set a benchmark for all providers against which we are measured. The universities performance against the benchmark is shown graphically in the dashboard. Note that for the TEF, performance is measures against a benchmark, whereas 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 over a four year period as follows:

NSS Data – 2018/19 – 2021/22
Continuation – 2016/17 – 2019/20
Completion – 2013/14 – 2016/17

Progress – 2017/18 to 2019/20 (note only three years of data are available as the Graduate Outcome Survey has only been run for three years)

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

Measure	Benchmark Value	Institution overall value
The teaching on my course	83.1%	84.6%
Assessment and feedback	73.8%	76.1%
Academic Support	77.6%	79.6%
Learning resources	81.5%	84.4%
Student voice	72.4%	75.9%

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

Mode of Study	Numerical Threshold	Institution Overall Value
Full-time First degree	80%	86.5%
Full-time Other undergraduate	75%	83.3%
Full-time PGCE	85%	92.0%
Full-time PG Taught Masters	80%	87.4%
Part-time First Degree	55%	65.5%
Part-time Other Undergraduate	55%	76.0%
Part-time Taught Masters	80%	87.4%
<i>Part-time PGCE data not provided due to low numbers on course</i>		

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

Mode of Study	Numerical Threshold	Institution Overall Value
Full-time First degree	75%	87.7%
Full-time Other undergraduate	65%	81%
Full-time PGCE	85%	93.2%
Full-time PG Taught Masters	80%	90.9%
Part-time First degree	40%	47.4%
Part-time other undergraduate	55%	82.3%
Part-time PG Taught Masters	65%	71%
<i>Part-time PGCE data not provided due to tiny numbers on course</i>		

Student Outcomes – Progression Data (Students progressing to professional or managerial employment, for further study) (B3 data)

Mode of Study	Numerical Threshold	Institution Overall Value
Full-time First degree	60%	72.7%
Full-time Other undergraduate	45%	70.6%
Full- time PGCE	85%	90.4%
Full-time PG Taught Masters	70%	80.7%
Part-time First Degree	70%	90.8%
Part-time other undergraduate	65%	72.6%
Part-time PG Taught Master	85%	92.7%
<i>Part-time PGCE data not provided</i>		

The data set out in the above tables provides a high level overview of students continuation, completion and progression data in the primary modes of study. The datasets can further analysed by course and by gender, ethnicity, disability, age on entry, those studying at partner organisations.

Analysis of this data shows that there are areas where the University needs to address concerns, this is particularly true around retention (continuation). We know that our retention statistics declined in 2020/21 and 2021/22 due primarily to the impact of Covid and therefore anticipate that this will result in a decline in the University's position against the numerical threshold next year, and maybe the following year. Work is in progress to analysis the data further to help understand what might be behind poor student retention and what initiatives and interventions are needed to help improve this. This is vitally important both from the students' personal perspective but also in relation to the sustainability of university finances.

In future reports the OfS Data Dashboard will start to provide year on year data which will assist the University in identifying trends and this will be reflected in future VFM reports.

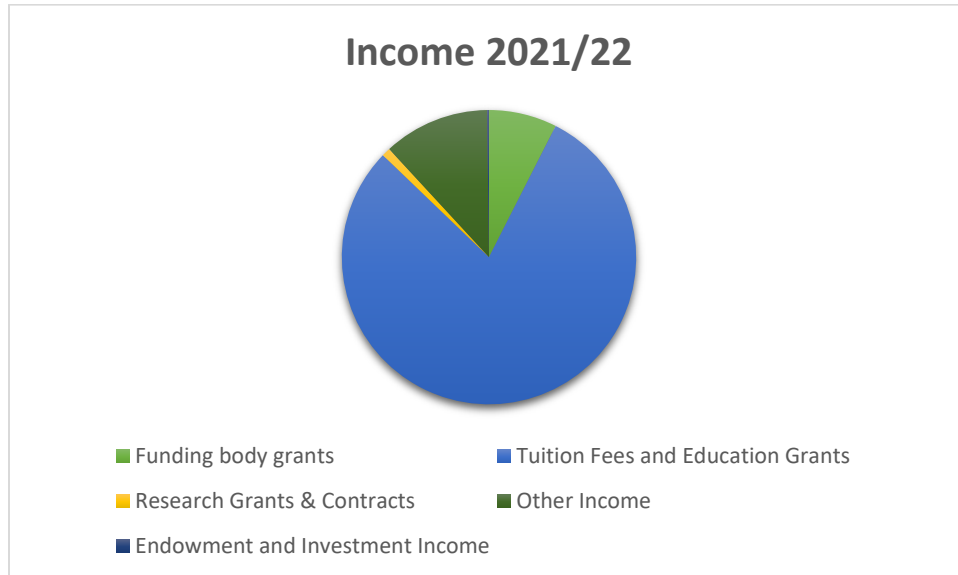
4. Economies & Efficiencies

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 2021/22, based on the last set of audited accounts, is as follows:

University Income

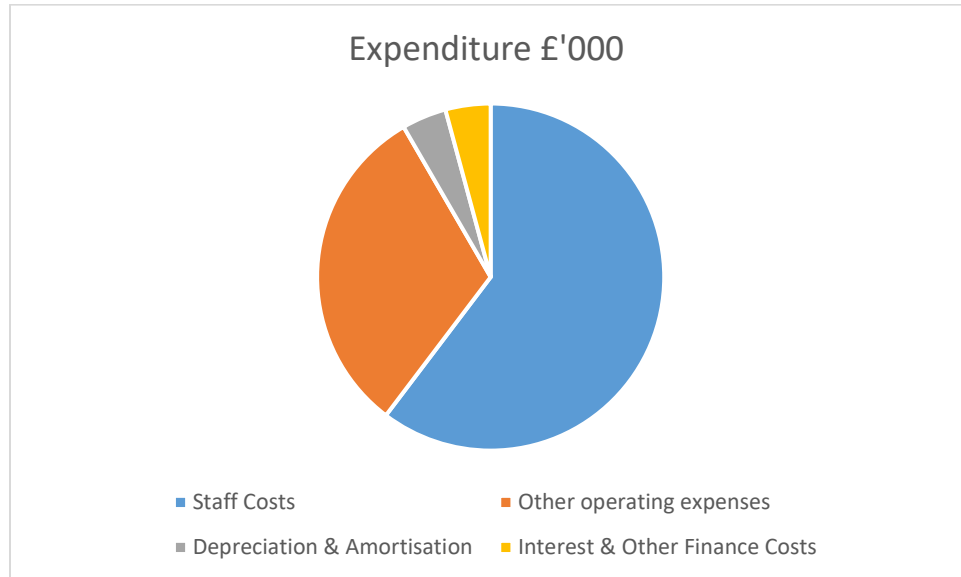


Income	£,000
Funding Body Grants	6,903
Tuition Fees & Education Grants	73,465
Research Grants & Contracts	878
Other Income	10,747
Endowment & Investment Income	190
	92,183

The main areas within the 'Other Income' section are:

Area	Value
Student Accommodation	£5,586,780
Conference, Catering & Hire of Rooms	£1,912,052
Project Income - ad-hoc initiatives that Schools/Departments undertake for external organisations	£570,112
Car Parking & Permits	£285,756
NHS Placement income	£236,265

University Expenditure



Expenditure	£'000
Staff Costs	58,146
Other operating expenses	30,193
Depreciation & Amortisation	4,007
Interest & Other Finance Costs	4,053
	96,399

Included in 'Other Operating Expenses':

Area	Value
Student Accommodation - external rentals and related costs	£564,534
Catering Expenditure - costs of providing onsite catering facilities	£1,947,849
Electricity, Gas & Water for all University properties including Student Accommodation	£2,173,677
Repairs & General Maintenance to all University property and equipment, including Student Accommodation	£2,238,230
Partner Colleges - cost of courses affiliated to the University, for example Halesowen College	£4,644,555
Student Bursaries	£985,411

Student Financial Support

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

- Access to Learning Fund:
261 non-standard awards: paid when a student has an unforeseen situation or exceptional costs such as essential repairs, emergency payments or priority debts
69 standard awards: paid to help towards a recognised shortfall between income and expenditure
- 55 Academic Scholarships

Procurement Efficiencies

Each year the Audit Committee receives an Annual Report on the University's Purchasing. The latest report received (Audit Committee 22nd March 2022), which reviews purchasing in 2020-21 identified that the Procurement Team achieved £1.065m efficiency savings against a spend of £20.7m on goods, services and works.

Not all savings, efficiencies and benefits achieved by the Procurement Team are monetary. Examples of non-monetary savings, efficiencies and benefits in 2020/21 are:

- Procurement of external contractor to provide DBS checks for students and staff, the successful supplier provided a system interface between themselves and the University which resulted in time management efficiencies for staff in checking certificates
- The review of the Occupational Health contact for staff. The new contact included the introduction of an Employee Assistant Programme giving staff wide access to a number of services including counselling, money advice, legal advice and general health advice.
- Tender for a new Student Module evaluation survey tool to help assist with NSS surveys and general surveys. The new supplier offer a much more detailed and configurable piece of software.
- Consolidation of mobile phone contracts onto a new tariff which enabled the University to have a capped data fee across the fleet rather than on individual phones.

Capital Developments and efficiencies

- **Riverside Building, Severn Campus**

At the start of 2021/22 the University consolidated its Gym provision from around the University into one larger gym in the Riverside Building on Severn Campus. This provides a modern facility which is equidistant to the St Johns and Severn Campus with easy access and parking for students, and staff. The initiative was informed by a proposal of a former Students Union President.

Building on the success of the Gym, at the start of 2022/23 the University moved its Physiotherapy and Sports Therapy provision into the Riverside Building. The co-location of these

two courses provides efficiencies of space and resources as well as opportunities for staff and student interdisciplinary working.

- **Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Building, Severn Campus**

The Elizabeth Garret Anderson building will provide additional teaching facilities for the University's growing health provision with the provision of teaching rooms, trainee consultation rooms and an anatomy suite. These facilities will complement the University's existing simulation suites in the Sheila Scott building and recently refurbished teaching space in the Elizabeth Casson building with students, and staff, moving between the buildings depending upon what activity and class they are undertaking. This provides cost efficiencies through the use of the same skills simulation spaces by all health courses, ensuring good use of facilities, as well as providing opportunities for interdisciplinary training.

The building was formerly the home of Worcester News. The refurbishment and construction work contract is let to Stepnells who were appointed from the University's contractors framework. Part of the terms of their contract requires them to meet social value objectives; Stepnells target was £1.6m of added Social Value, to date they have achieved £2.8m. This has been achieved through a range of initiatives including: 92.9% of waste being diverted from landfill; an innovative programme of 12 first year level electrical students each participating in 30 hours work experience; £2.3m spent in local supply chain; Careers in Construction Event held at The Hive including cv writing and mock interviews.

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 evidences the wide range of work undertaken across the University and its impact.

In the fourth year of the [Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings](#), published in 2022, the University retained a top five placing in the UK for Quality Education as well as a top five ranking in the UK for Gender Equality. In 2021 the [median pay gap at Worcester was 0%](#)

In 2021/22 became part of the Purpose Coalition, an initiative by the former Education Secretary, the Rt Hon Justine Greening which has developed a [Levelling Up Impact Report](#) showing how the University is working in partnership to provide opportunities and increase social mobility.

Key to this success is the University's long history in training students to enter a range of professions both in teaching and health related subjects. In 2021/22 the University was awarded the largest allocation of health training places in the country following a government bidding process. Bids for extra places were assessed on the quality of each provider, including their rates of continuation and graduate employment outcomes. Worcester was allocated an additional 473 places for students to study Nursing, Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Paramedicine. In September 2021 the University welcomed its largest ever intake of Nursing and Midwifery students, these students will be joined in September 2023 with the first cohort of students on the new graduate entry medical programme. Students graduating from the University's health and teaching programmes are

keenly sought after in the region and have excellent employment opportunities contributing to the local economy. The University's success in this area over many years has led to it being identified as the HE provider to work with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and Dudley College of Technology on its new Health Innovation Centre. The aim of this innovative project is to provide opportunities for local people in the Black Country to train initially in health-related professions enabling social mobility and improving the local economy. These courses will be added to in the longer term with courses in Education, Psychology, Sport and Science providing local progression routes for the College's students.

[Research being carried out at the University](#) was judged to be world-leading or internationally excellent in the Research Excellence Framework 2021, published in 2022. The University's work in dementia studies and mental health research, including bi-polar disorder, were among those deemed to be world-leading, reflecting the University's commitment to and investment in these fields over the last 10 years. Work on violence prevention and on inclusion of marginalised groups was also highly rated, while there was also success in traditional academic areas such as History, where 82% of the work submitted was identified as world leading or internationally excellent. This included significant research into the identities of African people who had been enslaved.

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.

Hive Library	2021/22
Total number of visits	332,973
Teenage library membership	10,286
Number of children and adults participating in community events	20,548
Number of people attending public lectures	3,652

In 2021/22 the University was again successful in achieving first class honours in the People and Planet 'Green' league, something it has achieved every year since 2009, and in 2022 was named in the top 5 most sustainable universities in the UK. The University came joint top in the Sustainable Food and Energy Sources categories and scored 100% across five of the categories.

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

6. Conclusion

The Annual Report for 2021/22 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.