

# Teaching excellence framework risks 'driving a wedge' between teaching and research

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The Physiological Society has released a report following a series of high profile roundtable sessions with senior politicians and academics. The report makes recommendations to the Government on the changes taking place in Higher Education with the planned roll out of the 'Teaching Excellence Framework' (TEF).

The TEF is designed to provide detailed information on [teaching](#) in universities, but The Physiological Society warns that the current proposal promotes a simplistic and transactional view of a university education. The effect will be to prevent innovation in [undergraduate teaching](#), and drive a wedge between teachers and researchers. While the government's rhetoric, as seen recently in the "Joint working between OfS and UKRI" paper, sounds the right notes, amendments to the Higher Education and Research Bill have not been sufficient to allay fears over negative consequences.

The report's recommendations are based on high level roundtables at the Labour, Conservative, and SNP 2016 Party Conferences. They show a strong consensus on changes required to improve the effectiveness of the TEF, such as:

- Maintain the link between research and teaching to encourage students to engage with the cutting edge advances in their subject.
- Utilise peer review systems to compare learning gain, as student satisfaction does not correlate to teaching quality.

- Seek greater input from student representatives and do not rely on the National Student Survey.

Launching the report, Dr Lucy Donaldson, Policy Chair at the Physiological Society, said:

"This report highlights the real concern within the sector about the Government's plans. We are worried that the TEF as it stands will uncouple teaching from research in universities, harming both. This will have repercussions for the economy and the future workforce.

"There is near unanimous agreement within the sector that that the metrics planned for TEF don't achieve what the Government wants them to.

"A greater inclusion of [peer review](#) of teaching strength, and more detail from the student voice, will give a much more accurate picture of teaching quality.

"A better way to improve teaching quality is to recognise individuals who are effective teachers and contribute to teaching development. This recognition can be from the universities, by rewarding and promoting teaching academics, and from the government rewarding universities who conduct educational research."

**More information:** Download the new report here:

[www.physoc.org/sites/default/files/TEF](http://www.physoc.org/sites/default/files/TEF)

[%20vs%20REF-%20Are%20Teaching%20and%20Research%20now%20adversaries.pdf](#)

Provided by The Physiological Society

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