Value for Money Report – 2022/23

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Date: March 2024
Approved by: Audit Committee

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 work-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 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 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 2022-23 the Students' Union recorded 5905.5 hours of volunteering undertaken by students. In 2022-23 the students' Raise and Give activities raised a total of £16,607 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 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 is 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 latter 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 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 over a four year period as follows:

NSS Data – 2018/19 – 2021/22
Continuation – 2016/17 – 2020/21
Completion – 2014/15 – 2017/18
Progression – 2017/18 to 2020/21

The data set out in the following tables provides a high level overview of NSS outcomes (undergraduate students only), students 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. Note that the data is usually updated annually when it becomes available. This year the publication of the B3 outcomes data has been delayed due to delays in collecting the 2022-23 HESA Student (Data Futures) record. In tables 3.2 and 3.3 data is provided as published last year and what is currently published for 2024 but will be updated by OfS once all data collection checks are complete.

3.1 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%

3.2 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 2023**	**Institution Overall Value 2024***
Full-time First degree	80%	86.5%	85.8%
Full-time Other undergraduate	75%	83.3%	81.2%
Full-time PGCE	85%	92.0%	92.8%
Full-time PG Taught Masters	80%	87.4%	89.8%
Part-time First Degree	55%	65.5%	70.3%
Part-time Other Undergraduate	55%	76.0%	75.8%
Part-time Taught Masters	80%	87.4%	69.3%
Part-time PGCE data not provided due to small numbers on course			

* data not fully updated due to delays in data collection

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

Mode of Study	Numerical Threshold	Institution Overall Value 2023	Institution Overall Value 2024*
Full-time First degree	75%	87.7%	87.4%
Full-time Other undergraduate	65%	81%	81.2%
Full-time PGCE	85%	93.2%	93.4%
Full-time PG Taught Masters	80%	90.9%	91.2%
Part-time First degree	40%	47.4%	69.9%
Part-time other undergraduate	55%	82.3%	83.1%
Part-time PG Taught Masters	65%	71%	71.0%
Part-time PGCE data not provided due to small numbers on course			

* data not fully updated due to delays in data collection

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

Mode of Study	Numerical Threshold	Institution Overall Value 2023	Institution Overall Value 2024*
Full-time First degree	60%	72.7%	73.4%
Full-time Other undergraduate	45%	70.6%	70.6%
Full- time PGCE	85%	90.4%	90.3%
Full-time PG Taught Masters	70%	80.7%	81.9%
Part-time First Degree	70%	90.8%	92.0%
Part-time other undergraduate	65%	72.6%	72.1%
Part-time PG Taught Master	85%	92.7%	93.2%
Part-time PGCE data not provided due to small number on the course.			

* data not fully updated due to delays in data collection

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 analyse 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

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.

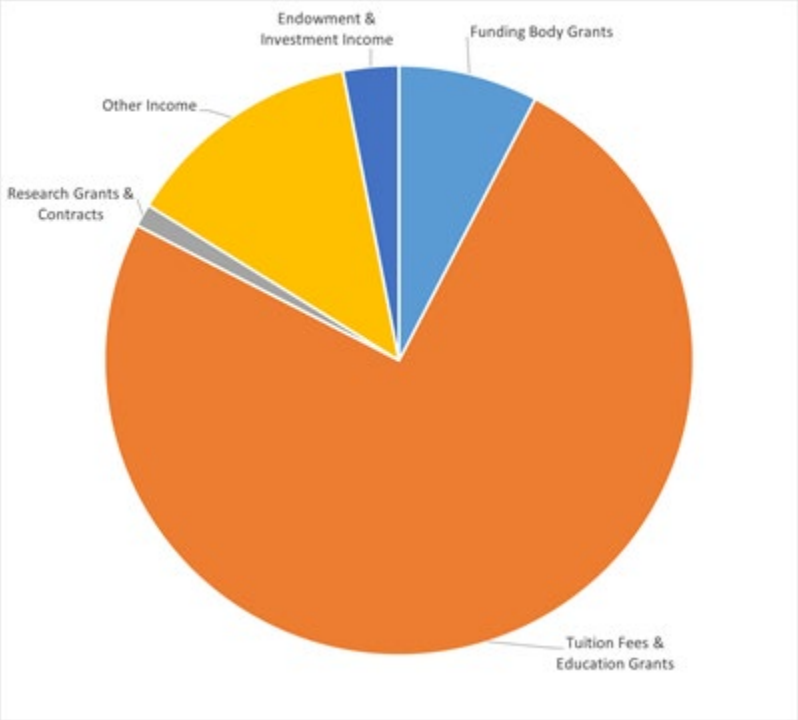
The data for 2022/23, based on the last set of audited accounts, is as follows:

University Income 2022-23

Income	£,000
Funding Body Grants	7,365
Tuition Fees & Education Grants	71,981
Research Grants & Contracts	1,190
Other Income	12,617
Endowment & Investment Income	2,940
	96,093

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

Area	Value
Student Accommodation	£5,948,000
Conference, Catering & Hire of Rooms	£2,207,000
Project Income - ad-hoc initiatives that Schools/Departments undertake for external organisations	£612,000
Car Parking & Permits	£477,000
NHS Placement income	£686,000



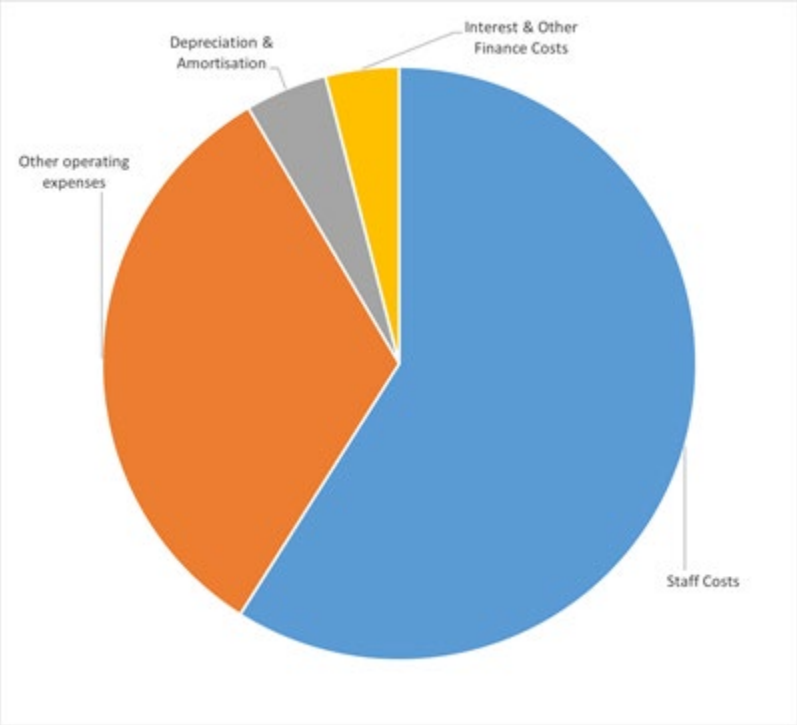
University Expenditure – 2022/23

Expenditure	£'000
Staff Costs	58,576
Other operating expenses	32,306
Depreciation & Amortisation	4,443
Interest & Other Finance Costs	3,976
	99,301

Included in 'Other Operating Expenses':

Area	Value
Catering Expenditure - costs of providing onsite catering facilities	£2,397,000
Electricity, Gas & Water for all University properties including Student Accommodation	£3,153,000

Repairs & General Maintenance to all University property and equipment, including Student Accommodation	£2,556,000
Partner Colleges - cost of courses affiliated to the University, for example Halesowen College	£4,079,000
Student Bursaries	£734,000
Library Services (excluding the Hive)	645,000
IT Services	£3,250,000



4.2 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 2022/23:
  386 non-standard awards (261 in 2021/22): paid when a student has an unforeseen situation or exceptional costs such as essential repairs, emergency payments or priority debts.
  109 standard awards (69 in 2021/22): paid to help towards a recognised shortfall between income and expenditure

- 45 Academic Scholarships in 2022/23 (55 in 2021/22)

4.3 Investment in support services for students

The University has invested heavily 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, more 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 – of particular importance 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 – 91% overall positivity for library resources and 85% overall positivity for IT resources facilitating learning in the 2023 National Student Survey.

Our approach, as articulated in the Access & Participation Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28, has continued to ensure that every learner, regardless of background or protected characteristic (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) is afforded equal opportunity to access and succeed in their Higher Education journey.

4.4 Procurement Efficiencies

Each year the Audit Committee receives an Annual Report on the University's Purchasing. The latest report received (Audit Committee 19th March 2024), which reviews purchasing in 2022-23, identified achieved savings as a percentage of impactable spend of 2.91%.

Not all savings, efficiencies and benefits achieved by the Procurement Team are monetary. Examples of non-monetary savings, efficiencies and benefits in 2022/23 are:

- The Procurement Team supported the development and transformation of the University's gym provision resulting in the gym being relocated to the Health & Wellbeing Hub at Severn Campus. First year students who reside in Halls of Residence have free access to the gym, non-resident students have the opportunity to pay heavily discounted membership rates, to encourage membership and enhance the health and wellbeing of our students.
- In collaboration with the University's catering provider a value offer for breakfast, lunch and post 2pm has been introduced which provides healthy options for max £2 per student; as well as value coffee offer of 50p per cup.
- The award of a new IT Recycling Contract will provide the University with better reporting regarding the disposal and reuse of old university IT assets. This will improve sustainability and carbon reporting in this area.

- Responders to the University's Invitations to Tender are asked to make a commitment to social value initiatives for students. In 2022/23 these commitments included: the insurance broker speaking with students about the insurance industry and careers in insurance; and Dell promoting their Women in STEM mentoring scheme which is open to our female STEM students.

4.5 Capital Developments and efficiencies

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

  The refurbishment of the former print facility to create the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Building was completed in April 2023. The Elizabeth Garret Anderson building provides 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 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 refurbishment and construction work contract was let to Stepnells who were appointed from the University's contractors framework. Part of the terms of their contract required them to meet social value objectives; Stepnells achieved £4m of added Social Value against a target of £1.4m. This was achieved through a range of initiatives including: 92.92% of waste being diverted from landfill; 195 apprenticeship and work placement weeks; 20 new local people employed on the project; 64.78% of overall spend within the local economy; £2.8k donations to local community and 88 hours community volunteering.

- **Severn Campus Infrastructure**

  During 2022-23 the University undertook a major infrastructure project to transform its site, a former industrial estate adjacent to the Hylton Road and Severn River in Worcester, into a new University campus. The site was already home to a number of university facilities including: the Arena, the Riverside Building and the Elizabeth Casson Building which were to shortly be joined by the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Building. The infrastructure project was completed in April 2023 and includes an internal roadway, pedestrian and wheeled routes with the latter providing easy, shorter and more accessible connections between the University's City and St John's campus for the University community and general public. The development provides for c300 car parking spaces, of which 100 have electric vehicle charging points.

  Whilst these facilities are important for the development of the campus a key objective of the project was to create a campus which provides its users with opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing. The development includes a number of green spaces both for social and quieter activities and a health, wellbeing and recuperation route.

The infrastructure contract was let to Stepnells who were appointed from the University's contractors framework. Part of the terms of their contract required Stepnells to meet social value objectives; Stepnells achieved £1.8m of added Social Value against a target of £1.59m. This was achieved through a range of initiatives including: £1.09m local supply chain spend; 80 apprenticeship and work placement weeks; £11k donations to local community.

- **New Astro-turf**

  During 2022/23 the University refurbished the University's original sand-based Astro-turf on the St John's Campus, which had originally been installed in 1992. The University was successful in securing a grant from the Football Foundation which provided 73% of the cost of the development and allowed the University to increase the size of the existing pitch.

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 fifth year of the *Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings*, published in 2023, the University retained a top five placing in the UK for Quality Education as well as a top five placing in the UK for Gender Equality. In 2022 the median pay gap at Worcester was 0%

In May 2023, the University's primary and secondary teaching programmes were rated by Ofsted as 'Outstanding'. The report opens: "Trainees benefit from an exceptional learning experience at the University of Worcester. This experience instils in them a deep rooted commitment to making a difference to the lives of the children in the communities they serve."

In September 2023 the University's new Three Counties Medical School welcomed its first cohort of students. The University received support from the Kildare Trust and local NHS trusts to fund 20 UK students through their four years of study. They are joined by 24 self-funded international students. The Medical School will build on the University's exceptional and proven record on widening access to higher education, directing recruitment primarily to those groups that are under represented in medical courses and in the profession. This includes, in particular, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who still account for only around 10% of all admissions to the profession national.

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	**2022/23**
Total number of visits	381,499

Teenage library membership	10,977
Number of children and adults participating in community events	32,679
Number of people attending public lectures	706

The University has had first class honours in the People & Planet 'Green' league every year since 2009. In October 2022 the University was judged to be 'leading the way' in the battle to reduce carbon emissions, according to independent research by Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK). The University was ranked as the joint 3rd higher education institution by SOS-UK, working alongside the National Union of Students (NUS), the University and College Union (UCU) and People & Planet (P&P), who assessed universities and colleges across the UK on their ambitions to act on the climate emergency and ecological crisis.

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 2022/23 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.