# Kingston bets Future Skills and TEF gold will counter cuts and financial strain



Kingston University presents itself as a practical, vocationally minded institution determined to align degree programmes with the needs of employers — a pitch amplified by a campus-wide Future Skills initiative and recent investments in student facilities. According to a recent profile, nearly 6,000 students were admitted in September 2024 and the university points to its location in south‑west London as offering cultural and professional access without some of central London's cost pressures. At the same time, Kingston’s rise to a triple‑Gold rating in the Teaching Excellence Framework has been presented by the institution as proof that those promises are translating into teaching quality and student outcomes.

The centrepiece of Kingston’s message is Future Skills, a curriculum‑wide programme the university describes as embedding nine employer‑valued attributes across undergraduate courses. The attributes — creative problem‑solving, digital competency, enterprise, a questioning mindset, adaptability, empathy, collaboration, resilience and self‑awareness — are taught and assessed from the first year, the university explains, with the stated aim of equipping students for a changing labour market.

Kingston sets out a three‑stage student journey through the programme. In year one Navigate modules introduce students to the skills they already possess; Explore in year two places students in employer‑engaged projects, placements and business visits; and Apply in the final year helps students refine skills for specific career paths. The university argues this structure responds directly to technological change and employer demand, saying on its Future Skills page: “In a world increasingly driven by artificial intelligence and technology, developing Future Skills will be vital when navigating and adapting to a rapidly changing workplace after graduation.”

The TEF Gold award — a public affirmation of teaching and student experience — has been embraced by the university as validation of its approach. Kingston’s own announcement of the rating noted it had achieved Gold for overall provision as well as for student experience and graduate outcomes, and linked strengths in teaching quality and inclusive curriculum development to initiatives such as Future Skills and widening‑participation programmes.

Kingston’s intake is demographically diverse. The university and recent profiles highlight that more than two‑thirds of its domestic intake come from the capital, with a broadly balanced mix of Black, White and Asian students, and a sizeable international cohort. More than half of entrants are reported to be the first in their family to attend university; almost a quarter are mature students; and the institution acknowledges particular under‑representation among children from white backgrounds who have claimed free school meals, a group singled out for targeted recruitment in Kingston’s access and participation plan.

On student finance, Kingston emphasises practical support. The university’s bursary page explains that at least 500 eligible home undergraduates with household incomes under £25,000 were to receive a £2,000 Kingston Bursary for the 2024 intake, with separate bursaries for care leavers, estranged students and young adult carers. A targeted Chancerygate Foundation bursary provides up to £10,000 a year to support Black British students on RICS‑accredited surveying and real‑estate courses, including mentoring and placement opportunities. The university also points to short‑term funds such as Back on Track awards for urgent financial hardship.

Accommodation and campus investment are other selling points. Kingston lists more than 2,000 rooms across several halls, with 40‑week rents for 2025/26 ranging from around £5,200 to higher‑end self‑contained studios at roughly £16,320; the university has recently refurbished multiple sites and says lower‑priced options remain among the cheapest student rooms available in London. The institution has also invested in campus upgrades and, it says, channelled money into improving student residential provision.

Support services are a repeated theme: pre‑entry schemes, targeted initiatives for Black African and Black Caribbean students called Elevate, compulsory staff training on safeguarding and mental health, daily counselling drop‑ins and disability and wellbeing groups intended to counter isolation. Kingston’s public statements link many of these provisions to its TEF submission and to the university’s stated mission of widening participation and improving outcomes.

But the narrative is not without friction. The university has been forced to respond to financial pressure: recent internal reviews and reporting indicate course closures and restructuring aimed at saving around £20 million. In March 2025, Times Higher Education reported that Kingston proposed the closure of its Humanities department and related programmes, including the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, drawing strong opposition from staff and students and prompting suspensions of some applications. Critics and union representatives warned the moves risk undermining postgraduate supervision, research centres and the breadth of the curriculum; university leaders counter that low recruitment on certain programmes made them unsustainable.

Those financial headwinds sharpen the stakes for Future Skills. The Daily Mail profile noted Kingston currently sits in the bottom 20 nationally for the proportion of recent graduates progressing to high‑skilled jobs and for the share of graduates who feel their careers are on track — indicators the university says the Future Skills rollout is designed to improve. New courses listed as admitting their first cohorts in September 2025 include historic building conservation, 3D design innovation and a BA in education (early years), and the university plans to expand degree apprenticeship provision, adding midwife and several registered nurse apprenticeship pathways.

Prospective students weighing Kingston’s offer will see a university investing in pedagogy, student support and accommodation while simultaneously managing the fiscal realities facing many UK higher‑education providers. The institution presents Future Skills, bursaries and a triple‑Gold TEF rating as evidence of a modern, employer‑facing university; critics point to programme cuts and department closures as evidence that financial constraints are reshaping academic provision. As Kingston and other universities adapt, applicants are advised to check the latest course listings, consult departmental updates and follow any ongoing consultations before committing.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914697/Kingston-University.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.kingston.ac.uk/about/news/kingston-university-awarded-tef-gold-rating)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/future-skills/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/future-skills/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914697/Kingston-University.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.kingston.ac.uk/about/news/kingston-university-awarded-tef-gold-rating), [[2]](https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/future-skills/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914697/Kingston-University.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.kingston.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/the-kingston-bursary), [[5]](https://www.kingston.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/chancerygate-foundation-bursary), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914697/Kingston-University.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 7 – [[6]](https://www.kingston.ac.uk/accommodation/halls-of-residence/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914697/Kingston-University.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914697/Kingston-University.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/future-skills/> - Kingston University’s Future Skills programme explains a curriculum-wide approach to embedding nine employer-valued attributes across undergraduate degrees. The page lists the attributes—creative problem-solving, digital competency, enterprise, questioning mindset, adaptability, empathy, collaboration, resilience and self-awareness—and describes a three-stage student journey: Navigate in year one, Explore in year two (with employer-engaged projects) and Apply in the final year to tailor skills for careers. It argues that these skills respond to technological change and employer demand, and that every first-year undergraduate studies and is assessed on Future Skills. It provides detailed links and guidance.
3. <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/about/news/kingston-university-awarded-tef-gold-rating> - Kingston University’s news release announces that it was awarded Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework, receiving Gold for overall provision plus Gold in the separate student experience and student outcomes categories. Published on 28 September 2023, the statement notes Kingston joined an elite group of providers awarded triple Gold and that the rating marked a rise from Bronze. The release highlights strengths in teaching quality, inclusive curriculum development, support for care leavers and widening participation through KU Cares and ELEVATE, and links the TEF success to the roll-out of the Future Skills programme across undergraduate courses, and student support services.
4. <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/the-kingston-bursary> - Kingston University’s Kingston Bursary page details financial support for home undergraduate entrants with household incomes at or below £25,000. It explains that eligible students starting their first year receive a £2,000 bursary paid in instalments and that a minimum of 500 bursaries are available for the September 2024 intake. The page sets out eligibility criteria, including home fee status, firm acceptance of an offer and applying for student finance; it excludes nursing and midwifery students who should seek NHS learning support. The page also explains assessment, payment method and that meeting criteria does not guarantee an award or availability limits.
5. <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/chancerygate-foundation-bursary> - Kingston University’s Chancerygate Foundation Bursary page describes a partnership providing a grant and career support to students on RICS-accredited real estate and surveying degrees. The page explains the award is worth up to £10,000 per year to cover living and study costs and includes mentoring and work placement opportunities. Eligibility criteria specify applicants must identify as Black British (African or Caribbean), have an offer to study Building Surveying, Real Estate Management or Quantity Surveying, be aged 26 or under, and have household income under £25,000. The page sets out application steps, deadlines and selection interview arrangements with the Foundation timelines.
6. <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/accommodation/halls-of-residence/> - Kingston University’s Halls of Residence page outlines on‑campus accommodation options, stating there are over 2,000 rooms across several halls including Seething Wells, Clayhill, Middle Mill, Chancellors and Walkden. It gives licence lengths and detailed weekly and annual pricing for 2025/26 entries, showing undergraduate 40‑week rents ranging from £130 per week (£5,200 per year) to £408 per week (£16,320 per year) for large self‑contained studios. The page highlights recent refurbishments at Seething Wells and other sites, outlines application and payment processes, explains priority for first‑year students, and provides practical information on facilities, accessibility and contact details and links to virtual tours.
7. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/kingston-axes-philosophy-centre-humanities-department-shutdown> - Times Higher Education reports on Kingston University’s proposed closure of its Humanities department and associated programmes, including the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, English and modern languages. Published March 6, 2025, the article describes staff and student opposition, suspensions of applications and the university’s rationale that low recruitment and financial pressures have made some programmes unsustainable. It notes the local UCU branch estimating a £20 million savings target driving the review, and records concern about the impact on postgraduate supervision, research centres and the university’s wider curriculum breadth and reputation. Calls for consultation and transparency have been published.