TEF: Lessons from earlier phases

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My background

- DfE analytical lead on accountability in Primary, Secondary, 16-19
- Associate Director for Accountability, Research and Evaluation, Education Partnerships Group
- Now Director of Post 16 and Skills at the Education Policy Institute

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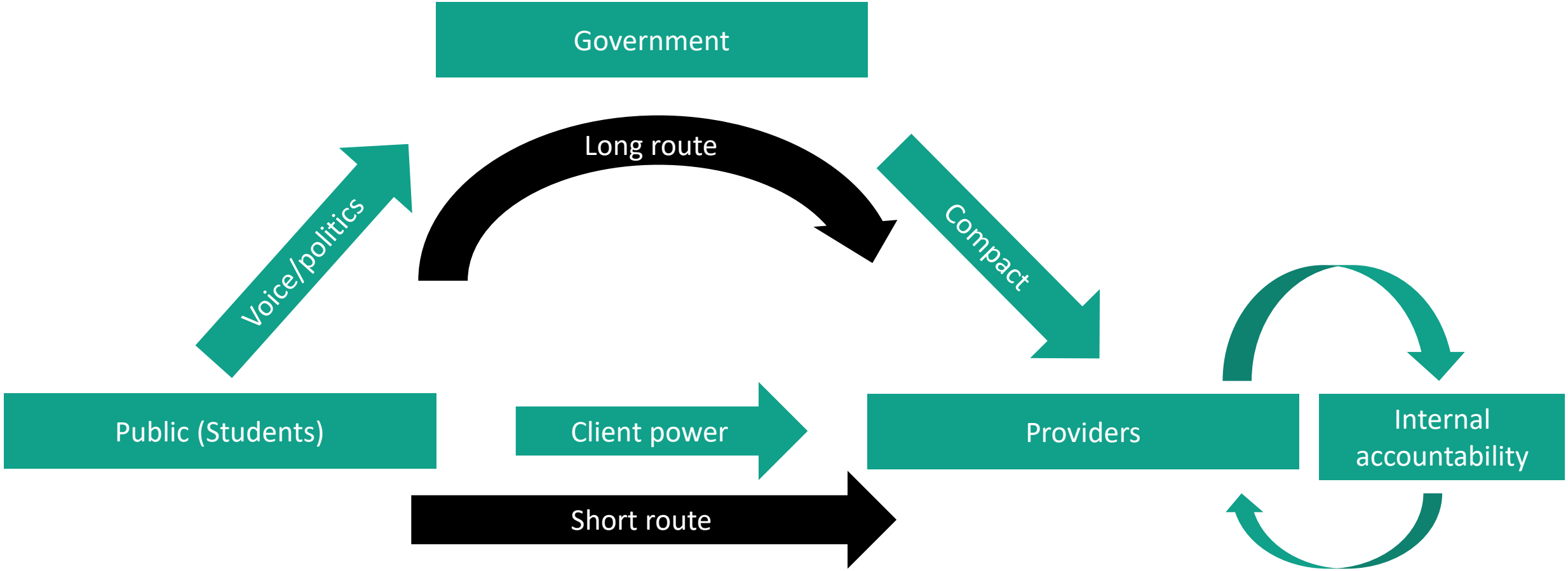
The Accountability Framework



Source: World Bank 2013

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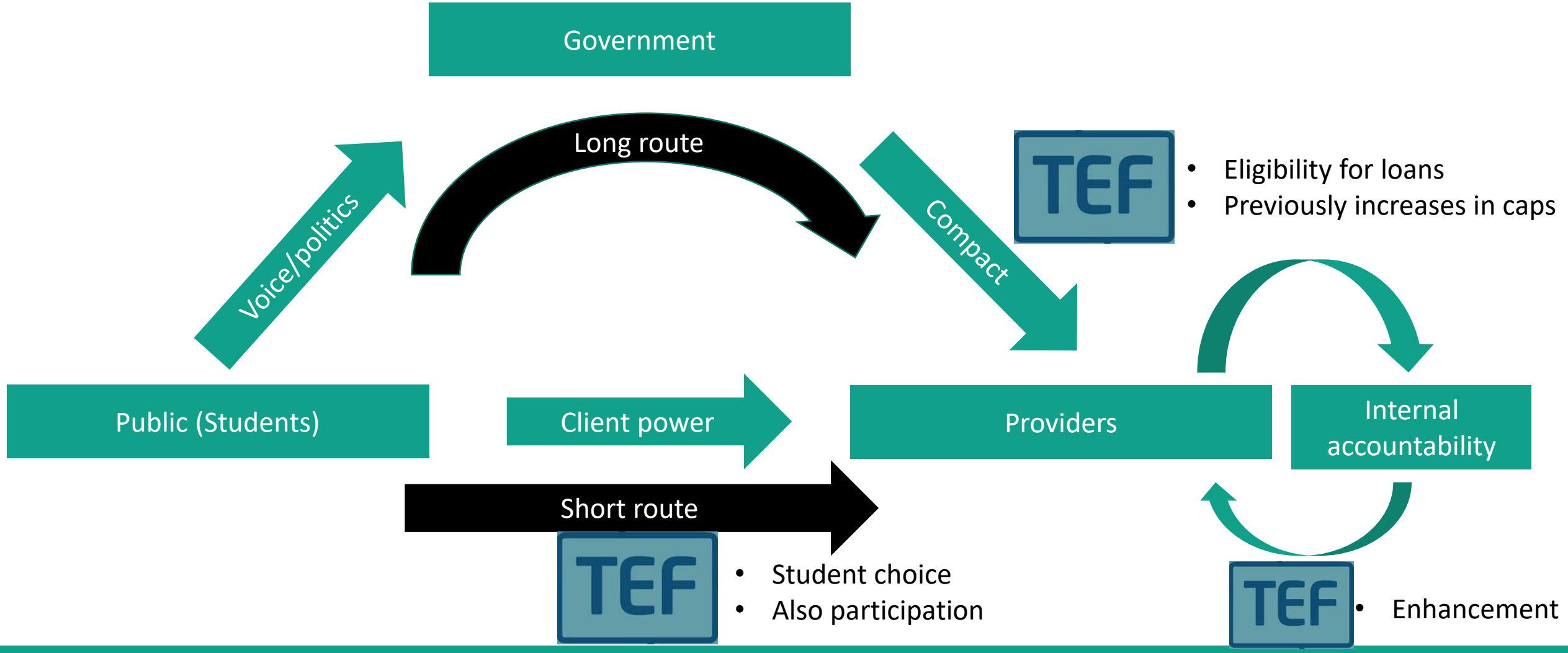
The Accountability Framework



Source: World Bank 2013

Accountability works

e.g.

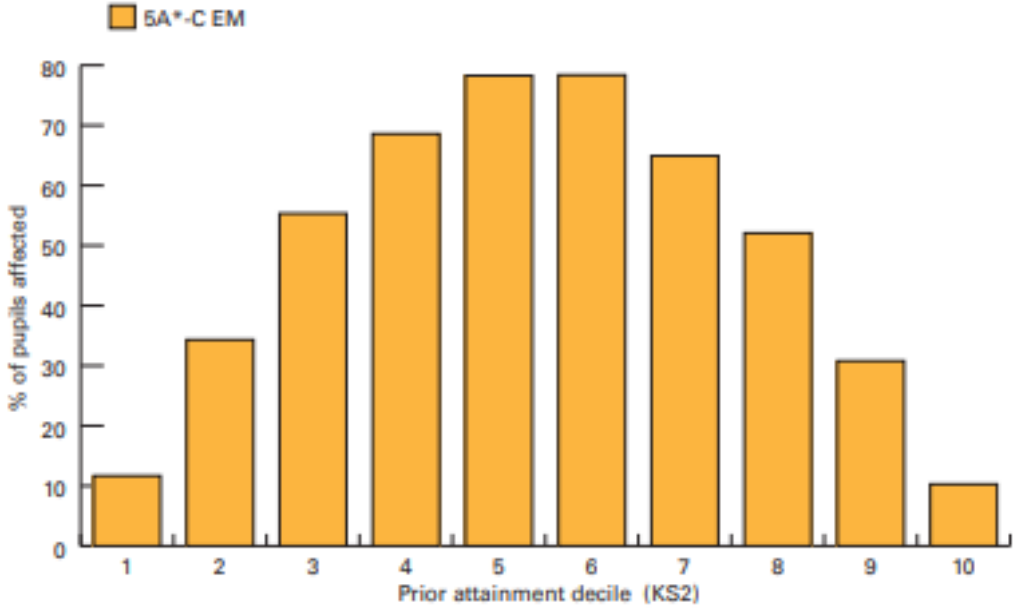
- Systems with autonomy and accountability do better (Fuchs and Woessmann 2007);
- Wales natural experiment (Burgess, Wilson and Worth 2010)
- No Child Left Behind (Carnoy and Loeb 2002; Hanushek and Raymond 2005)

Not so much history for HE.

But that's not always good

GCSEs and the C/D borderline

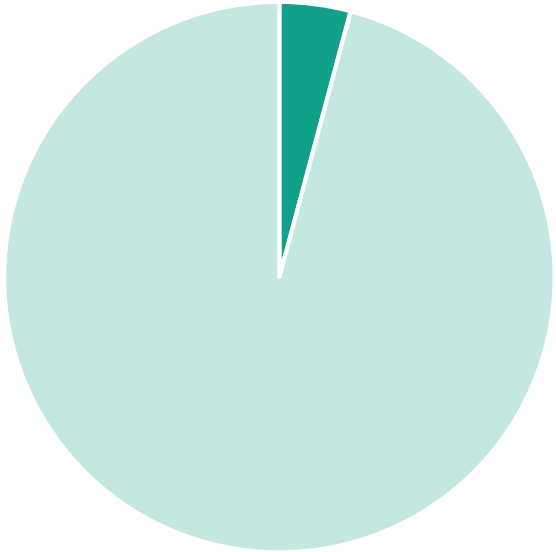
Figure 8 – Driving good school behaviour? Percentage of pupils affecting school score when changing grades by +/- 1



GCSEs and the equivalencies rule

- BTEC in fish husbandry = 2 GCSEs
- Level 2 diploma in horse care = 4 GCSEs

Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report



From 3000 to just 125 non-GCSEs

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Improvements take time.....

	Changes to main measures for secondary school
2008	5A*-C GCSEs & CVA
2009	English and maths bonus for CVA
2010	
2011	Change from CVA to VA
2012	
2013	
2014	Reduced equivalent qualifications.
2015	
2016	Move to Progress 8 and Attainment 8

Accountability hurts even when it's an improvement

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- E.g. Progress 8
  - Painful process
  - Cross party support
  - Everybody loved it, until….
- Uganda Value Added
  - Vested interests pushed the publication back 2 years

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…is HE different?

- Huge diversity of provision and objectives
- No external assessments
- International element important: Education as an export

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What TEF is getting right (subjective: DR)

- Panels
- Benchmarking
- Complexity kept in process, simplicity in outputs
- Review process

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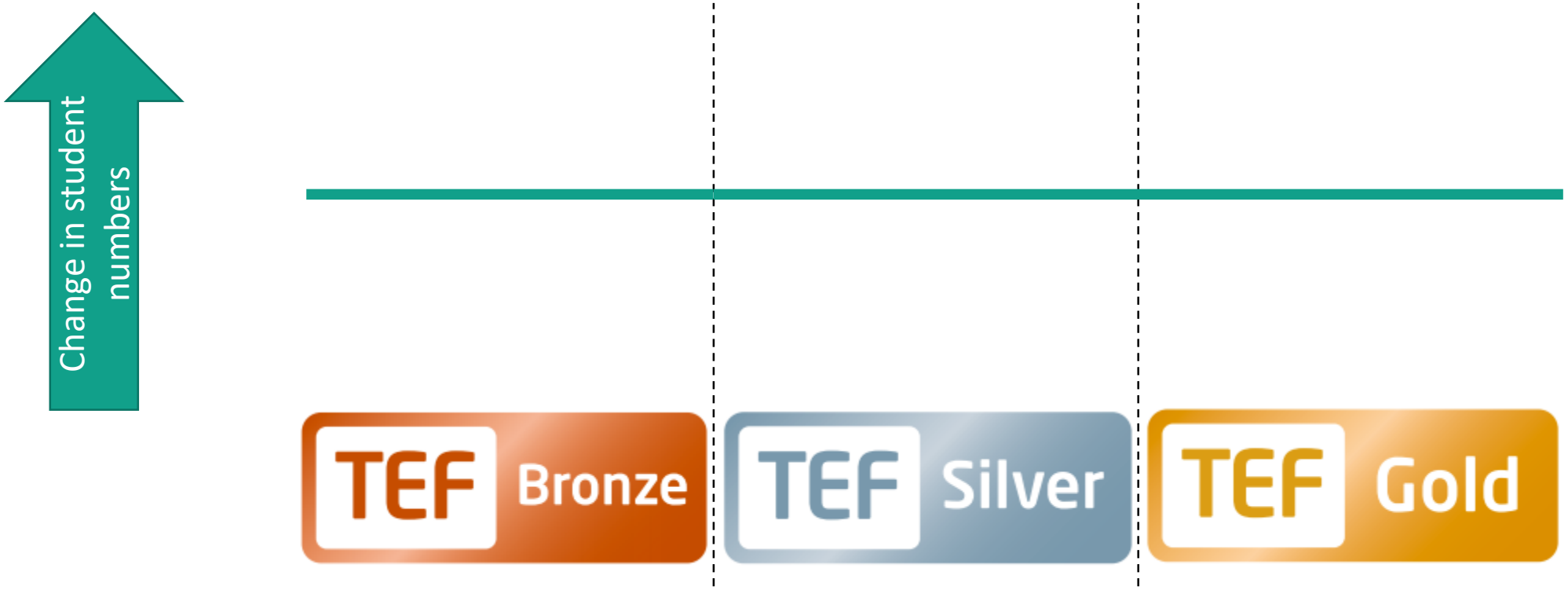
What is TEF getting right (objective)?

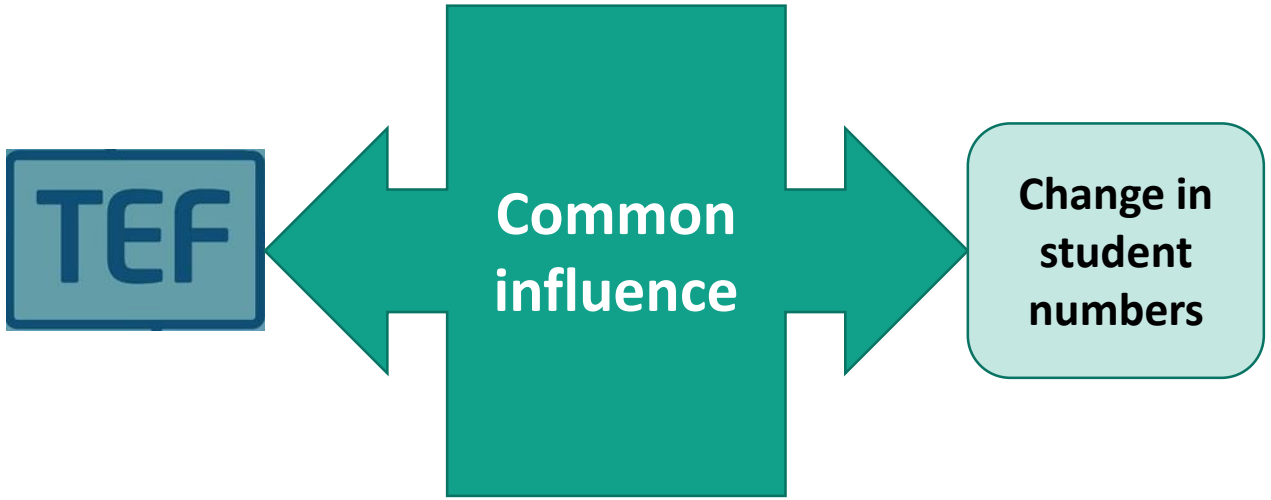
- How do potential students react?
  - Potential students increasingly using TEF to select institutions.

- How do institutions react?
  - Improvements in quality of provision for students and outcomes for graduates

Should see change in applications….

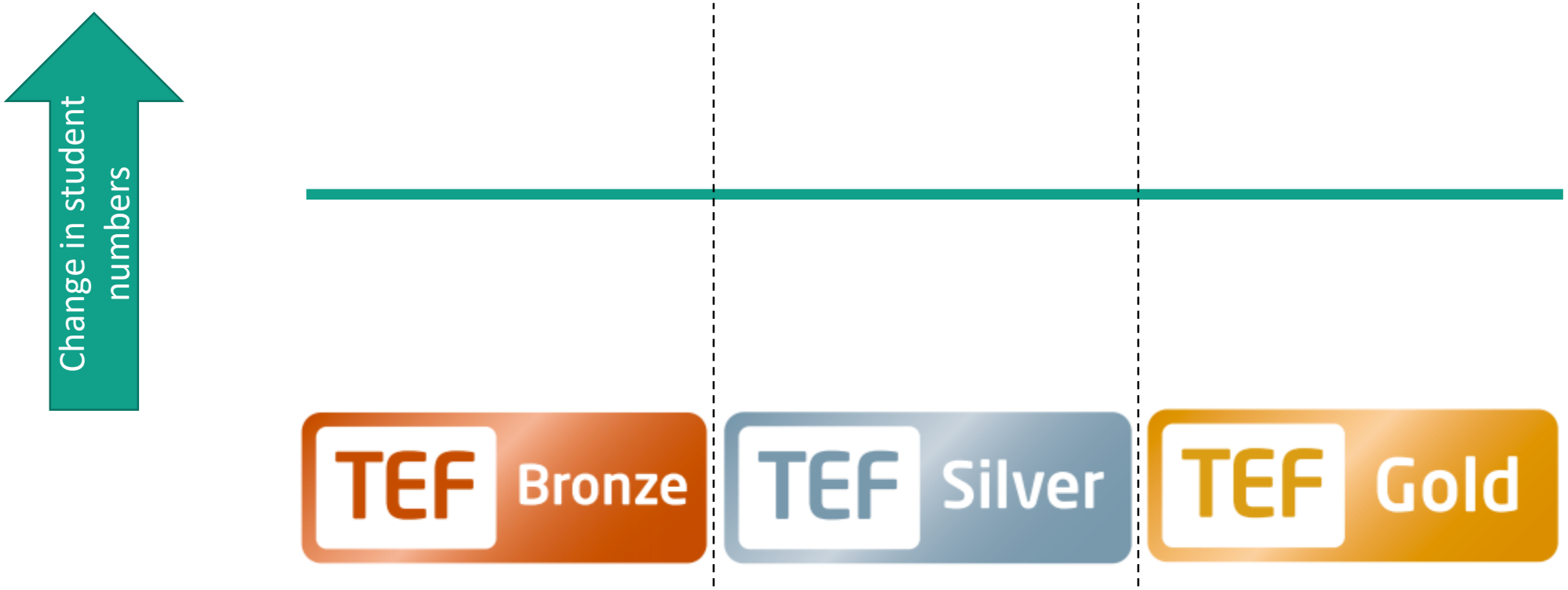


Could be a common influence

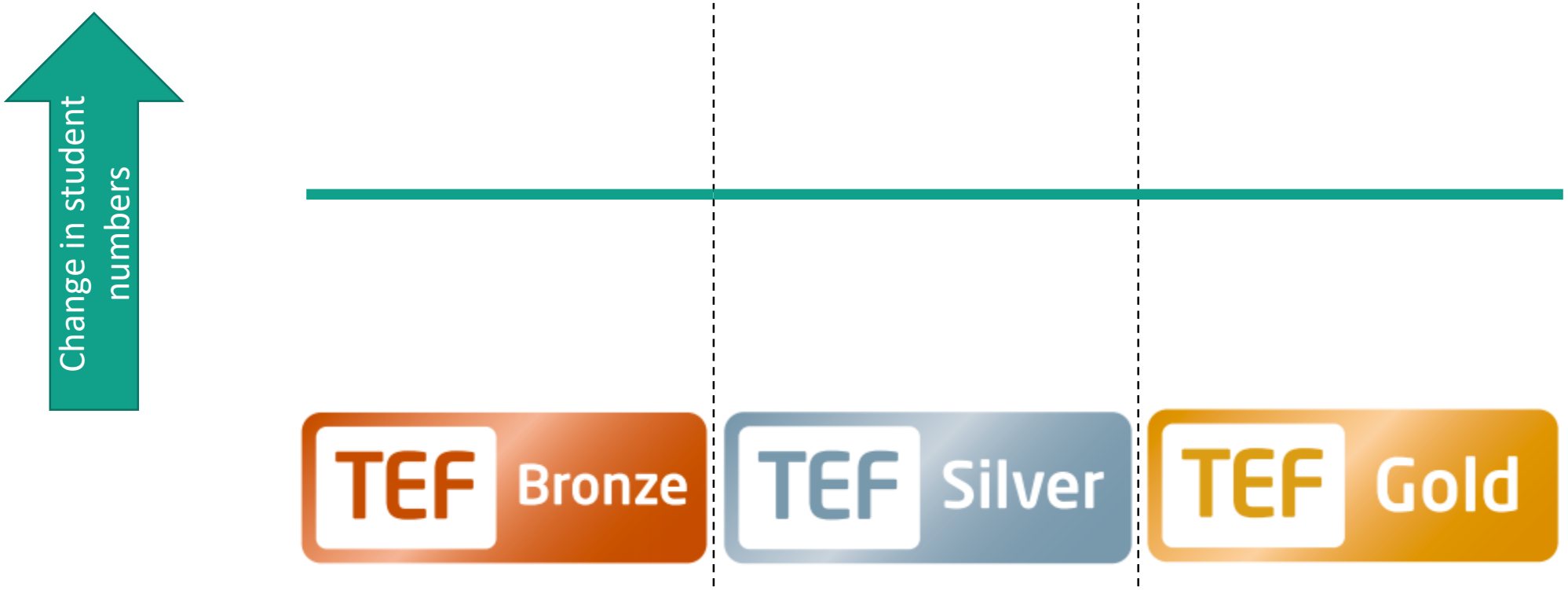


- But difficult to disentangle cause and effect
- Is TEF causing increases or are both applicants and TEF responding to common influence?
- Common influence could be an element of “quality” picked up by both TEF and changes in student numbers.

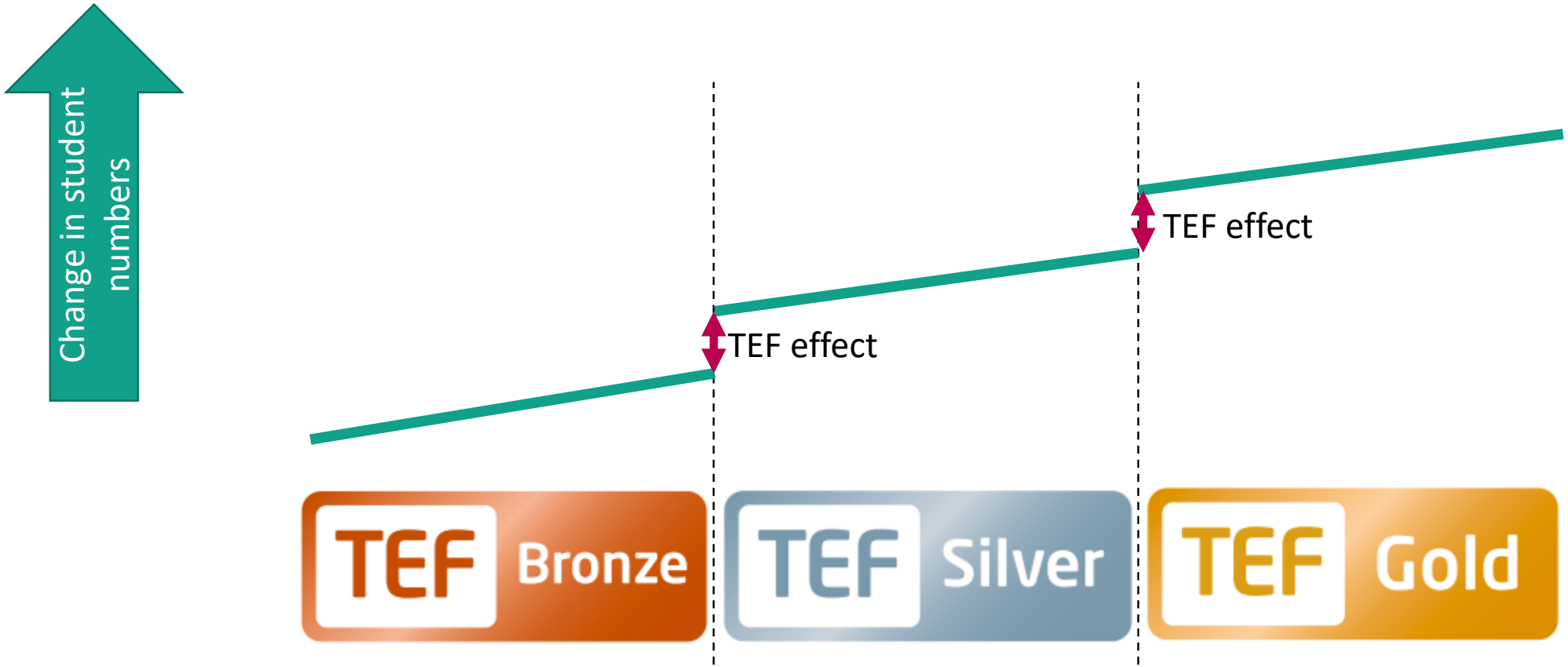
If TEF has no effect, but both applicants and TEF are responding to common influence



If all TEF, no other response to other influences



If both TEF has an effect, and applicants are responding to common influence



Use underlying data to create continuous TEF variable

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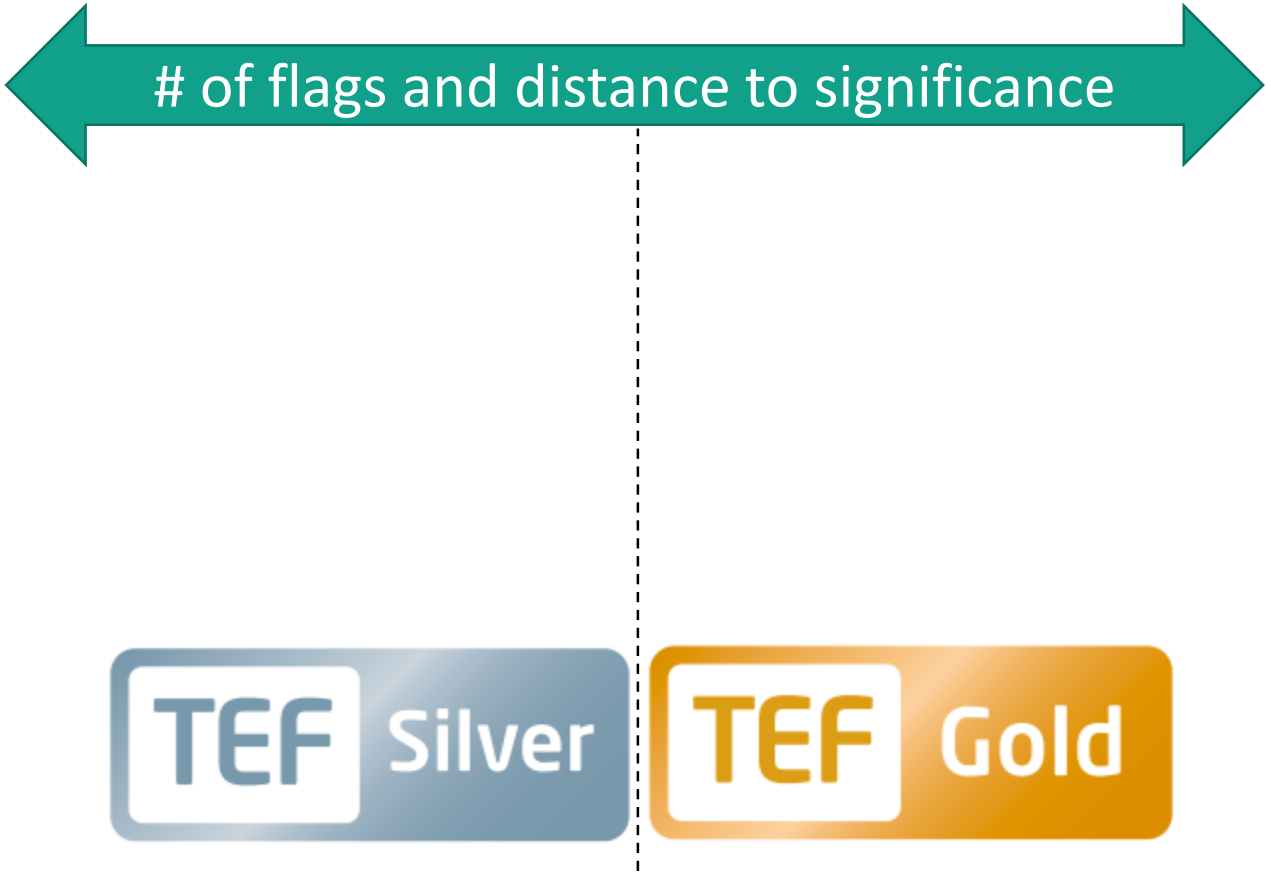
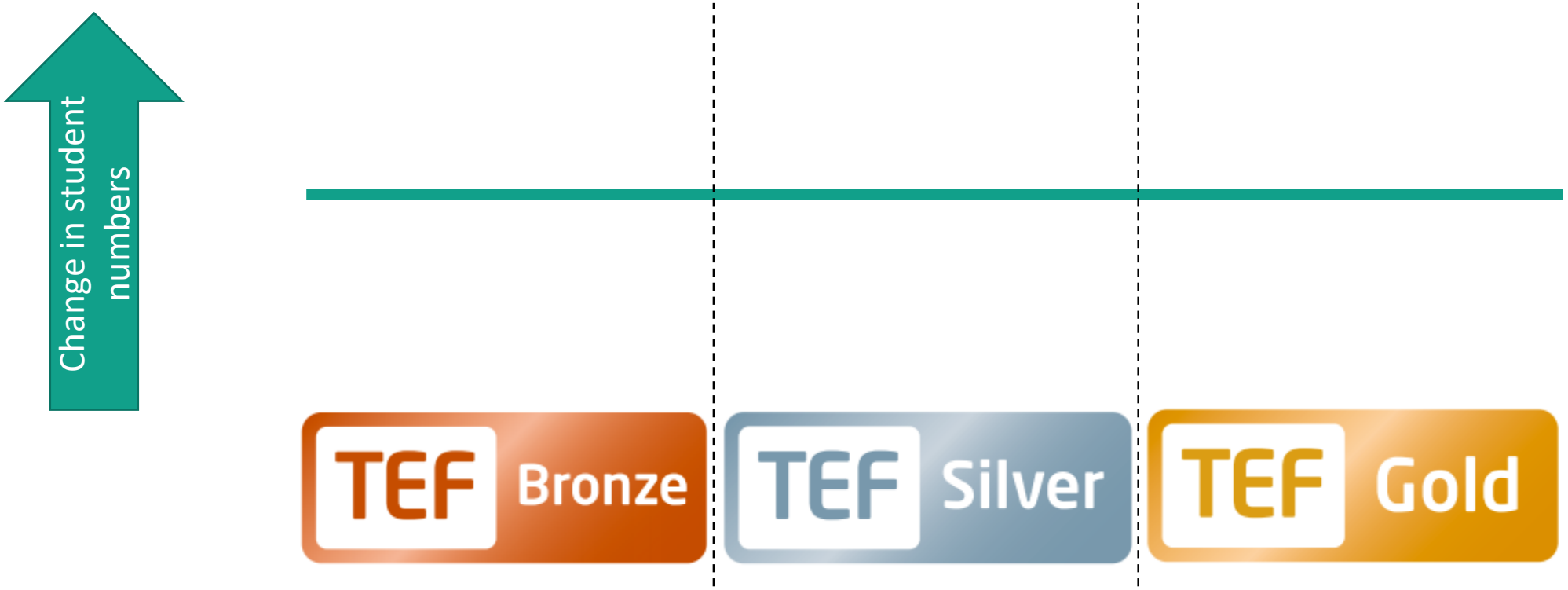
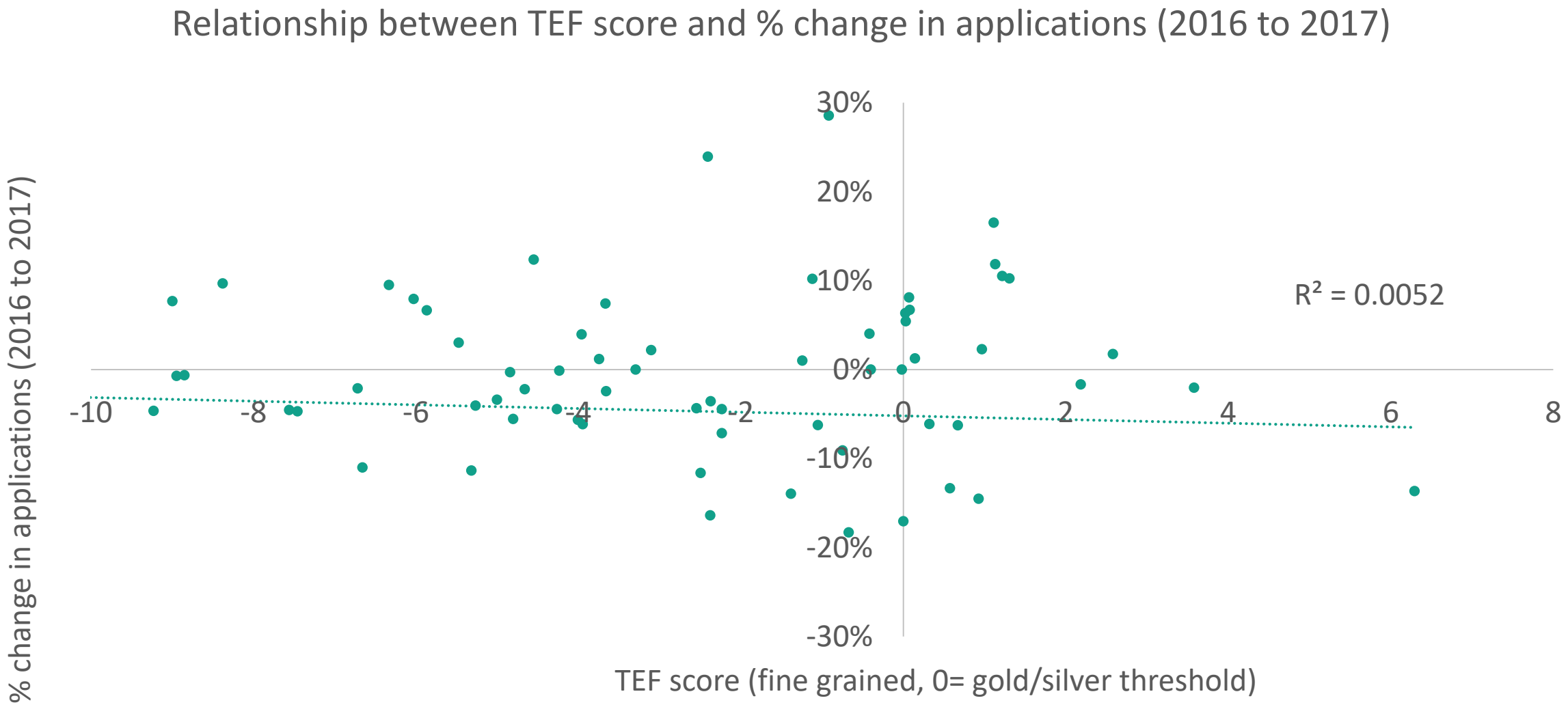


* Excluding those who had award changed by panel

What I found was…..



Or more specifically…



Change in applications not related to TEF award

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No TEF effect

- It's much too soon to tell whether TEF having an impact

No common influence: TEF and trend in applications

- Those qualities don't change much over time?

But often perceived influence can be just as important…

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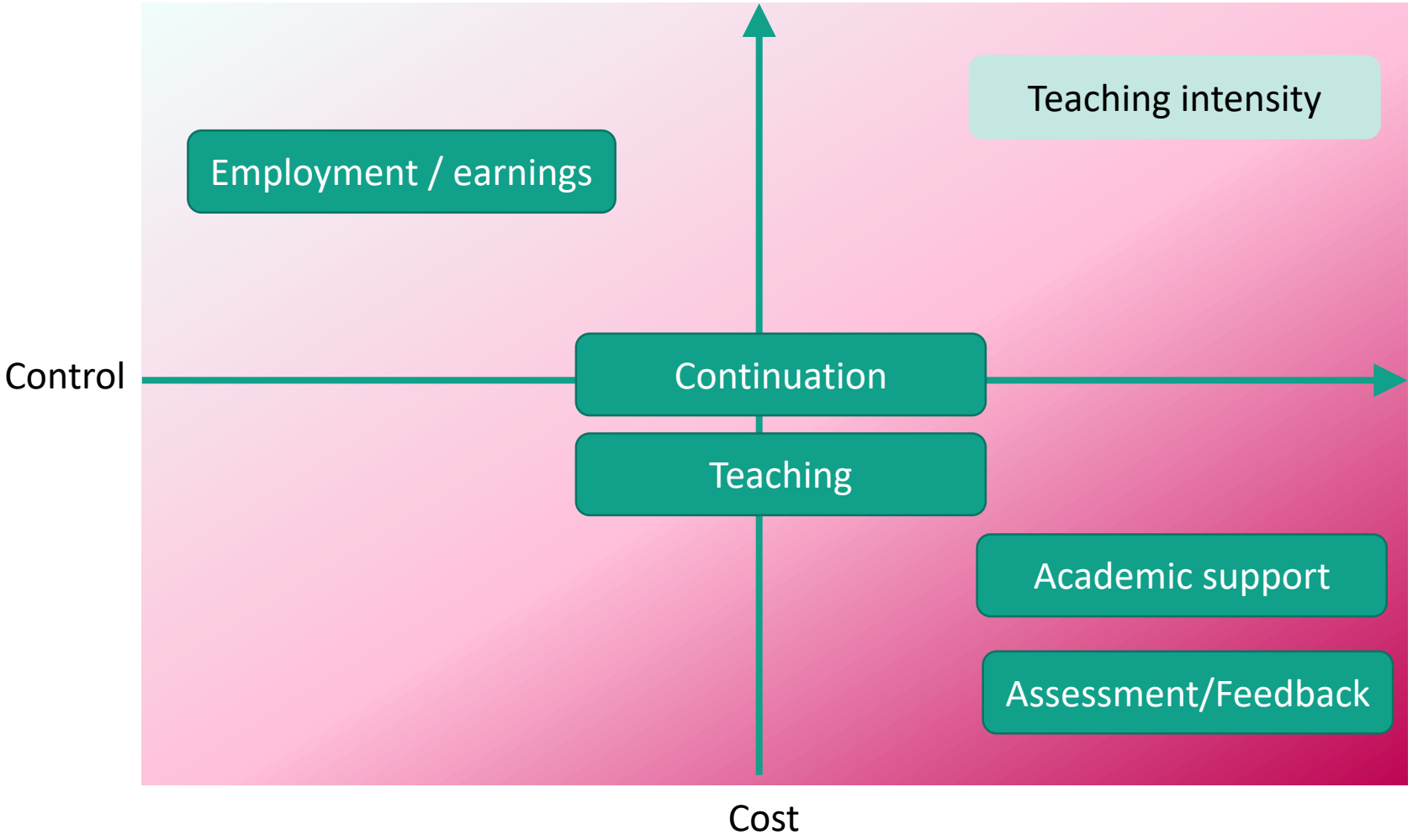
How about institutions?

- How do institutions react?
  - Depends upon strength of accountability
    - Alignment to fees?
    - Perceived to influence student choice?
- Consider changes to TEF metrics (as student numbers)
- External measures (learning gains)

Follow the measures



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Conclusion

- Judge TEF by its impact, not just its design
- Monitor for perverse incentives
- It will take time to get right