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Loughborough: The students' choice

BRILLIANT WRITING FOR STUDENTS BY STUDENTS

While Oxford and Cambridge traditionally top the university league tables, Alex Ogle discovers that you have to look a little further to find the colleges that students rate highest

Loughborough University has been crowned the most popular university among students.

The sport friendly institution was given the Student Experience award by the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* after an opinion poll of students.

Loughborough University won the prize after 6,500 students from 97 universities were polled about their own institutions. The university topped the poll due to its emphasis on life outside the lecture hall.

Ben Marks, managing director of Opinionpanel, who conducted the research, explained: "Loughborough really excelled when it came to offering a social life, extracurricular activities, amenities and sports facilities, underpinned by exceptionally high ratings for its academic performance."

Gemma Godfrey, President of the Loughborough University Students Union, agreed with that explanation. "When our students arrive on campus, they become involved with as many activities as possible and love every minute of it," she said.

"The award has confirmed for us what we knew all along - that the Loughborough experience is something totally unique. It's a feeling of enormous pride and



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belonging, something that our students are thrilled to be a part of."

Loughborough beat off heavyweight challengers for the Experience award, coming just ahead of Cambridge, St Andrews, Leeds and Liverpool.

John O'Leary, Editor of the *THES*, said Loughborough's win may surprise outsiders who would expect universities with a wilder nightlife to be more popular. But he thinks students enjoy smaller institutions for the more intimate experience.

"There's more opportunity for students to identify with the university, and to create their own social scene," he said.

The university, whose sports facilities were counted as major factor in the win, is considered the number one for sport in the UK, and counts world record-breaking athletes such as Paula Radcliffe and Steve Backley among its alumni.



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