

## **Sunderland tops national poll for giving students best experience**

The University of Sunderland has been named the top university in England for providing the best student experience.

More than 10,000 undergraduates from 170 institutions were asked how they rated their experiences at university, in a national survey commissioned by the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES).

Sunderland polled the highest overall ratings for an English university, ahead of Oxford and Cambridge.

Students said Sunderland's performance in areas such as facilities, social life, prospects, course satisfaction and exceeding expectations was the best in the country.

Professor Peter Fidler, University of Sunderland vice-chancellor, said: "It is wonderful to have such a glowing report from the students, whose opinion is so important. This recognition highlights how much good work has gone on at Sunderland over the past few years."

Since 2001 Sunderland has been named the best new university in England.

by the Guardian and Government performance indicators showed Sunderland as the best new university in England for the quality, range and quantity of its research.

It is also credited as one of the leading higher education institutions for widening participation – attracting students to university with no history of higher education in the family.

The university recently attracted attention for its high number of students who find work soon after leaving Sunderland. Government performance indicators show that 94% of graduates get jobs within six months of graduating.

In the latest Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) review – the organisation that checks academic standards – Sunderland was awarded the highest possible ratings for the quality of its courses. The same rating was given to its teaching, learning environment and student support as part of a full QAA audit.

These standards are expected to rise further with the quality of staff being attracted to Sunderland. Over the past year former Education Secretary Estelle Morris, England's former Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, Dr Jim Smith, and world-renowned scientist Professor Eric Senior have joined the university.

Students also highly praised the facilities at Sunderland - its riverside campus was recently given a 'wow' factor rating by influential architecture organisation CABE.

Ben Marks, managing director at specialist education researchers Opinionpanel Research which carried out the poll for the THES, said the award cut to the heart of the new agenda for universities – the students' entitlement to get value for their tuition fees.

The top three universities in the UK were University of Wales, Sunderland and St Andrews.

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