

HOW THE GUIDE WAS COMPILED

The Sunday Times has compiled this guide from the latest data available. The following methodology shows how we used the information in our league table and individual university profiles.

THE LEAGUE TABLE

Universities were ranked according to marks scored in seven key performance areas.

Teaching satisfaction (250 points) The 250 league table points in this section are split equally between teaching quality assessments and the National Student Survey. Subject areas have been assessed on a rolling programme. The number of "excellent" areas is shown in university profiles as a percentage of the total number of subjects assessed at each university since 1995. Excellence is defined as: subjects scoring at least 22/24 points, those ranked excellent, or those in which there is confidence in academic standards and in which teaching and learning, student progression and learning resources have all been ranked commendable. Teacher training excellence is based on a ranking system using Ofsted assessments, produced by Professor Alan Smithers and Dr Pamela Robinson of the Centre for Education and Employment Research, University of Buckingham. The results of the 2005 National Student Survey are scored taking a theoretical minimum and maximum score of 50% and 90% respectively. This meant each percentage point movement in the NSS was worth 3.125 points in the league table. Mean scores were awarded to Cambridge, Oxford, Warwick, East London, Thames Valley, City and all Scottish institutions. Sources: Quality Assurance Agency; Scottish Higher Education Funding Council; Higher Education Funding Council for Wales; National Student Survey, all accurate as at September 22, 2005.

Heads' assessment (50) Heads were asked to identify the highest-quality undergraduate provision. The number of subject citations at each institution is expressed as a percentage of the maximum number possible. The highest score was 46% and was awarded this number of points in the table.

Research quality (200) We used data from the most recent Research Assessment Exercise, published in December 2001. Seven different ratings were awarded for quality. The number of staff entered for assessment was also recorded. We have taken into account both the quality and quantity of research assessed to produce a percentage score for excellence. Source: Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce).

A/AS-level points (250) Nationally audited data for the 2003/04 academic year were used for league table calculations. Points gained under the Ucas tariff system from A- and AS-levels were used to calculate scores for all universities, except those where entrants holding Highers were in the majority. Grades were awarded points according to the following scale: A-levels — A:120, B:100, C:80, D:60 and E:40; AS-levels — A:60, B:50, C:40, D:30, E:20; Highers — A:72, B:60, C:48. A ceiling was set of 500 points and a percentage of all available points calculated for each university. Source: Hesa, 2003/04 data.

Unemployment (100) The number of students assumed to be unemployed six months after graduation was calculated as a percentage of the total number of known destinations. This is shown as a percentage in each profile. For the league table calculation the percentage was subtracted from 50. Separately, the percentage of full-time first-degree graduates in full-time non-graduate jobs as defined by SOC 2000 grouping was subtracted from 50. The two scores out of 50 were added to produce the league table score. Source: Hesa, 2003/04 Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education data.

First/2:1s awarded (100) We calculated the percentage of students who graduated with firsts or 2:1 degrees. Unclassified degrees were excluded. Source: Hesa, 2003/04 data.

Student/staff ratio (100) Student/staff ratio calculated by Hesa by institution. The University of Central Lancashire and the LSE provided their own calculations. We took a ratio of 10:1 as a benchmark for excellence, worthy of 100 points in the league table. Source: Hesa, 2003/04 data.

Dropout rate (variable) The number of students who drop out before completing their courses was compared with the number expected to do so (the benchmark figure shown in brackets). Benchmarks vary between universities according to subject mix and students' entry qualifications. The percentage difference between the projected dropout rate and the benchmark was multiplied by 5 and awarded as a bonus/penalty mark. Universities that lost fewer students than their benchmark gained; those losing more had points deducted. Source: Hefce, Performance Indicators in Higher Education 2002/03 except Abertay Dundee, Glamorgan, Glasgow Caledonian, and Wolverhampton, 2001/02.

* Scores for the University of Manchester are based on those of the present university and Umist. Scores for Cardiff University incorporate the University of Wales College of Medicine. London Metropolitan University is excluded from the guide following the withholding of data from The Sunday Times.

OTHER INDICATORS IN THE PROFILES

Teaching excellence The percentage of subjects rated excellent during teaching-quality assessments from 1995 onwards. See definition under teaching satisfaction, above.

Student satisfaction Answers to all 22 questions in the National Student Survey on a five-point scale were analysed to produce an overall score for each institution expressed as a percentage of the maximum score possible.

Head teacher ranking The rank achieved in a Sunday Times survey of head teachers' opinion of course quality.

Peer ranking The rank achieved in a Sunday Times survey of academics' opinion of course quality.

A-levels for entry This shows the percentage of students of known background admitted to first-year courses (full-time or sandwich) in 2003/04 whose highest qualifications were A-levels (or Highers for Scottish universities). Source: UK universities/Hesa.

Undergraduates/postgraduates The first figure in each category shows the number of full-time students, the second, in brackets, part-time. Source: Hesa 2003/04.

Teaching staff The number of staff at each university engaged in teaching and research. It excludes those engaged solely in research work and part-time staff, paid by the hour, who practise a profession or trade outside. Source: Hesa 2003/04.

Applications/places The ratio of degree-course applicants to the number accepted for these courses who applied through Ucas. The figure shown in brackets is the percentage increase or decrease in applications this year up to June 30, 2005. Source: Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (Ucas) annual statistical tables, 2004 entry, and Ucas 2005 application data.

Clearing entry The percentage of spare places filled through clearing. Source: UK universities, 2004 entry.

Bursaries The number of means-tested non-repayable bursaries expected to be awarded in 2006/07 following the introduction of £3,000 tuition fee ceiling in England and Northern Ireland, together with the minimum and maximum awards. For Scotland and Wales, where fees will not rise to £3,000, n/a is often shown or much smaller provision.

Scholarships The number of scholarships expected to be awarded in 2006/07 on the basis of academic merit (unless specified), together with the minimum and maximum awards. For Scotland and Wales, where fees will not rise to £3,000, n/a is often shown or much smaller provision. For both bursaries and scholarships, the qualification criteria are still being finalised in many cases. Please check details with institutions.

EU/overseas students This shows the percentage of students from the European Union and overseas in 2004 who applied through Ucas. Source: Ucas annual statistical tables, 2004 entry.

Mature students The percentage of students aged 21 or over when they began their undergraduate courses in September 2004. Source: Ucas annual statistical tables, 2004 entry.

State school The percentage of young full-time first-degree students of known background drawn from state schools or colleges. Source: Hefce, Performance Indicators in Higher Education, 2003/04.

Lowest social classes The percentage of young full-time first-degree students of known background whose parental occupation is non-skilled manual, semi-skilled or unskilled (social classes C2, D, E). Source: Hefce, Performance Indicators in Higher Education, 2003/04.

Low-participation areas The percentage of young full-time first-degree students of known background whose home postcode has a low participation record in higher education. Source: Hefce, Performance Indicators in Higher Education, 2003/04.

Live in The percentage of full-time undergraduates living in university accommodation, 2004/05. The figure in brackets shows the percentage for first-years wanting to live in only. Also shown are the minimum and maximum costs of university-run student accommodation to the nearest pound. Source: UK universities.

Rated excellent A full list of the subjects at each institution considered to be excellent under The Sunday Times's criteria, including the pre-1995 assessments now excluded from league table calculations.

☐ All telephone numbers, addresses and websites listed are for admission inquiries

COLLEGES OFFERING DEGREES

This list gives brief details, with contact numbers and e-mail addresses for admissions and websites, for key higher education colleges that offer undergraduate degree courses and are not profiled elsewhere in this guide. Most are specialist or single-subject institutions with limited intakes. Many offer degrees awarded or validated by a neighbouring university, details of which are listed below. Courses rated excellent for teaching quality are highlighted. Further information is available from Ucas at www.ucas.co.uk or the Standing Conference of Principals at www.scop.ac.uk

BARNESLEY COLLEGE 01226 216 216. programme.enquiries@barnesley.ac.uk www.barnesley.ac.uk Degrees: Huddersfield.

Rated excellent (5) Business and management; English; geography; history; politics.

BISHOP GROSSETESTE COLLEGE 01522 527 347. info@bgc.ac.uk www.bgc.ac.uk Degrees: Leicester.

BRITISH COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE 020 7435 6464 info@bcom.ac.uk www.bcom.ac.uk Private. Degrees: Westminster and accredited by the General Osteopathic Council.

BRITISH SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHY 020 7089 5316 admissions@bso.ac.uk www.bso.ac.uk Private. Degrees: Luton.

CENTRAL SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA 020 7722 8183. enquiries@cssd.ac.uk www.cssd.ac.uk Degrees: Open.

Rated excellent (3) Drama, dance and cinematics; art and design; education.

COLCHESTER INSTITUTE 01206 518777. admissions@colchester.ac.uk www.colchester.ac.uk Degrees: Anglia Polytechnic University.

CROYDON COLLEGE 020 8686 5700. info@croydon.ac.uk www.croydon.ac.uk Degrees: London Metropolitan.

Rated excellent (1) Education

CUMBRIA INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS 01228 400 300. info@cumbria.ac.uk www.cumbria.ac.uk Degrees: Central Lancashire.

DARTINGTON COLLEGE OF ARTS 01803 862 224. registry@dartington.ac.uk www.dartington.ac.uk Degrees: Plymouth.

Rated excellent (1) Drama, dance and cinematics.

EDINBURGH COLLEGE OF ART 0131 221 6027. registry@eca.ac.uk www.eca.ac.uk

Degrees: Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt.

Rated excellent (1) Architecture, architecture technology and landscape architecture.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE FALMOUTH 01326 211 077. admissions@falmouth.ac.uk www.falmouth.ac.uk

Degrees: own.

Rated excellent (1) Art and design.

GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART 0141 353 4517. registry-1@gsa.ac.uk www.gsa.ac.uk Degrees: Glasgow.

Rated excellent (1) Architecture, architecture technology and landscape architecture.

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE 01952 815 000. admissions@harper-adams.ac.uk www.harper-adams.ac.uk

Rated excellent (3) Agriculture, forestry and agricultural sciences; food science; land and property management.

THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE FOR PERFORMING ARTS 0151 330 3000. admissions@lipa.ac.uk www.lipa.ac.uk Degrees: Liverpool John Moores.

NEWMAN COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION 0121 476 1181 (ex 2205). registry@newman.ac.uk www.newman.ac.uk Degrees: Leicester.

NORTHERN SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE 0113 219 3000. info@nscd.ac.uk www.nscd.ac.uk Degrees: Leeds.

Rated excellent (1) Drama, dance and cinematics.

NORWICH SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN 01603 610 561. info@nsad.ac.uk www.nsad.ac.uk Degrees: Anglia Polytechnic University.

RAVENSBORNE COLLEGE OF DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION 020 8289 4900. info@rave.ac.uk www.rave.ac.uk Degrees: Sussex.

REGENTS BUSINESS SCHOOL LONDON 020 7477 2990 info@rbslondon.ac.uk www.rbslondon.ac.uk Private. Degrees: Open.

ROSE BRUFORD COLLEGE 020 8308 2600 enquiries@bruford.ac.uk www.bruford.ac.uk Degrees: Manchester.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC 020 7873 7373. go@ram.ac.uk www.ram.ac.uk Degrees: London.

Rated excellent (1) Music.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC 020 7591 4362. admissions@rcm.ac.uk www.rcm.ac.uk

Rated excellent (1) Music.

ROYAL NORTHERN COLLEGE OF MUSIC 0161 907 5200. info@mcm.ac.uk www.mcm.ac.uk Degrees: Manchester.

Rated excellent (1) Music.

ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DRAMA 0141 332 4101. registry@rsamd.ac.uk www.rsamd.ac.uk

Rated excellent (1) Music.

ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE 020 7468 5311. registry@rvc.ac.uk www.rvc.ac.uk Degrees: London.

Rated excellent (1) Veterinary medicine.

ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE OF MUSIC AND DRAMA 029 2034 2854. admissions@rwcmd.ac.uk www.rwcmd.ac.uk Degrees: Wales.

ST GEORGE'S, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON 020 8725 5201/0499. medicine@sgul.ac.uk/physio@sgul.ac.uk www.sgul.ac.uk Degrees: London.

Rated excellent (3) Medicine; subjects allied to medicine; nursing.

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY 020 7753 5831. registry@ulsop.ac.uk www.ulsop.ac.uk Degrees: London.

Rated excellent (1) Pharmacology and pharmacy.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMARTHEN 01267 676 767. registry@trinity-cm.ac.uk www.trinity-cm.ac.uk Degrees: Wales.

TRINITY COLLEGE OF MUSIC 020 8305 4402. admissions@tcm.ac.uk www.tcm.ac.uk Degrees: Westminster.

Rated excellent (1) Music.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS Formed in August by the merger of: Kent Institute of Art and Design 01622 620 000. info@kiad.ac.uk www.kiad.ac.uk

Rated excellent (1) Art and design

The Surrey Institute of Art & Design University College 01252 722 441. registry@surrart.ac.uk www.surrart.ac.uk

WIMBLEDON SCHOOL OF ART 020 8408 5086. LTinsley@wimbledon.ac.uk www.wimbledon.ac.uk Degrees: Surrey.

Rated excellent (1) Art and design, history of art, architecture and design.

WRITTLE COLLEGE 01245 424 200. info@writtle.ac.uk www.writtle.ac.uk Degrees: Essex.