

# Social life high on wish list

Students value good extracurricular activities just as much as high academic standards. **Rebecca Attwood** reports

A good social life and extracurricular activities rank alongside teaching quality when it comes to the factors students consider most central to their university experience, *The Times Higher's* annual student survey reveals.

Many of the attributes that students cited as being most key to their university experience were related to academic study, including a well-equipped library, a good relationship with teaching staff and a fair workload.

But when Opinionpanel Research examined which factors actually correlated to students' decisions to recommend their uni-

versity, it found that the "soft" and social aspects of student life were valued far more highly than expected.

While "high-quality staff/lectures" scored highly, so did "good community atmosphere", "personal requirements catered for", "good environment on campus" and a "good social life".

Shirley Pearce, vice-chancellor of Loughborough University, which topped the table, said Loughborough achieved its success on both academic and non-academic grounds.

"We are over the moon," she said. "In my view, this is a conse-

quence of the environment that our staff work so hard to create at Loughborough.

"In terms of both academic and non-academic aspects, we have a first-rate campus, and whether it is academic staff, estates, catering, gardening or support staff, we have fantastic teams with a real commitment to excellence. We also have an excellent students union we work very closely with."

Cambridge University claims second place, with high scores in academic areas, including personal relationships with teaching staff and small group tuition. It



**Loving Loughborough: students rated the university top**

also scores highly on extracurricular activities and societies, accommodation and community atmosphere.

Mark Fletcher, president of

Cambridge University Students' Union, credited the collegiate environment. He said: "There is a real community feel."

"Having 500 people living and

working in the same place makes people feel very attached to their college. There are also hundreds of societies, so there's something for everyone. Students really enjoy their time here and the fact so many would recommend the university to a friend is encouraging."

In third place is Glasgow University. Mhari Wilson, president of Glasgow's Students' Representative Council, said: "I am not surprised Glasgow scored highly.

"There is so much to do on campus and over 90 clubs and societies. I think students recognise that extracurricular activities are not just about what you get out of it but are good for your CV.

"There is a strong sense of community here — it is a really positive place to be."

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STUDENT EXPERIENCE RANKINGS			Most important										Fairly important					Least important						
University	Number of respondents	Overall score	High-quality staff/lectures	Helpful/interested staff	Well-structured courses	Good social life	Good community atmosphere	Good extracurricular activities/societies	Good environment on campus/around university	High-quality facilities	Personal requirements catered for	Good student union	Good support/welfare	Good personal relationship with teaching staff	Centralised/convenient facilities	Good industry connections	Cheap shop/bar/amenities	Tuition in small groups	Good accommodation	Good library and library opening hours	Fair workload	Good security	Good sports facilities	I would recommend my university to a friend*
1 Loughborough University	282	8.97	6.0	5.8	5.8	6.3	6.2	6.4	6.3	6.3	5.6	6.5	5.7	5.5	6.2	5.9	5.7	5.4	5.6	6.1	5.5	5.6	6.7	6.4
2 Cambridge University	526	8.76	6.5	6.4	6.1	5.7	6.1	6.4	6.3	6.1	5.8	4.4	5.9	6.2	5.6	5.8	4.5	6.8	6.0	6.4	4.5	5.6	5.4	6.5
3 Glasgow University	110	8.73	6.1	6.0	5.9	6.1	6.0	6.0	6.1	5.9	5.3	6.1	5.6	5.7	6.0	5.3	5.8	5.7	5.1	6.2	5.6	5.6	6.0	6.2
4 Oxford University	458	8.73	6.5	6.4	6.1	5.8	6.1	6.4	6.2	6.1	5.7	4.1	5.8	6.3	5.7	5.6	4.6	6.8	5.8	6.5	4.6	5.5	5.7	6.4
5 St Andrews University	63	8.72	6.4	6.1	5.9	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.4	5.8	5.6	5.2	6.0	6.0	6.0	4.9	4.8	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.8	6.1	5.3	6.4
6 University of Wales, Aberystwyth	66	8.65	6.1	6.0	5.9	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.2	5.7	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.9	4.9	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.4	6.3
7 Sheffield University	644	8.64	5.9	5.8	5.7	6.3	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.8	5.3	6.5	5.7	5.5	5.8	5.1	5.6	5.4	5.3	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.7	6.3
8 Dundee University	45	8.64	6.1	6.1	5.8	6.0	5.7	5.9	6.0	5.8	5.5	5.8	5.5	5.8	6.1	5.2	5.5	5.4	5.6	6.1	5.8	5.6	5.5	6.1
9 University of East Anglia	330	8.62	6.0	5.8	5.7	6.1	6.1	6.2	6.2	5.8	5.4	5.8	5.7	5.5	6.1	5.0	4.7	5.1	5.9	5.9	5.5	5.5	6.5	6.3
10 University of Wales, Bangor	39	8.59	6.1	6.1	5.8	5.9	6.1	6.1	6.3	5.6	5.5	5.3	5.9	5.9	5.8	4.8	5.2	5.3	5.7	6.3	5.6	5.4	5.4	6.1
11 Heriot-Watt University	31	8.58	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.7	6.3	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.7	5.7	6.0	5.7	5.4	5.3	5.5	6.3	5.5	5.5	6.1	6.2
12 Southampton University	510	8.58	5.9	5.8	5.7	6.0	5.8	6.1	6.1	5.9	5.3	5.9	5.5	5.5	5.8	5.3	5.6	5.2	5.5	6.2	5.4	5.6	6.0	6.2
13 University of Wales, Swansea	55	8.57	6.0	5.7	5.7	6.2	6.0	6.1	6.2	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.7	6.2	5.0	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.9	5.7	5.3	5.8	6.3
14 Leeds University	513	8.56	5.8	5.8	5.6	6.3	5.9	6.0	6.0	5.8	5.4	6.2	5.6	5.4	5.8	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.6	6.2	5.4	5.6	5.4	6.3
15 Bath University	338	8.52	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.8	6.0	6.1	6.0	5.4	5.2	5.5	5.4	6.1	5.9	4.5	5.1	5.5	6.5	5.2	5.8	6.6	6.1
16 Cardiff University	217	8.48	5.8	5.6	5.7	6.2	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.6	5.3	6.1	5.5	5.5	5.7	5.2	5.7	5.2	5.6	6.0	5.4	5.5	5.2	6.2
17 Warwick University	433	8.47	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.8	6.0	6.3	6.2	5.9	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.4	6.0	5.5	4.0	5.2	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.6	5.9	6.2
18 Teesside University	140	8.42	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.9	5.3	6.0	5.4	5.7	6.0	5.2	5.4	5.5	4.8	6.2	5.4	5.5	5.8	5.9
19 Durham University	511	8.42	6.0	5.8	5.8	5.9	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.6	5.4	4.9	5.9	5.5	5.4	5.0	5.4	5.3	5.6	5.9	5.4	5.6	5.2	6.3
20 Stirling University	68	8.41	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.0	6.5	5.8	5.3	5.0	5.5	5.5	6.1	5.0	4.6	5.7	4.5	5.0	5.7	5.6	6.4	6.0
21 Exeter University	358	8.41	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.9	6.0	6.0	6.3	5.7	5.2	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.8	4.9	5.2	5.2	5.5	5.8	5.4	5.5	5.6	6.1
22 Hull University	211	8.40	5.9	5.9	5.6	5.9	5.8	5.5	6.0	5.7	5.4	5.9	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.0	5.7	5.5	5.3	5.4	6.1
23 Leicester University	349	8.39	5.9	5.8	5.7	5.9	5.8	5.9	6.0	5.6	5.2	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.1	5.2	5.5	5.6	5.9	5.4	5.5	5.3	6.1
24 Surrey University	211	8.37	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.8	6.1	5.6	5.4	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.9	6.1	4.3	4.7	5.6	6.0	5.3	5.7	5.4	6.0
25 Newcastle University	554	8.37	5.7	5.6	5.6	6.4	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.7	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.2	5.9	5.2	5.0	4.8	5.3	5.6	5.3	5.4	5.7	6.2
26 Reading University	318	8.35	5.8	5.6	5.6	6.0	5.8	5.8	6.2	5.5	5.3	5.7	5.5	5.5	5.8	5.1	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.7	5.4	5.3	5.6	6.1
27 Portsmouth University	245	8.33	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.6	5.3	5.2	5.4	5.6	5.8	5.1	5.1	5.3	5.4	6.2	5.5	5.5	5.4	6.0
28 Gloucestershire University	113	8.33	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.4	6.0	5.8	5.2	5.6	5.4	5.8	5.5	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.5	6.0	5.7	5.5	4.9	5.8
29 Liverpool University	388	8.31	5.7	5.7	5.6	6.1	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.5	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.8	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.0	6.3	5.3	5.4	5.5	6.0
30 Lancaster University	468	8.30	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.9	6.1	5.9	6.1	5.5	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.8	4.8	4.9	5.3	5.7	5.8	5.3	5.8	4.9	6.0
31 Manchester University	662	8.29	5.7	5.5	5.5	6.3	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.7	5.2	5.1	5.3	5.2	5.6	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.5	6.1	5.3	5.5	5.6	6.2
32 Edinburgh University	216	8.29	5.8	5.6	5.4	6.1	5.6	6.0	5.8	5.7	5.2	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.7	5.0	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.6	5.3	5.2	5.8	6.2
33 Strathclyde University	212	8.28	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.8	5.6	5.5	5.8	5.4	5.4	5.7	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.6	5.0	5.3	4.8	5.7	5.3	5.3	5.2	6.1
34 Chichester University	70	8.28	6.0	6.0	5.8	5.5	5.9	5.1	5.9	5.4	5.3	5.2	5.3	6.0	5.5	5.0	5.1	5.7	5.4	5.7	5.6	5.3	5.2	6.1
35 Glamorgan University	58	8.28	5.6	5.7	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.5	5.8	5.8	5.4	5.3	5.5	5.8	5.8	5.0	4.9	5.4	5.3	5.9	5.4	5.7	5.8	5.7
36 Birmingham University	543	8.27	5.7	5.5	5.4	6.1	5.9	5.9	6.1	5.6	5.3	5.2	5.5	5.3	5.8	5.2	4.7	5.0	5.2	5.9	5.2	5.3	5.5	6.1
37 Huddersfield University	142	8.25	5.9	5.8	5.5	5.7	5.7	5.2	5.8	5.5	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.9	5.9	5.2	5.3	5.4	4.8	6.2	5.5	5.5	4.7	5.9
38 Essex University	181	8.18	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.9	5.3	5.1	5.1	5.3	5.6	5.7	4.7	4.5	5.2	5.6	5.9	5.5	5.5	5.2	5.9
39 University of Central Lancashire	224	8.18	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.7	5.6	5.2	5.4	5.3	5.7	5.7	5.1	4.8	5.3	5.0	6.2	5.4	5.5	5.2	5.7
40 Aberdeen University	59	8.17	6.1	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.9	5.5	5.5	4.0	5.3	5.9	5.7	5.1	4.6	5.5	4.7	5.5	5.7	5.4	5.2	6.0
41 Kent University at Canterbury	265	8.16	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.7	6.1	5.5	5.1	5.3	5.2	5.5	5.7	4.9	4.4	5.0	5.3	5.8	5.4	5.6	5.3	5.9
42 Nottingham University	548	8.15	5.8	5.5	5.6	6.1	5.8	5.9	6.2	5.7	5.2	4.6	5.4	5.2	5.5	5.2	4.4	4.9	5.5	5.9	5.2	5.1	5.2	6.2
43 Plymouth University	307	8.13	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.6	5.7	5.1	5.0	5.1	5.2	6.0	5.3	5.4	4.7	5.8
44 Bristol University	441	8.13	5.9	5.7	5.6	6.2	5.7	6.0	5.8	5.6	5.2	4.5	5.4	5.4	5.0	5.1	4.7	5.2	5.5	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.5	6.3
45 King's College London	264	8.11	5.9	5.7	5.6	5.7	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.1	5.6	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.2	4.9	5.4	4.7	5.8	5.2	5.4	4.7	6.0
46 Northumbria University	283	8.10	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.7	5.5	5.3	5.6	5.5	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.4	5.7	5.2	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.9	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.8
47 York St John University College	65	8.09	5.6	5.7	5.2	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.8	5.6	4.8	5.0	5.3	5.7	5.7	4.8	4.7	5.2	5.0	5.8	5.5	5.6	5.1	5.6
48 Nottingham Trent University	259	8.08	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.7	5.5	5.3	5.6	5.5	5.1	5.3	5.2	5.5	5.4	5.4	4.9	5.4	5.0	5.9	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.8
49 Glasgow Caledonian University	50	8.07	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.8	5.7	5.2	4.3	5.3	5.7	5.9	5.2	4.7	5.3	5.1	6.0	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.9
50 Sheffield Hallam University	300	8.06	5.5	5.6	5.3	5.9	5.7	5.3	5.8	5.5	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.5	5.4	5.1	4.6	5.2	5.0	6.1	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.7