

Nottingham wins in popularity stakes

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by John O'Leary

When choosing where to study, location matters just as much as reputation. In the second part of our week-long definitive guide, our correspondent explains why students find some universities more appealing than others

The coveted title of the most popular university in Britain has switched hands several times in recent years. Usually either Manchester or Leeds has attracted the largest number of applications, but in 2002 that distinction belongs to Nottingham.

Experts on university admissions would agree that the comparison is not an entirely fair one. Factors beyond any university's control, such as its location and the attractions of the town or city in which it is based, have almost as much of a bearing as academic reputation. But that does not stop the marketing men taking full advantage.

One might have thought that advertising a high level of competition for places would be counterproductive, but success breeds success. Students are fashion-conscious, and Nottingham can expect to benefit from its popularity.

Like Manchester and Leeds, Nottingham has a full range of courses — universities at the bottom of this table would be quick to point out that they cannot attract applications for subjects they do not offer. All three cities have a reputation for a vibrant nightlife and, perhaps most important, they are in the "right place" for the largest number of applicants. Nottingham is the right distance from most of England's conurbations to make regular parental visits impractical, but close enough for an occasional visit home.

Of course, all three universities have much more going for them than that. Nottingham, which has seen a 17 per cent increase in applications in the past year, has two striking campuses and a reputation for high academic standards. Students and their advisers know that the addition of the Jubilee Campus and the allocation of hundreds more places offer a better prospect of success than in previous years.

Sir Colin Campbell, Nottingham's vice-chancellor, says: "The latest application figures show that our confidence in investing for the future of higher education in the UK as a whole was entirely justified. We will continue to improve the overall experience of higher education we offer to both home and international students."

The Most Popular Universities

The Times Good University Guide

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Thumbs up:

Nottingham 47,984 (8.8)

Leeds 47,039 (7.3)

Bristol 38,412 (11.1)

Manchester 38,796 (6.6)

Birmingham 35,851 (6.8)

Ratio of applicants to places in 2001 in brackets. Source: UCAS

The Times 2002 Good University Guide Overall Rankings

Pos	Univ	Teach	Research	Entry	Staff	Lib/staff	Facil	Deg class	Grad dest	Compl	Score
	Max possible score	24	7	30	n/a	n/a	n/a	100	100	100	100
1	Oxford	22.3	6.5	29.5	12.2	1417	184	84.9	95.2	96.0	1000
2	Cambridge	22.7	6.6	29.7	11.9	959	150	93.4	98.5	98.0	997
3	Imperial College	22.0	6.4	27.9	8.1	933	369	93.1	97.7	89.0	987
4	Bath	21.4	5.7	25.4	14.0	789	403	70.1	96.2	95.0	934
5	London, LSE	21.9	6.4	28.2	14.6	1058	146	70.3	95.3	93.0	931
6	Warwick	22.5	6.0	26.3	15.7	657	171	72.1	94.6	96.0	920
7	Bristol	21.6	5.7	26.5	12.8	559	352	88.1	95.9	94.0	917
8	York	22.6	5.8	25.5	13.0	520	152	68.5	96.3	94.0	911
9	Nottingham	21.7	5.3	26.2	14.1	740	218	80.1	96.6	95.0	903
10	St Andrews	22.0	5.7	24.7	9.8	668	221	83.3	95.6	92.0	902
11	London, UCL	21.9	6.0	25.8	6.7	837	191	82.4	93.4	92.0	899
12	Manchester	21.9	5.7	23.5	14.1	678	205	78.0	96.3	93.0	884
13	Durham	21.9	5.7	25.4	14.4	575	269	63.4	94.0	94.0	881
14	Loughborough	22.0	5.1	22.0	16.3	583	277	59.8	97.2	90.0	879
15	Edinburgh	21.5	5.6	26.5	13.8	742	234	86.6	95.9	86.0	870
16	Newcastle	21.6	5.2	23.0	13.3	845	263	70.2	94.3	89.0	863
17	Birmingham	21.7	5.3	23.7	13.5	560	223	72.9	95.6	90.0	852
18	Sheffield	22.0	5.5	25.4	15.8	470	185	73.8	95.1	90.0	847
19	Aberdeen	21.3	4.7	19.7	11.0	712	290	72.4	97.0	84.0	834
20	London, King's	21.7	5.5	24.1	11.0	609	174	84.5	93.6	91.0	833
21	Lancaster	21.6	5.8	22.1	18.3	544	258	61.7	93.0	92.0	831
22	London, Royal Holloway	21.2	5.7	22.1	15.1	491	316	60.2	94.4	91.0	829
23	Queens, Belfast	21.5	4.9	24.2	15.6	471	287	62.8	95.8	90.1	828
24	Southampton	21.6	5.8	23.0	15.8	567	189	57.8	94.8	90.0	824
25	Essex	21.7	5.6	18.3	15.5	618	270	53.1	95.0	83.0	816
26	Leicester	21.7	5.0	21.9	15.3	491	188	60.4	95.1	92.0	815
27	SOAS	21.5	5.5	22.7	12.8	1077	100	72.2	89.1	83.0	813

28	Glasgow	21.7	5.2	24.2	13.9	573	166	80.5	93.5	85.0	809
29	Leeds	21.3	5.3	23.8	15.2	578	137	65.9	96.2	91.0	808
30	Reading	21.3	5.3	20.9	13.5	530	189	60.3	95.8	88.0	807
31	UMIST	20.6	5.5	22.7	9.4	521	209	58.2	95.1	88.0	804
32	Stirling	21.4	4.8	19.1	16.7	564	186	62.2	95.7	90.0	803
	Surrey	20.5	5.4	19.6	12.9	531	249	55.3	99.0	90.0	803
34	Cardiff	21.1	5.7	22.8	17.2	487	216	62.7	94.4	89.0	795
35	Exeter	21.4	5.2	23.0	18.2	440	133	66.2	94.0	94.0	791
36	Aston	21.1	5.0	22.0	19.4	433	236	61.3	96.3	85.0	781
37	Dundee	21.0	5.1	19.8	10.9	528	181	79.1	95.9	84.0	776
38	Liverpool	21.4	5.2	20.7	15.2	412	139	67.3	95.5	88.0	772
39	Queen Mary	21.3	5.0	18.9	10.8	629	200	70.7	92.8	85.0	771
40	East Anglia	21.0	5.4	21.1	19.0	482	187	64.4	93.3	91.0	770
41	Strathclyde	21.5	4.7	20.4	17.5	421	172	60.9	95.3	82.0	767
42	Kent	21.0	4.8	20.2	17.9	534	151	55.8	97.9	88.0	766
43	Hull	21.3	4.3	19.5	17.0	482	93	58.5	97.0	93.0	765
44	Sussex	20.7	5.5	22.6	15.4	593	190	61.5	91.9	86.0	758
45	Swansea	21.1	4.6	19.7	15.6	419	183	54.2	95.0	87.0	751
46	Keele	21.2	4.6	18.9	17.6	272	139	64.1	95.2	92.0	748
47	City	20.7	4.4	20.5	13.6	481	178	55.8	95.9	83.0	747
48	Heriot-Watt	20.6	4.7	19.3	14.3	640	219	45.2	94.5	86.0	743
49	Aberystwyth	20.9	4.5	18.7	19.0	507	246	57.9	91.3	90.0	741
50	Brunel	21.2	4.3	18.3	20.2	440	161	52.4	97.2	84.0	736
51	Oxford Brookes	21.4	2.8	16.2	14.4	383	247	53.9	94.7	82.0	733
52	Ulster	20.7	3.8	18.9	16.9	360	132	63.4	93.6	89.8	717
53	Plymouth	20.8	3.2	15.1	13.3	589	142	49.1	92.9	88.0	704
54	Bradford	20.2	4.4	17.8	15.8	461	243	48.7	95.8	85.0	703
55	Nottingham Trent	20.4	2.8	17.3	17.4	419	212	48.6	97.8	87.0	700
56	Bangor	20.9	4.7	16.3	18.4	530	147	50.2	91.5	88.0	695
	Northumbria	21.4	2.3	16.4	18.1	380	152	49.5	92.9	89.0	695
58	West of England	21.4	2.8	16.9	19.2	412	145	41.9	95.3	81.0	680
59	Hertfordshire	21.1	2.5	15.1	17.2	483	124	50.4	93.3	83.0	675
	Robert Gordon	20.6	1.9	14.2	16.9	447	132	59.9	98.1	82.0	675
61	Sheffield Hallam	21.0	3.0	15.9	21.4	382	186	49.0	93.5	86.0	674
62	Portsmouth	20.6	3.2	15.8	18.4	409	111	48.1	96.3	85.0	668
63	Goldsmiths College	20.1	5.3	19.1	16.8	405	109	54.5	92.4	85.0	666
64	Abertay Dundee	20.2	2.0	11.8	17.1	1016	152	50.2	92.6	88.0	665
65	Cardiff Institute	21.1	2.7	15.8	15.2	333	91	49.8	91.5	88.0	664
66	Napier	20.2	2.3	11.8	17.7	426	143	58.6	96.9	87.0	654
67	Coventry	20.7	2.1	13.5	16.7	441	194	44.4	95.1	82.0	652
68	Brighton	20.7	2.9	13.6	21.3	425	140	48.5	95.5	83.0	647
69	Westminster	20.5	2.8	13.6	11.2	428	132	56.0	91.7	74.0	640
70	Lampeter	20.6	4.7	13.4	18.5	502	162	49.6	87.3	89.0	635
71	Sunderland	20.7	2.8	12.7	18.5	331	185	47.9	94.4	79.0	634
72	Kingston	21.2	2.7	14.2	22.7	393	132	49.2	94.0	75.0	632

	Luton	20.9	1.8	10.6	15.4	408	165	47.6	99.4	74.9	632
74	Salford	20.5	4.3	14.9	18.4	340	154	45.5	90.6	80.0	626
75	Manchester Metro	20.8	2.9	15.4	19.6	384	81	44.1	92.0	83.0	623
76	Surrey Roehampton	20.1	3.2	12.8	20.5	295	157	48.4	95.2	85.0	612
77	Glasgow Caledonian	20.7	2.5	17.1	16.6	220	63	51.7	93.0	76.0	610
78	Central Lancashire	20.5	2.2	14.5	20.1	346	146	45.9	92.0	77.4	605
	Leeds Metropolitan	20.1	2.2	15.4	19.0	502	124	50.0	91.4	83.0	605
80	Bournemouth	19.6	1.9	17.6	16.2	393	45	51.5	93.0	89.0	602
81	Glamorgan	20.4	2.4	13.1	16.6	389	165	47.6	90.3	77.0	595
	Gloucestershire	20.1	3.0	13.4	22.9	371	101	44.9	95.5	84.0	595
	Staffordshire	20.2	2.2	12.7	21.6	450	157	42.5	92.4	87.2	595
84	Wolverhampton	20.4	2.0	12.8	17.9	359	195	51.4	89.3	79.0	594
85	Liverpool John Moores	20.2	2.6	15.4	17.9	396	100	48.6	90.4	83.0	593
86	De Montfort	20.0	3.1	13.5	19.1	399	52	56.4	93.6	78.0	591
87	Central England	19.9	2.2	14.1	22.5	354	145	52.4	93.9	81.0	585
88	Middlesex	20.4	2.7	12.3	19.2	496	51	51.9	91.6	77.0	584
89	Huddersfield	20.5	2.4	13.6	19.7	317	120	47.0	91.1	77.0	579
90	Greenwich	20.2	2.5	11.5	20.5	495	157	40.8	93.1	77.0	570
91	Lincoln	19.5	1.7	13.7	19.7	464	80	44.8	92.2	85.0	552
92	Anglia	20.2	1.5	13.6	20.3	295	100	47.7	93.6	76.0	551
	Paisley	20.4	1.6	12.1	18.5	450	114	41.1	87.6	80.4	551
	Teesside	19.9	1.9	12.2	16.4	382	129	39.8	91.2	82.0	551
95	South Bank	20.0	2.9	17.6	16.1	318	144	37.8	87.1	73.0	540
96	Newport College	19.5	3.0	12.6	28.5	331	84	50.5	92.2	80.0	522
97	North London	19.9	2.3	11.3	22.8	384	167	42.3	92.9	69.0	521
98	Derby	19.7	1.5	12.4	30.8	333	111	45.6	92.2	85.0	504
99	East London	19.2	2.5	12.5	18.7	385	131	47.0	86.4	75.0	489
100	London Guildhall	20.0	1.9	11.8	20.5	424	99	32.0	87.1	70.0	468
101	Thames Valley	19.1	0.5	10.3	35.7	387	44	30.0	88.9	82.0	360

How to read the table

Teach=Teaching, maximum possible score 24.0

Research = Research, maximum possible score 7.0

Entry = Entry Standards, maximum possible score 30.0

Staff = Staffing

Lib/staff = Library and computing spending

Facil = Facilities spending

Deg class = Degree class, maximum possible score 100.0

Grad dest = Graduate destinations, maximum possible score 100.0

Compl = Completion, maximum possible score 100.0

Score = Total score, maximum possible score 1000

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Business Studies

		Raw Data			Overall Score
		TQA	RAE	A Levels	
1	London School of Economics	24	5	A 28.3	100.0
2	Aston	24	5	B 22.7	94.0
3	Warwick	E	5*	B 27.0	93.3
4	Bath	E	5	A 27.9	93.1
5	Lancaster	E	5*	B 25.8	92.4
6	UMIST	E	5	A 24.9	91.0
=7	Manchester	24	5	C 22.1	90.2
=7	Nottingham	E	5	B 26.6	90.2
9	Queens, Belfast	23	4	B 26.8	87.6
10	Imperial College	E	5	B 21.4	86.4
11	Southampton	23	4	B 24.5	85.9
12	City	23	5	C 23.0	84.2
13	Ulster	24	3a	D 21.0	82.4
14	Strathclyde	E	4	C 22.6	81.8
15	Leeds	22	5	C 25.1	79.2
16	Surrey	E	4	C 17.7	78.2
17	East Anglia	23	3a	C 19.8	77.5
18	Edinburgh	HS	4	B 25.6	76.8
19	Exeter	22	4	C 24.4	76.4
20	St Andrews	HS	4	A 22.6	76.3
21	Bangor		5	B 13.7	75.7
=22	Loughborough	22	4	C 22.6	75.2
=22	Cranfield	E	4	D 17.9	75.2
24	Hertfordshire	23	3a	C 16.2	74.9
25	Oxford	S	5	A 29.8	74.7
26	Oxford Brookes	24	2	F 17.4	74.1
27	West of England	23	3a	D 17.8	73.5
28	De Montfort	E	3a	C 13.9	73.3
29	Leeds Metropolitan	24	2	F 14.9	72.3
30	Stirling	HS	4	B 19.2	72.2
31	Nottingham Trent	E	3b	D 18.0	72.1
=32	North London	24	3b	E 10.3	71.2
=32	Manchester Metropolitan	23	3a	E 18.1	71.2
=32	Royal Holloway	21	4	B 22.4	71.2
35	Reading	21	5	C 22.6	70.7
36	Kingston	E	3a	E 16.5	70.0
37	Liverpool	23		20.4	69.4
38	Keele	21	4	B 18.5	68.3
39	Glamorgan	E	3b	D 12.4	68.1
40	Cardiff	S	5	B 23.0	67.8
41	Birmingham	21	4	D 24.4	66.6
42	Cambridge	S	5	A	66.2
43	Sheffield	S	4	B 24.6	66.1
44	Wolverhampton	23	3b	F 12.9	64.6
=45	King's College London	S	4	B 22.2	64.4
=45	Bournemouth	22	3a	E 17.8	64.4
47	Kent	21	3a	C 19.3	64.0
48	Glasgow	S	4	C 23.3	62.4
49	Liverpool John Moores	22	3b	E 15.7	61.9

50	Northumbria	22	3b	F	18.1	61.8
51	Central Lancashire	22	3b	E	14.2	60.8
52	Hull	S	4	C	20.4	60.4
53	Newcastle	S	3a	C	23.1	60.1
54	Middlesex	22	3a	E	11.6	59.9
55	Brunel	S	4	C	19.4	59.6
56	Derby	22	2	E	13.1	59.1
57	Coventry	22	2	E	12.6	58.7
58	Bradford	S	4	C	17.5	58.3
59	Portsmouth	S	4	C	17.2	58.0
60	Heriot-Watt	S	4	D	21.0	57.6
=61	London Guildhall	22	3b	F	11.2	56.8
=61	Aberdeen	S	3a	B		56.8
=61	Leicester	S	3a	B		56.8
64	Salford	S	3a	B	14.8	56.3
=65	Swansea	S	3a	D	19.6	55.0
=65	Durham	S	3a	D	19.6	55.0
67	Robert Gordon	HS	2	F	12.5	54.1
=68	Gloucestershire		3a	D	12.3	53.1
=68	Aberystwyth	S	3b	C	16.4	53.1
70	Central England	21	2	F	13.0	51.2
71	Glasgow Caledonian	S	3a	E	15.3	49.4
=72	Brighton	S	3a	E	13.7	48.2
=72	Plymouth	S	3b	E	15.0	48.2
74	Westminster	20	3b	E	14.7	48.0
75	Lincoln	S	3b	D	11.9	47.8
76	Sheffield Hallam	S	3b	F	16.3	47.3
77	Anglia	20	2	D	13.0	47.1
=78	South Bank	20	3a	E	11.6	46.7
=78	Huddersfield	S	3b	E	12.9	46.7
80	Staffordshire	S	3b	E	12.5	46.4
81	Queen Mary	S			15.9	46.3
82	Luton	S	3a	E	10.2	45.7
83	Napier	S	3b	E	10.9	45.2
84	Cardiff Institute	S			14.0	45.0
85	East London	S	2	E	11.6	44.8
86	Paisley	S	2	E	11.1	44.4
87	Sunderland	S	2	F	12.0	43.9
88	Greenwich	20	3b	F	11.4	43.7
89	Abertay Dundee	S	3b	E	8.5	43.5
90	Newport College	S			10.8	42.6
91	Teesside	S			10.3	42.3
92	Thames Valley	19			7.9	34.0