



Buckinghamshire New University aims to be 'best in sector'!

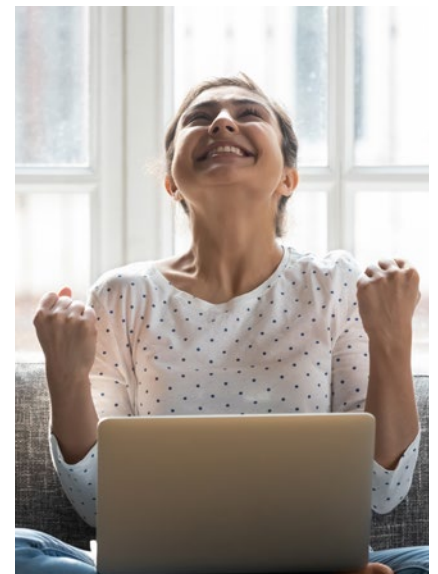
Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) has set itself the ambition of being 'best in sector' when it comes to student satisfaction with their higher education experience.

The University's *Thrive 28* Strategy also sets the goal of achieving sector-leading status for the support of the health and wellbeing of its students.

The JS Group is helping BNU to succeed in meeting these strategic aims as an integrated student engagement partner, making sure that much-needed funds for supporting the student experience are delivered rapidly while also being channelled for the best possible learning gains.

In addition to the highly-advanced and specially-created funding portal this is achieved through the BNU Learning resource fund which also gives students access to an online resource centre, helping BNU students to access additional guidance on all sorts of topics throughout their student journey. The JS Group also provides a dedicated customer services team to assist those using these resources and systems.

The very close working partnership with the JS Group has contributed to BNU's recent award at the What Uni Student Choice Awards 2023: the University claimed the top award in the Cost-of-Living category – testifying to its impressive programme of student financial support.



"It's a great partnership" says Professor Nick Braisby, BNU's Vice-Chancellor. "There's no doubt that without the JS Group we would have been faced with a cumbersome process of trying to provide funding to our students ourselves at a time when they need that money quickly, easily and in a way that enables them to make the right spending choices."

"What the JS Group brings is speed, ease of student access, financial process security, and targeted delivery and insight into where that investment of special student support funding is being returned. It's simply more meaningful in terms of improving the vital student experience."

The partnership with the JS Group enables the effective delivery and management of BNU's two sets of student support packages.

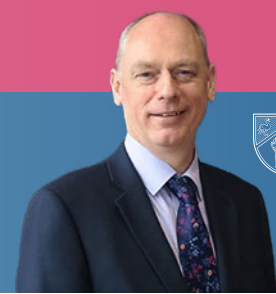
Firstly, all new UK first-year undergraduates receive an amount of credit via the BNU Learning and Resources Fund that can be spent on the Aspire platform for course materials, textbooks, learning resources and anything else that directly supports their studies.

The second programme is through the delivery of cash bursaries that are awarded to those students who are in most need of support throughout their BNU life (via the range of means-tested bursary, scholarship, hardship and other specialist funds).

TO FIND OUT MORE

Please visit www.jsgroup.co.uk or contact David Marshall – david.marshall@jsgroup.co.uk

The JS Group method and service has revolutionised our payments process



"Before the JS Group's involvement, I'd have to check every application, put the application on a long list and obtain bank details, and then send this all off to Finance for processing. That could have taken up to five days or longer because it's going through a BACS type transfer system. What the JS Group innovation allows us to do is allocate the money to the student and allow them to draw down on this literally in minutes. It's immediate, safe and secure. It's especially important when you have students needing instant help, maybe at the end of a Friday when they really need assistance that wouldn't otherwise be available to them over the weekend."

The Vice-Chancellor, Nick Braisby, adds; *"What I also like about the JS Group is that they allow freedom for students. There is a tendency sometimes to say "We know best and we are giving you a one-off sum of money and you have to spend it on this". Actually, our students have so many different challenges in their lives that it's difficult for an institution to say what would be in the individual student's own best interest. Putting some money at the student's own disposal is the right thing to do."*

An additional feature of the JS Group's partnership is the ability to provide regular data and insight to the University on how its investment in student support funds is being returned. The JS Group has data and analytics that can show spending patterns, highlight particular areas of demand, and make comparisons with trends across the 30-plus other universities that are also working with the JS Group.

Overall, it's just more meaningful in terms of improving the student experience and getting really useful data out of the whole process.

- Nick Braisby

"It can also help us to make adjustments," says Daniel Gerrish. "We're currently working with our library team to produce more refined reading lists, and we are adding in gym memberships, food vouchers and specialist equipment for certain students. Overall, it's been really easy to work with the JS Group team and if I've needed them, they are just there for me. It all just feels like we work in the same team and organisation."

Nick Braisby also identifies the importance of enabling funds to reach students at the very start of their university experience as an important factor in all this. "There is a need to create an instant sense of belonging – and making sure those first few weeks at University are as positive as can be. We want to hear "I've landed at the right institution with the right kind of support for me."



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