

It allows us demonstrate considerable additional benefits when choosing our university



Teesside University regards JS Group as a vital partner in delivering its university strategy – especially when it comes to enabling digital success for its students.

Within Teesside's Ambition Delivered Today strategy, the University aims to provide the best possible digital knowledge, support, and experience for all students.

Its Future Facing Learning programme digitally empowers students and provides them with a range of digital tools and experiences throughout their Teesside journey.

As part of this initiative, full-time undergraduates receive free Apple iPads (with keyboards) during their enrolment stage and are provided with £300 worth of credits (over the lifetime of their studies) in order to purchase a range of learning materials and resources. This particular added-value initiative is known as TU Advance.

The JS Group partners with Teesside University to deliver TU Advance by providing students with credit funds that can be spent on a wide range of goods and services to help students make the most of their time at university. These funds are made available via the JS Group's award-winning Aspire platform.

It also adds significant benefit as a partner to the University through data-tracking on spending patterns, enhancing the student experience through a Student Engagement Portal, and appointing an on-campus Engagement Partner to ensure that all undergraduates are making the most of the supporting opportunities.

"TU Advance, and the JS Group support within this, is a huge success," says **Professor Mark Simpson**, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Teesside University. *"It's really tackled the need for levelling-up of all of our students when it comes to digital access and to enabling students to be able to access course-related resources, without the usual financial barriers.*

"We've developed a strong reputation for what we've been doing in digital support and have been winning awards for this refreshing approach."

The original intention at Teesside was to focus the student credits purely on the purchase of text books and of course-specific equipment. However, the University has more recently widened the offer to enable access to adjacent technology needs such as the purchase of the Apple Pencil, of headphones, and of data packages.

"We've evolved as needs and circumstances change and the JS Group has been an important partner in encouraging and allowing that evolution. They are very in tune with us and with our students and we have an incredibly enthusiastic member of their team working with us on campus."

"We continue to evaluate this scheme and it is always very popular with our students. We're very mindful that an important part of our strategy is about putting students at the heart of everything that we do and this works very well in that context. We have to do all that we can to make sure that students are being equipped to have the best possible experience here and that they feel cared for and supported."

TU Advance is also viewed as an important feature in attracting new students into higher education and for encouraging interest in Teesside University as a "right choice" university.

"It allows us to demonstrate considerable additional benefits when choosing our university", says **Chris Walker**, Deputy Director for Student Recruitment and Marketing. *"We need to stand out and to show that that we can make an important difference to the lives of students – especially in the current climate of life choices and personal financial challenges."*

TO FIND OUT MORE

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

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The iPad and such free-of-charge digital access is one of our unique selling points here at Teesside. I also see students take delight in us providing them with the extra credit-based financial support that we give them. It can make such a difference to them. They regard it as a terrific bonus at such an important time in their education.

All in all, the package of Future Facing Learning through Teesside Advance, the iPad, and the JS Group partnership is a very powerful tool that we use quite heavily for student recruitment and also, from a student learning experience, throughout the time that they are with us."

Chris also notes the importance of the JS Group's provision of one of its own staff being ever-present on the Teesside campus as a significant benefit for students.

"This role contributes so much within the partnership. It's very much an integral part of the team and she gets involved in open days, in induction, and in enrolment week. That visibility is absolutely key because there is always a Teesside Advance and an accompanying JS Group presence."

An additional strength to the partnership is the ability of the JS Group's on-the-ground Engagement Partner to work very closely with the academic community across the University when it comes to identifying the particular books and course-related materials that lecturers would recommend to their students at different stages.

"I think the academics have seen the potential to serve their own needs well through the JS Group involvement," says Chris.

"Overall, it's a really positive partnership. Anything that our students can get from us that's going to support their experience when they're with us – whether textbooks, IT products or particular subject equipment – that is going to make a big difference to them."

"The digital investment and innovation that we are making is probably what most in the higher education sector now know us for," adds Mark Simpson. *"That's because we have been very early into that space and have driven things forward very quickly."*

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Peter Gray, CEO of the JS Group, adds:

"It is a real pleasure to partner with an outstanding team at Teesside University and to see their commitment to supporting students. Teesside University Advance is a great example of the impact that a credit bursary can have alongside the more traditional cash awards made to students."

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