QS Stars Case Study: Nottingham Trent University

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is one of the most popular universities in the UK. We are defined by our commitment to creating opportunities, valuing ideas, embracing sustainability, enriching society, connecting globally, and empowering people — ambitions that inform every element of life and learning at the University, and which are reflected in our student satisfaction, graduate employment rates, and fantastic teaching quality. We have recently attained three consecutive ‘University of the Year’ awards, as well as a second Queens Anniversary Prize — the UK’s most prestigious research honour. Coupled with award-winning student support, these accolades reflect the true quality of the NTU experience.

With a staff and student community drawn from over 160 different countries, we are a genuinely global family. As the foundations of our ‘success for all’ ethos, we believe in diversity, inclusivity, and equal access to all of our opportunities. For generations of students, NTU has been more than just a university — it has been a place to grow, and somewhere to call home.

Why did you choose QS?

QS Stars is one of the most detailed and respected rating system in higher education. It’s a great opportunity to promote NTU’s brand, strategic goals and achievements, as well as the living and learning experience we’re so proud of.

What really distinguishes QS Stars, however, is the contextual nature of its rating system. Every prospective student is looking for something different, and this system helps them find an institution that’s truly suited to their needs, ambitions, and expectations.

What objectives has QS Stars helped you to achieve?

We were proud to receive our five-star rating — it acknowledges the work we’re doing every day to highlight NTU’s strengths, goals, and values. Both domestically and internationally, that kind of exposure in a competitive market is invaluable, and we feel it reflects the scope and quality of everything that’s happening across our campuses.
“QS Stars has highlighted NTU’s strengths in areas such as teaching, employability, and inclusivity — indicators that aren’t always emphasised in other rating systems, but ones that are key to NTU’s identity.”

Nicola Vassallo
Associate Director of Brand and Marketing
Nottingham Trent University

What are the key benefits of using QS Stars?

It’s a useful system for measuring ourselves accurately against other universities around the world. It helps us to identify the institutions that share our values, opening up pathways for future partnerships and collaborations — another key aspect of NTU’s ethos.

QS Stars also gives prospective students the information to make an informed and relevant university choice. This is incredibly important to us — we’re looking to attract people who instinctively feel they will be comfortable, challenged and encouraged here. Those principles exist in and outside of the classroom, and the rankings give prospective students a more rounded, holistic sense of what’s on offer here — from our world-class facilities and support services, to our exciting range of extracurricular opportunities.

What challenges have you been able to overcome thanks to QS Stars?

QS Stars has highlighted NTU’s strengths in areas such as teaching, employability, and inclusivity — indicators that aren’t always emphasised in other rankings, but ones that are key to NTU’s identity. It’s rewarding to be properly, globally recognised for the holistic achievements we’re so proud of. It also allows us as to replace older or less insightful ratings with a more accurate and relevant picture of the University.

What have you learnt by using QS Stars?

This new rating endorses all the things we’re doing well. It celebrates the hard work and resource we’re continuing to invest in our core strengths and values. But most of all, it shows we’re on the right path as an institution, encouraging us to continue pushing boundaries as we redefine what modern universities can and should be. And QS Stars not only reiterates the areas where we’re excelling; it helps us to take a more granular and focused look at the potential areas for improvement.
QS Stars explained

QS Stars is a globally recognised rating system for higher education institutions. Ratings are achieved through an in-depth assessment across at least eight categories, resulting in an overall rating of 1 to 5+ Stars and a rating of 1 to 5 Stars for each category.

Following the assessment, QS provides a detailed report summarising the results in each category. This allows institutions to recognise their strengths, as well as weaker areas which may require attention and improvement.

The QS Stars package also includes a set of badges with the ratings achieved overall and in each category. Institutions may use these in their own marketing materials to show prospective students their strengths in areas that matter most, such as Teaching and Employability.

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