



Vice-Chancellor  
Professor  
Graham  
Henderson  
addresses the  
University  
Forum

**T**EESSIDE is already widely recognised as one of England's premier universities for widening participation. Now it wants to become one of the country's best universities for getting students into jobs requiring graduate skills.

It's a goal the university is nudging closer to as more and more employers turn to Teesside to recruit their graduates. Major employers such as the police and the health service also see the advantage of working closely with Teesside University to design and develop tailor-made courses to equip people for future employment. And now others like the North East Process Industry Cluster, the Engineering and Construction Industry Training Board and the North East Chamber of Commerce are helping Teesside extend its reputation as one of the UK's leading employer-facing institutions of higher education.

The quality of the university's courses is also gaining increasing recognition from professional organisations which, in turn, is leading to an expanding portfolio of professionally accredited degrees.

Vice-Chancellor Graham Henderson is in no doubt about the importance of external endorsement and was delighted when this year's Guardian University Guide put Teesside in number one spot for teaching Mechanical Engineering. The university also gained its best ever position in the recent Sunday Times university league table.

And it is not just the league tables that point to the university's improved performance. This year's National Student Survey, which ranks universities on the basis of direct feedback from students, put Teesside in the top quartile

# University aims to be the best

of all UK universities for student satisfaction for the fourth year running.

"Our provision is seen and recognised as being among the best in the country. But we can't stand still as we want to attract as many people to study at the University of Teesside as possible," said Professor Henderson.

"Students, and their parents, are increasingly looking for universities to provide an excellent student experience, covering everything from an attractive campus to the number and quality of staff and good social life. So, if we want to continue to grow and succeed we have to provide a student experience that is second to none, and I think we're getting there."

Last year the university invested heavily in new and refurbished science laboratories and opened three new buildings - the Athena Centre for Creative Technology, the Phoenix Institute of Digital Innovation and the Cook Building, with its principal focus on Design education.

"This had a hugely positive impact upon recruitment and attainment of students within our Schools of Science and Technology, Computing and Arts and Media. And we're about to embark on the next stage of the

campus transformation - with a new £17m building to house the university's new dental education provision as well as providing enhanced facilities for sports therapy and health education.

"And work is about to start on a new £12m Teesside University building in Darlington to serve the needs of those potential part-time students in the west of the Tees Valley who don't currently enjoy easy access to higher education."

And that's not all that's planned, says Professor Henderson. "We've always been financially prudent, generating regular annual surpluses to fund our expansion, and this year we achieved our biggest surplus ever at £7.6m. This means we can face the future with confidence, and we're already drawing up plans for two more developments on our Middlesbrough town centre campus to improve still further the experience of both part-time and full-time students."

So how come Teesside is so confident and bullish about the future, when some institutions are struggling to make ends meet? Professor Henderson's answer speaks volumes. "The Higher Education Funding Council funds success and so do bodies like the Strategic Health Authority. And because we have been

successful in meeting our targets and delivering our planned growth, we are attracting more funds.

"Tuition fees have helped, of course, but it is important to bear in mind that, in our case, much of this additional income has been reinvested into scholarships and bursaries for our students. We're also investing in a further 77 new staff this autumn because we're still growing.

"Our School of Health and Social Care, for instance, expects a thousand more students this year and in the area of Education we have seen staff numbers grow from three to 22 in just 12 months in response to increasing student numbers. Other areas are also doing well like sport, engineering, policing, and the creative and performing arts, as well as our work in forensic science, fraud management & financial crime.

"And as the campus improves and our reputation grows, we are finding it easier to attract students from abroad, and so far this year we have seen over 200 more overseas students attracted to Teesside, many from India and China."

So the future certainly seems bright ... at least at the University of Teesside.