



At a time when universities are often accused of ploughing familiar furrows, Coventry University stands out as an institution that is willing to take calculated risks to help its students succeed. Most notable has been the establishment of Coventry University College as a low-cost option aimed at removing the barriers that prevent many people from accessing higher education.

By making courses affordable, and structuring them in a flexible way that is in keeping with students' lives, the college has opened new avenues for individuals who might otherwise have been excluded. In 2013-14, 44 per cent of Coventry's students were from the poorest postcodes, and the institution has now extended the model to a new Scarborough campus. Students, including many who are the first in their family to attend university, are also encouraged to further broaden their horizons and take up opportunities overseas.

Other achievements in 2013-14 included a transformation of its research strategy, investment in the estate and a £125 million deal to regenerate a neglected area of Coventry city centre, as well as extensive work with small and medium-sized enterprises in the city.

John Gill, editor of Times Higher Education, said: "The judges were impressed with Coventry's achievements across a range of activities and, in particular, by its novel approach to improving access. We're always looking for pioneers who make bold attempts to tackle the issues facing higher education locally, regionally and nationally, and Coventry is to be congratulated for doing it so successfully."