International Ranking

&

Institutional Research

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Rankings Information Collected from Major International Rankings

Question1: When and how was your ranking system developed? (A brief history)

Thomson Reuters

Thomson Reuters is not a ranking agency. Rather, through the global [Institutional Profiles] project, we collect and supply data used in a number of ranking exercises, such as the Leiden Ranking, the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities, the U-Multirank ranking, and the *U.S. News* Best Global Universities ranking. Data collected is also used to create the performance metrics available in the InCitesTM Institutional Profiles service, which allows for the evaluation and comparison of institutions around a number of research and performance indicators.

Times Higher Education World University Rankings

The *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings were developed after a year of extensive consultation, and were first produced in 2004 by the *Times Higher Education* magazine. At the time, it was known as the *Times Higher Education Supplement* (THES) before a name change in 2008.

The original THES global ranking data used data collected by a third party that was designed to take a broader look at the world class university. Methodology was based on 5 performance indicators and was the first global ranking to use a global survey of academics' opinions.

Due to the dramatic change of the higher education landscape since 2004, *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings methodology has expanded to keep apace with greater student and faculty mobility and more cross-border research collaboration, and now uses 13 separate performance indicators.

Following a major strategic review, the *Time Higher Education* World University Rankings no longer outsource data, but instead have a dedicated in-house rankings team who work directly with institutions to collect data. Thus, *Times Higher Education* provides greater transparency, governance and accountability on institutional data.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University

In order to assess the gap between Chinese universities and world-class universities, the Center for World-Class Universities (CWCU), Graduate School of Education (formerly the Institute of Higher Education) of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China has tried to rank the world's research universities according to academic or research performance and based on internationally comparable data. Upon the request of many colleagues from different countries, CWCU decided to publish its ranking on the Internet in 2003, where it is known as the Academic Ranking of World Universities.

QS World University Rankings

QS initiated its thinking on World Class Universities in 2001 and devised a rankings concept which led to the launch of the THES-QS World University Rankings in 2004. Initially centered on research, teaching and international outlook metrics, graduate employability was added the following year as fundamental feature to form the four central pillars upon which the rankings are based today.

2007 was an important year in the life cycle of the rankings project. In order to not only facilitate but to improve stability and fairness, QS introduced four key enhancements to the methodology:

1. Survey respondents were prevented from promoting their own university
2. Switch to Scopus (Elsevier) from ESI (Thomson) for citation data
3. Consistent usage of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) data for all personnel related data

4. Statistical standardization of indicator scores ensuring consistent application of weightings

2009 became another milestone on the rankings timeline: the six year collaboration between *Times Higher Education* and QS came to an end.

Now, working with a wide range of international partners, the QS World University Rankings® reached a new level of exposure and have become the most widely used basis for comparing universities across borders.

U-Multirank

U-Multirank has been developed from the international academic community as a reaction to the existing global rankings. The formal initiative was taken after a meeting of the European ministers of Education & Research in 2009, where a question was formulated addressed to the European Commission to explore the possibilities of a 'better and broader' global ranking in higher education.

After a competitive tender process the European Commission announced the launching of a feasibility study to develop a new approach to ranking which should be multi-dimensional, transparent and global. After a large number of stakeholder consultation meetings (with students, academics, university leaders, and representatives from business and industry as well as from societal organisations) in June 2011 a consortium of experts (which was awarded the feasibility study) submitted its final report in which a new global ranking tool was designed and presented. The new transparency tool, which was tested with 150 pilot institutions, was called: U-Multirank. The new tool stressed three fundamental points of departure from the existing rankings (see question 2).

After the feasibility study, a new competitive tender process led to a project with seed funding from the European Commission in which the new global ranking tool is being implemented and applied. Since the start of this project, U-Multirank has so far created two editions: the first in 2014, the second on 30 March 2015. Two more editions will be presented in this project, after which U-Multirank will be institutionalised as an independent organisation.

U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings

U.S. News developed the Best Global Universities rankings in the summer and fall of 2014 and the first edition was published on October 28, 2014. *U.S. News* has been publishing national rankings for around 30 years and our Best Colleges rankings of U.S. colleges and universities is well known globally and is viewed by millions of users each year both in the U.S. and by students who want to go to school in the U.S. *U.S. News* thought it was a natural extension that we do a global ranking in order to put U.S. research universities in a global context. *U.S. News* also felt it was important that there was at least one U.S. based publisher (*U.S. News* is based in Washington DC) doing a global university ranking and that it was logical that it be *U.S. News*. *U.S. News* plans to publish our Best Global Universities rankings yearly.

Question2: In what ways is your ranking system different from other international rankings? (Uniqueness)

Thomson Reuters

When supplying data for a ranking service TR allows the ranking service itself to define the ranking methodology and data use.

Times Higher Education World University Rankings

The *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings use 13 separate indicators – more than any other global system – to provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons. The rankings seek to capture the full range of a global university's activities.

Our 13 performance indicators are grouped into five areas:

- Teaching: the learning environment (worth 30% of the overall ranking score)
- Research: volume, income and reputation (worth 30%)
- Citations: research influence (worth 30%)
- Industry income: innovation (worth 2.5%)
- International outlook: staff, students and research (worth 7.5%)

The *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings examine only a globally competitive, research-led elite group of institutions through a year-on-year comparison based on true performance rather than methodological change. The underlying database that fuels the rankings contains 650 institutions in total, selected for deeper data collection and analysis on the basis of their research publication output and impact. The final rankings list is restricted and comprises only the first 200 placed universities - representing only 1% of higher education institutions in the world.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University

a. ARWU indicators consist of objective indicators only, no opinion survey is used.
b. All the data used in ARWU is from third parties and publicly available, ARWU does not use data directly from universities.
c. ARWU publishes the score on each individual indicator
d. The results can be verified by others.

QS World University Rankings

Consistent, simple methodology, stable results, discipline independent, language independent, low dependence on self-reporting – these are the attributes that make the QS World University Rankings® unique. In addition to these principle facts, QS is the only ranking authority that considers Graduate Employability, an aspect central to the life goals of most prospective students. The indicator is an independent measure and constitutes exclusivity among international university rankings. It is based on a global survey, taking in almost 30,000 responses for the 2014/2015 edition, from a number of different sources: previous respondents, institution supplied lists, QS databases and partners.

The survey asks employers from all corners of the world to identify the universities they perceive as producing the best graduates with the purpose to give students a better sense of how universities are viewed in the job market. A higher weighting is given to votes for universities that come from outside of their own country, so it is especially useful in helping prospective students to identify universities with a reputation that extends beyond their national borders.

U-Multirank

U-Multirank wants to be a 'different' ranking. From its early conceptualisation the intention of U-Multirank has been to develop an 'alternative approach' to global rankings in higher education and research. The three main points on which U-Multirank differs substantially from the other rankings are:

- U-Multirank is multi-dimensional, recognising that higher education institutions serve multiple purposes and perform on a range of different activities. Whereas other rankings focus strongly on research and reputation, U-Multirank refrains to make use of reputation indicators and combines the analysis of research performance with four additional dimensions of general university performance.
- It is a ranking of university performances, but not in the sense of an aggregated league table like other rankings. U-Multirank shows performance only at the level of the individual indicators. And as it uses no composite indicators it also does not need weights to combine indicators. As an alternative to the 'league table approach' U-Multirank uses five performance groups, which allows it to solve the problem of the exaggerated minor differences in the positioning of universities in league tables.
- U-Multirank is user-driven, implying that stakeholders themselves are enabled to rank institutions with comparable profiles according to the criteria they prefer. Based on the epistemological argument that there is no such thing as 'absolute and objective relevance', in U-Multirank it is not the ranking producer but the ranking client who decides about the selection of dimensions and indicators to be used in the ranking analysis.

U-Multirank makes use of the 'like with like principle', allowing the identification of institutional profiles that show levels of similarity (and thus allows 'comparing apples with apples and oranges with oranges'). The multi-dimensionality of U-Multirank allows for all kinds of university profiles to be included in its analyses. Whereas, because of their heavy focus on research and reputation, other global rankings do not show the performances of, for instance, teaching-led and regionally engaged institutions. U-Multirank allows the profiling of these institutions too.

U-Multirank offers an interactive website (www.umultirank.org) on which users can create their own rankings according to their own preferences. For this U-Multirank offers over 30 indicators in five dimensions: teaching & learning, research, knowledge transfer, international orientation and regional engagement. U-Multirank provides rankings at the level of institutions as a whole and at the level of specific disciplinary fields (field-based rankings). The field-based rankings include field-specific indicators and the results of a student satisfaction survey.

In addition U-Multirank presents a set of (now 17) so-called 'readymade rankings' in which the U-Multirank team has selected sets of coherent indicators to present specific performance aspects of higher education institutions. Readymade rankings are offered on: 'research and research linkages', 'economic involvement', 'internationalisation' and on 'teaching and learning' (in several different disciplinary fields). More readymade rankings will be developed during the coming years.

Similar to other global rankings U-Multirank uses information from public sources where available, in particular research performance data and patent data. With these data U-Multirank presents some innovative research and innovation performance indicators not found in other rankings. In addition, U-Multirank invites actively participating universities to supply their own data, allowing these institutions to present a detailed institutional profile of themselves. U-Multirank refrains from using reputation surveys, arguing that these do not lead to sufficiently reliable results.

All these characteristics make U-Multirank very different from the 'league table rankings'. U-Multirank presents its (user-driven) multi-dimensional results in categories of performance and only per indicator. U-Multirank doesn't produce composite indicators to create one-dimensional league tables. And U-Multirank is completely transparent in its use of indicators and methods.

U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings

The *U.S. News* Best Global Universities Rankings are unique in a few ways. First, *U.S. News* is the only global ranking using regional research reputation as a ranking factor. It counts 12.5% of the ranking model. Second, there are many other differences in the ranking factors that are used by *U.S. News* and all the other rankings. Third, our presentation of the rankings is very different than the other rankings in a few significant ways. First, there aren't any bands of schools in certain ranking ranges; the *U.S. News* Best Global Universities Rankings is published as a consecutive numerical ranking from rank 1 through rank 500 which means that it's a larger ranking than the other rankings. In addition the *U.S. News* Best Global Universities Rankings has 10 weighted ranking factors. Each of the factors is published with a number rank of 1 through 750 so it's very easy for users to tell where a university is positioned on any of the 10 ranking factors compared to other universities. The other global rankings generally publish scores not ranks for their ranking factors which makes it very difficult to determine the relative position of any school on any of their ranking factors.

Question3: In what ways is the institutional research office involved? (Data collection)

Thomson Reuters

The Thomson Reuters Profiles Project is served by three globally positioned data editors who support all aspects of the data collection process for a specific world region. University institutional research departments (occasionally marketing departments) are our first and only point of contact for data collection. TR provides a dedicated data collection portal account to each institution. Support materials are available including data definitions, subject mappings and other regional support materials.

Times Higher Education World University Rankings

The *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings in-house dedicated rankings data team work directly with participating institutional research offices, or similar administrative subunits in universities. The *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings engages in an intensive interactive process with institutional data providers and tries to reach complete agreement on the data to be presented in the ranking tool.

Institutions provide and sign off their institutional data for use in the rankings.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University

ARWU does not use data from universities. However, CWCU started a project called "Global Research University Profiles (GRUP)" in 2011. Through GRUP project, universities are asked to report data on their staff, students and finances. Based on the data reported by universities and collected from third parties, GRUP presents comparisons of universities in different rank ranges and/or in different geographic groups in terms of 40 indicators, allowing users to learn about the performance of their local and international peers for various purposes.

QS World University Rankings

The key to a successful data compilation is to be in contact with university representatives most appropriate to forward accurate institutional data. Any institution part of our ranking exercise nominates at least one primary research contact who should have access to required statistics and who will be able to submit all relevant information into our QS Core online database meeting set deadlines. The contact will also receive all correspondence related to the rankings project. In the majority of cases these are colleagues from the institutional research or planning and management office.

The QS Intelligence Unit will distribute a data submission request addressing nominated research contacts, asking for academic faculty staff and student statistics, broken down by degree level and nationality marker. For all personnel related data the university will need to be able to answer questions regarding full-time and part-time headcounts as

well as full-time-equivalents with the latter being utilized in all ranking calculations. Above might sound simple but it is a complex process and it requires looking after. Having complete accurate data represents one of many rankings challenges and consequently it is vital to interact with the university in general in with the institutional research office in particular.

U-Multirank

U-Multirank makes use of both verified data from international data sources (bibliometric[1] sources, patent databases) and information provided by participating higher education institutions. This latter information category largely comes from institutional research offices or similar administrative sub-units in universities. U-Multirank asks each actively participating university to identify an 'information officer' with whom the process of data collection and analysis is coordinated.

In order to be able to assess the appropriateness and quality of this information, U-Multirank engages in an intensive interactive process with institutional data providers and tries to reach complete agreement on the data to be presented in the ranking tool. U-Multirank also has a number of specific data validity and reliability checks built in. These jointly operate as the data quality system of U-Multirank. U-Multirank only uses verified and reliable data; in the case of missing data it leaves gaps instead of inserting estimates (like some of the other global rankings do).

U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings

The *U.S. News* Best Global Universities Rankings obtains all its rankings data for all the ranking indicators (reputational, publications, citations, highly cited papers and school specific data on enrolment, faculty, etc.) from Thomson Reuters. Thomson Reuters works with institutional research offices to collect the school specific data for such factors as faculty and student counts as part of The Thomson Reuters Profiles Project.

Question 4: What is a typical data collection and ranking release timeline?

Thomson Reuters

The Profiles Project data collection period takes place in May and June of each year. Data collected from universities is combined with bibliometrics data and the results of an annual academic reputation survey to create a data set that can be utilized by ranking services according to their needs and methodology. The InCites Institutional Profiles service is refreshed with new data in the fall of each year.

Times Higher Education World University Rankings

- Data collection for the rankings broadly comes in three segments:
- Reputation data – a survey of leading academics across the globe and subject areas conducted at the beginning of the calendar year
- Institutional data – a survey of leading academic international institutions during the spring
- Citations data – analysis of latest available data during the summer

Analysis of data sources begins with the Reputation Data (results of which are published in the spring) and is on-going whilst data is gathered.

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[1] Bibliometrics is statistical analysis of written publications, such as books or articles. Bibliometric methods are frequently used in the field of library and information science, including scientometrics. For instance, bibliometrics are used to provide quantitative analysis of academic literature.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University

ARWU usually is published on August 15th.
GRUP usually open for data submission during March to May.

QS World University Rankings

The QS World University Rankings® is published annually in September/October. Typically, the data collection process starts in November by us inviting universities to supply academic and employer contact details lists. Those contacts will be utilized in our Global Academic and Employer Surveys which are deployed in the first quarter of the year. Both surveys are usually open until end of July. The initial request to submit data is distributed in February and we allocate four to five months for data collection and data validation. Data and survey result analysis commences usually in July and ends upon approval of final results. We allow our IT and PR teams approximately four to five weeks to set up publication on the website and respective campaigns. Ranked universities will receive institution specific fact files approximately one week prior to the official launch date.

U-Multirank

The overall release time is about 12 months. New registrations are usually possible from March to July. Before the publication of a ranking in a certain year (end of March) the preparation for the new data collection process starts; institutions can send in their data on-line during 3 months; this is followed by a first data-verification process by U-Multirank; during a next phase there is an interaction process with the individual institutions allowing them to correct data, add missing data and complete their data sets; after this a second data-verification process follows with a second interaction process; the final phase involves the data analysis and the calculations of the indicator scores. The timing of the student survey is adapted to the national contexts. The whole process is rather time-consuming because of its interactive nature and the individual contacts with the institutional 'information officers'.

U-Multirank with multi-year updating cycles: the institutional rankings are updated every two years, the field-based rankings every three years; every year a different group of fields is updated. Currently over 1200 universities from more than 80 countries are in the U-Multirank database. Which makes it the largest higher education database worldwide.

U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings

The *U.S. News* Best Global Universities Rankings data collection is based on Thomson Reuters' schedule since Thomson Reuters is our data supplier (see questions #3). In terms of release data for the next rankings, the next *U.S. News* Best Global Universities Rankings will be released sometime in October 2015.

Question5: Please provide your recommendations of how universities may use your ranking. Please be specific and feel free to use examples and case studies.

Thomson Reuters

Institutional profiles facilitate a multidimensional and unbiased comparison of all aspects of a university's performance regardless of the university's mission, size, geographical location or subject mix. Combining gold-standard bibliometric information with unique data on reputation, demographics of staff, students and funding creates a 360 degree view of all aspects of an institution's performance.

Profiles are utilized by universities, funding agencies, governments and rankings agencies as a valuable tool to identify weaknesses and strengths, find peer institutions, compare to global or regional benchmarks and to promote achievements to their stakeholders.

Times Higher Education World University Rankings

Universities, funding agencies and governments around the world have used the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings to benchmark their performance. This is illustrated by the following endorsements:

"The data collected for the *Time Higher Education* World University Rankings provide a useful set of indicators which enable us to analyse the dynamics of higher education development and to comparatively relate excellence to policies" Dirk Van Damme, Head of the Innovation and Measuring Progress Division (IMEP) at the OECD

"The *Times Higher Education* rankings are the principal yardstick we should look to." Shashi Tharoor, former Minister of State for Human Resource Development, India.

"*Times Higher Education* rankings – now increasingly seen as the gold standard." Ferdinand Von Prondzynski, Vice Chancellor, Robert Gordon University

Although *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings was conceived for the academic environment they are increasingly relied upon by students and families across the world seeing information on choosing higher education institutions.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University

a.   Setting strategic goals.

(1)   Aiming for Top 25
In the University of Manchester's Strategic Plan 2020, the university set a goal to be in the top 25 of the Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities by 2020.
Link: http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=11953
(2)   Aiming for Top 50
The University of Western Australia has set itself an ambitious goal of being counted as one of the top 50 Universities in the world by 2050 (as measured by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University's Academic Ranking of World Universities).
Link: http://www.cm.uwa.edu.au/plan/campus-plan-2010/vc-message
(3)   Aiming for Top 100
The ambition of the University of Toulouse (UT) is to boost the academic performances of all its components and its target is to secure a position among the top 100 within the next 20 years.
Link: http://www.univ-toulouse.fr/sites/default/files/UNITO-FICHE-B.pdf
(4)   Aiming for Top 150
Queen Mary, University of London has set a plan for 2010-2015 which aims to enter the 100-150th group both in Academic Ranking of World Universities and the *Times Higher Education* ranking of world universities by 2015.
Link: http://www.qmul.ac.uk/docs/about/32329.pdf
(5)   Aiming for Top 200
In 2009, Macquarie University developed its Research Strategic Plan 2009-2011, which sought to attain a ranking amongst the top 200 Universities in ARWU by 2014. Even though the goal has not been reached, the university's ranking has been increasing all the way.
Link: http://www.qmul.ac.uk/docs/about/32329.pdf
(6)   Aiming for Top 500
As one of its long term objectives, China Medical University (CMU) strives to become one of the World Top 500 universities as ranked by the Academic Ranking of World Universities.
Link: http://english.cmu.edu.tw/about/overview.php

b. Benchmark the university with local or international peers indicator by indicator. This can be done through GRUP platform.

QS World University Rankings

Despite their many shortcomings, biases and flaws 'rankings' enjoy a high level of acceptance among stakeholders and the wider public because of their simplicity and consumer-type information. Despite of only being able to show what is on the surface of this complex entity 'university', rankings have impact. As of today we are aware of at least 10 officially known policy recognitions, with Hong Kong's government scholarship scheme being one example.

It is a fact that our ranking system strengthens competition among universities which strive to improve their standing in the overall table. Due to us providing easily readable information the ranking is therefore beginning to be used as basis for funding allocations, as well as for developing institutional policies.

Our exercise has put performance evaluation on the map for many institutions. So, our work is inspiring institutions to pursue performance evaluation which will lead to performance enhancement. For example, an Italian university confirmed that the QS World University Rankings® will be adopted by the university in its strategic plan as the ranking to use for measuring improvement.

Also, with education becoming a top priority in emerging economies – many are looking to form high value, brand-building partnerships with world leading institutions being featured in our league table. And referring to the unique lens of graduate employability, the QS World University Rankings® influences the modern and smart employers to select the best employees from best universities. It means that businesses have started to use our ranking as a framework for picking up best available talent from universities featured.

Another aspect to consider is that being part of our ranking represents your institution as one of the top 8% of higher education institutions in the world and this could mean to attract higher value faculty and higher potential applicants that equals higher achieving more capable students, objectively better graduates and this then could translate into better employer reputation, a higher alumni earning and a potentially higher alumni giving.

U-Multirank

Institutions appear to use the U-Multitrank database to undertake benchmarking activities (with institutions with similar or very different profiles), to develop (international) consortia of cooperation (for student exchange, joint programs, research cooperation, recruitment of students and staff, etc), to undertake strengths/weaknesses analyses, to communicate their specific strengths, to showcase their qualities to funders, to convince policy-makers, etc. Many institutions also appear to use U-Multirank for internal management processes since it offers the option of comparative analyses for strategic planning decisions, quality management and performance measurement. A crucial precondition for these uses is a broad range of indicators and the full availability of the indicator values.

U-Multirank is recognised by many stakeholders as a valuable instrument to compare profiles of institutions and programmes and to communicate specific institutional strengths. Some illustrations:

Jamie Merisotis, President and CEO, The Lumina Foundation, USA:
"There is a profound need for more accessible, easily understood information on the performance of higher education. Colleges and universities, higher education associations and organizations, and governments around the globe are working to make greater transparency a reality. Significant progress in these efforts has been made by U-Multirank (www.umultirank.org) – a new user-driven approach to international data on higher education

institutions. U-Multirank provides valuable information and represents a compelling model of how higher education data that is focused on results can be made more accessible."

Fernando M. Galán, Vice-Chairperson, European Students Union:
"ESU believes that U-Multirank will be an extremely useful tool for students all over the world, being the first global ranking that includes in a serious manner the teaching and learning dimension."

Dr. Simon Marginson, Professor of International Higher Education, UCL Institute of Education, University College, London:
"U-Multirank is an exceptionally important development. It opens up universities to their communities and lifts cross-country comparison to a new level of comprehensiveness. It is a vital corrective to the "football" league mentality that has crept into higher education - higher education is more than a competition, more important than sport, and cannot be adequately summed up by single ranks in university league tables. Compared to other comparisons and rankings, U-Multirank gives students and other higher education stakeholders much more information to work with in making considered decisions."

Professor David D. Dill, Professor Emeritus of Public Policy, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (USA):
"Many university rankings apply common criteria to all academic institutions, encouraging an "academic arms race" for prestige fueled by expensive institutional investments in factors known to be associated with academic reputation. U-Multirank permits students and academic staff to compare institutions of similar mission and type, creating incentives for universities to improve their distinctive processes and activities, thereby sustaining the rich diversity of higher education and the vital contribution it makes to society."

Francisco Marmolejo, Tertiary Education Coordinator, The World Bank:
"At the end of the day, traditional rankings constitute an arbitrary assortment of variables, sadly forcing tertiary education institutions and governments to follow a narrowed definition of quality while pursuing the goal of being recognized locally and globally. Fortunately, U-Multirank has become a viable, proactive and less disruptive alternative to benchmark institutions by providing an innovative, multidimensional and flexible approach "à la carte". U-Multirank leaves a tertiary education institution to ultimately define its own approach and to recognize and value its uniqueness. It also, recognizes the fact that today's tertiary education landscape in the world is extremely diverse, and that it is not enough to have just one definition of what a tertiary education institution should be. U-Multirank is a more suitable response on the quest for quality in the complex and ever-changing world of tertiary education."

U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings

U.S. News doesn't offer advice on how universities should or shouldn't use any ranking. Clearly some universities use rankings (especially our *U.S. News* Best Colleges or Best Graduate Schools national rankings) for benchmarking, marketing brochures to attract students, quality branding, alumni fund raising, to attract new faculty, compete for research awards, or build partnerships.

Question 6: What strategies can universities use to maintain or improve their ranking?

Thomson Reuters

Institutions are encouraged to consider a number of ranking results, keeping in mind the nature of the ranking methodology. One size does not fit all and a ranking position alone does nothing to help a university learn where it fits against all other universities in a ranked group. Regardless of ranking position, underlying indicators can be taken on individually and used to evaluate current conditions or drive decisions about future directions.

Ranking services can help universities focus their efforts in particular areas where improved performance is desired. Strategies for improvement such as greater focus on high quality research, efforts to hire the best faculty and leadership staff, ensuring that academics and administrators are clear about the university strategy, among others, are worthy university improvements, not simply ranking position improvements.

On a practical level, as bibliometrics (paper/citation metrics) are often a heavily weighted factor in ranking methodologies, universities can work with bibliometrics providers like Thomson Reuters to ensure that paper and citation counts are accurate and complete.

Thomson Reuters encourages universities to submit accurate data each year, aiming for completeness and consistency over multiple years.

Times Higher Education World University Rankings

At *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings we place significant importance on the separation between editorial content and commercial revenues. We treat the position of institutions within the rankings with great care and do not give specific advice to institutions on how they can affect their position. However, we believe that by providing a transparent and rigorous set of performance indicators institutions can understand how their position within the rankings can change.

Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University

a. Emphasize research excellence.
b. Recruit established or promising researchers.
c. Monitor the performance of faculties or colleges

QS World University Rankings

Rankings are not just strengthening the competition among universities they are also satisfying the growing demand for institutional transparency. Every university is getting better and more progressive each year but it is about getting better faster in order to maintain or improve in rank position. Based on an analysis of fastest climbers in our rankings system we have established the following five components:

GOVERNANCE: Be sustained, isolated from political change and/or manipulation. It is important to be transparent and performance driven.

FOCUS: Not all institutions have a bottomless bank account, so break down the elephant task – identify centers of excellence and focus the branding around.

BRANDING: Even though it may seem superficial at times, branding is essential for recognition and partnerships. It certainly needs to relate to the institution and it needs to be honest.

COLLABORATION: Joint research attracts awareness and bigger collaborations mean higher impact.

PATIENCE: All of the above takes time to manifest itself. There is no quick fix strategy.

Meanwhile and in specific rankings context: Ensure that academic peer and employer contact detail lists are well prepared such that these potential respondents have knowledge of your university, its research and achievements. Ensure that all research papers are registered with Scopus, as all our research and citation scores are obtained from mentioned database. Most importantly, we do need a (our) primary research contact in order to work with the most accurate data reflecting your university reality.

U-Multirank

The answer to this question is very simple. When a university intends to present good ranking outcomes it should do at least two things:

1. For any university it is crucial that it has a clear strategy and knows its profile (in terms of research priorities, teaching programs, knowledge transfer activities, international focus, and regional engagement).
2. Knowing its own strategy and profile, a university should optimize its information system and have good institutional research processes in place, which will allow it to present clear and transparent information.

U.S. News Best Global Universities Rankings

Many universities need to become far better at external data reporting in order to make sure accurate data is being distributed. Many universities are very professional and precise in their external data reporting while others don't take it seriously. Better data will better reflect the university in rankings. Also it could in the ranking to have a sophisticated understanding of bibliometric/Citations from Web of Science (Thomson Reuters) Scopus (Elsevier) in order to make sure that the articles that are authored or co-authored by your school's faculty are indexed properly so your school is getting full credit for its publications and citations. There could be barriers to this taking place –consistent naming of the school, etc.