

WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

Identifying the World's Best Universities: the Development of
the Times Higher Education World University Rankings

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Phil Baty *Editor*

Times Higher Education World University Rankings



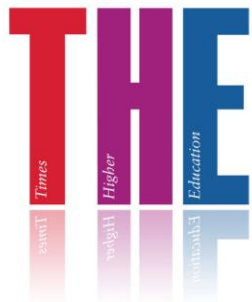


Times Higher Education World University Rankings *Where we were*

“The organizations who promote such ideas should be unhappy themselves, and so should any supine universities who endorse results they view as untruthful”.

Andrew Oswald professor of economics,
University of Warwick, 2007





About Times Higher Education

The weekly magazine for all higher education professionals





Why Rank? Rapid globalisation

- There are almost 3 million students enrolled in higher education outside their country of origin, a 53 per cent increase since 1999
- Universities now have 162 satellite campuses outside their home countries, an increase of 43 percent in just the past three years
- Around 20 per cent of all academics working in the UK are appointed from overseas
- Sir Drummond Bone said: “World class research is inherently international”





Why Rank? Rankings can be useful

- “Rankings often serve in place of formal accreditation systems”
- “Rankings prompt change in areas that directly improve student learning experiences”.
- “Rankings encourage institutions to move beyond their internal conversations to participate in broader... international discussions.”
- “Rankings foster collaboration, such as research partnerships, student and faculty exchange programmes.”

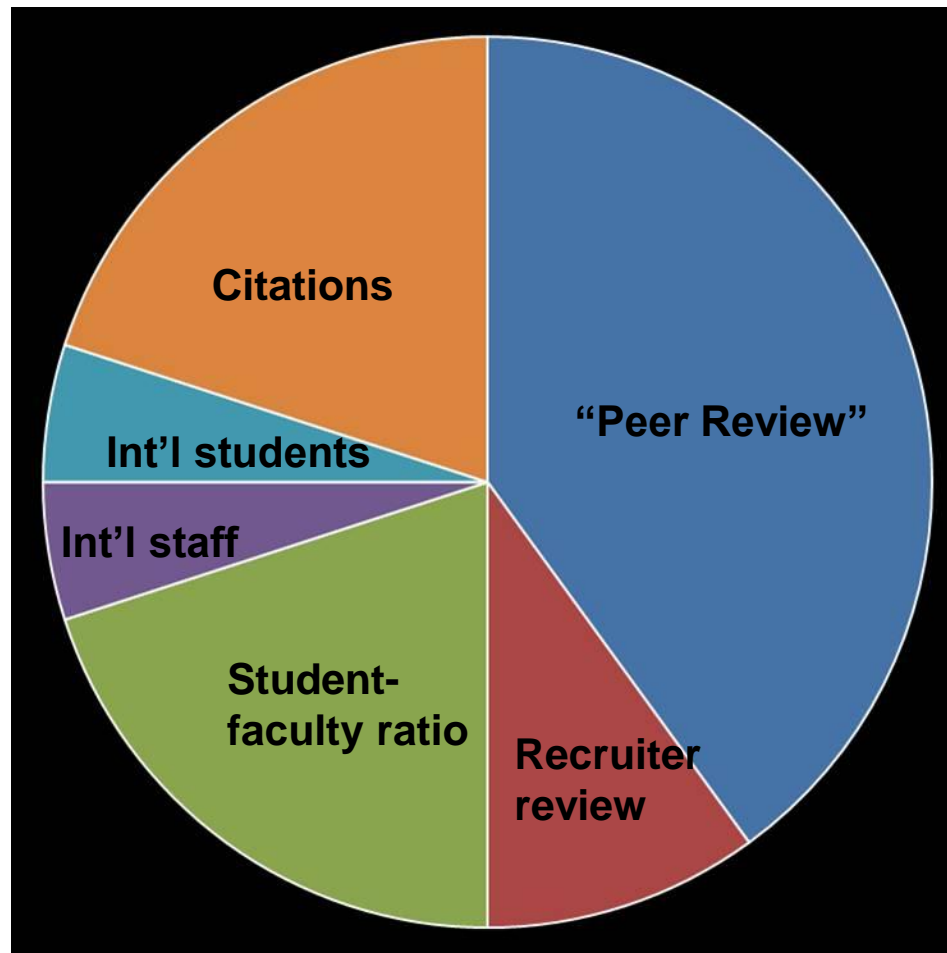
(US Institute for Higher Education Policy, May 2009)





The old THE-QS criteria

How the data were put together





Why the change? Strong criticism



"Results have been highly volatile. There have been many sharp rises and falls... Fudan in China has oscillated between 72 and 195..." Simon Marginson, University of Melbourne.

"Most people think that the main problem with the rankings is the opaque way it constructs its sample for its reputational rankings". Alex Usher, vice president of Educational Policy Institute, US.

"The logic behind the selection of the indicators appears obscure". Christopher Hood, Oxford University.





Peer review flaws

Not really “peer review” (just a reputation survey, with all the weaknesses of subjectivity)

QS achieved a low response rate to its survey: In 2009 only around 3,500 people responded to the survey. In 2008, there were just 182 from Germany, and 236 from India.

This is not good enough when you’re basing 40 per cent of the score on academic peer review

But: support for reputation measure in TR opinion poll. 79 per cent said were a “must have” or “nice to have”.





Citation flaws

By measuring citations-staff, QS failed to take into account dramatically different citation volumes between disciplines

Major bias towards hard sciences, because arts and humanities papers have much lower citation volumes

Is the LSE really only 67 in the world?





Other problems

Staff student ratios – is it really a measure of teaching quality?
Should it really be worth 20 per cent?

International student score – no way to judge quality of student intake

International staff score – ditto





Despite major flaws, rankings became massively influential

“The term world class universities has begun to appear in... institutional mission statements, and government education policy worldwide”

“Many staffing and organisational decisions at institutions worldwide have been affected by ranking-related goals and outcomes.”

“Rankings play an important role in persuading the Government and universities to rethink core national values”

US Institute for Higher Education Policy





Despite major flaws, they became massively influential



“Rankings are an unmistakable reflection of global academic competition... they seem destined to be a fixture on the global education scene for years to come. Detractors notwithstanding, as they are refined and improved they can and should play an important role in helping universities get better.”

Ben Wildavsky, The Great Brain Race (Princeton University Press, May 2010)





Times Higher Education's responsibility

"We will make the Times Higher Education World University Rankings the most respected, authoritative and widely cited global ranking on the market."

Ann Mroz, Editor, Times Higher Education, November 2009





Confirmed improvements

Reputation survey. Commissioned polling firm Ipsos Mori to undertake the reputation survey – 25,000 properly targeted and representative responses planned

Citation measures. Thomson Reuters' Web of Science covers 12,000 of the highest-impact academic journal and more than 110,000 conference proceedings.

Better use of data. Drawing on exceptional expertise from Thomson Reuters, and with direct access to the research citations data owners, we can use the citations data in a much more sophisticated way, to normalise for different subjects





Over to you

- Visit the Global Institutional Profiles Project website:
<http://science.thomsonreuters.com/globalprofilesproject/>
- Help shape the future of the World University Rankings by joining Times Higher Education's rankings discussion forum: <http://bit.ly/ErAag>
- Keep up to date with all the rankings news on Twitter:
@[THEWorldUniRank](https://twitter.com/THEWorldUniRank)

Join in the debate!





Thank you. Stay in touch.

Phil Baty
Times Higher Education

T. 020 3194 3298

E. phil.baty@tsleducation.com

www.twitter.com/THEWorldUniRank

