# Quick guide to 7 major ranking reports

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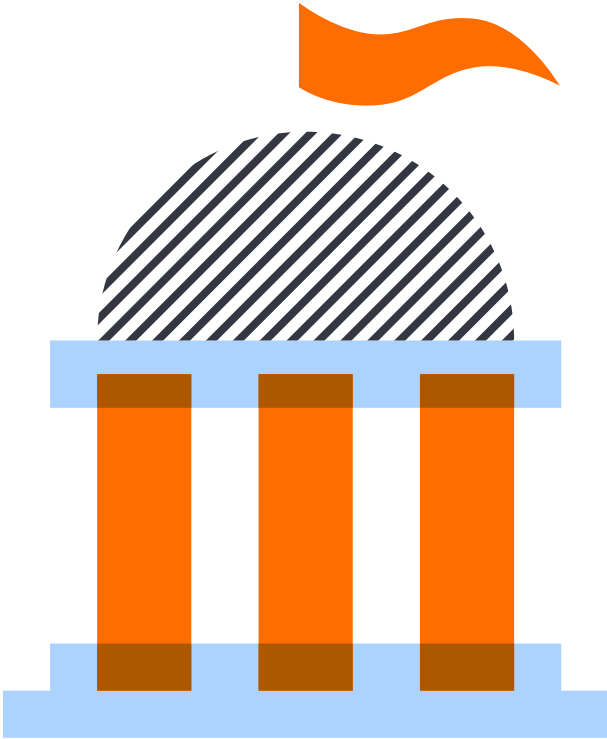
University rankings vary significantly, with numerous global and regional ranking organizations offering a diverse array of focuses, algorithms, methodologies, and data sources. It's important to recognize that each university has its distinct mission and purpose, while each ranking report or organization has its unique niche and set of indicators that evolve over time.

Understanding these differences is essential for aligning your institution's strategy with relevant rankings. This guide offers a concise overview of seven major global rankings, providing direct links to each ranker's website and methodology for further exploration.



# Quick guide to 7 major ranking reports

This quick reference table provides a look into 7 major and influential global ranking reports. Use the information to quickly compare and identify what each of the 7 reports focuses on, and what contributes to their methodologies.

ACADEMIC RANKING OF WORLD UNIVERSITIES

**Report:** Shanghai Rankings

**Focus:** Global

**Scope:** 2,500+ institutions are ranked annually, top 1000 are published

**Timing:** Annually (August)

THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

**Report:** World University Rankings

**Focus:** Global

**Scope:** 1,904 institutions

**Timing:** Annually (September/October)

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

**Report:** World University Rankings

**Focus:** Global

**Scope:** 1,500 institutions

**Timing:** Annually (Spring)

U.S.News & WORLD REPORT

**Report:** Best University Rankings

**Focus:** Global

**Scope:** 2,000 institutions across more than 95 countries

**Timing:** Annually (October)

THE IMPACT RANKINGS

**Report:** Impact Rankings

**Focus:** United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

**Scope:** 1,591 institutions (changes annually)

**Timing:** April

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS by subject

**Report:** WUR by Subject

**Focus:** Individual subject areas (54)

**Scope:** 1,500 institutions

**Timing:** Annually (Spring)

CWTS Leiden Ranking

**Report:** CWTS Leiden Rankings

**Focus:** Research-intensive universities

**Scope:** 1,411 institutions

**Timing:** Annually (June)

**Ranking organization:**
Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)

**Ranking report:**
Shanghai Rankings/ARWU

**Report focus:**
Global

**Stated goal:**
Provide a starting point for identifying national strengths and weaknesses as well as facilitating reform and setting new initiatives

**Scope:**
2500+ institutions are ranked annually, top 1000 are published in the report

**Data sources:**
Nobel Prize | Fields Medals (www.mathunion.org) | **HiCi:** Clarivate
**N&S:** Web of Science | **Bibliometrics:** Web of Science
**Number of academic staff:** National agencies such as National Ministry of Education, National Bureau of Statistics, National Association of Universities and Colleges, National Rector's Conference.

**Timing:**
Annually (August)

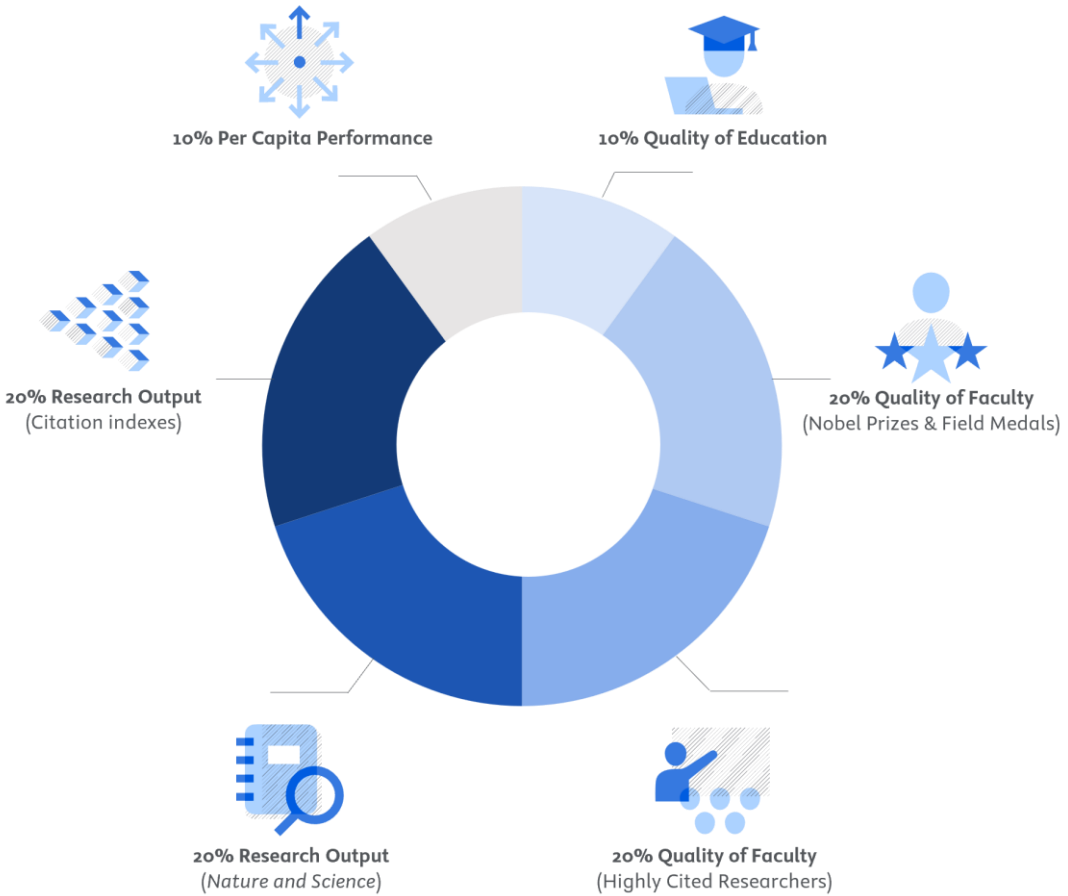
Source: https://www.shanghairanking.com/
Website accessed on: August 21, 2023

ACADEMIC RANKING OF WORLD UNIVERSITIES SINCE 2003

For each indicator, the highest-scoring institution is assigned a score of 100, and other institutions are calculated as a percentage of the top score. An institution's rank reflects the number of institutions that sit above it.

- **10% Quality of Education**: Alumni of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals
- **20% Quality of Faculty**: Staff of an institution winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals
- **20% Quality of Faculty**: Highly Cited Researchers
- **20% Research Output**: Papers published in *Nature* and *Science**
- **20% Research Output**: Papers indexed in Science Citation Index-Expanded and Social Science Citation Index
- **10% Per Capita Performance**: Per capita academic performance of an institution

** For institutions specialized in humanities and social sciences such as London School of Economics, N&S is not considered, and the weight of N&S is relocated to other indicators.*



**Ranking organization:**
Times Higher Education (THE)

**Ranking report:**
World University Rankings

**Report focus:**
Global

**Stated goal:**

- Evaluate research-intensive universities across all their core missions: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook.
- Provide trusted performance data on universities for students and their families, university academics, university leaders, governments and industry.

**Scope:**
1,904 institutions

**Data sources:**
Academic Reputation Survey | Elsevier's Bibliometric datasets and analytics solutions: Scopus & SciVal (data cut-off date = May 1st )

**Timing:**
Annually (September/October)

Source: www.timeshighereducation.com
Website accessed on: 22 August 2023

THE uses 18 performance indicators to position 1,904 institutions worldwide. These performance indicators are grouped into five areas (as shown to the right).

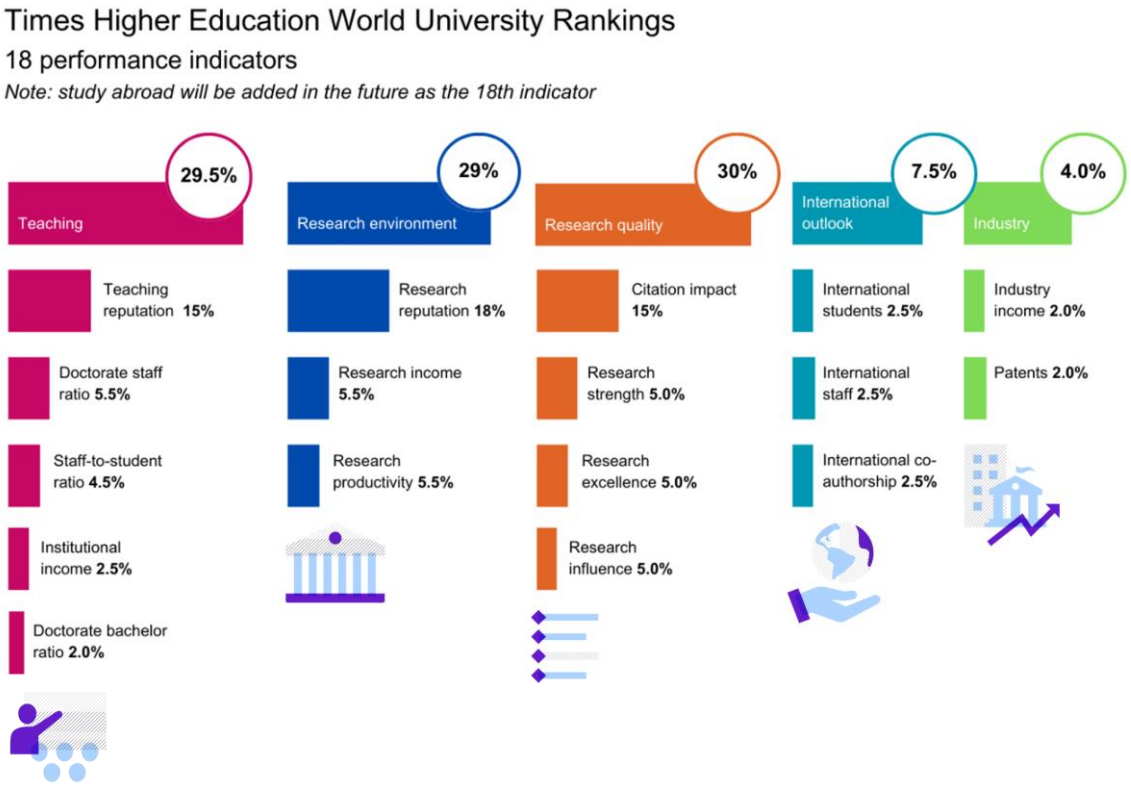
**29.5% Teaching** (the learning environment):
- 15.0% Teaching reputation
- 4.5% Staff-to-student ratio
- 2.0% Doctorate bachelor ratio
- 5.5% Doctorates staff ratio
- 2.5% Institutional income

**29% Research environment** (volume, income and reputation):
- 18% Research reputation
- 5.5% Research income
- 5.5% Research productivity

**30% Research quality**
- 15% Citation impact
- 5.0% Research strength
- 5.0% Research excellence
- 5.0% Research influence

**7.5% International outlook** (staff, students and research)
- 2.5% Proportion of international students
- 2.5% Proportion of international staff
- 2.5% International co-authorship

**4.0% Industry** (income (2%) and patents (2%))



**Ranking organization:**
QS

**Ranking report:**
QS World University Rankings

**Report focus:**
Global

**Stated goal:**
Enabling motivated people anywhere in the world to fulfill their potential through educational achievement, international mobility, and career development. New emphasis on employability and sustainability.

**Scope:**
1,500 institutions

**Data sources:**
Elsevier's Bibliometric datasets and analytics solutions: Scopus & SciVal

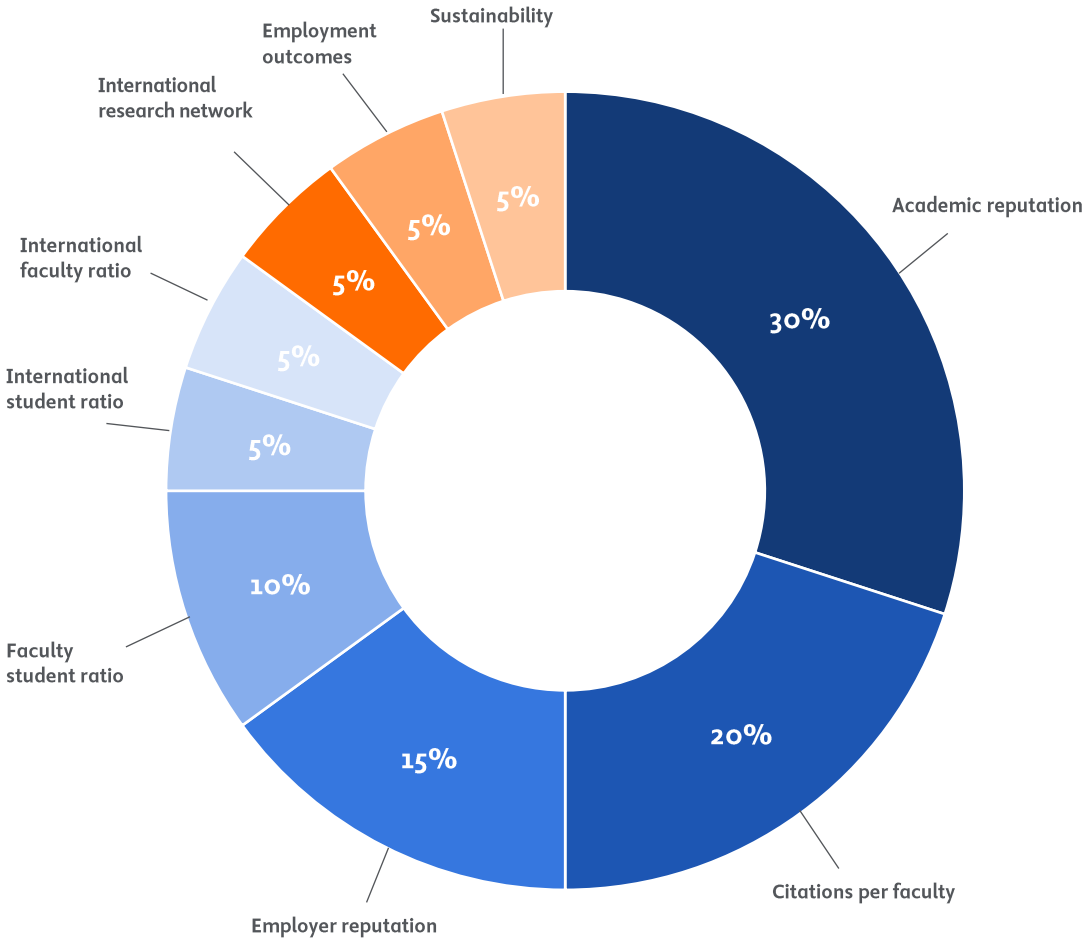
**Timing:**
Annually (Spring)

Source: support.qs.com/hc/en-gb/articles/4405955370898-QS-World-University-Rankings
Website accessed on: 22 August 2023

QS evolved its methodological framework for its 20th edition WUR to add sustainability, employability and research collaborations to its well-established set of six simple metrics. Faculty area normalization was introduced in 2015 to ensure that institutions specializing in Life Sciences and Natural Sciences were not unduly advantaged.

**QS World University Rankings evaluates universities according to nine metrics:**

- Academic reputation 30%
- Citations per faculty 20%
- Employer reputation 15%
- Faculty student ratio 10%
- International student ratio 5%
- International faculty ratio 5%
- International research network 5% *(added in 2023)*
- Employment outcomes 5% *(added in 2023)*
- Sustainability 5% *(added in 2023)*



**Ranking organization:**
U.S. News &World Report

**Ranking report:**
Best University Rankings

**Report focus:**
Global

**Stated goal:**
For potential students: used to explore higher education options beyond their own countries' borders and to compare key aspects of schools' research missions.

For universities: provide a way to benchmark themselves against other schools, become more visible globally, and find top schools in other countries to collaborate with.

**Scope:**
2,000 institutions across more than 95 countries

**Data sources:**
Bibliometric data and indicators: Clarivate
Reputation Indicators: Clarivate Analytics' Academic Reputation Survey

**Timing:**
Annually (October)

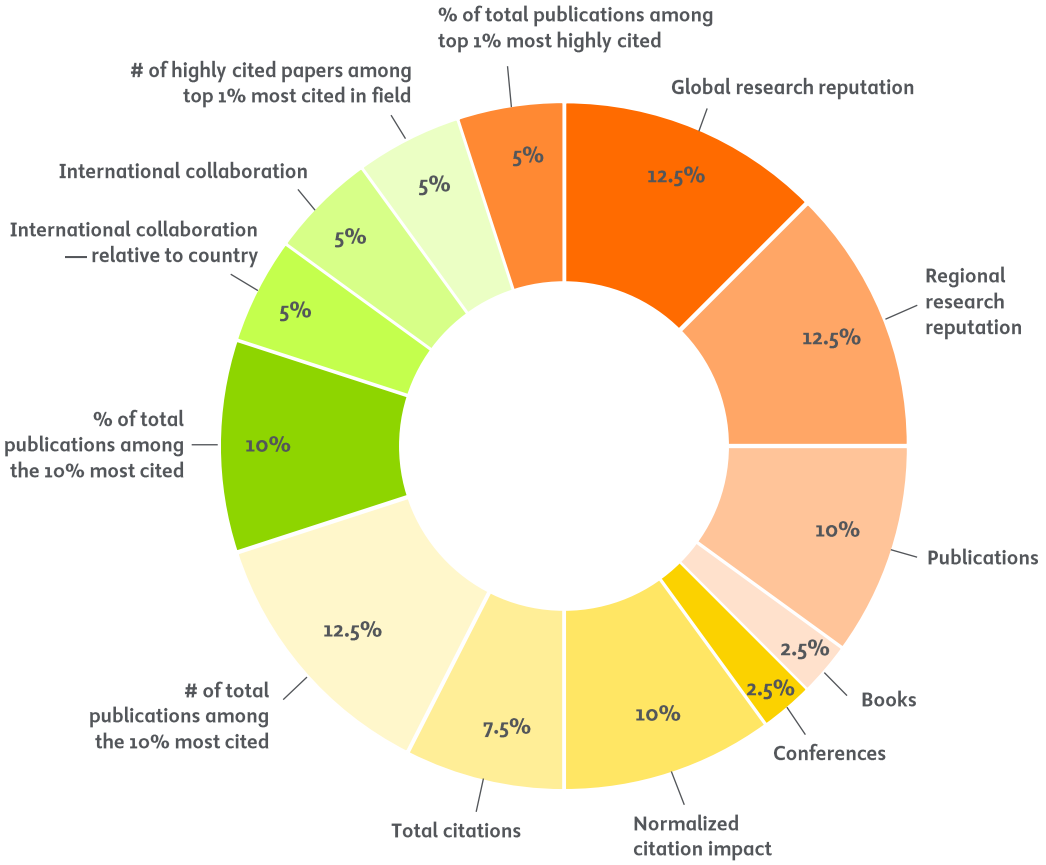
Source: https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/articles/methodology
Website accessed on: 22 August 2023

U.S.News & WORLD REPORT

The rankings focus specifically on schools' academic research and reputation overall and not on their separate undergraduate or graduate programs.

To arrive at a school's rank, the overall global scores are calculated using a combination of the weights and z-scores for each of the 13 indicators used in the rankings.

- **12.5%** Global research reputation
- **12.5%** Regional research reputation
- **10%** Publications
- **2.5%** Books
- **2.5%** Conferences
- **10%** Normalized citation impact
- **7.5%** Total citations
- **12.5%** Number of publications among the 10% most cited
- **10%** Percentage of total publications among the 10% most cited
- **5%** International collaboration
- **5%** International collaboration — relative to country
- **5%** Number of highly cited papers among the top 1% most cited in their respective field
- **5%** Percentage of total publications among the top 1% most highly cited papers



**Ranking organization:**
Times Higher Education (THE)

**Ranking report:**
Impact Rankings

**Report focus:**
United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

**Stated goal:**
To provide a showcase for the work being delivered by universities in our communities, and an opportunity to shine a light on institutional activities and efforts not covered in other rankings and demonstrate the differences a university is making to the world we live in.

**Scope:**
1,591 institutions from 112 countries/regions (2023, changes annually)

**Data sources:**
- Universities can submit data on as many of the 17 SDGs as they are able
- Elsevier's Bibliometric datasets and analytics solutions: Scopus & SciVal

**Timing:**
Annually (April)

Source:
https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/about-the-times-higher-education-world-university-rankings
Website accessed on: 22 August 2023

## How universities are ranked

THE uses indicators to provide comparisons across three broad areas: research, outreach, and stewardship, across all of the SDGs.

Any university that provides data on SDG 17 and at least three other SDGs is included in the overall ranking.

The methodology was developed in conjunction with THE's partners Vertigo Ventures and Elsevier, and after consultation and input from individual universities, academics, and sector groups.

Universities can submit data on as many of the SDGs as they are able. Each SDG has a series of metrics that are used to evaluate the performance of the university in that SDG.

As well as the overall ranking, THE also publishes the results of each individual SDG. This rewards any university that has participated with a ranking position, even if they are not eligible to be in the overall table.

## Methodology

A university's final score in the overall table is calculated by combining its score in SDG 17 with its top three scores out of the remaining 16 SDGs. SDG 17 accounts for 22% of the overall score, while the other SDGs each carry a weight of 26%. This means that different universities are scored based on a different set of SDGs, depending on their focus. The score for the overall ranking is an average of the last two years' total scores.

The score from each SDG is scaled so that the highest score in each SDG in the overall calculation is 100. This is to adjust for minor differences in the scoring range in each SDG and to ensure that universities are treated equitably for whichever SDGs they have provided data for. It is these scaled scores that we use to determine which SDGs a university has performed most strongly in; they may not be the SDGs in which the university is ranked highest or has scored highest based on unscaled scores.

## The SDGs included:


**Ranking organization:**
QS

**Ranking report:**
QS World University Rankings by Subject

**Report focus:**
Individual subject areas (54 subject areas)

**Stated goal:**
Help prospective students identify the world's leading schools in their chosen field in response to high demand for subject-level comparisons.

**Scope:**
1,500 institutions

**Data sources:**
International Reputation:
- QS global survey of academics
- QS global survey of employers

Research Impact:
Elsevier's Bibliometric datasets and analytics solutions: Scopus & SciVal
- Research citations per paper
- *h*-index in relevant subject

**Timing:**
Annually (Spring)

Source: https://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/articles/methodology
Website accessed on: 22 August 2023

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS by subject

**Five components are combined to produce the results for each of the subject rankings, with weightings adapted for each discipline:**

- Academic reputation
- Employer reputation
- Research citations per paper
- *h*-index
- International Research Network (IRN) NEW

As research cultures and publication rates vary significantly across academic disciplines, the QS World University Rankings by Subject applies a different weighting of the four indicators in each subject.

For example, in medicine, where publication rates are very high, research citations and the *h*-index account for 20% of each university's total score. On the other hand, in areas with much lower publication rates, such as history, these research-related indicators only account for 7.5% of the total ranking score. Meanwhile, in subjects such as art and design, where there are too few papers published to be statistically significant, the ranking is based solely on the employer and academic surveys.

| | INDICATORS | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Faculty Area | Academic Reputation | Employer Reputation | Citations per Paper | *h*-index | IRN |
| Arts & Humanities | 60% | 20% | 7.5% | 7.5% | 5% |
| Engineering & Technology | 40% | 30% | 10% | 10% | 10% |
| Life Sciences & Medicine | 40% | 10% | 20% | 20% | 10% |
| Natural Sciences | 40% | 20% | 15% | 15% | 10% |
| Social Sciences & Management | 50% | 30% | 7.5% | 7.5% | 5% |


**Ranking organization:**
CWTS

**Ranking report:**
CWTS Leiden Ranking

**Report focus:**
Research-intensive universities

**Stated goal:**
The Leiden Ranking stands for a multidimensional perspective on university performance.

**Scope:**
1,411 institutions in 2023

**Data sources:**
Web of Science data from the Science Citation Index Expanded, the Social Sciences Citation Index, and the Arts & Humanities Citation Index, which is then enriched by CWTS. Excludes conference proceeding publications and book publications

**Timing:**
Annually (June)



Source: https://www.leidenranking.com/
Website accessed on: 21 August 2023

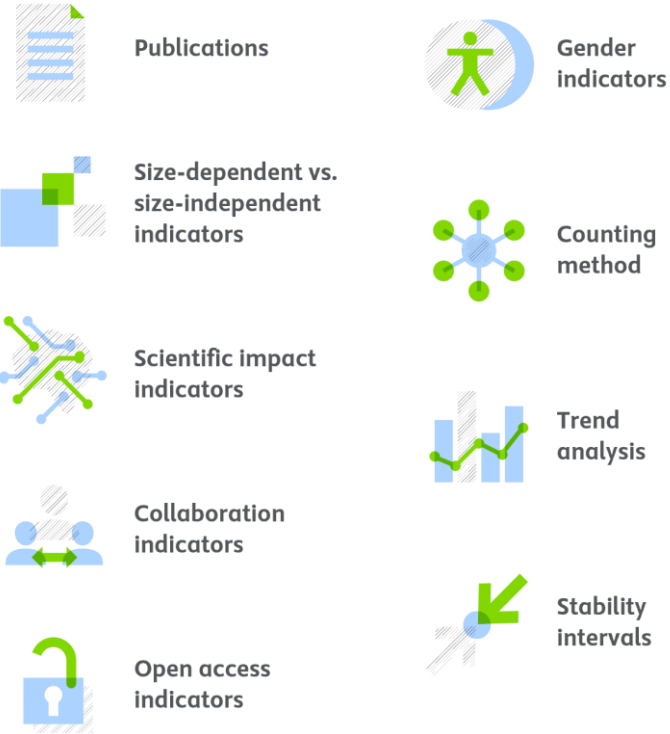
CWTS Leiden Ranking

The Leiden Ranking provides information exclusively about the research done at universities. They offer important insights into the scientific performance of just over 1,400 major universities worldwide. Research is represented in publications, and the collected data about these publications forms the basis for the Leiden Ranking. A set of bibliometric indicators are used to provide statistics on scientific impact, collaboration, open access publishing, and gender diversity.

**Identification of universities:** Typically, a university is characterized by a combination of education and research tasks in conjunction with a doctorate-granting authority. However, these characteristics do not mean that universities are particularly homogeneous entities that allow for international comparison on every aspect. As a result of its focus on scientific research, the Leiden Ranking presents a list of institutions that have a high degree of research intensity in common.

**These indicators include:**

- Publications
- Size-dependent vs. size-independent indicators
- Scientific impact indicators
- Collaboration indicators
- Open access indicators
- Gender indicators
- Counting method
- Trend analysis
- Stability intervals



## Learn more about university rankings

Discover how university rankings and research activities intertwine. While not the sole gauge of institutional reputation and academic excellence, rankings serve as benchmarks on national, regional, and global scales.

Delve into resources for a deeper understanding of ranking mechanisms and how to analyze and track research activities, crucial for advancing your ranking goals.

## Online Rankings Topic Page:

https://beta.elsevier.com/academic-and-government/university-rankings-and-research-activities

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# Thank you