



Q&A

The 2025 World University Rankings Masterclass: Europe

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Q&A

Q. Good Morning, could you please explain how are defined subject areas for the ranking?

A. Good morning! Subject areas for the ranking are defined within the framework of the 11 broad subject categories that Times Higher Education (THE) uses for its World University Rankings. Each of these broad categories is further divided into specific subjects to accommodate the variety of academic disciplines across institutions. However, these narrow subject categories are meant to serve as guidelines rather than strict classifications, acknowledging that subject structures and definitions can vary globally.

When universities provide data for the rankings, they are expected to map their own programs and research outputs to these broad subject categories. This mapping process may involve estimations or overlaps where exact data are not available. It's important for institutions to mark all the subjects they offer as applicable and to complete all required fields to ensure meaningful performance indicators can be produced. The subject-weighted indicators are used to reflect the varying volume of doctoral awards and research income across different disciplines.

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Q. I have one question related to the inclusion criteria. What happens to small-sized universities (around 200 teaching staff / researchers) as it might be a bit more difficult to get included in the ranking? Wouldn't be possible to bypass the inclusion criteria and keep some sort of ratio between the staff number and the number of publications over a 5-year period? We currently are a reporting institution and not part of the actual ranking. Thank you!

A. Hello! The inclusion criteria for the World University Rankings are designed to ensure that only institutions that meet certain standards of research output and breadth of academic offerings are included. For small-sized universities, meeting the threshold of 1,000 relevant publications over the previous five years and more than 100 relevant publications in any single year can indeed be

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Q. I am curious about the response rate and, if there are missing data.

A. The academic reputation survey response rate is around 1.8%.

Q. Regarding the Academic Reputation Survey, can HEIs provide THE with list of academics (not from their own institutions) and their details to be contacted for the survey? this may include co-authors, external examiners etc ...

A. No, higher education institutions (HEIs) cannot provide THE with lists of academics to be contacted for the Academic Reputation Survey. THE does not have a nomination system where voters or institutions can nominate others to take part in the survey. The selection of respondents is based on an in-house academic contact database, which includes verified academic contacts who are active, cited academics. This approach is taken to ensure that the survey responses are completed only by qualified individuals and to maintain the integrity of the survey process.

Q. Can an Academic vote for his/her institution? If yes, does the vote count as 1 for that institution?

A. Yes, an academic can vote for their own institution in the reputation survey. However, there is a self-voting cap in place to prevent any potential bias from excessive self-

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Q. could you please repeat/explain the point in one of the last slides that UNESCO data will no longer be used? Why?

A. The point regarding UNESCO data is that the dataset previously utilized by THE for the World Reputation Rankings is no longer being published by UNESCO. We are currently looking for an alternative dataset.

Q. I am going to report the information about this meeting tomorrow morning to our Uskudar University Senate. so is it possible to get the recording and ppt tonight at least

A. Please find the full recordings and slides at <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/content/thes-world-university-rankings-2025-masterclass>

Q. Do your evaluation criterias remain the same all the years or can they be modified or changed in time on some basis?

A. The evaluation criteria for university rankings can indeed be modified or changed over time. These changes are often based on ongoing research, feedback from the academic community, and the desire to more accurately reflect the current state of higher education and research. For instance, THE has introduced changes in the World University Rankings methodology, moving from WUR 2.0 to WUR 3.0 in 2024, which includes new metrics and adjustments to existing ones. This evolution in methodology is aimed at providing a more robust and insightful assessment of universities' performance. It's important for institutions to stay informed about these changes, as they can impact rankings and the perception of an institution's strengths and weaknesses.

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Q. I mean the dimension Subject in ASIC codes are over courses ISCED 6-7-8?

A. ISCED levels are part of the International Standard Classification of Education, which categorizes education programs and related qualifications into levels. ASJC is a granular subject classification used by Elsevier:

https://service.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/12007/supporthub/scopus/

Q. You still not use fractional counting in the bibliometrics?

A. Yes, fractional counting is used in bibliometrics for certain cases. Specifically, when dealing with papers that have a large number of authors, such as those with 1000 or more unique authors, a fractional counting method is applied. This method ensures that the contribution of each institution involved in a multi-authored paper is weighted appropriately. The fraction is calculated using a formula that takes into account the number of authors from a particular institution in relation to the total number of authors on the publication. This fractional value is then used in the calculation of various metrics, such as output, international output, mean Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI), and output in the top 10th percentile by FWCI for an institution.

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Q. We also see the QS results on ranking worldwide. What do you think of them? Their potential and position?

A. Both the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings and the QS World University Rankings are widely recognized and used by students, academics, and institutions worldwide. Each has its own methodology and set of indicators, which can lead to different outcomes and insights.

Q. Apologies. Please explain again acronym FCWI

A. The acronym FWCI stands for Field-Weighted Citation Impact. It is a metric used to assess the citation impact of research outputs from universities. The FWCI measures the average number of citations received by a publication from a university, normalized for the subject field, publication year, and document type. A FWCI score of 1 indicates that the university's research output is cited at a rate commensurate with the global average for similar publications. A score above 1 means the research is more cited than expected, while a score below 1 indicates less citation impact than the global average. This metric is a significant component of the World University Rankings, reflecting the quality of academic output from universities.

Q&A

Q. why you rank Turkey in Asia?

A. Turkey is ranked within the Asia University Rankings primarily due to its geographical and regional association. While Turkey straddles both Europe and Asia, a significant portion of its landmass is situated in the region recognized as Western Asia. The decision to include Turkey in the Asia University Rankings is based on a combination of factors, including geographical considerations and the regional focus of the rankings.

Q. Could you please explain me difference between academic and research staff in line with THE concept?

A. In the context of THE (Times Higher Education) rankings, academic staff and research staff are distinct categories with specific definitions.

Academic staff includes those who are involved in teaching students and may also be engaged in research activities. This category encompasses permanent staff and those on long-term contracts who contribute to the academic mission of the institution, including teaching and potentially research. Their full-time equivalent (FTE) is calculated based on their academic roles, excluding any time spent on clinical, administrative, or support functions.

Research staff, on the other hand, are individuals who are exclusively dedicated to research activities. They are often contracted for specific research projects and are not permanently attached to the institution. This category includes researchers, research fellows, and postdoctoral researchers but does not include professors, lecturers, clinicians, technical staff, administrative staff, PhD students, or other students. The FTE for research staff reflects their sole commitment to research. In summary, academic staff are involved in teaching and may also conduct research, while research staff are focused solely on research projects and are typically on temporary contracts.

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Q. The availability of funds and financial resources drives the research field, as well as the institutes that have access to them. I believe adjustments are needed regarding the amount of funds allocated to certain fields, particularly in terms of prioritization and normalization. Interdisciplinary areas, which often face difficulties due to fragmented terminology and diverse research focuses, struggle with a lack of topic-related journals. These areas should receive extra consideration. Some fields are not prioritized by industry or academic innovation (on the financial side), yet academics are still striving to find cooperation and support a place among the hot topics. such as those outside of patentable areas. Additionally, I believe more complex country scores should be introduced to provide extra points for certain fields nearby the population etc.

A. The challenges faced by interdisciplinary research in science disciplines, such as the allocation of funds and the need for specialized journals, are indeed significant. Interdisciplinary research often requires additional support due to its nature of integrating multiple scientific fields. The lack of topic-related journals can hinder the dissemination of interdisciplinary findings, and the prioritization of funding often favors more established, single-discipline research areas. Universities and research institutions can address these challenges by creating environments that foster interdisciplinary collaboration, such as providing dedicated physical facilities and administrative support specifically for interdisciplinary teams. Additionally, promotion systems that recognize the value of interdisciplinary work can incentivize researchers to pursue these areas despite the potential financial and publication challenges.

It is also important for funding bodies and academic institutions to consider the broader impact of research areas that may not be immediately patentable or commercially viable but contribute to the advancement of knowledge and address complex societal challenges. This could involve re-evaluating funding models and assessment criteria to better accommodate and encourage interdisciplinary research efforts."

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Q. regarding the reputation surveys, can we inform our staff that the survey is opened and they could be contacted by THE and is important to participate?

A.

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Q. Do you have a regional office in Morocco, for example, to support universities?

A. We do not have a regional office in Morocco to support universities. However, universities interested in participating in rankings or seeking support can contact the relevant teams via email or phone as provided in the contact details. They can reach out to profilerankings@timeshighereducation.com. Our team can communicate in English, French, Arabic, and several other languages.

Q. Is there a specific policy for developing countries?

A. We strive to consider the diverse circumstances of institutions worldwide, including those in developing countries. If there are adjustments or considerations made for developing countries in the ranking process, these would typically be outlined in the methodology documentation.

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Q. The response rate in your academic survey is quite low at 1.8%. I assume the response rate is not randomly distributed across countries - what do you do to mitigate not response bias in your survey?

A. To mitigate non-response bias in academic surveys, several strategies are typically employed. One common approach is to apply weightings to the survey responses to ensure that the distribution of scholars across different regions is accurately reflected. This can involve using data from organizations like UNESCO to understand the global distribution of academics and then adjusting the survey results accordingly.

Additionally, efforts are made to increase the response rate by sending reminders and ensuring the survey is accessible in multiple languages. The survey design may also be optimized to be concise and user-friendly to encourage participation. In some cases, monitoring the response rates from various regions and institutions can help identify over or underrepresentation, allowing for targeted follow-up communications to balance the sample.

It's important to note that while these methods can help reduce bias, it's challenging to eliminate it entirely. Continuous evaluation and improvement of the survey process are necessary to enhance the representativeness and reliability of the results.

Q&A

Q. How can we be helped in the selection of data to be submitted in the THE Impact rankings

A. Please email impact@timeshighereducation.com for specific support.

Q. Last year, I remember a very interesting slide about multidisciplinary around the world. Can you say or show something about it this year?

A. The presentations this year did not contain any information on multidisciplinary. But we invite you to consult our recently published Interdisciplinary Science Rankings at <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/interdisciplinary-science-rankings->

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Q. What role do THE rankings play in university funding or international partnerships?

A. The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings can significantly influence university funding and international partnerships. High rankings can enhance an institution's reputation, making it more attractive to prospective students, faculty, and researchers. This increased desirability can lead to higher enrollment rates and the ability to attract top talent, which in turn can result in increased tuition revenue and a stronger pool of candidates for research positions.

Furthermore, universities that perform well in THE rankings often find it easier to secure research funding from government bodies, private organizations, and international agencies, as a strong ranking is seen as an indicator of quality and research impact. This can lead to more opportunities for cutting-edge research and innovation.

In terms of international partnerships, a good position in the rankings can make an institution more appealing as a partner for collaborative projects, student and staff exchanges, and joint academic programs. These partnerships can enhance the global reach and prestige of a university, further improving its position in future rankings and creating a positive feedback loop that benefits both funding and international collaboration opportunities.

Q. Could you please provide the contact information of the person in charge of university rankings for new institutions? We would like to join the ranking and learn about all the requirements we need to meet.

A. Please reach out to profilerankings@timeshighereducation.com and we can further assist you.

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Thank you