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The Methodology: A simple overview

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The THE - QS World University Rankings were conceived to present a multi-faceted view of the relative strengths of the world's leading universities. The research yields results on 600 "in the round" and 300 in each of five broad faculty areas. The overall rankings are compiled based in six distinct indicators:

Indicator	Explanation	Weighting
Academic Peer Review	Composite score drawn from peer review survey (which is divided into five subject areas). 6,354 responses in 2008.	40%
Employer Review	Score based on responses to employer survey. 2,339 responses in 2008.	10%
Faculty Student Ratio	Score based on student faculty ratio	20%
Citations per Faculty	Score based on research performance factored against the size of the research body	20%
International Faculty	Score based on proportion of international faculty	5%
International Students	Score based on proportion of international students	5%

Weightings are decided upon by Times Higher Education based on their opinion of the importance of the measured criteria balanced against the effectiveness of the indicator to evaluate the intended measure.

Academic Peer Review

The Academic Peer Review is the centrepiece of the THE - QS World University Rankings and is based on an online survey distributed to academics worldwide. Results are compiled based on three years worth of responses totalling 6,354 in 2008. Respondents are not permitted to submit their own institution or to respond more than once (their latest response is counted). Weightings are applied both geographically and by discipline to ensure as fair a representative spread as possible.

Employer Review

Similar to the Academic Peer Review, this indicator is based on a global online survey, this time distributed to employers. Results are again based on three years worth of "latest response" data. Geographical weightings are again applied to ensure fair representation from all regions of the world.

Faculty Student Ratio

Faculty Student Ratio is used in many ranking systems and evaluations in the world, and whilst it may not be a perfect measure of teaching quality, it is the most globally available and accessible measure of commitment to teaching. An indication that the institution in question has sufficient staff to teach its students.

Citations per Faculty

Citations are a widely used, conventional measure of research strength. A citation is a reference to one academic publication in the text of another. The more citations a publication receives the better it is perceived to be, the more highly cited papers a university publishes, the stronger it can be considered to be. As a measure this is somewhat geared towards scientific and technical subjects, which is why it doesn't carry more weight. The source used in this evaluation is Scopus, the world's largest abstract and citation database of research literature. The latest five complete years of data are used. The total citation count is factored against the number of faculty in order to take into account the size of the institution.

International Factors

In today's increasingly globalized world, the most successful universities have to attract the world's best students and faculty. Simple evaluations of the proportion of international students and international faculty serve as indicators of an institution's international attractiveness.

These indicators are then combined using standard statistical methods to yield the overall scores you will see in the results tables. If you are interested in greater detail, this section of the website contains a wealth of in depth information on how the rankings are compiled.

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