

THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

History, methodology and influence

Beijing 25 June, 2010

Times
Higher
Education

Phil Baty *Editor*

Times Higher Education World University
Rankings





About Times Higher Education

The weekly magazine for all higher education professionals

The weekly magazine for higher education

Standards deviation
Inquiry raises concerns about quality control 6

RAE panels
Collegial links in the spotlight 8

Blended learning?
Emulate Starbucks to keep students happy, says v-c 15

Thought for today
Intellectuals still speak truth to power 54

Atheism vs belief: Hume's humorous approach 40

www.timeshighereducation.co.uk

Who's hit the jackpot?
Funding allocations in full

£2.20
5-11 March
2009
No. 1,880

The weekly magazine for higher education

Individual deductions
How much the allocations cost the elite per head 6

Spin cycles
Select committee sifts sector's dirty laundry 8

Without prejudice?
Petition seeks removal of lecturer on BNP list 11

Gloves, and hat, off
Britain's war on (Jewish) terror 48

Win a Flip camcorder 11

www.timeshighereducation.co.uk

Odd ones out

Are super-bright obsessive thinkers no longer welcome in the academy?

£2.20
12-18 March
2009
No. 1,887

The weekly magazine for higher education

Business bonanza
Third-stream work earns up to sevenfold return 6

Pride and prejudice
Professor in Austen row accused of 'jealousy' 7

'Ofqual for universities'
MPs hear call for body to defend standards 8

Scientific creed
Michael Reiss says God and Darwin co-exist 40

Winners and losers in Scottish funding allocations 10

www.timeshighereducation.co.uk

...lend me your ears

Barack Obama and the rebirth of rhetoric

£2.20
2-8 April
2009
No. 1,890





About www.timeshighereducation.co.uk

The dedicated website for higher education news, jobs and resources

My THE | [Login](#) | [Register](#) | [Jobs by category](#) | [Jobs by location](#) | [Issue index](#) | [Site map](#)

2009 THE AWARDS
DEADLINE 5 JUNE 2009
CLICK HERE TO ENTER

HOME CONTACT COMMENT CAREER LEGAL BOOKS STATS ADVERTISE JOBS EVENTS MAGAZINE SUBSCRIBE

THE JOBS

SEARCH FOR THE BEST JOBS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS WEEK'S THE

SIGN UP FOR OUR FREE NEWSLETTER

WORLD RANKINGS 2008

VIEW THIS YEAR'S TOP 200 UNIVERSITIES
CLICK HERE

WELCOME TO TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION!
The number one destination for higher education jobs, news and resources.

[RSS Feeds](#)

BREAKING NEWS

V-Cs accuse select committee of 'obsession'
7 April 2009
Head says criticism is 'not based on great substance' as MPs unveil another academic's misgivings. Melanie Newman reports

Public still sees student loans as credit card-style debt
7 April 2009
Perception shift needed before fees cap can be raised, top LSE economist tells conference. Rebecca Attwood reports

- Scholar who labelled 9/11 victims 'little Eichmanns' was wrongly fired, court finds
- 'Mr Mayhem' lifts lid on UEL charges
- Funding will shift to drive government aims
- £2.8m shortfall shuts down telescope research

[More News >](#)

READERS' REACTIONS

What's the buzz?
THE
Catch up on the stories which have been exciting THE readers

THE SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

Just 88p an issue

[CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE](#)

Latest Jobs from THE

Chairs for our 8th Century
University of Aberdeen
As the Global University of the North, we are one of the UK's great instit...

Lecturer/Teaching Fellow or Senior Lecturer/Senior Teaching Fellow
Salary: will be dependent on level of appointment
Peninsula Medical School
Applications are welcomed from any individuals qualified to PhD level and ...

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE PERFECT JOB

SIGN UP FOR OUR FREE EMAIL ALERTS

Browse THE Jobs

Lecturers, Fellows, Tutors & Researchers (191)	Academic Related (8)
Fellows (9)	Academic Related - Other (2)
Fellowships (7)	Administrators (6)





About TSL Education



[Times Educational Supplement](#)
[Times Higher Education](#)
[TES Prime](#)
[TSL Events](#)
[TES HireWire](#)





Why Rank? Rapid globalisation of higher education

- There are almost 3 million students enrolled in higher education outside their country of origin, a 53 per cent increase since 1999
- * 15 per cent of students in Australia are from overseas
- Universities now have 162 satellite campuses outside their home countries, an increase of 43 per cent 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 have a useful function

- “Rankings often serve in place of formal accreditation systems in countries where such accountability measures do not exist.”
- “Prompt change in areas that directly improve student learning experiences”
- “Encourage institutions to move beyond their internal conversations to participate in broader national and international discussions.”
- “Foster collaboration, such as research partnerships, student and faculty exchange programmes.”

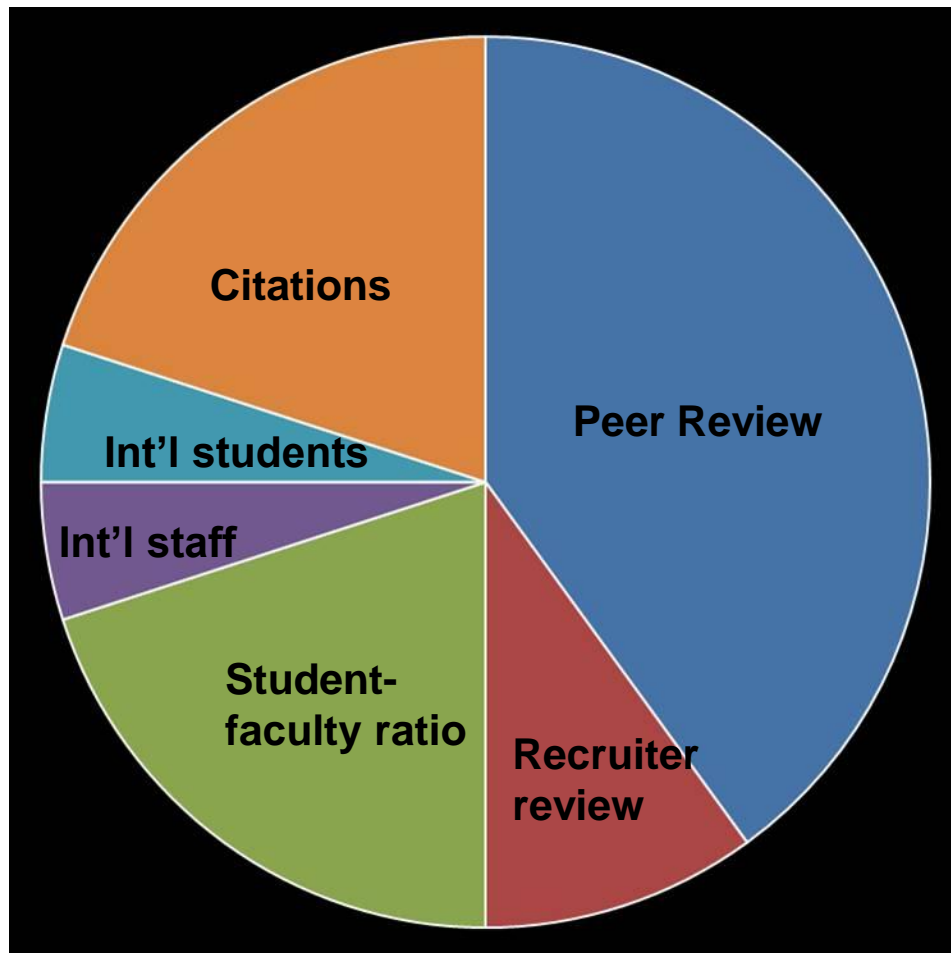
(US Institute for Higher Education Policy, May 2009)





The old THE-QS criteria

How the data were put together under the old (2004-2009) system





What we found in 2009 rankings

- Harvard has been top every year since we started the rankings
- The US and UK take up every one of the top 16 places
- US has 54 in the top 200, the UK has 29
- There are 9 Australian universities in the top 200 and the Australian National University is the top institution outside the US and UK
- Canada has 11 institutions in the top 200, Japan 11, the Netherlands 11 and Germany 10.





What we found in 2009 rankings

- 24 (26) University of Hong Kong
- 35 (39) Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
- 46 (42) Chinese University of Hong Kong
- 49= (56) Tsinghua University
- 52= (50) Peking University
- 103= (113) Fudan University
- 124 (147) City University of Hong Kong
- 168= (143) Nanjing University
- 195 (224) Hong Kong Polytechnic University





What we found in 2009 rankings

- Asia challenging traditional Western (US-UK) dominance
- US lost four institutions from top 100 from 2008 to 2009
- Japan had two new entrants – Tsukuba (174) and Keio (142)
- Hong Kong had one new entrant – Hong Kong Polytechnic University (195)
- South Korea had one new entry – Yonsei (151)
- China held on to six in the top 200





What we found in 2009 rankings

“If the emerging nations of Asia concentrate their growing resources on a handful of institutions, tap a worldwide pool of talent, and embrace freedom of expression and freedom of inquiry, they have every prospect of success in building world-class universities. It will not happen overnight; it will take decades. But it may happen faster than ever before.”

Rick Levin, President, Yale University, 2010.





But while the old rankings give us a helpful snapshot...

- We have torn them up and will start again
- QS will no longer have ANY involvement at all with the Times Higher Education World University Rankings for 2010 and beyond
- We have abandoned the old THE-QS methodology and a new one is now being developed in consultation with academics and university managers worldwide.





Why the change?

There has been strong criticism of the old QS methodology, which Times Higher Education accepts and has listened too. For example:



“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.





Why the change?

“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.





Specific flaws

We consulted our editorial board, and they highlighted two key concerns:

“Peer review”

Citations





Peer review flaws

Peer review – simply a reputation survey. Inherently controversial

Subjective. They reflect past, not current, performance. Based on stereotype or even ignorance.

A good or bad reputation may be mindlessly replicated.

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

Reputation is crucial. Survey can bring in some measure of the things quantitative data cannot.





Peer review flaws

QS achieved a tiny response rate to its survey: In 2009 only around 3,500 people responded to the survey

Tiny number of responses from individual countries. In 2008, there were just 182 from Germany, and 236 from India.

Lack of clarity over the questions asked. What are we judging?

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





Citation flaws

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

No normalisation for subject

Is the LSE really only 67 in the world?





Other problems

Staff-student ratio – is it really a measure of teaching quality?

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

International staff score -- ditto





Despite major flaws, the WUR became massively influential

“The term world class universities has begun to appear in higher education discussions, 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





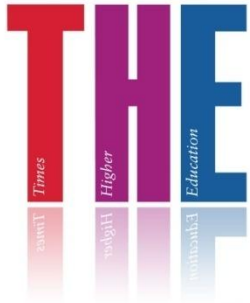
Despite major flaws, the WUR became massively influential



“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)





Despite major flaws, the WUR became massively influential



“University rankings are powerful. They compel public attention and shape the behaviour of universities and policy makers.. The rankings date only from 2003 and 2004 but already they are everywhere in the sector and beyond. They set university reputations”.

Simon Marginson, centre for the study of higher education, University of Melbourne.





Times Higher Education's responsibility

“The responsibility weighs heavily on our shoulders. We are very much aware that national policies and multimillion-pound decisions are influenced by the rankings.....We feel we have a duty to improve how we compile them.

“Rankings are here to stay. But we believe universities deserve a rigorous, robust and transparent set of rankings – a serious tool for the sector, not just an annual curiosity.”

Ann Mroz, Editor, Times Higher Education, November 2009





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





What now?

We have signed a deal with **Thomson Reuters**, the world's leading research data specialist, to work with us to produce a new and improved ranking methodology for 2010 and beyond, and to collect and analyse all of our rankings data.

With Thomson Reuters, our editorial board, and our readers, we are working to develop a new methodology.



POWERED BY
THOMSON REUTERS





What now?

“In addition to unmatched data quality, Thomson Reuters provides a proven history of bibliometric expertise and analysis. We are proud that our data continues to be chosen by leading organisations around the world and we’re happy to provide insight and consultation on such a widely respected indicator,”

*Jonathan Adams, director of research evaluation,
Thomson Reuters*





What now?

GLOBAL INSTITUTIONAL PROFILES PROJECT

Join the effort to build more accurate and comprehensive resources on institutional activity



As 2010 unfolds, researchers around the world will receive multiple survey requests from various ranking initiatives. However, only one seeks to fundamentally change the way data is collected and analyzed.

Thomson Reuters has launched a major global initiative to develop a data source that provides the best informed and most effective resource for building profiles of universities and research-based institutions. Times Higher Education, a global authority in higher education, has joined our efforts and committed to revamp its popular World University Rankings, now powered by Thomson Reuters data. Both organizations look to bring greater depth and transparency to institutional assessment, and our combined efforts have already yielded promising change:

- Deep, normalized, comprehensive data
- Increased transparency in methodology—a hallmark of Thomson Reuters service
- Expanded datasets across research, teaching, institutional mission, and many more
- Citation data from the *Web of Science*SM, the gold-standard in research indexing
- New and more customized avenues of institutional comparison
- Careful recalibration of ranking algorithms, including reputational weight
- Specificity in discipline, where survey respondents evaluate their individual field
- New approaches to data gathering and analysis, informed by an open opinion survey to industry



THOMSON REUTERS

Look for our survey and help join the effort to reinvent how institutions are profiled!

<http://science.thomsonreuters.com/globalprofilesproject>





Confirmed improvements: reputation survey

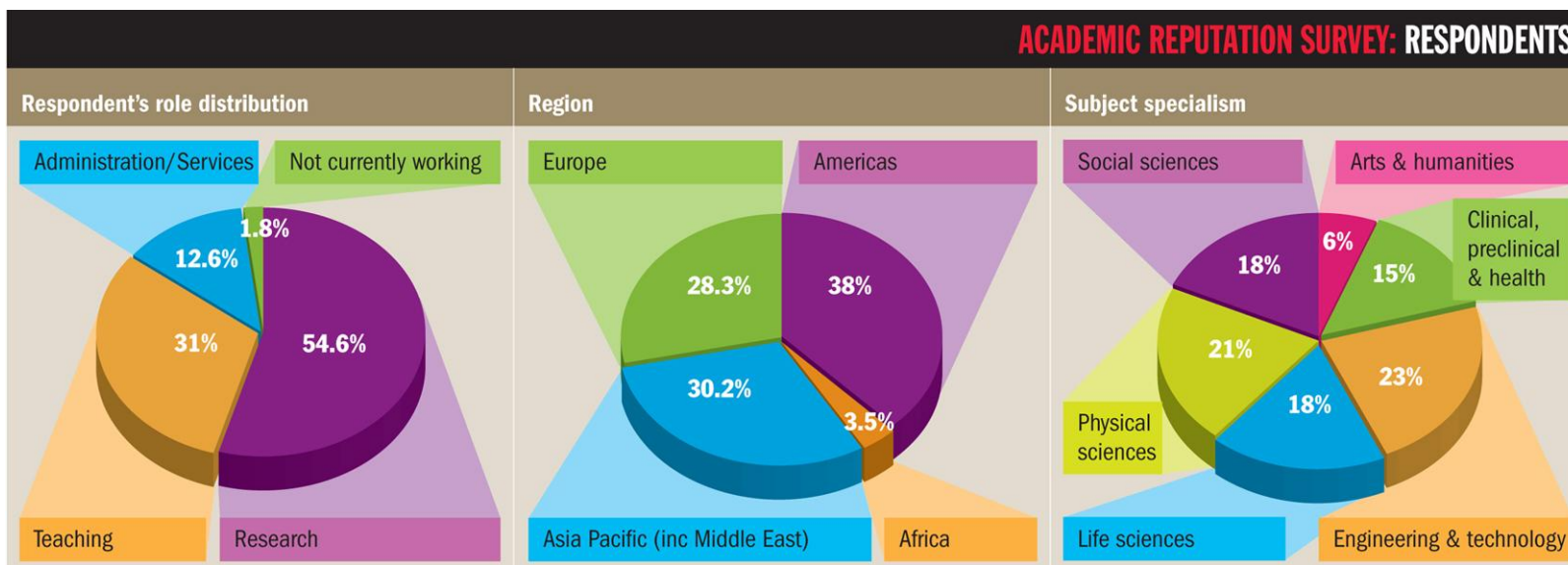
- * Third party experts, polling firm Ipsos Mori, to undertake the reputation survey
- * Properly targeted and carefully sampled responses – Unesco demographics
- * Only published researchers asked
- * Action-based questions
- * 13,388 high quality respondents, compared to just 3,500 gathered by QS in 2009





Confirmed improvements: reputation survey

13,388 responses breakdown





Confirmed improvements: research measures

Thomson Reuters' Web of Science platform provides academics and university administrators with access to the world's leading citation databases, covering:

- * 12,000 of the highest-impact academic journals
- * More than 110,000 conference proceedings





Confirmed improvements: subject based

All data collected at the subject level

Six subject areas to be examined (compared to five in 2004-09):

Arts and humanities

Life Sciences

Physical Sciences

Engineering and Technology

Clinical, Pre-clinical and Health

Social Sciences



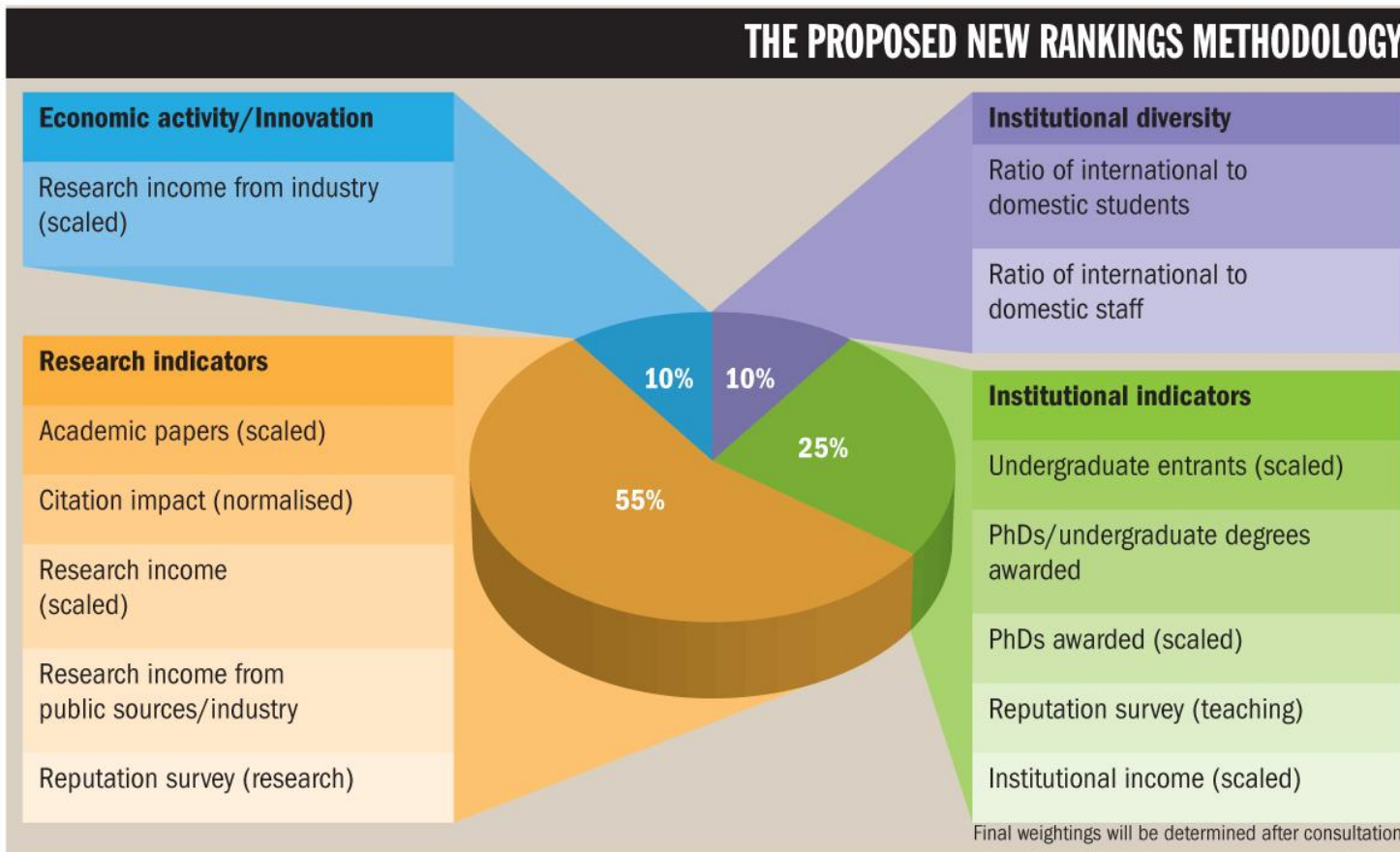


Confirmed improvements: More data variables

- Number of academic staff, including proportion who are of international origin
- Number of research-only staff
- Number of undergraduates admitted, including the proportion of international students
- Number of bachelor's degrees awarded
- Number of doctoral students admitted, including the proportion funded by competitive research scholarships
- Number of doctorates awarded
- Total institutional income
- Research grant income from public sources and charities, and research contract income from industry and commerce



Confirmed improvements: The methodology





Confirmed improvements: The methodology

More “academically robust”

Ross Williams, Melbourne Institute

“On the whole, the THE rankings will gain enhanced credibility as a result of these new changes”

Ed Byrne, vice chancellor, Monash University





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>
- Join our rankings Facebook group. www.facebook.com/THEWorldUniRank
- 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

