

Rankings as a Student Information Tool

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Contents of Presentation

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For Whom is Ranking?

- n For students: 'where shall I go and study?'
- n For HEIs: 'against whom am I competing?'; 'Who's the benchmark?'
- n For policy makers: 'Where should special funding be allocated?'
- n For society: 'where has my physician graduated?'
- n For employers: 'am I recruiting the right person for the right job? Where did s/he graduate?'

Existing Approaches to Rankings

- n Who conducts the rankings?
- n How are the rankings presented?
- n How are variables put together to create the ranking?

Who Conducts the Ranking?

- n Magazines, e.g.:
 - u USNWR (US), Times (UK), Guardian (UK), Repubblica (I)...
- n Educational publishers, e.g.:
 - u Barron's (US), Good Guides (AUS)
- n University-based Groups e.g.:
 - u Shanghai Jiao Tong University (China)

What Format of Rankings?

- n Straight Numerical Rankings
- n Clusters or groupings, in which institutions are assembled into clusters of similar quality
- n 'Top Level' approach,
 - u Only the top institutions are ranked numerically, while the 'worse' performers are grouped

How Indicators Are Presented

- n 'Weight-and-sum' approach
 - u Indicators are combined to produce an overall institutional score.
 - u Each indicator is assigned a weight according to its perceived importance
- n Neutral comparisons (not weighted)
 - u All indicators must be shown for all institutions
 - u Use of interactive technology

How to Rank – and How Not

An Example of a Widely Accepted Ranking

Pl. ▲	Sp.	g.	u.	v.	Tore	Diff.	Pkte.
1	10	8	2	0	26:9	17	26
2	10	7	2	1	21:11	10	23
3	10	6	2	2	21:9	12	20
4	10	5	4	1	15:11	4	19
5	10	5	2	3	16:11	5	17
6	10	5	2	3	16:13	3	17
7	10	4	4	2	15:16	-1	16
8	10	4	3	3	14:16	-2	16
9	10	3	5	2	13:16	-3	14
10	10	3	4	3	12:16	-4	12
11	10	3	3	4	12:16	-4	12
12	10	3	3	4	12:16	-4	12
13	10	3	3	4	12:16	-4	10
14	10	3	1	6	7:15	-8	10
15	10	2	4	4	8:13	-5	10
16	10	2	3	5	10:16	-6	9
17	10	2	1	7	11:17	-6	7
18	10	0	1	9	4:20	-16	1

clear,
unequivocal
positions

clear rules for
calculation of
overall score

Can We Rank HEIs Like That ?

weights of indicators ?

rank scale with overall value

ranking of whole university ?

clear rank position

is this university 64,8% as good as Harvard?

2005 RANK	2004 RANK	NAME	COUNTRY	PEER SCORE (40%)	RESEARCH SCORE (10%)	INT'L FACULTY SCORE (5%)	INT'L STUDENT SCORE (5%)	FACULTY/S SCORE (20%)	CITATION SCORE (15%)	OVERALL SCORE
1	1	Harvard University	US	100	100	17	23	21	57	100.0
2	3	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	US	84	87	12	41	16	53	86.9
3	6	Cambridge University	UK	96	73	65	34	20	16	85.8
4	5	Oxford University	UK	93	70	58	37	23	15	83.9
5	7	Stanford University	US	78	95	10	30	12	56	83.4
6	2	University of California	US	95	62	7	13	7	39	80.6
7	8	Yale University	US	88	83	52	27	42	19	72.7
8	4	University of California, Berkeley	US	82	82	27	41	26	100	71.5
9	9	Princeton University	US	82	72	22	30	20	31	64.8
10	27	Ecole Polytechnique	France	77	77	47	36	100	4	61.5
11=	52	Duke University	US	69	69	24	20	66	10	59.1
11=	11	London School of Economics	UK	68	68	99	100	20	1	59.1
13	14	Imperial College London	UK	65	65	63	51	34	10	59.0
14	23	Cornell University	US	61	61	11	19	17	2	58.1
15	17	Beijing University	China	71	57	7	4	26	2	56.3
16	12	Tokyo University	Japan	73	2	2	12	19	1	55.1
17=		University of California, San Francisco	US	24	0					
17=		University of Chicago	US	52	47					
19		University of Melbourne	Australia	66	27					
		University of Zurich	Switzerland	56	36					
		University of Singapore	Singapore	49	7					
		University of Australia	Australia	62	12					
		University of France	France	64	8					
		University of Canada	Canada	38	23					
		University of Sweden	Sweden	52	48					
		University of Netherlands	Netherlands	47	29					
		University of Korea	Korea	50	14					
		University of Canada	Canada	46	19					
		University of Canada	Canada	51	34					
30	48	Edinburgh University	UK	48	47	33	28	15	10	47.7
31	29	Kyoto University	Japan	57	2	20	9	28	10	47.5
32	28	Pennsylvania University	US	42	41	20	25	28	15	47.3
33	33	Monash University	Australia	55	19	54	49	7	5	46.5
34	32	Ecole Polytech Fédérale de Lausanne	Switzerland	22	3	95	65	64	3	45.0
35	43	Manchester University & Umist	UK	43	50	47	23	18	6	44.8
36	31	University of Michigan	US	46	32	17	19	17	15	43.9

Most Used Indicators and Critiques to Rankings (1)

- n Reputation and Prestige: peer evaluations through, e.g., surveys of other (similar) institutions' presidents and deans.
 - u Subjective measure
 - u Problem of circularity
 - .. 'New' universities are almost always ranked below the 'old'
 - u Proximity (foreign universities are less known)
 - .. Except the 'usual top-10'
 - u Reputation and prestige privilege research-oriented

Most Used Indicators and Critiques to Rankings (2)

- n Student Characteristics, e.g. acceptance rates, high school class standing, entrance test scores, student diversity
 - u Reputational conception of quality, often adopted in HEIs' admission policies
 - u Resource notion of quality
 - .. Problem: input measures fail to measure what the university provides to students

Most Used Indicators and Critiques to Rankings (3)

- n Staff characteristics, e.g. salary
 - u This variable mostly measures the institutional value placed on research, for it is the best researchers (not teachers) who typically earn the highest salaries.
- n Proportion of full-time staff
- n Proportion of staff with Ph.D.

Most Used Indicators and Critiques to Rankings (4)

- n Student faculty relationship, e.g.
 - u Student Staff Ratio and class size
 - .. However, optimal class size is a function of discipline
- n Student satisfaction
- n Assets, e.g. funding
 - u Without information on how funds are spent these measures are difficult to interpret as measures of institutional quality

Most Used Indicators and Critiques to Rankings (5)

n Expenditures

- u How much is an institution committed to teaching/learning and/or research?
- u Suitable for inter-institutional comparisons, but what is actually included in the investments?
- u Lack of standardised formats for reporting expenditures
- u Can a HEI that spends more to achieve a similar result than another HEI be ranked higher for this very fact?

Most Used Indicators and Critiques to Rankings (6)

- n Student Grades/Test Scores
- n Retention Rates and Graduation Rates
 - u Problem of grade inflation: rankings that rely heavily or entirely on this indicator favour institutions with lower academic standards over more demanding HEIs
- n Graduate employment
 - u No control on influencing factors e.g. social background and connections

Most Used Indicators and Critiques to Rankings (7)

- n Research
 - u Bibliometrics (e.g. number of publications and citations),
 - u Number of faculty with special awards (e.g. the Nobel Prize),
 - u Financial indicators of research (e.g. the research budget, number of research grants etc.) and
 - u The number of patents issued. Moreover, some other rankings utilise also the number of Master and Ph.D.
- n Other, such as alumni giving, etc.

The Dilemmas of Ranking (1)

- n Universities have different goals and missions
- n Universities are internally differentiated: cannot be measured as a whole
- n Bias towards research (low/no focus on teaching quality)
- n Popularity contests (appreciation vs. facts)
- n Bias towards natural & medical sciences
- n Bias towards English language / Anglo-Saxon world
- n Tables vary in their validity, comprehensiveness, comprehensibility, relevance, and functionality
- n Rankings share broad principles and approaches, but differ considerably in detail
- n Variations related to: different aims, systems, cultures and availability and reliability of data

A Multidimensional 'Ranking': The CHE Approach

city, university	students	study outcome
internatio- nalisation	teaching	resources
research	labour market, employability	overall assessment (students, professors)

History of Student Information in the Netherlands

- n 1980s: Minister supports data collection + book publication 'Choice Guide'
- n Ca. 2000: web-based student information tools appear in Britain, Germany
- n 2006: Netherlands web site appears:
www.studychoice123.nl (English)
- n 2006-2007: pilot in internationalisation:
 - u connect SK123 with German CHE- 'ranking' and
 - u introduce CHE method in Belgium

Aims and Target Groups

1. Information for prospective / mobile students

= primary target group

2. Information for HEIs (benchmarking)

Challenge: find a balance between reduction of complexity for least informed students vs. detailed information for HEIs

Methodological Principles

Organised by
disciplines / fields

No ranking of whole
universities

Multidimensional

No aggregated
overall score

Multi-perspective

Not just one
data source

Robust rank groups:
Top  Middle 
and Bottom group 

No spurious
precision of
league tables

Major Data Sources

- n National statistics
 - u From state statistics agency
 - u From Ministry of Education
- n Alumni survey

- n Institutional data
 - u Paper → Web form
- n Student survey
 - u Telephone → web-based



Already collected



Collected
on purpose

Data Sources Not Used

- n Reputation among professors
 - u E.g. 'Where would you send your child?'
 - u Note: only works well if
 - .. Professors know their colleagues
 - z Not internationally, except for 'stars'
 - .. Reputations relate to teaching performance
 - z In fact mostly research-based
- n Accreditation status
 - u It is a precondition for getting mentioned, therefore not a variable anymore



Homepage

Students

School-leavers

Advisors

Workers

Parents

Quick search

Search for a programme

Search

☒ Bachelor ☐ Master

☒ English only ☐ All studies

Advanced search

Compare programmes that meet your requirements

Click here!

Compare more than 2500 studies in the Netherlands

The Netherlands offer a world-class education system, with qualifications that make a real difference to your career. This website gives you details of all English-taught and Dutch-taught bachelor's and master's degree programmes.

Look, compare and choose. That's Studychoice.nl

Compare student cities

In which city do you want to study? What is the average rent for a student room? [More info...](#)

Do you speak Dutch?

Compare more than 2500 studyprogrammes in the Netherlands. [More info...](#)

Press release

The latest news about this website [More info...](#)

All studies (new!)

A study directory – an easy overview of all study programmes in the Netherlands. [More info...](#)

Students

Go international, be ambitious. Compare all English-taught bachelor's and masters degree programmes in Holland.

[More info](#)



School-leavers

Study in Holland. Are you up to the challenge? Compare all English-taught bachelor's degree programmes. Be critical. It's your future!

[More info](#)



Advisors

Give your students good, honest advice about study in Holland. Our unique website gives you all the tools you need.

[More info](#)



News

[18.02] [More Mexican students in Holland](#)



Homepage

Students

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Parents

All bachelor's and master's programmes

Here you will find all English-taught bachelor's and master's degree programmes in the Netherlands. We provide quality, survey-based information on each programme. This website is a joint, non-profit initiative of the higher education sector in the Netherlands.

Look, Compare and Choose. That's Studiechoice.nl. Click here.



Do you speak Dutch?

Compare 2500 bachelor's and master's programmes in the Netherlands
www.studiekeuze123.nl

Compare more
than 2500 studies
in the Netherlands (English and Dutch)

Compare now! Click here.

Check for more info: Studychoice.nl

Browsing



Movies

For a general view of life in Holland. Take a look at some interesting movies.

→ www.viSions.nl



Dutch scholarships

This search engine brings together a range of Dutch scholarships for international students who wish to study in the Netherlands.

My opinion

Name **Alma Gonzalez from Mexico**

Age **32**

Study programme
Biomedical Sciences

"I knew Holland was small, but I didn't realize it was a melting pot of cultures! It's quite a relief to know that you can get by in English. The universities are free of politics, quite different than back home.



"I wanted to know
the average
starting salary"

A teacher suggested Holland. Studychoice.nl provides study information about all universities, as well as information obtained from a number of surveys. I wanted to know whether it's easy to find work in my discipline. The study is fantastic!



Poll

I am interested in studying in the Netherlands because...



The Netherlands has good job opportunities



This programme is only offered in the Netherlands



The quality of education in the Netherlands is renowned



The tuition fees in the Netherlands are low



Vote now!

[View the result](#)



Homepage

Students

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Workers

Parents



Compare more than 2500 studies

Do you speak Dutch?

Compare 2500 bachelor's and master's

presented personal comparison of study programmes.

1

Study programmes

Go straight to all bachelor's and master's programmes.

2

Choose programmes

Choose fields of study and programmes to compare.

3

Select criteria

Choose from more than 90 different criteria to make a comparison.



Homepage

Students

School-leavers

You are here

Select criteria

Add your own criteria to the default criteria or edit them.



Results

Your comparison in an easy-to-use table.



Stop

and start again

Step 3 Choose criteria



Popular criteria

- Student opinions on programme: total score
- Job prospects
- Satisfied with choice of programme (% of graduates)
- Content quality (student opinion)
- Career preparation (student opinion)
- Average rent for student room (in euro) (€)
- Completion rate within 5 yrs (hbo)
- Study intensity: ave. hours/wk
- Teaching quality (student opinion)
- Enrolment quota

All criteria

- Students opinion per course
- Student opinion on facilities by institution
- Accessibility and facilities by institution
- Admittance and selection per course
- Job market by discipline
- Basic facts by programme

Your selection (7)

(Put most important on top!)

1. Career preparation (student opinion)
 2. Teaching quality (student opinion)
 3. Ease of study
 4. Study & teaching facilities (stud.opinion)
 5. Study intensity: ave. hours/wk
 6. Teaching language
- Satisfied with choice of programme (% of graduates)



Omlaag

You are here

Choose criteria

Add new criteria or change weighting.



Results

Your comparison in an easy-to-use table.



Stop and start again

Results of search query



New search

☒ Bachelor ☐ Master

☒ English only ☐ All studies

Filter results

[change criteria](#) | [advanced search in 3 steps](#)

Information of the association and the selected courses on score

HAN-University, Arnhem

Business Economics

www.han.nl

HAN-University, Arnhem

Management, Economics and Law

www.han.nl

Amsterdam Univ of Professional Edu...

Business Economics

www.economie.hva.nl

InHolland University Alkmaar

Business Economics

www.inholland.nl

Saxion Univ of Applied Science, Dev...

Commercial Economics

www.saxion.nl

Amsterdam Univ of Professional Edu...

Business Economics

www.hva.nl

InHolland University Den Haag

Commercial Economics

www.inholland.nl

Maastricht University

Economics

www.unimaas.nl

Maastricht University

Fiscal Economics

1. Career preparation (student opinion) 2. Teaching quality (student opinion) 3. Ease of study 4. Study & teaching facilities (stud.opinion) 5. Study intensi ave. hours/wk

	1. Career preparation (student opinion)	2. Teaching quality (student opinion)	3. Ease of study	4. Study & teaching facilities (stud.opinion)	5. Study intensi ave. hours/wk
HAN-University, Arnhem Business Economics	7.1	6.9	7.1	7.2	
HAN-University, Arnhem Management, Economics and Law	6.8	6.9	6.9	6.7	
Amsterdam Univ of Professional Edu... Business Economics	6.8	6.8	7.0	7.1	
InHolland University Alkmaar Business Economics	6.7	6.5	7.1	6.1	
Saxion Univ of Applied Science, Dev... Commercial Economics	6.7	6.7	6.9	6.1	
Amsterdam Univ of Professional Edu... Business Economics	6.7	6.5	7.1	6.4	
InHolland University Den Haag Commercial Economics	6.7	6.1	6.8	6.6	
Maastricht University Economics	6.4	7.4	6.9	7.6	
Maastricht University Fiscal Economics	6.4	7.4	6.9	7.6	

Highest score
 Average score
 Lowest score
 No score

Choose criteria

Add new criteria or change weighting.



Results

Your comparison in an easy-to-use table.



Stop and start again

New search

☒ Bachelor ☐ Master

☒ English only ☐ All studies

Filter results

[change criteria](#) | [advanced search in 3 steps](#)

Information of the association and the selected courses on score

Maastricht University

Economics

www.unimaas.nl

Maastricht University

Fiscal Economics

www.unimaas.nl

Tilburg University

International Economics

www.uvt.nl

Erasmus University Rotterdam

General and Business Economics

www.eur.nl

HAN-University, Arnhem

Business Economics

www.han.nl

HAN-University, Arnhem

Management, Economics and Law

www.han.nl

Utrecht University

Economics

www.uu.nl

Amsterdam Univ of Professional Edu...

Business Economics

www.economie.hva.nl

University of Amsterdam

General Economics and Business

1. Teaching quality (student opinion) 2. Study & teaching facilities (stud.opinion) 3. Study intensity: ave. hours/wk 4. Career preparation (student opinion) 5. Ease of study



7.4



7.6



31



6.4



7.4



7.6



31



6.4



7.2



7.5



28



6.3



6.9



7.3



28



6.4



6.9



7.2



31



7.1



6.9



6.7



31



6.8



7.2



7.2



29



6.2



6.8



7.1



26



6.8



6.9



7.1



27



6.3

Highest score

Average score

Lowest score

No score

Pilot Project: NL – BE - DE

- n CHE approach is the better-known version of SK123
- n European Commission wants to stimulate European mobility of students
- n Project aims:
 - u Link existing Student Info Tools (NL)
 - u Introduce CHE approach in a 'new' country (BE)

Experiences Pilot Project: Linking Student Info Tools

- n Data collection differs in 2 countries
 - u Different administrative systems
 - .. E.g. how to count 'professors', 'students'?
 - u Different political issues à different ideas of what are relevant data/dimensions
 - .. E.g. gender balance
 - u Different survey approaches
 - .. Ask for general opinions vs. ask for detailed data
 - z E.g. ... (see next slides)

CHE Questions on Courses

Question No. 5

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the **coursework (instruction)** of your Masters programme?

Coursework (Instruction)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Mildly disagree	Mildly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
The quality of theory training is excellent.							
The quality of methodology training is excellent.							
I am satisfied with the level of interdisciplinarity.							
I am satisfied with the variety of course content.							
The quality of instruction is excellent.							
The courses are relevant to my research interests.							
I have sufficient opportunity to participate in research.							
Interaction with PhD students is vivid.							
If coursework is offered in another language than the national language of the country in which you study: The language skills of teachers are sufficient.							

SK123 Questions on Courses

- n The extent to which the course work material is interesting.....(rate)
- n The Level of the Study Material.....(rate)

Experiences Pilot Project: Student Responses

- n Low response rates
- n Validity: is there a bias in responses?
- n Comparability of judgements
 - u Students have different expectation levels
 - .. German students are satisfied with situations that Dutch students find unsatisfactory
 - .. Same also applies within a single country
 - z Students in Amsterdam are more critical than students in Enschede
 - u This leads to bias of ranking
 - .. Dutch study programmes are valued lower than German programmes
 - .. In Netherlands: Enschede is the 'best' town for students??

Conclusion

- n Student information tools are in high demand
 - u Students use web sites next to school advice and 'informal' information
- n Collecting data is hard work
 - u Validity is far from perfect
- n International student information tools presuppose demand for international mobility
 - u In Europe: small part of students, mostly at Master or Ph.D.-course levels