



University ranking – a critical perspective

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	Europe	World
THES	81	188
SJTU	19	69
Webometrix	4	46

Perspective

- Capital city university - established. 1811.
- UiO = 1/3 in National HEI Research
 - One third of all funding from NRC; one third of all doctoral degrees; and one third of all publications
- 3 (or 5!) Nobel prizes - Chemistry, Physics, Economics
- EU Research
 - 115 EU funded projects in FP6, ca. 20% coordinated by UiO, bringing in approx. €22 mill.
 - 7 Marie Curie Training Sites
- Home to 11 National/Nordic Centres of Excellence
- A little less than 30 000 students
- A little more 6000 staff – about half academic



Rankings do not tell the truth – nor do they lie

- Ranking lists have specific focus dependent on the publisher of said lists – rankings seldom show the public what the universities want them to see
- They have come to stay and they have an impact
- They are increasingly used:
 - by the media,
 - by students and their parents,
 - by policy makers,
 - even by the universities themselves.



They have impact

A study by E. Hazelkorn shows:

- 50% use their rank for publicity purposes
- 58% are unhappy with their position
- 70% want to be in the top 10% nationally
- 71% want to be in the top 25% internationally
- 50% have formal processes review results
- 68% use them as management tools



Principal question

- Is it possible to describe the state of a university by one single number?
- A number even working for all universities?
- Obviously the answer is no – but still, one parameter may say something – and the change in one parameter says even more.
- A ranking can only give a snapshot of part of a university – but are still used by many as a measure of the over all quality.
- What to put in the ranking?



Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Citation index	Nature & Science	Acad. perfor.	Alumni Nobels	Staff Nobels	Highly cited res.
20%	20%	10%	10%	20%	20%



Times Higher Education Supplement

Peer review	Recruiters review	Number of citations	Staff to student ratio	Overseas staff	Overseas students
40%	10%	20%	20%	5%	5%



Methodological weakness

- Two examples:
- Peer reviews: As any statistician knows, it is a serious problem to pick the respondents in a good, representative way. THES is criticized for not doing that.
- Bibliographical approach: A risk of bias between the different subjects – due to very different cultures.



How UiO respond to rankings

Quality in research a strategic priority at UiO

Changes in ranking results are pleasant byproducts of improvements in research quality. By becoming better – we are ranked higher

In addition we can adjust the following to get better results

- Improve data by improved data harvesting and the quality control in our data delivery
- Active contact with the institutions that rank us - Improve the data by awareness of definitions
- Improve internal and external awareness on the significance of rankings



Tasklist

- Help more researchers, researcher groups and academic communities to achieve an international standard of quality.
- Conduct more proactive recruitment efforts
- Obtain more assets for research
- Secure more uninterrupted time for research
- Gain strength through cooperation
- Strengthen researcher education
- Create greater potential for new scientific development



Process – Research priorities

- Focus on quality
- The process is research driven and research focused
- The main goal is to give a comprehensive view of our strengths and our weaknesses.
- **Research priorities** creates a baseline for further development of our both our research- and our education portfolios
- Implementation begins this year



Conclusion

Rankings are here to stay

They have an incredible high impact – not always to the best of the sector