

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, 13 May 2014

U-Multirank: Launch of new global university ranking

U-Multirank, the new global university ranking, was released online today (www.umultirank.org). This unique new tool for comparing university performance currently includes information on more than 850 higher education institutions, more than 1,000 faculties and 5,000 study programmes from 70 countries.

U-Multirank takes a different approach to existing global rankings of universities; it is multi-dimensional and compares university performance across a range of different activities grading them from “A” (very good) to “E” (weak). It does not produce a league table of the world’s “top” 100 universities based on composite scores. Instead, it allows users to identify a university’s strengths and weaknesses, or the aspects that most interest them. *“We are delighted to have been able to design and implement this new user-driven and multi-dimensional ranking that goes beyond simplistic league tables and that addresses many of the criticisms of existing global university rankings,”* said Professor Dr. Frans van Vught, from the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies at the University of Twente in the Netherlands, one of the lead partners of the consortium.

U-Multirank enables users to compare particular sorts of universities (“like with like”) in the areas of performance of interest to them. It indicates how universities perform by showing their position in five performance groups (A=“very good” through to E=“weak”) in each of 30 different areas. While comparisons using U-Multirank are user-driven, it does include three “readymade” rankings – on research, on the strengths of universities’ economic involvement and on Business Studies programmes.

The wide range of new indicators of performance cover five broad dimensions: teaching and learning, regional engagement, knowledge transfer, international orientation and research. Students and other stakeholders have played a major role in developing U-Multirank and the ranking has been tested by student organisations. *“The ESU believes that U-Multirank will be an extremely useful tool for students all over the world, being the first global ranking that includes in a serious manner the teaching and learning dimension,”* said Fernando Galán, Vice-Chairperson of the European Student Union.

It is also the first international comparison to include all types of higher education institutions. *“One really important feature of U-Multirank is that it provides a much better reflection of the diversity of our higher education institutions. We focus not only on comprehensive internationally-oriented research universities but the full range: including specialist colleges, regionally orientated institutions and Universities of Applied Sciences,”* said Professor Dr. Frank Ziegele, from the Centre for Higher Education in Germany, the other lead partner of the consortium. U-Multirank shows the performances of the institutions as a whole but also ranks them in selected academic fields: in 2014 the fields are business studies, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and physics; in 2015 psychology, computer science and medicine will be added. U-Multirank results show that while over 95% of institutions achieve an “A” score (very good) on at least one measure, only 12% of the institutions show a broad range of very good performances (more than 10 “A” scores). This diversity of performance has not been shown before in any international ranking.

Background and further information

U-Multirank is an independent ranking prepared with seed funding from the European Union and led by a consortium headed by Professor Dr. Frans van Vught of the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at the University of Twente in the Netherlands and Professor Dr. Frank Ziegele of the Centre for Higher Education (CHE) in Germany. Other partner organisations include the Centre for Science and Technology Studies from Leiden University (CWTS), Catholic University Leuven, academic publishers Elsevier, the Bertelsmann Foundation, student advice organisation Push and software firm Folge 3. The consortium also works closely with a range of national ranking partners and stakeholder organisations.

U-Multirank is based on a methodology that reflects both the diversity of higher education institutions and the variety of dimensions of university excellence in an international context. The data included in U-Multirank are drawn from a number of sources, providing users with a comprehensive set of information: information supplied by institutions; data from international bibliometric and patent data bases; and surveys of more than 60,000 students at participating universities - one of the largest samples in the world and offering students a unique peer perspective.

The second U-Multirank rankings will be released in March 2015. Institutions that would like to participate can express their interest on the U-Multirank website (www.umultirank.org).

U-Multirank receives €2 million in EU funding from the Lifelong Learning Programme for the years 2013-2015, with the possibility of a further two years of funding for 2015-2017. The goal is for an independent organisation to manage the ranking on a sustainable business model thereafter.

For more information and contact

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Annex

- a. Partial results from each of the three readymade rankings (full lists available on our website)
- b. Master list of included higher education institutions
- c. Master list of performance measures (indicators)
- d. Q+A memo
- e. Additional contact sheet

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