National and International Rankings

Gero Federkeil
National and international rankings

National rankings will be here to stay

- Information for prospective (undergraduate students)
- Information on regional institutions
- Specific indicators of national relevance

There is a growing need for international rankings, yet better rankings than the existing!

- Growing mobility of students / staff
- European Higher Education Area
- Growing international competition among HEIs

Multiple / redundant data collection reduces acceptance of rankings
A network of national rankings

Network of national rankings based on the same basic methodology

- Allowing for cross-country comparisons

- … using a core set of common indicators plus country specific indicators

- Meeting the needs for country-specific information (relevance)

- … at the same time delivering data for U-Multirank

- Reducing the burden of institutions (redundant data collection)
An emerging network of multi-dimensional rankings

CHE University Ranking: D, A, CH, NL

Fundacion CYD: Ranking of Spanish Universities

OST Cartographie de la recherche dans les universités

...
A critique of composite indicators rankings

Basic (epistemological) argument:
- There is no single objective ranking. Each ranking and each selection of indicators reflects the views of those producing the ranking (“Quality lies in the eye of the beholder”)
- Different users of rankings have different preferences and priorities regarding the relevance of indicators
- Calculating composite indicators patronizes the users

- There are neither theoretical nor empirical arguments for assigning particular (fixed) weights to individual indicators
- Empirical evidence shows that weighting schemes of existing global rankings are anything but robust:
  Small changes in weights lead to big differences in results
The advantages of multi-dimensional rankings

- Multi-dimensional rankings show profiles (strengths and weaknesses) of the institutions ranked: multiple excellence

- Multi-dimensional rankings leave the decision about the relevance of individual indicators to the users
  - They take serious the fact that different users have different preferences and priorities

- Multi-dimensional rankings allow for personalised rankings which can help users to make an informed choice
And now I am going to change my hat!

www.che-ranking.de

gerofederkeil@che.de
The IREG Ranking Audit
- Purpose, Procedures and Criteria

Gero Federkeil, CHE
Vice-President IREG
I. The purpose of the audit

• Enhance the transparency about rankings
• Give users of rankings a tool to identify trustworthy rankings
• Improve the quality of rankings
II. The Audit Process

General principles:

• Overall responsibility lies with IREG Executive Committee
• Procedures should guarantee maximum transparency and impartiality
• Procedures follow good practices developed in quality assurance systems (accreditation)
III. The Audit Process

Audit teams

• Roster of auditors (will be published on IREG website)
• No rankers among auditors!
• Balance by professional background, field of expertise, regions

Audit coordinator (Prof. Klaus Hübner)

• Coordination of audits
• Consistency of audits & decisions
III. The Criteria

20 criteria on 5 dimensions:

I. Purpose, target groups, basic approach
II. Methodology
III. Publication and presentation of results
IV. Transparency, responsiveness
V. Quality assurance

• 10 core criteria with double weight, 10 standard criteria
1. Purpose, target groups, basic approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The purpose of the ranking and the (main) target groups should be made explicit:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rankings should recognize the diversity of institutions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Rankings should specify the linguistic, cultural, economic, and historical contexts of the educational systems being ranked.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Methodology

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rankings should choose indicators according to their relevance and validity.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The concept of quality of higher education institutions is multidimensional and multi-perspective (...). Good ranking practice would be to combine the different perspectives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Rankings should measure outcomes in preference to inputs whenever possible</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rankings have to be transparent regarding the methodology used for creating the rankings.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>If ranking are using <em>composite indicators</em> the weights of the individual indicators have to be published. Changes in weights over time should be limited and due to methodological or conceptional considerations:</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Data used in the ranking must be obtained from authorized, audited and verifiable data sources and/or collected with proper procedures for professional data collection</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The basic methodology should be kept stable as much as possible.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Publication of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The publication of a ranking has to be made available to users throughout the year either by print publications and/or by an online version of the ranking</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The publication has to deliver a description of the methods and indicators used in the ranking.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The publication of the ranking must provide scores of each individual indicator used to calculate a composite indicator in order to allow users to verify the calculation of ranking results.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Rankings should allow users to have some opportunity to make their own decisions about the relevance and weights of indicators</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Transparency, Responsiveness

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rankings should be compiled in a way that eliminates or reduces errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Rankings have to be responsive to higher education institutions included/ participating in the ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Rankings have to provide a contact address in their publication (print, online version)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Quality Assurance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quality Assurance Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Rankings have to apply measures of quality assurance to ranking processes themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Rankings have to document the internal processes of quality assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Rankings should apply organisational measures that enhance the credibility of rankings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Assessment of criteria

• Each criteria is assessed on a 6 point scale:

  - Not sufficient 1
  - Marginally applied 2
  - Adequate 3
  - Good 4
  - Strong 5
  - Distinguished 6

• Maximum total score: 180 (10*2*6, 10*6)
• Threshold for positive audit: 60% (=108 points)
• None of the core criteria must be assessed below 3

• Publication of audit decision and summary report
• No ranking of rankings ➔ No pulication of scores
Outlook

• First two audits are going to start now
• Process open to other volunteers
• Pressure on rankings „to have it“?
• Evaluation of process after 4-5 audits
The IREG Ranking Audit
- Purpose, Procedures and Criteria

Gero Federkeil, CHE
Vice-President IREG