

**20 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS:
FROM ODDITY TO
GLOBAL COMPETITION FRAMEWORK**

- **This presentation was created by ICG for the AIEA conference on 22 February 2023.**
- **The presentation shall be considered incomplete without oral clarification.**
- **The opinions expressed in this presentation are those of the authors alone.**
- **ICG makes no warranty regarding any claim or data presented in this presentation, and does not take any responsibility for any third party acting upon information contained in this presentation.**
- **Copyright ICG, 2023. All rights reserved.**

Chair and Speaker Bios

Chair, Dr. Daniel J. Guhr

- Dr. Guhr serves as ICG's Managing Director. He holds a D.Phil. and a M.Sc. from Oxford, and a M.A. from Brandeis. He also studied at Bonn and Harvard Universities, served as a research specialist at UC Berkeley, and conducted research at the Max-Planck-Institute for Human Studies.

Speaker, Dr. Jane Gatewood

- Jane Gatewood serves as the Vice Provost for Global Engagement at the University of Rochester. She is active in both AIEA and NAFSA. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Emory University, a Master's degree from Montana State University-Bozeman, and a PhD from the University of Georgia.

Speaker, Dr. Kalpen Trivedi

- Kalpen Trivedi serves as the Vice Provost for Global Affairs at UMass Amherst. He has been named Senior International Officer of the Year by the Institute of International Education (IIE), and is active in AIEA and NAFSA. He holds a Bachelor's from Oxford, a Master's from Cambridge, and a PhD degree from Manchester Universities.

Introduction: A Few Questions

- How many active international rankings exist as of 2023?
 - 24
- How many individual data points power these 24 rankings in a given year?
 - Dozens of billions
- Which ranking has the most indicators?
 - Leiden: 162 (in fairness, counting sub-indicators)
- What is your favorite international rankings?
 - ...
- Which international rankings do you think is "best"?
 - ...
- Which ranking do you think is the least reliable?
 - ...

Introduction to the International Rankings Landscape

- International university rankings are by now 21 years old. Since the heavily argued-about 2003 launch of the Shanghai (ARWU) ranking, this landscape has grown in leaps and bounds.
- Yet the technical and strategic comprehension of international rankings remains quite limited across relevant stakeholders – university staff, students and their families, journalists, policy-makers, employers, etc.
- Many stakeholder perspectives focus on (a) minute yet typically irrelevant methodological issue, (b) particular yet imprecise at best rank positions, and (c) political dogma driving wholesale rankings criticism.
- The real value of international rankings lies in the deep, contextual intelligence that can be generated when expertly dissected, and overlaying rankings at an indicator as well as raw data level.

INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS: OVERVIEW

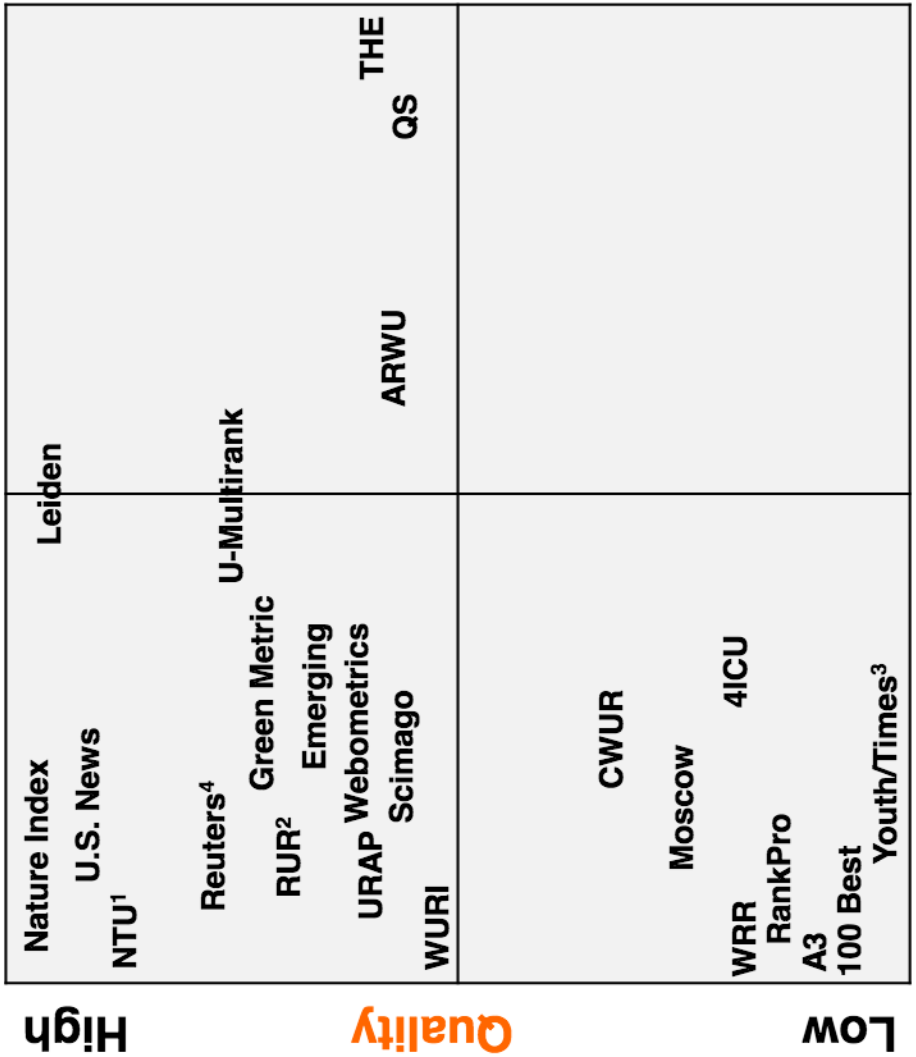
24 Active Rankings as of late 2022

Rankings	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	
Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, aka Shanghai)																					
Ranking Web of Universities (Webometrics)																					
World University Rankings (QS)																					
uniRank(formerly 4 International Colleges & Universities (4ICU))																					
Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities (NTU)																					
CWTS Leiden Ranking																					
University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP)																					
SCImago Institutions Rankings (new version)																					
World University Rankings (THE)																					
Global Employability Rankings (Emerging/Trendence)																					
Round University Rankings (RUR)																					
U-Multirank (Universities Compared. Your Way)																					
UI GreenMetric World University Ranking																					
Center for World University Rankings (CWUR)																					
Global University Ranking (Youth Inc. / Education Times of India)																					
nature INDEX																					
Worldwide Professional University Rankings (RankPro)																					
Best Global Universities Rankings (U.S. News & World Report)																					
Reuters Top 100 Most Innovative Universities																					
Moscow International University Ranking																					
100 Best Universities in the World																					
A3 Academic Ranking by Academics for Academics																					
World's Universities with Real Impact (WURI)																					
World Research Ranking (World Scientific Publishing)																					

■ Acad. performance w/ league table
 ■ Academic performance w/o league table
 ■ Broad-based league table
 ■ Web presence league table
■ Multi-indicator ranking
 ■ Employability-based league table

Notes: "R" denotes retroactive. Defunct rankings include: Newsweek (2006), G-Factor/Universitymetrics (~2009), High Impact Universities (~2010), Grand Ecole des Mines (2011), LinkedIn (2014-16), In4M/The Lens (2017), Global University Ranking (RatER, 2017), and uniRanks (2017) (the two last rankings constituted aggregation models based on existing rankings). The 2021 releases of ARTU (UNSW) and Applied HE (Singapore) are simple mash-ups of existing rankings. Sources: Rankings agencies, ICG.

Leaders and Laggards



➤ The highest quality rankings are not the most widely used ones by some margin.

➤ ARWU, and especially QS and THE continue to lead in public perception (“Big 3”).

Legend

- Quality denotes data reliability, indicator composition, and methodological sophistication.
- Reach denotes the current, global reach into all stakeholders, with a bias towards universities.

Notes: 1 Technical mistakes in 2022 release. 2 Outliers and broken tables. 3 Suspected made up data. 4 Unclear if still active. Source: ICG.

Landscapes Observations

- **Age matters.** ARWU (2003), QS (2004), and THE (2010 (viz 2004)) dominate the landscape, though ARWU is fading. No post-THE entrant has obtained critical adoption levels.
- **Quality matters less.** ARWU simply is not a well composed ranking. Some QS and THE indicators (e.g., citations) defy common sense. Very few mistakes are discovered or root-cause understood.
- **Economics.** THE and QS generate annual double digit million dollar revenues from product and data/analytics sales, (digital) advertising, conferences/events, and consulting.
- **Expansion.** Expansion waves included: More narrow focus, subject, thematic, and now “global societal impact” rankings (i.e. QS ESG, THE SDG/Impact). The latter are starting to somewhat outcompete WURs.

Panel Discussion

- Please share some background about your institution.
- What role do international rankings play at your institution?
- Who is in charge of international rankings?
- Does your institution have an international rankings strategy?
- What impact have rankings movements (e.g., dropping out of the Top 100) had for your institution?
- How does your partner landscape look at your institution's rank positions?
- What is the level of sophistication your institutions has in terms of dealing with core indicators such as publications, citations, faculty data, etc.?
- What would you do if you could design international rankings “from scratch”?

Dr. Daniel J. Guhr
Managing Director

Phone +1 650 860 6101

Fax +1 650 860 6110

E-mail guhr@illuminategroup.com

Web www.illuminategroup.com

Illuminate Consulting Group

P.O. Box 61252

Palo Alto, CA 94306

USA