

ACA
ACADEMIC
COOPERATION
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Rankings and U-Multirank

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Roadmap

Issues to be dealt with

- **International rankings**
- **U-Multirank**
- **Academic Cooperation Association (ACA)**



Who is ACA?

- A (mainly) European association of national (regional) organisations supporting mobility and internationalisation in higher education
- Or simply: the **federation of the CIMOs of Europe**
- Founded in 1993 (we turn **20 this year**)
- Seat in **Brussels, Belgium**



What does ACA do?

- **Our mission: innovation through internationalisation**
- **Information for and support of its members in European affairs**
- **Studies and evaluations**
- **Publications: *ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education* and other media**
- **Conferences and seminars on international higher education (20th Anniversary Conference, The Hague, 9-11 June)**
- ***ACA Newsletter – Education Europe***



ACA's themes and issues (1)

- **International mobility and mobility statistics** (*Eurodata, Mapping mobility in European higher education, European and national policies for academic mobility, MOWIN project; state grants and loans project*)
- **European higher education in a global setting** (*Perceptions of European higher education in third countries, Global Promotion Project*)
- **English-taught programmes** (two publications in the past ten years, 3rd one to start soon)



ACA's themes and issues (2)

- **International marketing** (Global Promotion Project)
- **International higher education monitors** (ACA AIM, ISAS of IAU, International Student Barometer, NUFFIC: Mapping internationalisation; HRK: 'internationalisation of universities' audit)
- **International higher education reform, such as Bologna Process and Europe2020** (studies for the European Parliament, *The external dimension of the Bologna Process*)
- **Excellence** (rankings, league tables, etc.)



International rankings - examples

- **Academic Ranking of World Universities** (Shanghai Jiao Tong University, since 2003)
- **World University Rankings** (Times Higher Ed, originally with QS, since 2004)
- **QS World University Rankings** (Quacquarelli Symonds Ltd., since 2010)
- **In the meantime: sub-analyses** by region, age of university or reputation



International rankings – criticism (1)

- **Quality cannot be measured!(?)**
- **International rankings favour research universities,** since the main indicators are research-related (publications, citations, Nobel prizes, Fields medals, etc.) They are **one-dimensional**. No good orientation for student choice.
- **International rankings do not do justice to universities' efforts in teaching, community relations, internationalisation, etc.**
- **International rankings favour universities publishing in English**



International rankings – criticism (2)

- International rankings **do not properly control for size** (root of ‘mergermania’?)
- International rankings **disregard research efforts of non-university actors** (country comparison)
- Universities as such are neither good nor bad – **focus on institutes, subjects, etc.**
- International rankings undermine **higher education system diversity** (‘academic drift’ and other unintended, but harmful effects)
- **Impact negatively on international partner choice** (tactical partner choice)
- **Europe’s record: not too good**



U-Multirank: history

- Continental **European discomfort with existing rankings**, with France particularly displeased
- **French Council Presidency** in 2008 lobbied for creation of a fair global ranking
- **CHE Hochschulranking** (with weekly Die ZEIT): multidimensional, mainly produced to support student choice, subject-specific. User can influence ranking, by selection of indicators and weighting
- Gradually **extended to some neighbouring countries**
- **‘Role model’ for U-Multirank**
- **U-Map project** prepared the ground, by charting the diversity of European HE systems and developing ‘institutional profiles’ (to be able to compare “like with like”). U-Map is not a ranking, but a ‘mapping tool’. It looks at **what HEIs do, not at how well they do it**



U-Multirank: design + feasibility study

- Until 2009: U-Multirank **design phase**
- Feasibility study (1st test): carried out **between 2009 and 2011**
- Funded by the **European Commission**
- **Project team:** Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies/CHEPS in The Netherlands and Centre for Higher Education/CHE (Germany, see before) as lead partners
- Participation of **159 HEIs** (50 non-European)
- **Institutional and subject-specific ranking in 3 fields:** mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, business studies
- Test run was regarded as **successful**. In particular, the **burden on HEIs to provide data was deemed reasonable**.



U-Multirank: current phase (refining + extending)

- **New round**, again EU-funded
- **Target: 500 HEIs** from Europe and elsewhere in the world
- **Present: recruitment of HEIs** under way (lack of interest in Asia?)
- Institutional **and** discipline-based
- **Disciplines**: mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, business + physics (for 2nd ranking 2015: more disciplines)
- **June/July 2013**: start of data collection
- **Early 2014**: publication of results
- **2nd ranking: 2015**, with more disciplines involved
- **Overall result**: successful, but need to refine some indicators



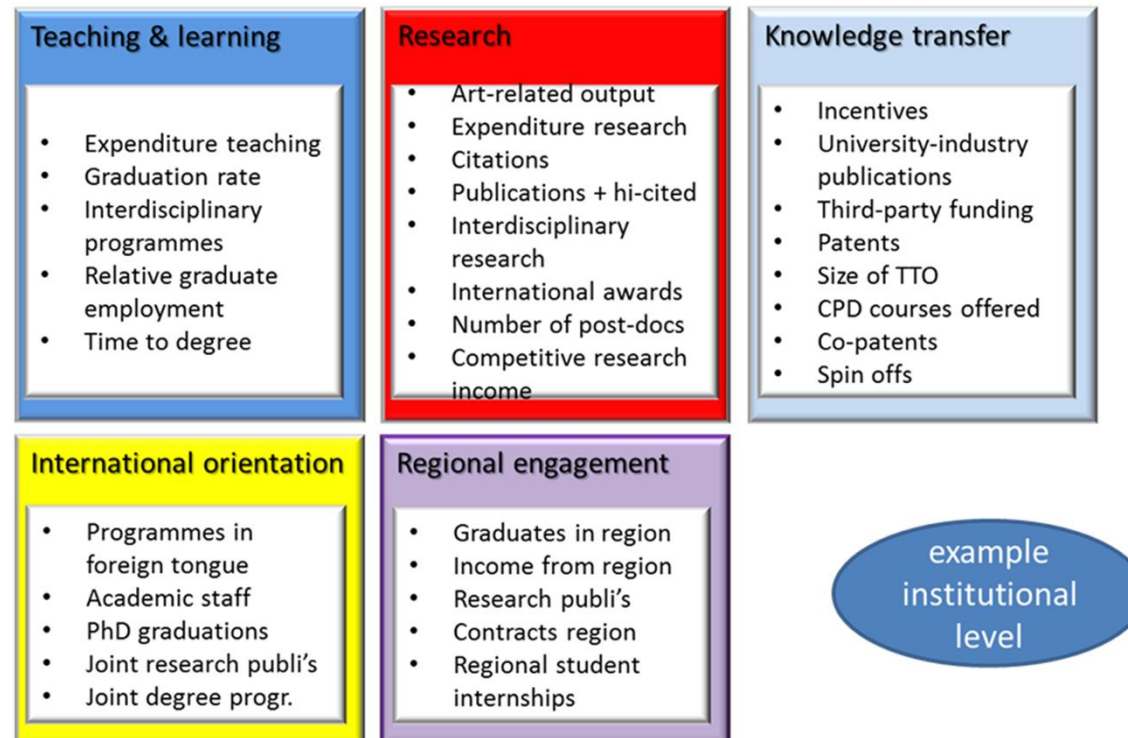
U-Multirank: a 'different' ranking

U-Multirank claims it is

- **Multi-dimensional:** coverage not only of research, but also education (teaching), innovation, internationalisation, and community outreach
- **Transparent:** clear information on factors used to assess performance (everyone says this)
- **Global:** while U-Multirank was designed by Europeans, its application is to be worldwide
- **Profile-specific:** institutions are invited to compare themselves on the basis of similar missions, priorities and activity foci (compare 'like with like')
- **Multi-level:** Institutional **and** discipline-based
- **User-driven:** choice of indicators and their weightings by individual user ('My ranking'). Particularly important for prospective students.



U-Multirank: dimensions covered



U-Multirank: any problems?

- Clearly the most refined ranking instrument so far
- How many HEIs will participate?
- How heavy is the work / cost of data provision and data analysis really?
- Will institutions resist the temptation of ‘massaging the figures’?
- Who will pay the bill? Right now, the EU Commission shoulders the cost, and might do for a few years still. What happens afterwards?
- Will the media give enough coverage? U-Multirank is complex, and therefore difficult for headlines (“University of Lapland best or worst, depending on indicators and weighting”)



That was it...

More on ACA: www.aca-secretariat.be

Where you can next meet us:

ACA 20th Anniversary Conference

Internationalisation and international mobility. Where do we stand, where are we heading?

The Hague, 9-11 June 2013

Thank you for your kind attention.

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