



Institutional Diversity: Rankings and Classifications in Higher Education

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Structure of the presentation

1. IMHE focus and activities regarding ranking and classification in OECD countries
2. The CHE Ranking of European Universities
A pilot project
3. Classifying Higher Education Institutions in Europe
A Feasibility Study

Mission and diversity of higher education institutions

- As the number of students has grown, the number of higher education institutions, and the diversity of their mission has grown too.
- It has become difficult to consider them as a homogeneous group, and it is clear that prioritization of activities and choice of mission have become the concern of institutions at least in some countries.
- Questions on rankings & classifications/typologies:
 - How are they affecting public perceptions of higher education and what is their impact on institutional behavior and strategy?
 - How could rankings could be improved; and how institutions should be compared and grouped.
 - How do the various regional approaches to classification compare and can they be linked to develop into a global scheme?
 - What is the relationship (conceptual and practical links) between classifications/typologies and ranking?



Institutional Diversity: Rankings and Typologies in Higher Education.

- First seminar in Bonn (with HRK) in December 2006:
 - Ranking only makes sense within defined groups of comparable institutions, i.e. classification as a prerequisite
 - Without this the research university as a dominant model will prevail (global winner)
 - And ranking will thus have an adverse effect on diversity of mission

The implications of increasing pressure for international comparison and ranking, and its impact on institutional strategy and practice.

- Survey (with IAU & DIT) on the influence of league tables and ranking systems on institutional decision making and government policy making
- Conference in Dublin (with DIT). Conference on Diversity of Missions (25-27 June)



Impact and Influence of League Tables and Ranking Systems on Institutional Decision-making

A Study for IMHE, IAU & DIT (by Ellen Hazelkorn)



- >70% ranked nationally and/or internationally.
- 58% not happy with their current institutional ranking
- 92.8% and 82%, respectively, want to improve their national or international ranking
- Comparing current with preferred rank:
 - 70% wish to be in top 10% nationally
 - 71% want to be top 25% internationally

Impact and Influence of League Tables and Ranking Systems on Institutional Decision-making

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Impact on Higher Education	True %	False %
Favour Established Universities	83	17
Establish Hierarchy of HEIs	81	19
Open to Distortion and Inaccuracies	82	18
Provide Comparative Information	74	26
Emphasize Research Strengths	65	35
Help HEIs Set Goals for Strategic Planning	65	35
Provide Assessment of HEI Performance	52	48
Promote Accountability	48	52
Can Make or Break an HEI's Reputation	42	58
Provide Assessment of HE Quality	41	59
Promote Institutional Diversity	38	62
Enable HEIs to Identify True Peers	33	67
Encourage FAIR Competition	25	75
Provide Full Overview of an HEI	11	89

Impact and Influence of League Tables and Ranking Systems on Institutional Decision-making

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Actions Arising (± 50%)

	Examples
Strategy	'Indicators underlying rankings are explicit part of target agreements between rector and faculties'; became part of a SWOT analysis; benchmarking exercises
Organisation	New section established to deal with indicator improvements and monitor rankings; reorganisation of structure; organise investigation team
Management	'Rector enforces the serious and precise processing of ranking as well as control of the relevant indicators'; development of better management tools;
Academic	Improve teaching and learning; new academic programmes; increase English language programmes; more scholarships and staff appointments



The CHE Ranking of European Universities

A Pilot Project

Supported by the European Commission

Project Partners

- CHE (Centre for Higher Education Development, Germany)
- CHEPS (Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies, University of Twente)
- CWTS (Centre for Science and Technology Studies, Leiden University)
- Flemish Ministry of Education
- Association of Dutch Universities and the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences
- European Commission (funding partner)



Project Aims

- To extend the CHE Ranking to HEIs in the Netherlands and Flanders
- First step: a common ranking of German, Austrian, Swiss, Dutch and Flemish HEIS will be established for 3 subject areas
- For each subject area, data will include information on both teaching and research performance
- As well as on facilities and services for students



Main Rationales

- Ranking is unavoidable (but many dilemmas)
- Has to be done well / ownership by the HE community
- Flemish and Dutch systems are small; comparison of quality needs a larger scale
- International attractiveness is important for both countries
- Work towards a European system



CHE as Best Practice

- High-quality comparative data at the departmental level
- No spurious "overall" ranking
- Web-enabled database
- Permits each student to examine rank institutions based on the criteria that matter most to them, the student.

(EPI, 2006)

- Berlin Principles
- CHEPS minimum design requirements



The approach: Basic Principles




No ranking of whole universities

No overall score out of weighted indicators

No individual ranks in league tables

Ranking of single disciplines / subject areas

Multidimensional ranking

3 Rank groups:
top  intermediate 
bottom 



The approach: Indicators & Levels

city, university	students	study outcome
internatio- nalisation	teaching	resources
research	labour market, employability	overall assessment (students, professors)

Bachelor

Master

(PhD)

Across
Binary HE
Systems!

Bibliometrical
data

Data on applied
research /
knowledge
transfer, etc.



Classifying Higher Education Institutions in Europe

A Feasibility Study

Supported by the European Commission

Project leader: Frans van Vught



Main Principles

- Diversity is important
- Need for better understanding: transparency for students, partner institutions, B&I, etc.
- To support mobility, cooperation and recognition and to enhance the competitiveness & attractiveness of European HE (Bologna)
- A basis for diversified policy approaches
- A methodological and analytical tool for research



First project phase (2004-2005)

- A stakeholders approach
- Exploration and iterative discussions
- Stakeholders' Views:
 - Inclusive for all European higher education institutions
 - A tool for developing institutional profiles
 - Multi-dimensional and flexible
 - Not prescriptive or rigid
 - Ownership to rest with higher education institutions
- Result: a set of schemes as a basis for a classification

Four Schemes

<p><i>Schemes on education</i></p> <p><i>Types of degrees offered</i></p> <p><i>Range of subjects offered</i></p> <p><i>Orientation of degrees</i></p> <p><i>European educational profile</i></p>	<p><i>Schemes on research and innovation</i></p> <p><i>Research intensiveness</i></p> <p><i>Innovation intensiveness</i></p> <p><i>European research profile</i></p>
<p><i>Schemes on student and staff profile</i></p> <p><i>International orientation</i></p> <p><i>Involvement in life long learning</i></p>	<p><i>Institutional schemes</i></p> <p><i>Size</i></p> <p><i>Mode of delivery</i></p> <p><i>Community services</i></p> <p><i>Public/private character</i></p> <p><i>Legal status</i></p>



Construction of the schemes

- Each scheme offers a description of certain characteristics
- Each characteristic is described by one or more indicators
- Each indicator consists of several categories



Second project phase (2006-2008)

- Testing the schemes (data availability)
- Enhancing the legitimacy of a classification
- Analysing existing European data sources
- Surveying 100+ European HEIs
- In-depth-case studies
- Stakeholders meetings
- International consultations (Carnegie / China)
- Conferences
- Drafting the classification

References

- Background paper on ranking:
http://www.studiekeuzeenranking.leidenuniv.nl/content_docs/paper_marginson_van_der_wende.pdf
- On the CHE project:
<http://www.utwente.nl/cheps/research/projects/cherankingforeu.doc/>
- On the Classification project:
<http://www.utwente.nl/cheps/documenten/engreport05institutionalprofiles.pdf>