

TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION
WORLD REPUTATION RANKING 2023
METHODOLOGY



**World
University
Rankings**

1 Introduction

The *Times Higher Education (THE)* Academic Reputation Survey is conducted annually, with scholars across the world being invited to take part. The survey is strictly invitation only, with invitees selected by THE. We do not have a nomination system, such that invitees cannot nominate themselves, or others, to complete the survey. We do not allow universities to provide contact lists either. Only academics who have published in academic journals, have been cited by other researchers and who have published within the last five years are asked to participate.

The administration of the survey is performed in-house by THE (before 2022 the survey was run by Elsevier). This year, the 2023 survey garnered 38,796 responses from respondents in 166 countries. It ran from October 2022 to January 2023 and was available in 12 languages.

The results of the academic reputation survey flow through to a number of outlets.

- Reputation Ranking 2023
- World University Ranking 2024 (33% weight)
- Japan University Ranking 2023 (8% weight)
- Latin America Ranking 2023 (33% weight)
- The Reputation Core and Reputation Plus data products in the THE DataPoints platform

2 Survey participation

The survey is structured to evaluate three main areas.

1 Votes

Respondents are asked to vote for institutions that they think are the best in the world. Invitees can vote for any number universities up to a maximum of 15 in both research and teaching. Voting is unordered. Scholars can choose from a drop-down list which features over 8,000 academic institutions. Should the desired institution not be included, a free text facility will allow the respondent to type in the name of the institution that they want to vote for.

We also ask respondents to vote for institutions that they think are the best in their direct experience. Again, invitees can vote for any number of universities up to a maximum of 15 in both research and teaching. Academics are also given the chance to vote for additional institutions within their own country, with up to 6 votes to be cast in research and teaching.

2 Demographics

Voters are asked to provide information about themselves. We ask about factors such as subject area of expertise, the country in which a scholar is based and their level of experience in academia.

3 Reasoning

Academics are asked how important various factors (for example, conferences or geographical proximity) are to them when deciding how to vote. We also ask about which media sources invitees pay attention to when forming their opinion of the best universities.

Finally, there is the opportunity for each respondent to leave feedback at the end the survey. Copies of the survey instrument are available on request.

3 Ranking calculation

The raw data from the survey is downloaded from the survey platform and processed by the THE data team.

One key consideration when computing the ranking is to ensure that the results of the survey are representative of the distribution of scholars globally. Our benchmark for this is publicly available data from the *UNESCO Institute of Statistics*. This data gives us the distribution of scholars throughout the world.

When processing the data, we apply weighting factors to the results. For those countries with fewer voters than the UNESCO benchmark, we up-weight each vote. For those countries with more voters than the benchmark, we down-weight. This step ensures that the final vote proportions in the ranking reflect the true geographical spread of scholars. We also apply these adjustments at the subject level.

This year we have introduced a self-voting cap. This reduces the self-vote share to 10% of the total votes for any given university. Self-votes are still allowed and are included, but are weighted down in much the same way as we apply country and subject weightings. The majority of ranked institutions are unaffected by this adjustment.

Once we have the final vote numbers, we compute the ranking by assigning a score relative to the top institution, which is set a score of 100. When constructing the total scores, we apply a ratio of 2:1 in favour of research over teaching, reflecting the WUR's focus towards research led institutions. Then, a proportionate vote ratio determines the score. For example, a university receiving 72.1% of the votes that the top institution received will have a score of 72.1. This is done for research, teaching and the total number of votes.

This process yields the reputation ranking, which features the top 200 universities. The ranking will be published on the Times Higher Education website in February 2024.

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings>