



**World
University
Rankings 2024**



THE World University Rankings 2024 Masterclasses

Q&A Summary

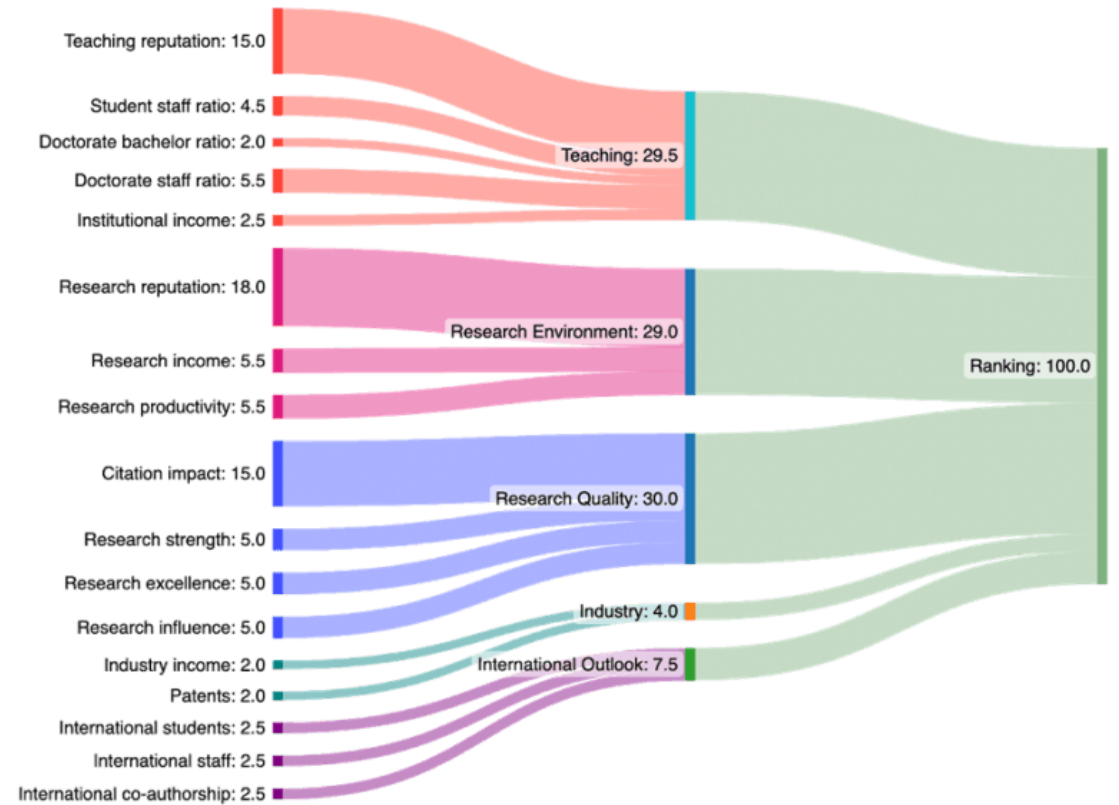
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The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2024 include 1,904 universities across 108 countries and regions.

The table is based on our new WUR methodology, which includes 18 carefully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution's performance across five areas: teaching, research environment, research quality, industry, and international outlook.

This year's ranking analysed more than 134 million citations across 16.5 million research publications and included survey responses from 68,402 scholars globally. Overall, we collected 411,789 datapoints from more than 2,673 institutions that submitted data.

Trusted worldwide by students, teachers, governments and industry experts, the 2024 league table reveals how the global higher education landscape is shifting.



Q&A – Academic Reputation Survey

Academic Reputation Survey

Q: And please, how do you select the sample of academics to survey? Where are the detailed criteria and procedure explained on your website? (not the principles)

A: Invitees are cited academics based at universities and research institutions across the world. They are published scholars whose papers have received citations in academic journals. These academics come from our in-house academic contact database, which has 3.4m verified academic contacts. We run regular verification of these contacts; we won't send to an email that hasn't been verified in the last 6 months. The academics information was gathered from publicly available academic papers.

Q&A – Academic Reputation Survey

Academic Reputation Survey

Q: Could you clarify where the reputation survey respondents are drawn from. Do institutions have any influence?

A: We only select academics who have actively published in the last few years and have at least one citation in an academic paper. We don't have a nomination system where voters or institutions can nominate others to take part as we are very keen to ensure that survey responses are only completed by active, cited academics. We will at some point look at the merits of asking universities to supply information on their cited academics. The academics are selected from our in-house academic contact database, which has 3.4m verified academic contacts. However, the universities can help by encouraging their staff to reply to the survey. Academics will receive their invitations from surveys@timeshighereducationmail.com. We would greatly appreciate your help in reminding them to check their inboxes (and spam folders) for this invitation. The invitations will be spread across a 3-month period. In order to ensure that all your invited staff receive the survey invitation, we highly recommend you inform your IT department to whitelist our email address surveys@timeshighereducationmail.com and IP 129.41.76.108. If your staff are selected to take part in the survey then they have been chosen based on a proven record of research publication and will be representing peers from both their discipline and country. Please urge them to take the opportunity to provide their expert input and help us develop a uniquely rich perspective on global higher education.

Q&A – Academic Reputation Survey

Q: Do you feel that the reputation survey weight is a bit high and could be biasing the other indicators?

A: We have allocated roughly similar weights to the three data sources that underpin the rankings: Reputation Survey, Portal data, and Bibliometrics. We believe the opinions of scholars around the world matter and give us valuable information on the best universities around the world. However, we also recognise that the reputation data presents a relatively low number of universities with a high number of votes, and a high number of universities with a low number of votes. We have been working on trying to balance this out by introducing new questions about ranking a set number of institutions.

Q: Has a cap on self-voting in the reputation surveys been introduced, and if so, has it made much of a difference?

A: Self-voting is allowed. 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.

Q&A – Academic Reputation Survey

Q: I'd like to understand more about the reputational survey, how does this work please?

A: The survey is sent to a sample of academics selected by THE, in which we ask them to nominate the universities that they perceive to be the best for Teaching and/or Research in their field. For the 2022 and 2023 surveys, academics were asked to nominate up to 15 institutions for Teaching and up to 15 institutions for Research globally. The most recent Academic Reputation Survey (run annually and conducted by THE) that underpins this category was carried out between October 2022 and January 2023. We have run the survey to ensure a balanced spread of responses across disciplines and countries. Where disciplines or countries were over- or under-represented, THE's data team weighted the responses to fully reflect the global distribution of scholars.

Q: If you are managing the reputation database, how do you ensure it is up to date? How do you source email addresses for example and verify that they have published research?

A: We run regular verification of these contacts; we won't send to an email that hasn't been verified in the last 6 months. The academics information was gathered from publicly available academic papers.

Q&A – Academic Reputation Survey

Q: When is the voting period for research reputation - also can we view the dashboard for our own university to see the results of the research reputation please?

A: The Academic Reputation Survey typically runs from early November to late January every year. If you would like to see detailed data and insights from the Academic Reputation Survey, please go to <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/our-solutions/data-and-insights/reputation-dashboard>.

Q: Where do you source the participants for the reputation survey?

A: Invitees are cited academics based at universities and research institutions across the world. They are published scholars whose papers have received citations in academic journals. These academics come from our in-house academic contact database, which has 3.4m verified academic contacts. We run regular verification of these contacts; we won't send to an email that hasn't been verified in the last 6 months. The academics information was gathered from publicly available academic papers.

Q&A – Bibliometrics

Q: How one paper is associated with a university? Is it based on current affiliation of authors or the affiliation at the time of publication? are all authors treated equally affiliation wise?

A: It is based on the affiliation at the time of the publication. This is because Scopus aims to accurately reflect “the scholarly record”, exactly as delivered by the third-party publishers of those publications. If an author is dual-affiliated (or has more than one affiliation), the publication will count once towards each institution. The order of the institutional affiliations does not matter. Each publication is attributed to all the institutions affiliated to each author. The paper will count for 1 for each affiliation/institution (we look at the affiliation, not the author). The only specific case here would be for papers with more than 1,000 authors, for which we do kilo-authored fractional counting.

Q: If an author has two affiliation, how do you account it for two universities?

A: If an author is dual-affiliated (or has more than one affiliation), the publication will count once towards each institution. The order of the institutional affiliations does not matter. Each publication is attributed to all the institutions affiliated to each author. The paper will count for 1 for each affiliation/institution (we look at the affiliation, not the author). The only specific case would be for papers with more than 1,000 authors, for which we do kilo-authored fractional counting (only for the Citation Impact metric).

Q&A – Bibliometrics

Q: Is there a list of journals that Elsevier includes in their dataset (e.g., do papers in Springer count, or say certain open access papers?)

A: We only look at journals indexed by Scopus. The full list is available at <https://www.elsevier.com/solutions/scopus/how-scopus-works/content>.

Q: When you look at the paper, what is the census period? Year-by-year for yearly rating?

A: We always look at the latest 5-year period for the bibliometrics. For the World University Rankings 2024 published in September 2023, we looked at the 2018-2022 period. For the next WUR 2025 (to be published in October 2024), we will look at the 2019-2023 period.

Q&A – Citation Impact

Q: FWCI can be influenced by a small number of heavily cited papers. Those can have a greater impact on a smaller number of publications than on a larger set of publications. In such circumstances The FWCI of a smaller university,(just meeting the threshold of 1,000 publications) could potentially have unfair advantage over a larger/comprehensive university with say 25,000 publications over 5 years. Have you seen any evidence of this in the data this year?

A: These outlier situations may still happen in the Citation Impact metric but their impact on the overall score and rank is now greatly reduced if not removed entirely, due to the addition of the three new bibliometrics measures.

Q: Have any alternative options been considered for stabilising the potential volatility of Citations metrics? The Research Pillar is a step in the right direction, however are there other options to consider in this field?

A: WUR 3.0 has seen a complete revisiting of the main metrics underpinning the research quality assessment. The Citation Impact metric was kept for continuity reasons, but the complementary three metrics make the Research Quality pillar as a whole more robust and we should look at this pillar in its entirety.

Q&A – Data

Q: Do you collect data on non-doctorate postgraduate degrees? I'm thinking particularly of Masters courses, as it would be interesting to see how the metrics are changing over time.

A: We do not collect Masters' degrees information for the rankings, only Bachelors' degrees and Doctorates' degrees. We do however collect bachelors students, masters students and doctoral students as optional data but they are not used in the ranking calculation.

Q&A – Definitions

Q: How to get access to the THE Dashboard and is it paid?

A: If you are talking about DataPoints, any ranked university can get credentials to have access to their detailed WUR performance. Please email rankings@timeshighereducation.com to check on your access. If you are interested in further data and insights, please go to <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/our-solutions/data-and-insights/world-university-rankings-dashboard>

Q: What is included in the 'industry income' category?

A: Industry income (shortening for 'research income from industry and commerce') is defined as below. It is a subset of 'research income'. Research income is defined as the income received by the university to fund research projects (regardless of the source – can come from governments, charities, private companies). Industry income is a subset of that, as we only consider the research income coming from private companies. It is defined as the research income received from industry or other commercial bodies, and is scaled by academic staff, a proxy for the size of the university.

Q&A – Employability

Q: Does this ranking also consider the student alumni career track records?

A: The THE World University Rankings does not have any employability measure. Employability measures may be a challenge as they can be very much localised and is not easy to compare on a global scale.

Q: What about employment after university vs time and money spent...?

A: The THE World University Rankings does not have any employability measure. Employability measures may be a challenge as they can be very much localised and it may not be easy to compare on a global scale.

Q&A – HESA

Q: Can UK HEIs withdraw from the rankings given the THE gets data from HESA?

A: By default UK universities are included in the THE World University Rankings but it is possible to opt out if you wish. Please email profilerankings@timeshighereducation.com for more information.

Q&A – Impact Rankings

Q: Are the social media links are considered as valid public evidence for Impact Ranking?

A: Yes, we can accept social media posts as evidence. However, we do recommend that it is set as open (does not need a login to access it), and it shows clearly that it is from the university as a body.

Q: Is it a must to cover all SDGS while applying?

A: The participation starts from one SDG of your choice. However, if you would like to be in the Overall Impact Rankings you need to submit data for any three SDG plus the mandatory SDG 17.

Q&A – International

Q: Is the UK considered a large country when you calculate the international metrics?

A: We don't categorise countries as large or small, we use the population size (strictly speaking the log of population size) to normalise.

Q&A – Methodology

Q: Are there any correlations between certain metrics? E.g. does high international metrics correlate with reputation scores?

A: It is possible to find correlations or links between metrics. For instance, there is a correlation between research reputation and citation impact score, and based on this we offer a SWOT analysis. If both reputation and citation are low it's a weakness, if the research reputation is high but citation is low it is a threat (there seems to be a high reputation but it is not corroborated by tangible recent citation quality), if citation score is high but research reputation low it is an opportunity (work can be done to make more visible the good quality research output done at the university) and if both citation score and research reputation are high then it is a strength.

Q: Can the data suggest why universities with a broader range of subjects fare better?

A: This may also be linked to the fact that top universities have had more time to develop and perfect a breadth of subjects over time, whilst smaller, younger universities start with a more focused approach.

Q&A – Methodology

Q: Do you have the same ranking criteria for Public and Private HEIs?

A: The eligibility criteria are the same for all universities.

Q: Rankings 201-250 and thereon (such as 801-1000) the universities are listed alphabetically?

Is there a reason the why the list is not ordered based on scores?

Precise ranks and overall scores are shown for the institutions ranked in the top 200. We then display banded ranks and overall scores for institutions in the rest of the table because the difference between their scores is not statistically significant. Precise pillar scores are displayed for each ranked institution. Institutions that are ranked within bands are listed in alphabetical order. All the universities ranked within the same band have the same position.

Q: Will the methodology change again next year?

A: There is currently no plan for a major methodological change in the next year. However,

Q&A – Normalisation

Q: When you do normalisation by staff numbers, which categories of staff are counted? Just Teaching and Research, or also Research only/Teaching only staff?

A: It depends of the metric in question. Doctorate staff ratio, Institutional income , Research income, Industry income, International staff are scaled by the number of academic staff only. Research productivity by the number of academic staff plus research staff. The new metrics (Research excellence, Research influence and Patents) are scaled by the square root of academic staff plus research staff.

Q&A – Participation rules

Q: Is that participation on the professor personal level as an academic or only limited to the university level to participate?

A: We rank universities, not professors.

Q&A – Patents

Q: Is the patents metric adjusted by subject area? Without much knowledge of patents, would this disadvantage institutions focusing on arts/humanities/social sciences?

A: Absolutely, the Patents measure is subject weighted to avoid penalising universities producing research in fields low in patents.

Q&A – Rankings

Q: Given the significant increases in the number of universities included in the ranking over time, wouldn't percentiles be more useful YoY as opposed to just ranking alone? A top 100 performance when there was 1000 universities included is a similar position to top 200 with 2000 universities under review.

A: We agree that percentiles in general would be one method to do any year on year comparison, accounting for the steady increase of ranked universities every year. However, percentiles can be more difficult to explain than the underlying score. Our new methodology will enable us to look at YoY score differences with greater clarity in future

Q: Please tell me why other universities' overall score is not mentioned on your website?

A: Precise ranks and overall scores are shown for the institutions ranked in the top 200. We then display banded ranks and overall scores for institutions in the rest of the table because the difference between their scores is not statistically significant. Precise pillar scores are displayed for each ranked institution. Institutions that are ranked within bands are listed in alphabetical order. All the universities ranked within the same band have the same position.

Q&A – Rankings

Q: You commented that top universities generally have a broad range of disciplines, presumably this is combined with scale in all areas to avoid spreading resources too thin? (i.e. breadth and scale is needed together?)

A: This may also be linked to the fact that top universities have had more time to develop and perfect a breadth of subjects over time, whilst smaller, younger universities start with a more focused approach.

Q&A – Reference year

Q: What happens when (if) JISC/HESA data are published late? Does the THE ever use the previous year?

A: A late JISC/HESA data publication would not affect THE, as we always collect the data from two years prior. We need to compare universities using data from the same year, and some universities have academic years that finish at different times of the calendar year. There is also a lag required for data to be collated, verified and approved that varies amongst institutions. Therefore, in global terms, the most complete data available for all institutions has been found to be from 2 years ago.

Q&A – Regional query

Q: I hope that there would be more discussion of world region rather than UK v The world. Perhaps with the exception of South Africa and Egypt countries in Africa have virtually no ranking in the world. Is thus a true reflection of quality or a data issue?

A: This specific Masterclass was about the United Kingdom but I invite you to view our Africa Masterclass. We now have 113 ranked universities from Africa, from only 48 back in 2018. Besides South Africa and Egypt, countries like Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Nigeria and Ghana are also well represented. In 2023, we had five African countries entering the ranking for the first time: Zambia, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Mauritius.

Q: Looking at 166 countries submitting data for ranking, which regions do they mainly represent, e.g. Central Europe, South Asia etc. Also: which regions are not entering the ranking?

A: The five most represented countries in the World University Rankings are as follows: the United States with 169 universities, Japan with 119 universities, the United Kingdom with 104 universities, India with 91 universities, and China with 86 universities. We are lacking representation from many African countries, this may be due to an absence of data submissions or a lack of eligibility criteria.

Q&A – Regional query

Q: Out of curiosity, how is the UK treated in terms of country size? Is it population or physical country size?

A: All country sizes are calculated in terms of population

Q&A – Research influence

Q: Does the research influence consider the journals that published a paper, like elite journals?

A: No, we don't use journal based metrics in our calculations. However, it can be the case that an article published in a well know journal receives more visibility and therefore citations than it might otherwise.

Q: In the Research Influence category, is any account taken of differences by subject of the time from paper submission to publication? This must impact the chain of citations used.

A: Yes we calculate the research influence score by year first.

Q&A – Research strength

Q: Regarding "research strength," when sorting the publications of a university according to their FWCI, do you start from 0, arrange them to the highest, and then directly refer to the FWCI value at the 75th percentile?

A: Yes, that is essentially what it is. The 75th percentile is essentially the 'median of the top half of all datapoints'.

Q&A – Scoring

Q: How are the actual scores calculated? Is it effectively a % of the top score of 100?

A: Moving from a series of specific data points to indicators, and finally to a total score for an institution, requires us to match values that represent fundamentally different data. To do this, we use a standardisation approach for each indicator, and then combine the indicators according to the weightings. The standardisation approach we use is based on the distribution of data within a particular indicator, where we calculate a cumulative probability function, and evaluate where a particular institution's indicator sits within that function. For most metrics, we calculate the cumulative probability function using a version of Z-scoring. The distribution of data in the metrics on teaching reputation, research reputation, research excellence, research influence and patents requires us to use an exponential component.

Q: I would like to know why we saw huge differences in Germany with scores of Student Faculty Ratio? Did you use a different normalisation?

A: This year we have done some fine tuning of our scoring parameters so that (1) we use more of the score range (2) the score distribution is flatter.

Q&A – Scoring

Q: We noticed a significant change in the student to staff ratio. Our points dropped although our numbers stayed the same. Can you explain what happened in this indicator? Thanks!

A: This year we have done some fine tuning of our scoring parameters so that (1) we use more of the score range (2) the score distribution is flatter.

Q&A – Studying Abroad

Q: Do you know how much the studying abroad difference (UK vs EUR) has changed since Brexit?

A: We've only been capturing study abroad (i.e outbound) information for two years. We do have public data from the UN on international student movement, there is no noticeable Brexit effect on overall movement

Q: Please, can you explain in more detail what you take into account in the "Studying abroad" indicator? All students in international programs, outgoing and incoming,... only outgoing ones?

A: For "Studying abroad" metric, we want to measure the opportunities given by the 'sending' university to expose their students to a learning experience in an overseas university - so this is only 'outgoing exchange students' that we consider here. Another measure under the International Outlook pillar, "International students" looks at the proportion of incoming overseas students enrolled at the university.

Q&A – Subjects

Q: Can the data suggest why Law seems to be performing worse?

A: Law is a much smaller subject than other subjects, say, Physical Sciences, less universities will offer Law as a degree. Across the world, 1,370 universities are ranked in Physical Sciences, and only 329 universities are ranked in Law.

Q: Can you please signpost to the requirements for subject ie number of publications/year, etc.?

A: Page 15 of the detailed World University Rankings methodology

"https://www.timeshighereducation.com/sites/default/files/the_2024_world_university_rankings_methodology.pdf" details the publication and staff thresholds, as well as the metric weightings, used for the Subject Rankings.

Q: Have broad subject area rankings for 2024 been issued yet?

A: The Subject Rankings were published on 26 October. Please visit

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

Q&A – Subjects

Q: Please, we would appreciate it if THE could include Real Estate to your subject list. Our department focus on real estate. It would be great if real estate was given special recognition, similar to other subjects, rather than including under other subjects.

A: The Real Estate discipline is currently assigned under the 'Business and Economics' subject area. There are many reasons why we continue to have our 11 broad subject areas; first, we are trying to keep a continuity for better year on year comparison (adding new subjects would mean breaking down previous subjects into smaller subjects). Second, we do need to have subjects that are big and robust enough in terms of data, to sustain such a detailed assessment and in order to give meaningful results. We would need to collect data around staff, students, income and degrees, across all universities. That takes us to the third point: ideally it needs to be a discipline that many universities across the world offer, if it's too niche a subject, the population of universities offering the subject will be small, and a ranking would not be very relevant.

Q&A – Subjects

Q: Why Psychology is taken as one of 11 subject groups? This is clearly an anomaly.

A: The Psychology subject was first ranked in 2018, when this discipline was 'broken off' the Social Sciences subject, along with Law and Education. This was an attempt to look at subjects that have a specific identity. We think they remain relevant although they may be smaller than some of the previous subjects.

Q&A – Submission query

Q: Is there any format to fill all related information for ranking?

A: We do have template forms in Excel format that we can distribute. However, please note that only Please contact us at profilerankings@timeshighereducation.com.

Q: Thank you .. and can the university participate for free or the are fees for that, and what is the email for the responsible person to communicate with?

A: Participation to our rankings is entirely free. Please email profilerankings@timeshighereducation.com for more information on our process.

Q&A – Validation

Q: Is any of the evidence collected based on publicly available data (e.g. via institutional website), or is it all based on submitted data?

A: For the World University Rankings, we only request quantitative data from universities (numbers of staff, students, degrees, income, etc.). However, during our validation phase, we may request for additional evidence to verify your submitted numbers.

Q&A – WUR 3.0 change (citation impact)

Q: THE originally planned and announced to use only the three new metrics. Why did you still include the "old" metric based in FWCI? Thanks!

A: THE listens carefully to feedback from universities and our Advisory Board. Retaining Citation Impact at a lower weighting (halved) provides critical continuity, as the indicator has been in use since 2009 and reduces year-on-year volatility, a major concern for universities. As the ranking will be published in September this notification gives institutions time to prepare for the publication of the ranking.

Contact us



To participate in next year's **World University Rankings**, please email us: profilerankings@timeshighereducation.com or fill a form via: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/content/world-university-rankings-2025-participation> and we will get in touch.

Should you have any further question, or want to know more about **THE's data product** for data-supported decision making, please contact us via data@timeshighereducation.com.

If you want to know more about **THE's consultancy service** for strategic planning, please contact consultancy@timeshighereducation.com

Other THE Rankings



Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings are the only global performance tables that assess universities against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To participate in next year's **Impact Rankings**, please email us: Impact@timeshighereducation.com or [fill a form](#) and we will get in touch.

**Interdisciplinary Science
Rankings**

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Responding to the view that the world's pressing problems can be solved only with insights from a range of scholarly fields, THE and Schmidt Science Fellows said a ranking would seek to improve scientific excellence and collaboration among universities, aiming to provide institutions with benchmarking data and rewarding campuses that incentivise cross-disciplinary work.

Participate in the ranking [here](#).



A new global online learning ranking will be launched by Times Higher Education (THE) in 2024 which will benchmark the successes and challenges of online learning for the very first time.

A key part of the ranking will be the student survey where universities' current students are asked for their assessment of various teaching and engagement measures through an online form.

The data collection portal for the Online Learning Rankings will be open from April to June 2024 and the ranking will come out in December 2024.

To participate in the ranking and find out more [here](#).