

# Interdisciplinary Science Rankings

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## DATA COLLECTION PORTAL

Interdisciplinary Science Rankings (ISR)

January to March 2025 data collection

Version 1.0

Date 13/01/2025

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Times Higher Education (THE) Interdisciplinary Science Rankings (ISR) guide. This guide explains the key aspects of the ISR data collection process.

Interdisciplinary science research holds the promise of unlocking learnings from multiple academic disciplines to solve global challenges. THE’s Interdisciplinary Science Rankings, [launched in association with Schmidt Science Fellows](#), is the first effort of its kind to measure institutions’ contributions and commitment to Interdisciplinary Science.

We are trying to understand the extent to which universities are deliberately and explicitly creating the environments and opportunities for this kind of interdisciplinary research.

Institutions will be able to use insights from the rankings to assess and develop their own approach to interdisciplinary science to facilitate a culture change in global science and drive high-impact research.

THE has developed data-driven metrics which will help achieve a better understanding of the factors that lead to interdisciplinary research success. We began collecting datapoints related to interdisciplinary research in 2023, and in November 2024 the first edition of the ISR was launched, resulting in THE’s biggest-ever debut of a global ranking. See more information here: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/record-participation-new-interdisciplinary-science-rankings>

## 2. IMPORTANT REMARKS

### 2.1. CHANGES FROM THE PREVIOUS DATA COLLECTION

- This year, institutions will be able to inform research not only among science disciplines, but also between one or more science disciplines and social sciences, psychology, law, economics, and clinical and health. See section APPLICABLE SUBJECTS for more details, exceptions, and examples.
- Information about job adverts will not be required.

### 2.2. YEAR

We will be collecting data for the year ending in **2023**.

“Year” for the purposes of the portal is defined as follows:

- The calendar year January to December **2023**
- The academic year that ended in **2023**
- The financial year that ended in **2023**

Please note that the ISR questions are not mandatory and will not feed into the World University Rankings (WUR). These questions are distinct from the methodology underpinning the WUR. To participate in the ISR, you must also submit data for the WUR, although you can opt out of being ranked in the WUR should you wish to take part only in ISR.

If you do not wish to provide information on interdisciplinary research this will not impact on your inclusion in the WUR.

### 2.3. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Please provide monetary data in **whole** numbers i.e., 17654 with **no** punctuation or thousand separators. Decimal places are also **not** permitted.

Monetary values should be reported in the currency you selected within the portal’s Institution section. If you need to alter this, please contact us. We then use World Bank

“purchasing-power parity” conversion rates to convert to a common denomination.  
See the WUR guide for more information.

### 3. DATA SUBMISSION

#### 3.1. TIMELINE

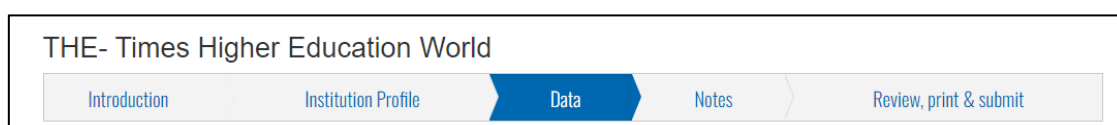
The portal for the second edition of the ISR opens on **13 January 2025** until **30 March 2025**.

The cut-off date for data submission is the closure of the data collection portal, unless an extension has been explicitly granted. If your submission is reopened exclusively to amend data for WUR, any new data added for ISR will not be assessed.

Should you need to add new data after the portal closes, please contact us at [interdisciplinary@timeshighereducation.com](mailto:interdisciplinary@timeshighereducation.com).

#### 3.2. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Submission will be made from the same data collection portal as for the World University Rankings 2025. The ISR questions will be the last section of the tab ‘**data**’:



Overall – This section is mandatory for all universities to complete	
Arts and Humanities	
Clinical and Health	
Engineering	
Computer Science	
Life Sciences	
Physical Sciences	
Social Sciences	
Business and Economics	
Psychology	
Law	
Education	
Interdisciplinary Science Rankings (ISR)	

Please refer to the World University Rankings Data Collection Portal Guide for general information about your submission.

### 3.3. MANDATORY FIELDS

Universities are required to complete the mandatory fields in the WUR Overall section, as well as at least one science subject in the WUR section. Additionally, we strongly encourage you to complete as many questions as possible in the ISR section to ensure eligibility for the Rankings. For guidance, in order to be ranked in ISR 2025, institutions must not have had more than two missing metrics, once the metrics have been calculated for the rankings.

Should you not wish to participate in WUR, please email us at [profilerankings@timeshighereducation.com](mailto:profilerankings@timeshighereducation.com) to confirm your participation in ISR and your wish to be excluded from WUR.

Finally, it is worth noting that the interdisciplinary research data that we are requesting, will NOT feed into the World University Rankings.

### 3.4. INFORMATION REQUESTED

Numeric data:

- Research income allocated to interdisciplinary research within applicable disciplines

Evidence data

- Does your institution provide measures of interdisciplinary research success within applicable disciplines?
- Does your institution provide specific physical facilities for interdisciplinary research teams within applicable disciplines?
- Does your institution provide specific administrative support for interdisciplinary research teams within applicable disciplines?
- Does your institution have a tenure or a career promotion system in place that recognizes interdisciplinary research within applicable disciplines?

Only **one** URL can be submitted per question as evidence. Documents are not allowed, only URLs entered in the corresponding field.

Please note that the content of the URL can be in any language. If the evidence pertains to only part of the content in the URL, you must indicate the relevant part(s) in the “Comments” section. We will not scan through the entire page to find relevant answers to the question at hand and therefore the question may not receive any points. Please do not use the “comments” section to share evidence URLs.

### 3.5. APPLICABLE DISCIPLINES

Due to feedback from universities who participated in roundtables and stakeholder conversations with THE, from **ISR 2026** (data collection Jan-March 2025) and onward, any

research project including multiple scientific disciplines, or one or more scientific disciplines combined with one or more social science disciplines will be considered.

Science disciplines are defined according to our [THE 11 subjects](#) as: Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Engineering, and Computer Science.

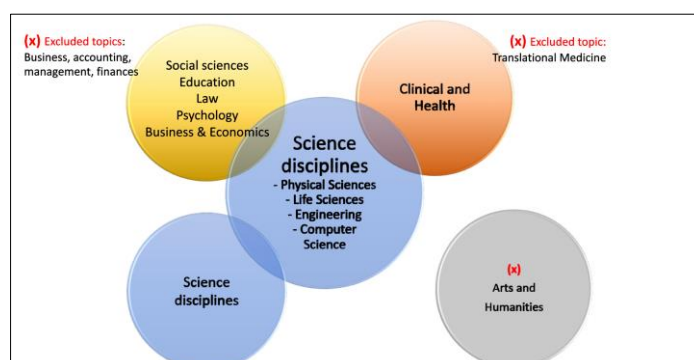
Please see exceptions and examples below:

### Applicable disciplines for the ISR 2026 (Data collection 2025)

- ✓ Science discipline (Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Engineering, and Computer Science) + a different science discipline (on their own, or plus any other subject)
- ✓ Science discipline + the same science discipline (ONLY if the topics belong to two different subjects in the THE's more detailed 31-subject breakdown)
- ✓ Science discipline + Social Sciences, Education, Psychology, Law, Economics (but not other subjects under the Business and Economics subject)
- ✓ Science discipline + Clinical and Health

### Disciplines not included in the ISR

- ✗ Topics that fall under Arts and Humanities on their own, or only in combination with one science discipline
- ✗ Business studies, and other topics classified as 'Business and Economics' in THE's 11 subjects, except from 'Economics'. (i.e., business, management, accounting, and finance)
- ✗ Translational medicine





## 4. DEFINITIONS

### 4.1. DEFINITION OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE RESEARCH

Interdisciplinary science refers to the integration of both the knowledge, traditions, and processes from multiple scientific disciplines. It can involve multiple academics who collaborate with one another across different disciplines. It may also be a single academic approaching a scientific question across multiple disciplines.

Multidisciplinary research might look at the same problem from more than one perspective, but true interdisciplinary research requires these perspectives to be integrated, either by a single researcher or a team.

### 4.2. DATA FIELDS

DATA FIELD	DEFINITION	CATEGORY NOTES
<b>Research income allocated to interdisciplinary research within applicable disciplines</b> <b>[NUMERIC]</b>	The income your institution received in <b>2023</b> specifically for interdisciplinary research purposes within applicable disciplines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is the gross income received to fund directly research projects. It must be externally generated as a result of short-term contracts or longer-term research units.</li><li>• Information contained in the OECD's <a href="#">Frascati Manual</a> may help you define what is considered as research.</li></ul> <p>This should NOT include the following income types even when</p>

		<p>redirected towards research activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ General funding and income generated by your own institution through donations, awards won, investments and commercialisation.</li> <li>○ Funding for research facilities and infrastructure.</li> <li>○ IP royalties, licensing and consultancy fees</li> <li>○ Teaching income</li> <li>• This will include “research income from industry and commerce” (see WUR’s guide)</li> <li>• This is a subset of “research income” in WUR.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Does your university provide measures of interdisciplinary research success within applicable disciplines?</b></p> <p><b>[EVIDENCE]</b></p>	<p>Measures of success in IS research from 2023 onward, or active in 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please select yes if you offer measures of interdisciplinary research success within applicable disciplines and enter <b>only one</b> URL that will act as evidence of your claim.</li> <li>• Please add any comments that may be relevant.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Does your university provide specific physical facilities for</b></p>	<p>Physical facilities dedicated to IS research from 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please select yes if you provide specific physical facilities for interdisciplinary research</li> </ul>

<b>interdisciplinary research teams within applicable disciplines?</b> <b>[EVIDENCE]</b>	onward, or active in 2023	<p>teams within applicable disciplines and enter <b>only one</b> URL that will act as evidence of your claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please add any comments that may be relevant</li> <li>• The physical facilities can be dedicated spaces for interdisciplinary research. They should not be used for any other purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Does your university provide specific administrative support for interdisciplinary research teams within applicable disciplines?</b> <b>[EVIDENCE]</b>	Administrative support dedicated to IS research from 2023 onward, or active in 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please select yes if you provide specific administrative support for interdisciplinary research teams within applicable disciplines and enter <b>only one</b> URL that will act as evidence of your claim.</li> <li>• Please add any comments that may be relevant</li> <li>• Specific administrative support can be a project manager supporting interdisciplinary research projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Does your university have a tenure or a career promotion system in place that recognizes interdisciplinary research</b>	Career promotion system that rewards interdisciplinary research from 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please select yes if you have a career promotion system in place that recognizes interdisciplinary research within applicable disciplines</li> </ul>

<p><b>within applicable disciplines?</b></p> <p><b>[EVIDENCE]</b></p>	<p>onward, or active in 2023</p>	<p>and enter <b>only one</b> URL that will act as evidence of your claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please add any comments that may be relevant</li> </ul>
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## 5. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 5.1. PARTICIPATION

#### 1. Is participation mandatory?

Participation is not mandatory for any of our rankings. Participation in the ISR is also not necessary to participate in order to take part in the World University Rankings. Should you not wish to participate, please leave all the ISR questions blank (i.e., do not complete the numeric data questions, and do not select any answer for evidence questions).

#### 2. What is the inclusion criteria?

- Must submit data for the World University Rankings 2026.
- Must declare at least one science subject (Computer Science, Engineering, Life Sciences and Physical Sciences) as applicable.
- Must publish at least 100 Interdisciplinary Science Research academic publications within the five-year window 2020 to 2024.
- Must have at least 50 academic and research staff in total across the applicable science subjects. These staff members do not necessarily need to be engaged in interdisciplinary research.
- Must not have more than two missing metrics, once the metrics have been calculated for the rankings.
- Must not be in THE's custom exclusion list - THE reserves the right to exclude any institution from our rankings, even if they satisfy all other inclusion criteria.

Please note that this is [the inclusion criteria for the ISR 2025](#), as guidance. The full **ISR 2026** methodology will be developed after reviewing data submitted in January-March 2025, and feedback from universities.

#### 3. What happens if my institution does not meet the inclusion criteria?

Universities that submitted data but did not meet the eligibility criteria for our table are included as reporter institutions. This means that they are listed, alphabetically, at the end

of the rankings table, and rather than being assigned a rank number, they are instead labelled 'reporter' institutions.

## 5.2. GENERAL DEFINITIONS

- 4. Almost all research projects contain interdisciplinary elements. How can we distinguish interdisciplinary research from mono-disciplinary research, as we believe there are interdisciplinary traits in every project?**

We are not looking for projects that may, coincidentally, contain some traces of interdisciplinary research. We are only looking for projects that are significantly interdisciplinary in nature and by design.

- 5. Do collaborations with other institutions count as interdisciplinary? Or does it have to be within the same institution?**

For the Portal data we are focusing on the activities that you are undertaking to foster interdisciplinary research within your own university. Research done in collaboration with other institutions can be included, but only the part allocated to your institution.

Collaborative interdisciplinary research will be recognised in our bibliometrics.

- 6. Can we conclude that interdisciplinary research includes any researchers or research teams/groups/centres who have come across and made use of knowledge from two or more disciplines to tackle a single research question?**

We are looking at research that is explicitly interdisciplinary from the start. A research program that was only tangentially interdisciplinary - for example the research is primarily within a single domain, but a few elements are taken from another during the research process - would not count. The involvement of a second disciplinary area needs to be intentional, and significant for this to count.

- 7. Can I include any discipline this year?**

See section 'APPLICABLE DISCIPLINES' , and [THE's detailed subject mapping](#) for more information. Below some examples:

Topic 1	Discipline (11-subject)	Sub-discipline (31-subject)	Topic 2	Discipline 2 (11-subject)	Sub-discipline 2 (31-subject)	ISR?	Comments
Astrophysics	Physical Sciences	Physics & Astronomy	-	-	-	No	Only one topic, not interdisciplinary
Astrophysics	Physical Sciences	Physics & Astronomy	History	Arts and Humanities	History, Philosophy & Theology	No	Arts & Humanities plus only one science discipline is not considered ISR
Astrophysics	Physical Sciences	Physics & Astronomy	Materials Science	Engineering	General Engineering	Yes	Interdisciplinary research between two distinct science disciplines
Astrophysics	Physical Sciences	Physics & Astronomy	Chemistry	Physical Sciences	Chemistry	Yes	Same applicable discipline, but two different sub-disciplines
Civil engineering	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Behavioural sciences	Social Sciences	Sociology	Yes	Social sciences are included this year, always in interaction with at least one science discipline
Earth and environmental engineering	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Economics	Business and Economics	Economics & Econometrics	Yes	Economics can be included in interaction with at least one science discipline
Earth and environmental engineering	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Business	Business and Economics	Economics & Econometrics	No	Research between Business, management, finances and accounting and only one science discipline is not considered ISR
Biotechnology	Life Sciences	Biological Sciences	Cardiology	Clinical and Health	Medicine & Dentistry	Yes	Clinical and Health topics are included this year, always in interaction with at least one science discipline
Biotechnology	Life Sciences	Biological Sciences	Translational Medicine	Clinical and Health		No	Translational medicine is not an applicable discipline

## 8. Can I report research that includes topics categorised as ‘Clinical and Health’?

You can report interdisciplinary research that includes Clinical and Health disciplines as long as it follows the criteria specified in section APPLICABLE DISCIPLINES. Please note that this does not include translational medicine.

## 5.3. METRICS AND METHODOLOGY

## 9. Is there a methodology for ISR?

The ISR is built on three pillars



You can find the **ISR 2025** methodology here for more information:

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/interdisciplinary-science-rankings-2025-methodology>. Please note that the **ISR 2026** methodology will be developed after the next data collection, and published alongside the new edition of the Rankings in late 2025.

#### **10. Where can I find the metrics/weights used to calculate ISR 2025?**

The full **ISR 2025** methodology can be found here:

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/interdisciplinary-science-rankings-2025-methodology>

#### **11. Where can I find the metrics/weights that will be used to calculate ISR 2026?**

There is no methodology for **ISR 2026** yet. It will be developed based on the ISR 2025 methodology, the data gathered from January to March 2025, and feedback from universities. The ISR 2026 methodology will be released in late 2025, alongside the second edition of the ISR.

#### **12. How do you score evidence?**

Please see the ISR 2025 methodology for full details.



#### 5.4. PORTAL DATA

**13. My institution submitted data for ISR 2025, however I cannot see it in the portal**

If you submitted data for previous editions of ISR, please note that you will not see it in this year's data collection portal as we will not display year on year data.

**14. For questions that require evidence URLs, do these links/webpages need to be in English?**

No, you can submit the URL/link/webpage in any language.

**15. If we have more than two ISR projects, can we enter one URL per project?**

The Portal is designed to only accommodate one URL per data field. We do recommend that if you have several URLs, please include only the evidence you consider the most relevant. If you share more than one URL, only the first one will be assessed.

**16. I need more help on how to use the portal in general**

For general information about the use of the portal, please refer to the World University Rankings portal guide, available in the data collection portal, or contact us at [interdisciplinary@timeshighereducation.com](mailto:interdisciplinary@timeshighereducation.com)

#### 5.5. RESEARCH INCOME QUERIES

**17. 'Research Income allocated to interdisciplinary research within applicable disciplines' - is this the same as 'Total Research income' in WUR?**

'Research income allocated to interdisciplinary research within applicable disciplines' is not the same as 'Research income' in WUR, it is a subset of 'Research income'.

Additional definitions include: The income your institution has received in 2023 specifically for interdisciplinary research within applicable disciplines purposes (in the currency specifically identified by that of your institution). For instance, it may be a grant funding that spans across two or more research council remit domains. There may be a lead council, but it should span at least two or more research council remit domains.

**18. Can you explain or provide some examples on research councils and research council remits?**

The term 'research council' is a UK-specific example and is only meant as an indicator of one way that interdisciplinary research can be identified. A more general case would be where there are different funding bodies for different disciplines (however those might be named) - in that case it would be clear that a piece of research that was co-funded between funding bodies was interdisciplinary. However, this may not be the only way that interdisciplinary research is funded.

There could be funding that is tied to a specific research project, or the funding could be more generally allocated to a team (so on an ongoing basis).

**19. Can we include the research income received from collaborative interdisciplinary projects that were undertaken in other institutions?**

For collaborations with other institutions, please only include the portion of financial resource that comes from your own institution.

**20. When entering WUR data, can we decide/choose which subject category to include interdisciplinary income in (as they are cross-over subject research) as long as we don't duplicate the data?**

Since this is by definition interdisciplinary research it's likely to span many subjects. As such, you can split the income received across the relevant subjects or choose to include in one subject that is most appropriate for the research.

**21. Can the income data we submit for the interdisciplinary research income fields duplicate the income data which we submit for each WUR subject category?**

Interdisciplinary research within applicable disciplines income is a subset of research income overall, and part of the interdisciplinary research income can be a part of research income in the subject category.

## 5.6. JOB ADVERTS QUERIES

- 22. Last year you requested information about job adverts mentioning interdisciplinary research, but I cannot see the question in this year's submission.**

The number of job adverts was a candidate metric for the rankings but was not chosen for the final ranking after data validation, and it will not be requested this year.

## 5.7. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT QUERIES

- 23. Can you define administrative support in more detail? What kind of other support are you expecting? (Other than project manager supporting?)**

We have heard from academics that interdisciplinary research can often mean interacting with multiple departments and therefore increased administration overheads. We are trying to determine if universities are able to provide additional support to account for this. This could also include support in grant applications, access to appropriate facilities - we are trying to be open about this.

## 5.8. MEASURES OF SUCCESS QUERIES

- 24. Can you define 'measures of success' in the context of interdisciplinary research?**  
**The University values all of *THE*'s metrics, and nearly all of them have been discussed in the evaluation of a research project to provide a scope for whether it is successful.**

Here we are looking to see if universities have their own measures of success that directly explore interdisciplinary success within applicable disciplines. These could be (for example) around successful project funding bids that involve interdisciplinary teams.

## 5.9. PHYSICAL FACILITIES QUERIES

- 25. What kind of information or data or evidence is *THE* expecting for this question?**  
**Any other research facilities or do we need to provide a list of equipment as evidence?**

Facilities could be on or off campus. Facilities don't have to be on their main campus, as long as they are used by the university (for example they may rent laboratory space elsewhere).

Evidence could be a website describing the facilities, for example.

#### **5.10. CAREER PROMOTION SYSTEM QUERIES**

##### **26. "A career promotion or tenure system specifically dedicated to reward interdisciplinary research": Does it mean that candidates can get benefits when they have participated in interdisciplinary research?**

Yes, benefits in a way, but basically here we're trying to see if there are incentives in the workplace that reward interdisciplinary research. Another comment we have had back from academics – and this is especially common in tenure track countries such as the USA – is that the need to chase tenure typically pushes academics into single discipline research. We are looking to see how many universities take active steps to avoid this in their career promotion and tenure decisions. Examples of evidence can include Human Resources policies mentioning these benefits.

#### **5.11. SURVEY DATA**

##### **27. Who is the survey audience?**

The questionnaire targets academic and research staff working in science disciplines. It is about interdisciplinarity however it is not exclusively addressed to those engaged in interdisciplinary research, and it can therefore be circulated among staff doing monodisciplinary research, as we want to understand how all research staff working in relevant disciplines feel towards interdisciplinary research.

##### **28. What format does the survey take?**

The survey targets experienced, published scholars who offer their views on excellence in interdisciplinary research. We ask researchers' view in their own research and their opinion on their institutions' interdisciplinary research.

##### **29. Can academics fill in multiple surveys?**

No, each academic is expected to fill in the survey only once.

### **30. Can the survey be forwarded to my colleagues?**

Yes, the survey can be forwarded to relevant colleagues (i.e., academic and research staff working in applicable disciplines, not necessarily doing interdisciplinary research)

### **31. When does the survey take place?**

The ISR Survey will open in February 2025. Kindly request your staff to participate in this survey. More information will be shared with registered contacts closer to the survey opening date.

### **32. What is required from universities?**

We kindly request you to distribute this survey across your staff who would be relevant to interdisciplinary research. The survey typically should not take more than 10 minutes to complete and is available in twelve languages.

Emails will be sent from [interdisciplinary@timeshighereducationsurvey.com](mailto:interdisciplinary@timeshighereducationsurvey.com) and [interdisciplinary@timeshighereducationdata.com](mailto:interdisciplinary@timeshighereducationdata.com). We highly recommend you to inform your IT department to add those email addresses and IP's to your "safe sender" and/or "whitelists".

### **33. What about GDPR?**

We have worked with our Data Protection Officer to ensure that all personal data is compliant with GDPR. We have conducted a Data Privacy Impact Assessment, and our legal basis for processing is based upon Legitimate Interest; we have successfully conducted a Legitimate Interest Assessment (LIA). Our privacy notice includes information to reflect this. You can find our full privacy policy here: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/privacy-policy?webSyncID=6f96fc2a-a106-48a6-88b1-0e6a6868adc0&sessionGUID=7588dc4b-98a0-4ee7-b03e-aff59f0fa029>

## **5.12. BIBLIOMETRIC DATA**

### **34. Where do you source your bibliometric data?**

The bibliometric data is provided by Elsevier, a third-party data supplier. Each publication is tagged with a set of subjects and relevance scores. Based on this information our data

scientists calculate an ISR score for each publication. A publication is considered ISR if its ISR score is in the top 25% percentile of all eligible publications. Please see the ISR 2025 methodology for guidance.

### **35. I still need more help – what do I do?**

Guidelines and documentation are built into the collection tool pages and available in 12 languages. You can also consult definitions by hovering your cursor over the data fields. Should you have any further questions, please contact the data collection team by email at [interdisciplinary@timeshighereducation.com](mailto:interdisciplinary@timeshighereducation.com) or speak to a member of the team on +44 (0)20 3963 4700 during UK office hours.