

UAI JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES AND LITERATURE (UAIJEHL)



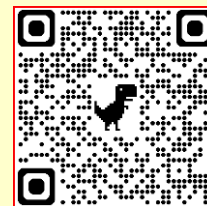
Abbreviated Key Title: UAI J Eud Huma Lit.

ISSN: 3049-3196 (Online)

Journal Homepage: <https://uapublisher.com/uaijehl-2/>

Volume- 1 Issue- 5 (September-October) 2025

Frequency: Bimonthly



COMPARING THE RANKING SYSTEMS FOR INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Tsetsegsaikhan M

Graduate University of Mongolia

Corresponding Author: Tsetsegsaikhan M

Graduate University of Mongolia

ABSTRACT

The countries around the world are pathing to create the basic conditions for higher education institutions to train skilled professionals to meet the needs and requirements of the labor market by developing a framework for quality assurance in higher education. The development and implementation of this framework was initiated by countries such as New Zealand, Australia and Scotland, and today the work of maturing of the qualification framework is being actively developed in about 160 countries around the world. The scope of specialization and the ranking of higher education institutions are becoming the basic condition to solve the following problems, such as in many parts of the world, the qualifications of citizens do not meet the knowledge and skills requirements of the workplace, the educational policy of educational institutions does not meet the needs of employers, and non-formal education is not related to the formal education system. In our country, the urgent issue of higher education is to form national ranking system for higher educational institutions.

KEY WORDS: Higher education quality, Accreditation, University ranking, Education quality assessment, Influencing factors

1. Introduction

The quality of higher education is a fundamental determinant of individual and societal outcomes, contributing to sustainable socio-economic development and overall well-being. Macro-level objectives in the education sector are realized through the micro-level performance of educational institutions, particularly their teaching, research, and innovation activities. Higher education institutions (HEIs) function as complex social organizations combining instruction, research, and innovation, making multidimensional quality assessment essential.

The assessment of higher education quality extends beyond graduate

competencies and labor market relevance. It encompasses institutional governance, accreditation, research output, faculty capacity, and international recognition. The evaluation of university quality, therefore, requires a holistic approach incorporating both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Since 1983, U.S. News & World Report has published annual rankings of U.S. colleges, expanding by 2003 to include universities and research institutes globally. The growing demand for internationally recognized, high-quality education has increased the need for transparent, standardized ranking systems, which have now

become integral to global higher education governance.

2. Research Methodology

This study employs a comparative qualitative approach, analyzing the methodologies and evaluation criteria of prominent international ranking systems. Data sources include official publications and methodological reports from Times Higher Education, ARWU, QS, U.S. News & World Report, and supplementary literature on higher education quality assessment.

Key dimensions considered in this analysis include:

- Teaching quality and learning outcomes
- Research performance and impact
- Academic reputation and employer perception
- Internationalization and global engagement
- Innovation and knowledge transfer

Comparative tables and descriptive analysis are used to highlight differences, similarities, and best practices, with a focus on their applicability to the Mongolian higher education context.

3. Comparative Analysis of Global University Ranking Systems

3.1 Times Higher Education (THE)

Founded in the United Kingdom, THE publishes annual global university rankings using a comprehensive methodology incorporating both quantitative data and reputation surveys. The assessment criteria include:

- **Teaching quality (30%):** reputation, income, student-to-staff ratio, degree completion rates, and Ph.D. supervision
- **Research (30%):** volume, income, and reputation
- **Citations (30%):** research influence
- **International outlook (7.5%):** ratio of international students and faculty, international collaboration
- **Industry income (2.5%):** knowledge transfer and innovation

3.2 Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)

Known as the Shanghai Ranking, ARWU emphasizes research output and quality. Indicators include:

- Alumni and staff Nobel Prizes or Fields Medals (10–20%)
- Highly cited researchers (20%)

- Publications in top journals (20%)
- Overall academic performance per faculty (10%)

3.3 QS World University Rankings

QS evaluates universities using six indicators:

- Academic reputation (40%)
- Employer reputation (10%)
- Faculty-to-student ratio (20%)
- Citations per faculty (20%)
- International faculty ratio (5%) and student ratio (5%)

QS rankings also classify universities by subject areas, covering fields such as Engineering, Medicine, Arts, and Humanities.

3.4 U.S. News & World Report

This system focuses on U.S. institutions while providing global university rankings. Its evaluation combines:

- Academic reputation and research performance (50%)
- Faculty/student metrics, research influence, and international collaboration (40%)
- Library resources and scholarly materials (10%)

4. Implications for Mongolia

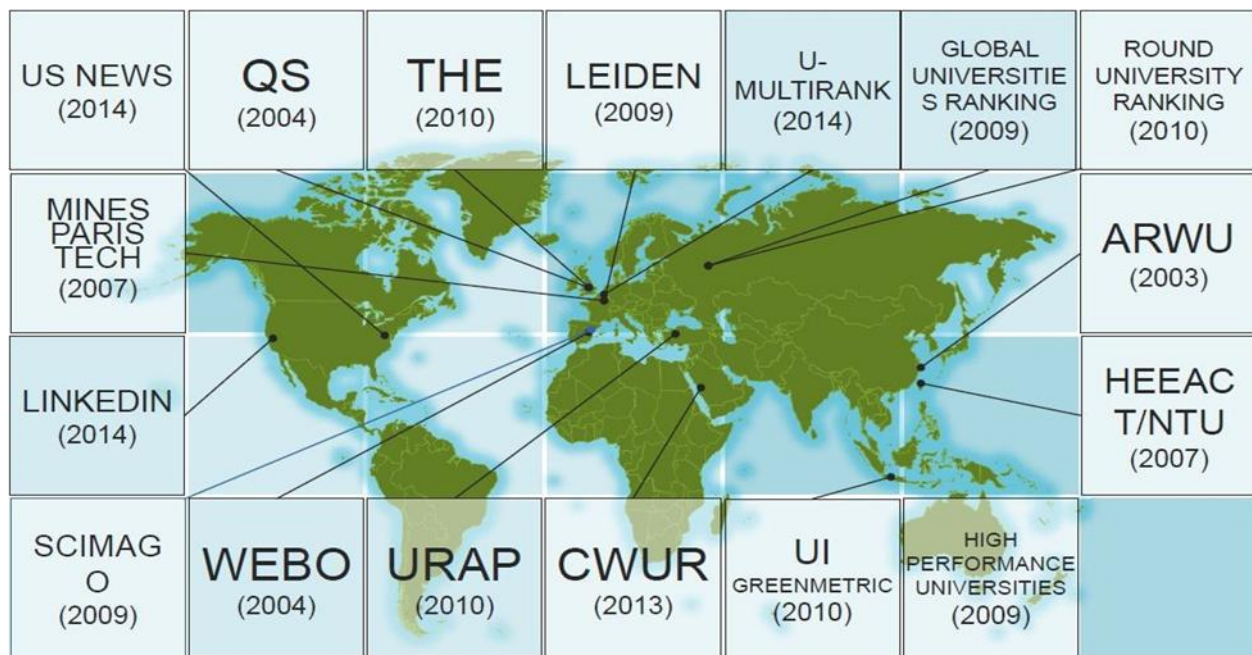
In Mongolia, establishing a national ranking framework is essential for improving the quality and competitiveness of HEIs. Government policies, such as the 2015 “Education Policy” and the 2016 Higher Education Law amendments, emphasize participation in international rankings and accreditation standards. These initiatives aim to position Mongolian universities among Asia’s top 100 institutions.

Challenges include:

- Lack of unified strategic planning across universities
- Limited capacity to meet international ranking criteria
- Need for integration of domestic accreditation and international evaluation systems

Opportunities involve leveraging international ranking methodologies to enhance institutional quality, research output, and faculty development, aligning higher education with global standards.

5. Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Major Global University Ranking Systems and Their Usage by Country

Higher education institutions around the world have often relied on third-party organizations to determine their rankings and rankings. As a result, the ranking of universities has become international and is regularly organized by reputable international organizations and media. University ranking systems have been established and are operating successfully in many countries, the most common and reputable systems are “Times Higher Education”, “Quacquarelli Symonds”, “U.S. News & World Report”, and “Shanghai ARWU”. Let’s take a closer look at these systems:

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Selected Global University Ranking Methodologies

1. “THE” – “Times Higher Education” “Times Higher Education”

This system has been ranking higher education institutions (HEIs) internationally since 2004, and between 2004 and 2009, it ranked HEIs in collaboration with the “QS” ranking system. The system, which originated in England, has been working with “Thomson Reuters” since 2010 to create a new ranking system. In developing the ranking system, a 250-page questionnaire was used to compare more than 50 influential people from all over the world and more than 300 internet surveys using standard data comparison “Z-scores”. According to the new methodology, HEIs are ranked according to the following five general criteria.

2. “ARWU/Academic Ranking of World Universities” – “World University Academic Ranking”

The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), also known as the Shanghai Ranking, is a publication published by the Shanghai Ranking Council of China. The ranking of world universities, compiled by Shanghai University of Technology in China since 2003, is based on a variety of indicators and the opinions of a board of international consultants.

3. “QS World University Ranking” – “QS World University Ranking”

“QS” is a leading company in higher education information and research, founded in 1990. It aims to provide reliable information and opinions from independent, professional experts on an

international scale for consumers and policymakers, and works with more than 2,000 top higher education institutions in 50 countries and more than 12,000 employers. The QS system is a ranking system developed by the British company Quacquarelli Symonds, which ranks the world's top 500 universities and regions such as Asia, Africa, and Europe. It ranks 300 Asian universities based on 6 criteria. More than 800 universities in the world are evaluated in 6 main categories of performance, and the QS ranking has been established annually since 2004. It was originally created to rank universities internationally, and in recent years, this system has been widely used in many countries.

4. “U.S. News & World Report” – “U.S. News and World Report”

“U.S. News and World Report” is a major American publishing company that has been publishing and reporting the U.S. News and World Report rankings for many years. Based on this, this organization currently ranks the best in the United States in areas such as education, medicine, jobs, tourism, and cars. Rankings of universities, as well as rankings of constituent schools and individual programs, provide valuable information for students seeking to study at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels.

Compared to the above ranking systems, the “THE” methodology uses real data from the institution and other organizations, as well as the results of international online surveys on the reputation of the institution’s teaching and research. The data obtained from such reputation surveys account for 32.5% of the total score for a given institution. However, the indicators assessing the university’s research and innovation activities account for 67.5% of the total indicators and 70% of the indicator’s importance. Also, in the ARWU methodology, 4 out of 5 indicators assess research and innovation performance and account for 90% of the indicator’s importance. In addition, there are 2 systems that evaluate the performance of research universities and university research activities (Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities, High Impact Universities; Research Performance Index), and the number of published articles and the number of citations are important indicators in them. The QS system is generally very similar to the Times Higher Education system, and its online reputation survey, which is conducted internationally,

involves more than 40,000 people working in the higher education sector and more than 10,000 employers in its reputation survey among employers every year. The data from this survey makes up about 50% of the university ranking. However, since 2012, it has started to establish a rating for professional programs for university applicants, and includes 29 specialties belonging to 5 categories: engineering, medicine, natural sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities. For example, Art and design, Performing arts, Engineering and technology, etc. The U.S. News and World Report system uses the 3 main criteria shown in the table above to determine the best universities in the United States. Like other systems, it uses the results of online surveys to rank universities, but this has a relatively small percentage of 20%. The other indicators are objective and independent of the institution, so this ranking is considered quite reliable. Unfortunately, the number of universities participating in this system is limited, which is due to the limited scope and effectiveness of the research, and the fact that scientific works are not always included in the US library registration system.

There are quite a few university ranking systems around the world, but they have not been able to create a unified system and methodology. These systems differ in their criteria, weighting of indicators, and methods of collecting and combining indicator data. Universities are also ranked using the G-factor indicator. When calculating this indicator, the number of links to the university's website from other schools is evaluated using the Google search engine, which is an external evaluation method to determine the importance and quality of the information that the university disseminates to the community.

The issue of ranking or rating for higher education institutions in Mongolia is becoming increasingly important today. This can be explained by the following two points.

First, Article 7.13 of the "State Policy on Education" approved by Resolution No. 12 of the Mongolian Parliament in 2015 states that by 2024, at least four universities in Mongolia will be among the top 100 universities in Asia. In this regard, universities should strive to participate in the ranking of Asian universities.

Second, in April 2016, the Parliament approved the Law on Amendments to the Law on Higher Education. One of the new provisions in this law is to expand the powers and duties of the accreditation body and transfer some of the functions previously performed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to the National Accreditation Agency. In 2015, the National Accreditation Agency revised its accreditation criteria and standards, including considering the position of the institution in national and international rankings and rankings as an indicator of the institution's performance. In such a situation, both public and private universities need to participate in the ranking system to gain a certain position, thereby strengthening and advancing their position.

Third, the recommendations made by the Second National Conference on "Sustainable Development-Higher Education" include: i) Identify and approve criteria and methodologies for determining the quality of higher education institutions and implement the ranking; ii) Implement the development of a strategic plan for each university by 2018 in order to determine and improve the international ranking of universities by international quality organizations; and these are urgent issues in the higher education sector that need to be resolved in the near future.

In connection with the implementation of the above-mentioned state education policy, it is necessary to determine the current level of reputation and competitiveness of Mongolian universities, determine the potential resources for reaching the ranks of prestigious universities in Asia and the world, and create a unified methodology for universities themselves and external organizations to determine their ratings and rankings.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Higher education quality assessment is multidimensional, encompassing teaching, research, governance, internationalization, and faculty capacity. Mongolian universities should:

1. Develop a standardized national ranking framework consistent with international practices
2. Strategically engage in global ranking systems such as THE, QS, and ARWU
3. Enhance research output and international collaborations
4. Strengthen faculty qualifications and graduate employability

By adopting these measures, Mongolian HEIs can improve their global competitiveness, ensure the relevance of education, and contribute to sustainable national development.

References

1. Zayaa, M. (2016). *Evaluation methodology for organizational innovation capacity* (PhD dissertation). Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
2. Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports of Mongolia. (2018). *Sustainable development – Higher education* (Conference proceedings). Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
3. University Governance Advisory Group. (2016). *Recommendations on ranking and rating methodologies for Mongolian higher education institutions*. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
4. Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports of Mongolia. (2020). *Higher education policy planning 2016–2020*. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
5. Creative Production and Innovation Center. (2019). *Assessment of higher education institutional quality*. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
6. Times Higher Education. (n.d.). *World University Rankings methodology*. Retrieved from <https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings>
7. Shanghai Ranking. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.shanghairanking.com/>
8. High Impact Universities. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.highimpactuniversities.com/>
9. QS Top Universities. (n.d.). *QS World University Rankings methodology*. Retrieved from <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/qs-world-university-ranking-methodology>
10. U.S. News & World Report. (n.d.). *Ranking criteria and weights*. Retrieved from
11. <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/ranking-criteria-and-weights>