World University Rankings 2025
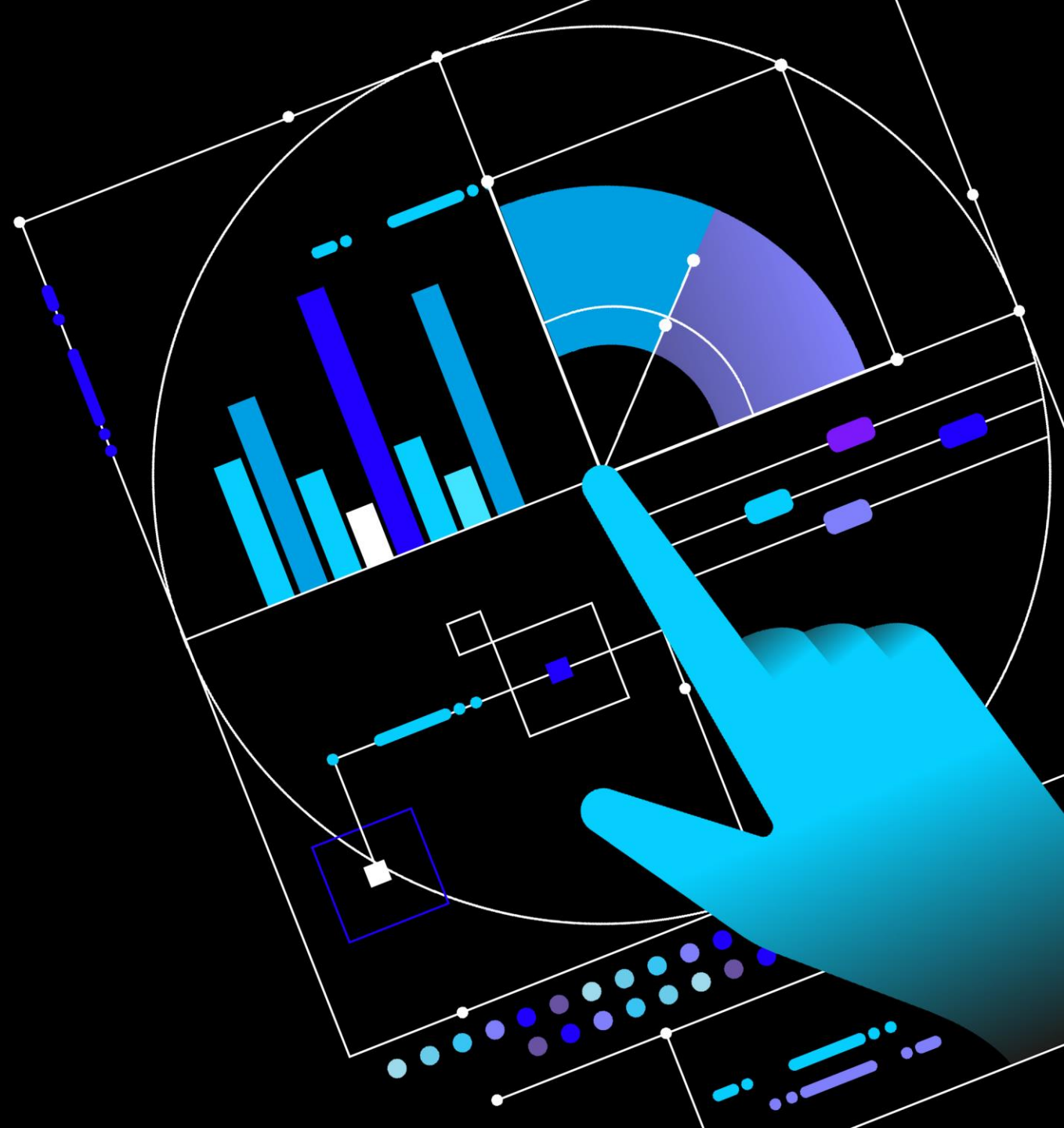
The 2025 World University Rankings Masterclass – North America

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WUR Product Owner
Times Higher Education

50+ Years of Insights

Empowering higher education by combining data and expertise within a global platform, THE helps universities deliver transformative impact for people, places and the planet.
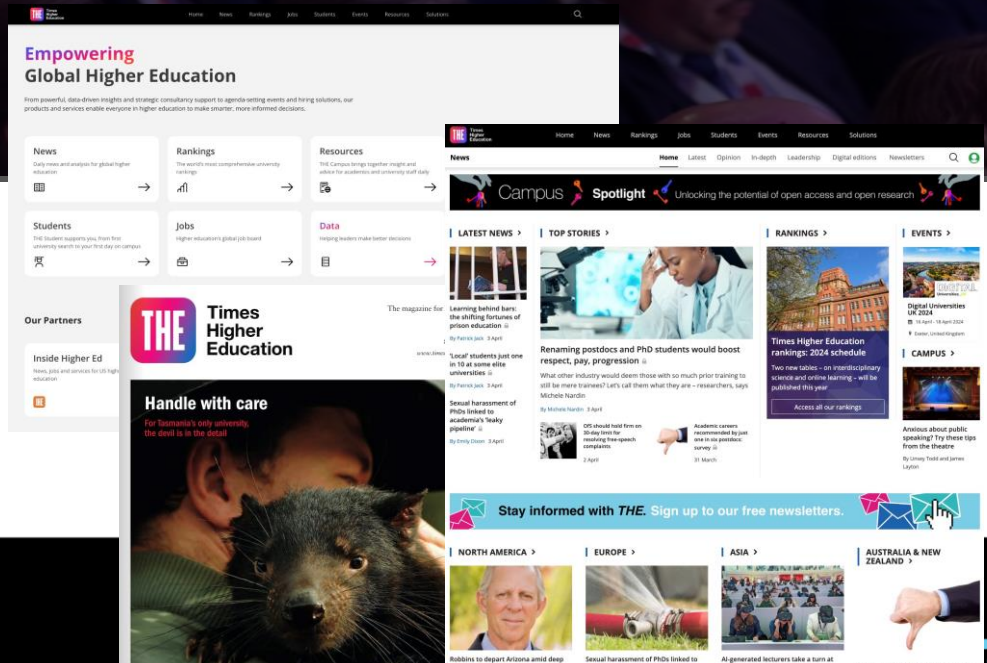
We connect the world's higher education community, facilitate the flow of ideas and talent, and help academics and students fulfil their potential.

We are proud to support universities, and believe that together we will build a better, more sustainable future.

1971

2024

Our Rankings

RESEARCH	IMPACT & SUSTAINABILITY

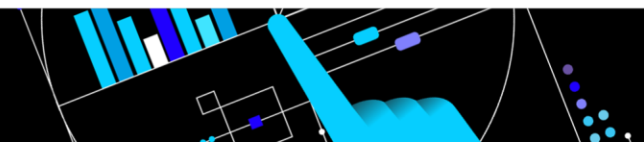**Focus:** research output, research quality, research collaboration, reputation + more

Participation rules: 1,000+ publications over 5 years, teach undergraduates across a range of subjects
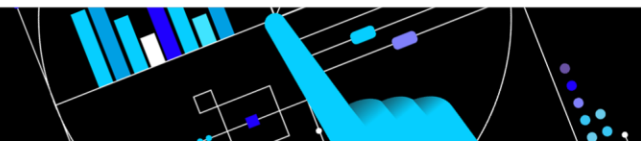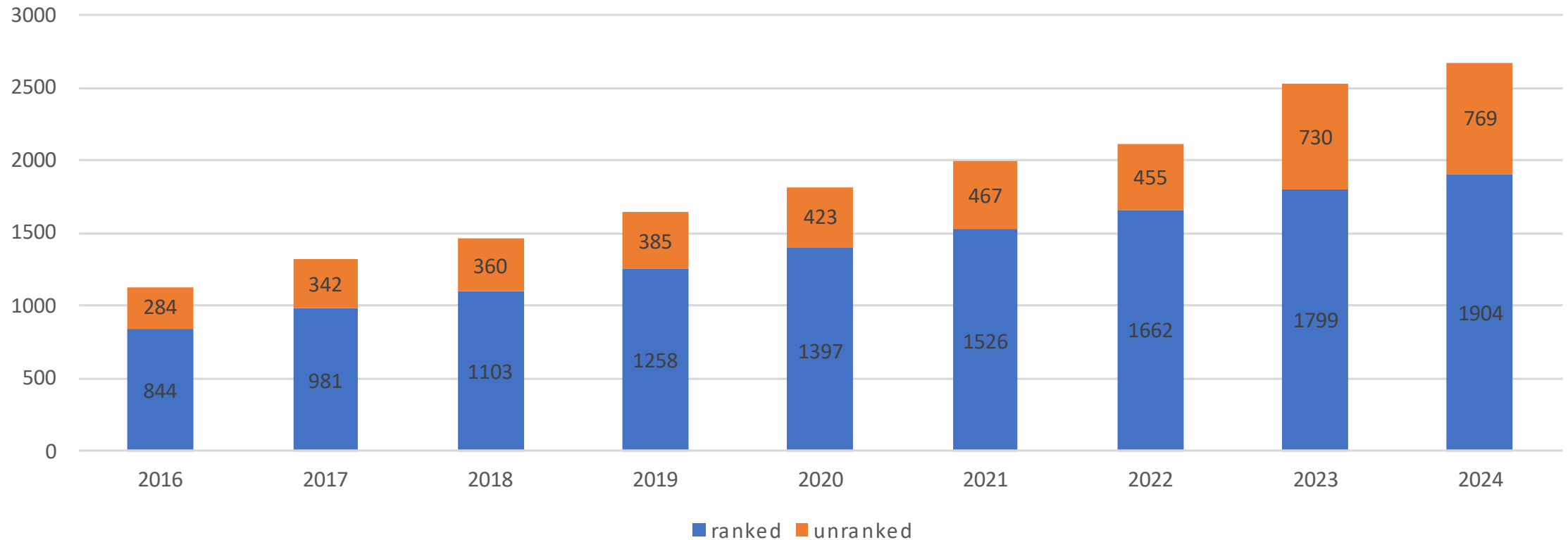
Focus: research, teaching, stewardship and outreach against the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Participation rules: all UG or PG higher education institutions

WUR 2024: 20th Anniversary of THE World University Rankings

Number of universities which submitted data to
THE World University Rankings

Year	ranked	unranked
2016	844	284
2017	981	342
2018	1103	360
2019	1258	385
2020	1397	423
2021	1526	467
2022	1662	455
2023	1799	730
2024	1904	769

■ ranked ■ unranked

THE World University Rankings 2025

2092 Ranked Universities

Africa moves up the rankings

Africa's representation is surging, as more institutions develop their research infrastructure, increase research productivity and seek to compete with the best in the world. Nigeria added six universities to the global rankings, taking its total to 21, while in the north, Egypt added seven to reach 35.

Seven countries make their debuts in the world rankings: Bahrain; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Mongolia; Paraguay; Rwanda; Syria and Uzbekistan, as their universities begin to compete in global research.

And, the two decades since the first ranking have not just witnessed the emergence of a much more diverse range of countries with universities represented among the growing global research elite – it has also seen a surge in performances that challenge the traditionally dominant Western nations.

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Oxford University keeps global top spot

The university has kept the top spot in the world for the ninth year in a row
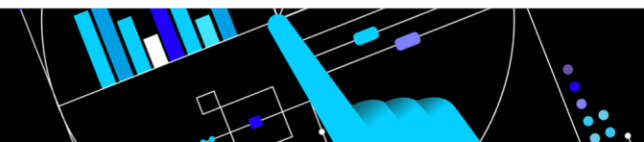
Emily Ford & PA News
BBC News

9 October 2024 · 19 Comments

The University of Oxford has kept top place in an international league table for a record-breaking ninth year in a row.

It's featured in the first position of the Times Higher Education (THE) world rankings.

THE World University Rankings

The world's biggest university ranking

Universities
The world's biggest university ranking

Universities submitted data	Number of countries represented
2,860	**133**

Bibliometrics
In partnership with **ELSEVIER**

Research papers	Citations
18m	**157m**

Universities Data
The world's largest data gathering exercise from universities

Data values	Data fields collected
472,694	**216**

Academic Survey
The world's largest academic survey

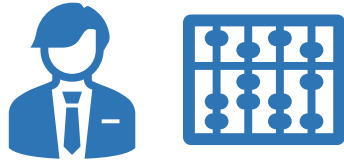| Respondents	Votes	Countries
93,440	**1,288,684**	**199**
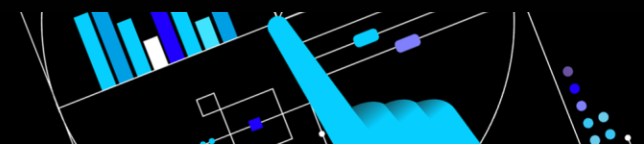
Methodology
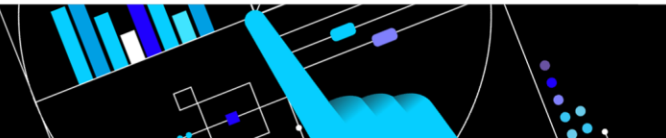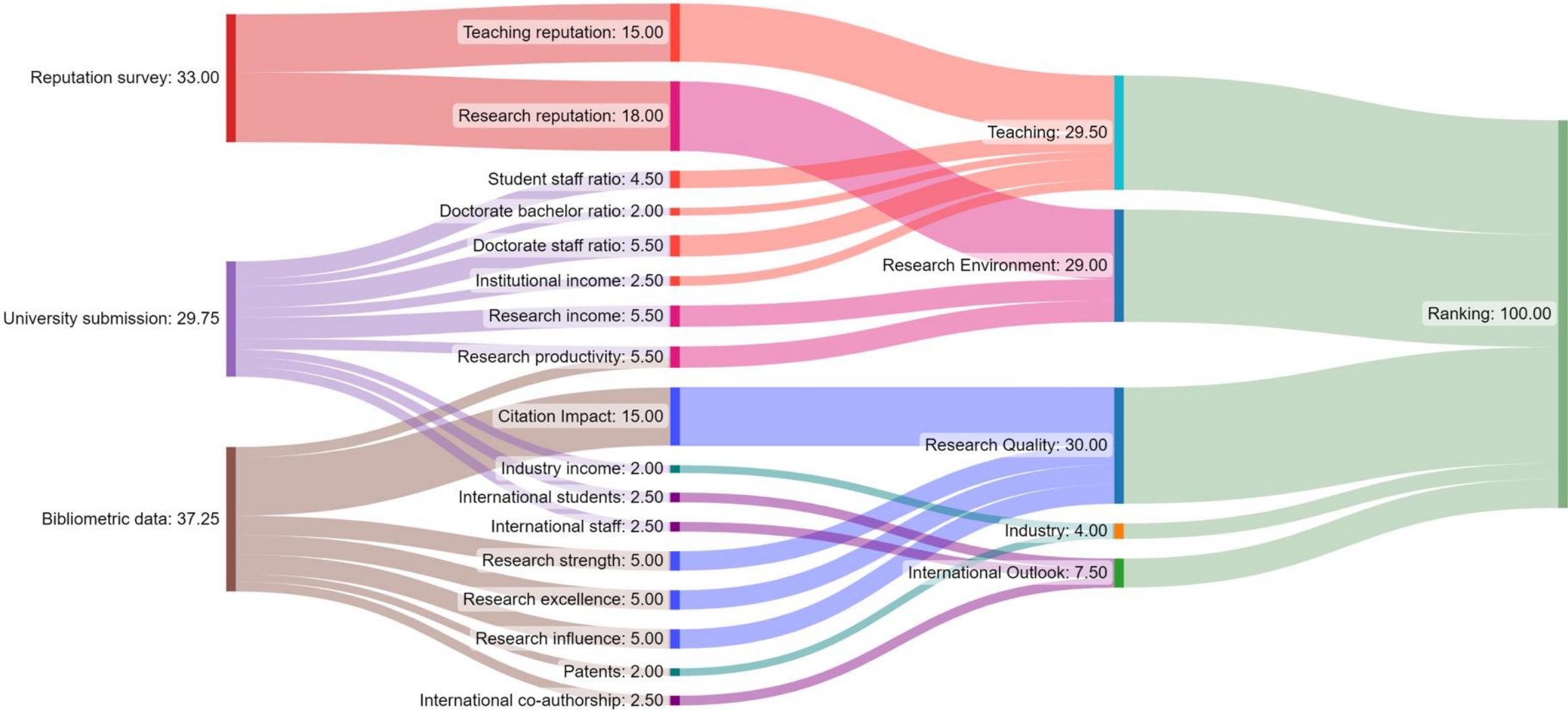
Data Source – University submissions

Nominated data provider

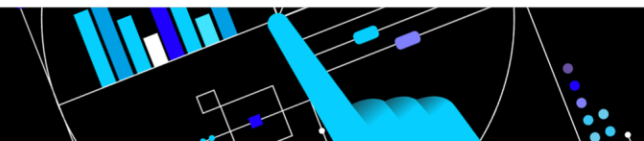Institutional scope
Institutional data

Publicly available data
Year on year
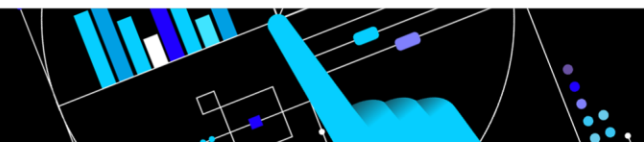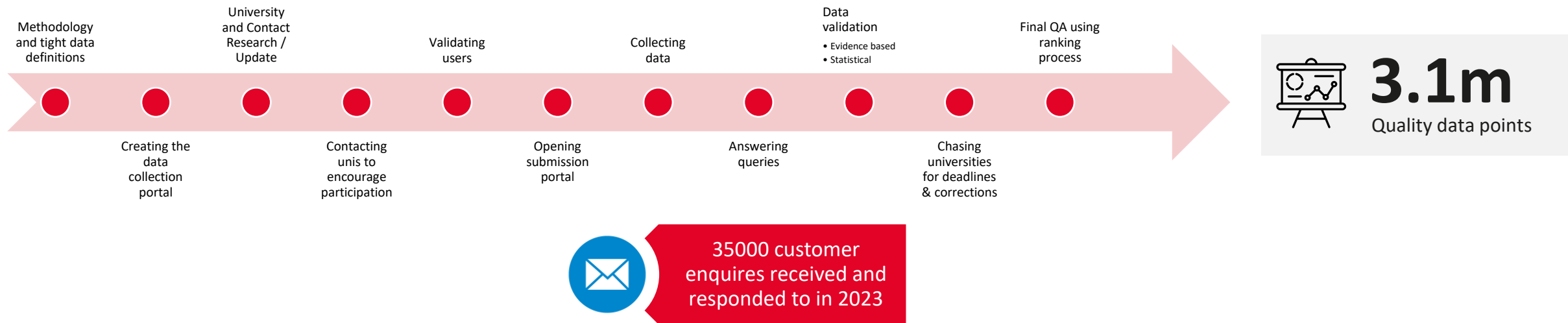Data submitted for other rankings
Similar institutions

profilerankings@timeshighereducation.com

Key building block: University performance data

- Data is collected direct from universities every year

- Data is collected for the entire university, and in 11 broad subject areas

- Data is validated using statistical techniques, and verified against over 70 external datasets – more are added each year

Methodology and tight data definitions

University and Contact Research / Update

Validating users

Collecting data

Data validation
• Evidence based
• Statistical

Final QA using ranking process

Creating the data collection portal

Contacting unis to encourage participation

Opening submission portal

Answering queries

Chasing universities for deadlines & corrections

3.1m
Quality data points

35000 customer enquires received and responded to in 2023

Financial fairness

- Domestic currency vs reporting currency

- Conversion to domestic currency

- Purchasing power parity
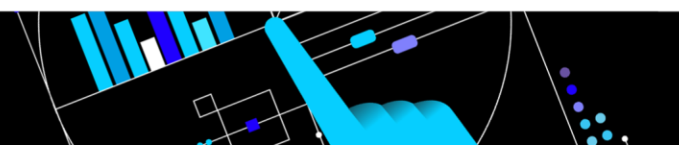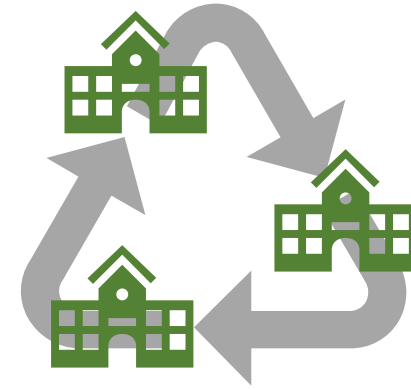
- Conversion to PPP USD

Example

- University A in Hong Kong reports 1,000,000 USD as their industry income

- Average USD:HKD exchange rate in 2022 is 7.83

  1,000,000 USD

  = 1,000,000 * 7.83 HKD

  = 7,830,000 HKD

- PPP rate for HKG in 2022 is 5.55

  7,830,000 HKD

  = 7,830,000 / 5.55 PPP USD

  = 1,410,810 PPP USD
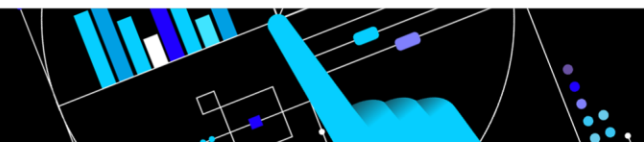
Fairness across subjects
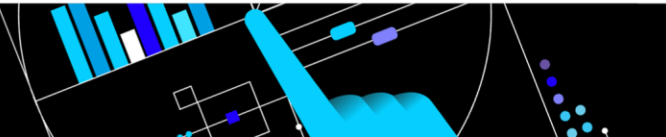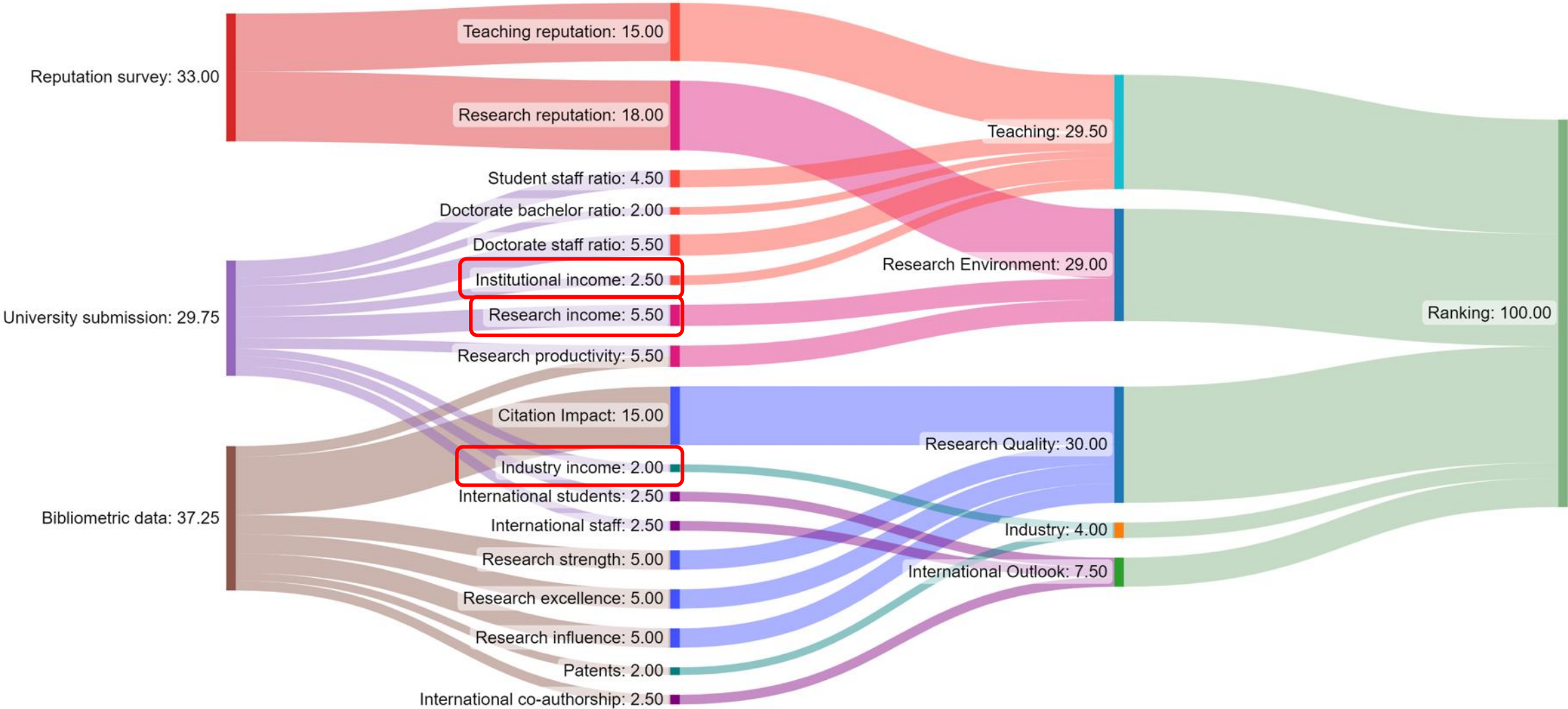
Data Source – Global Academic Reputation Survey

Methodology

- Invitees are selected by Times Higher Education. Strictly invitation-only. Universities cannot make nominations or supply contact lists, and individuals cannot nominate themselves for participation.

- Survey is sent to active academics.

- The results are benchmarked using an independent dataset. This is to ensure the ranking is representative of the global distribution of scholars, both by country and subject.

Methodology

- Scholars are questioned at the level of their specific subject discipline and are asked to name up to 15 universities that they believe are the best in research and teaching. Voting is unordered.

- We also ask about demographics and the rationale behind why people vote the way they do.

- Translated into 12 languages.

Academic survey details

|	1 Data sources	2 Initial participation rules	3 Selection method	4 Stratification	5 Quality checks	6 Number of responses
New approach	Contact details from *openly available research papers*	Have published at least once in last five years, *with one or more citations*	Random	1) National based on country, 2) Subject based on previous survey results*	National and *university level*	c 55,000
Previous approach	Contact details from research papers *within Scopus*	Have published at least once in last five years. *Not included in another Elsevier survey.*	Random	1) National based on country, 2) Subject based on previous survey results	Mainly national level only	c 10,000
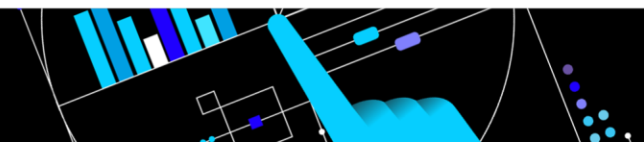
Effect of new approach

The new in-house survey attracts more than 5 times as many votes as the previous out-sourced survey, giving us far more representation, plus deeper insight as we know more about the respondents

	2021 (Elsevier)	2023 (In house)	2024 (In house)	Ratio 2021-2024
Respondents	10,963	38,796	55,037	500%+
Ranking votes	149,536	524,305	764,397	510%+
Countries participating	128	166	193	150%
Response rate	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%	

WUR 2025 will utilise reputation survey results from 2023 and 2024 surveys, utilising more than 5.2 times as many votes in the reputation metrics compared to WUR 2022
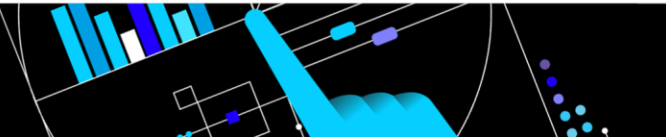
Participants are experienced academics
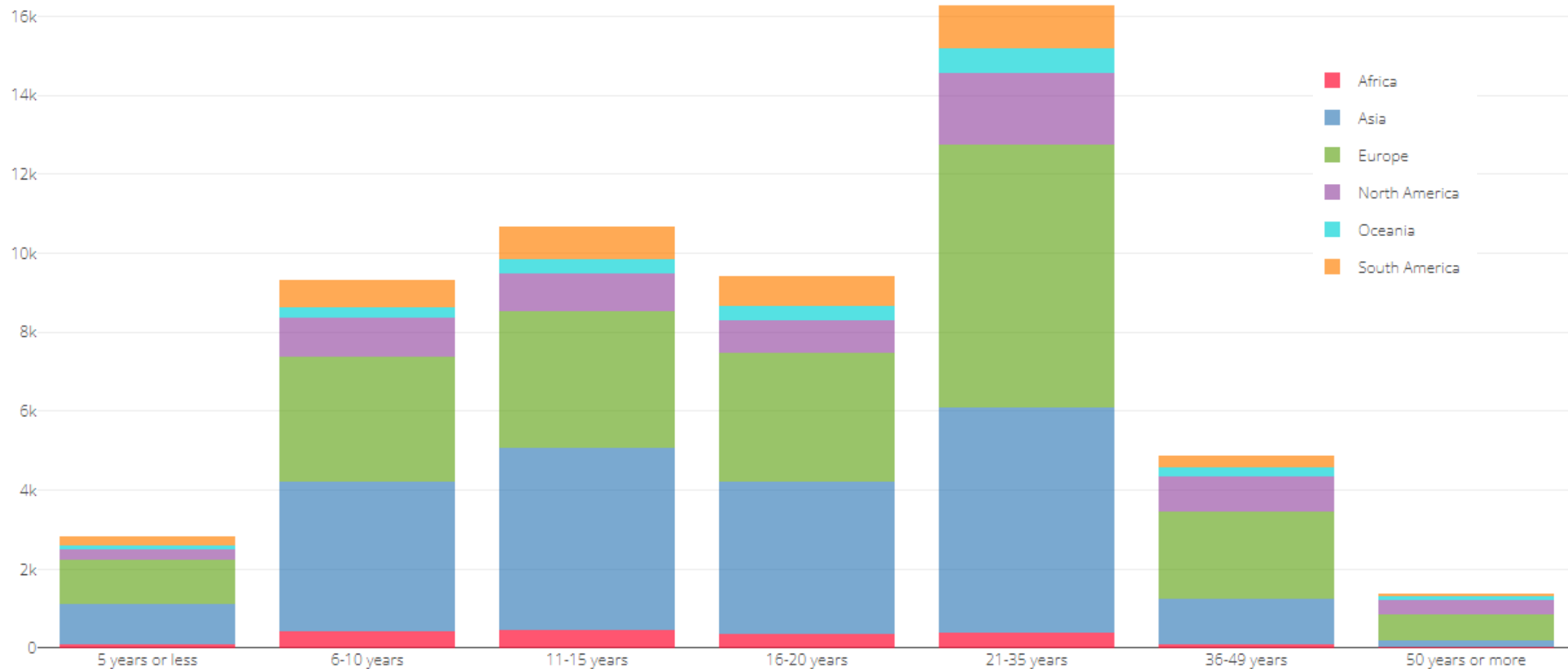
Changes to reputation

Self-voting is not wrong, unless it is abused

- Self-votes are now limited to a maximum of 10% of an institution's votes

- Only a small number of institutions are affected

Voting distribution

- Where votes come from a small range of institutions it may be an indicator of inappropriate behaviour

- We are now limiting the ratio of votes per institution to 12:1

- Less than 15 institutions are affected

Country distribution

- The current dataset of national researcher numbers is being discontinued

- Need to find a new stratification approach
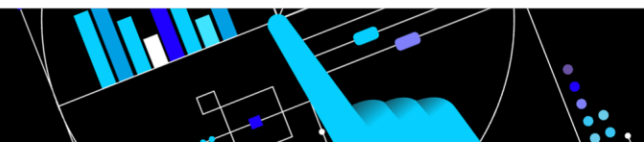
Pairwise comparison

Pairwise comparison

- The existing survey allows participants to select any university that comes to mind.

- We can also present specific institutions to respondents and ask them to pick their preference. This pairwise comparison creates an ordered list of universities.

- This approach can help move voters away from the super-brands and get them to consider those further down the ranking.
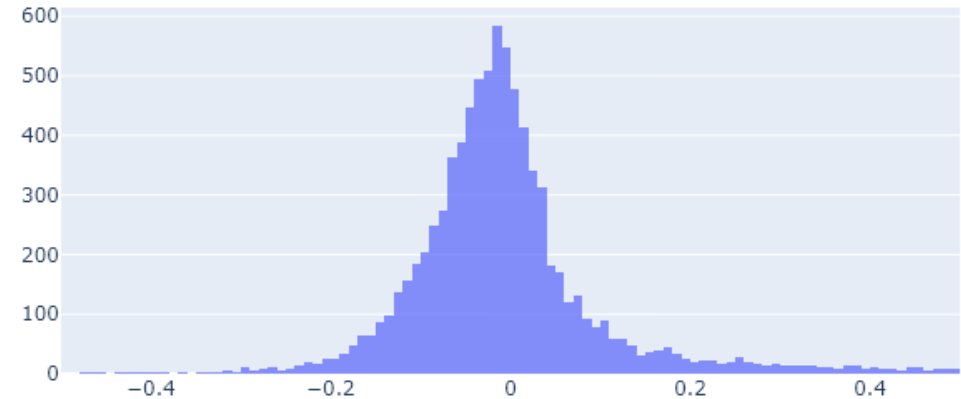
More universities lie in the centre ground with this approach

Pairwise comparison parameters - research
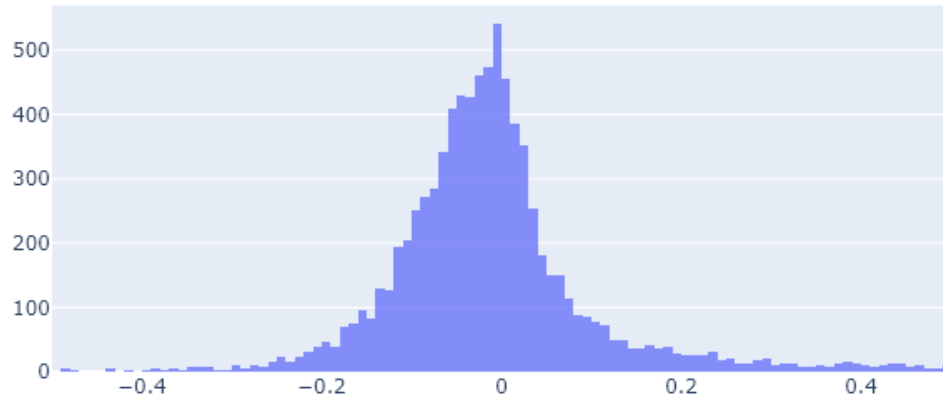
Pairwise comparison parameters - teaching

Voter diversity

When discussing reputation, the current ranking scores universities on the number of votes they receive.

But if two universities have similar vote counts, how could we differentiate between them?

In a global ranking, we might argue that a university with votes coming from many subjects and territories has a stronger brand than one that sources its votes from a narrow pool of respondents.
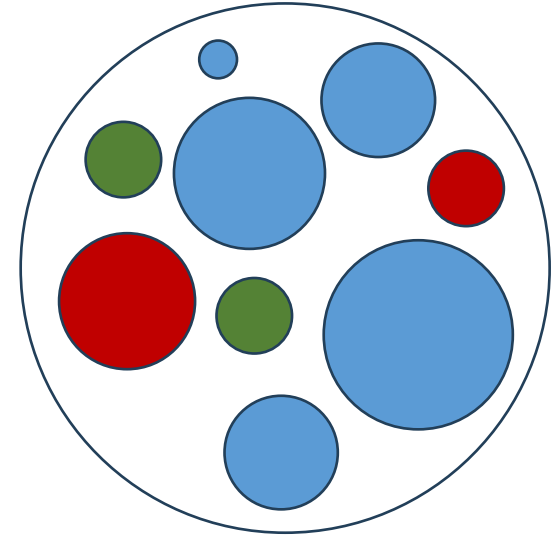
Entropy measures how much diversity a dataset has
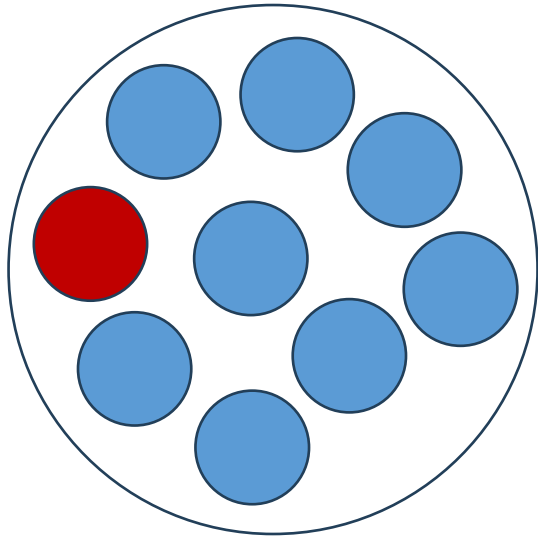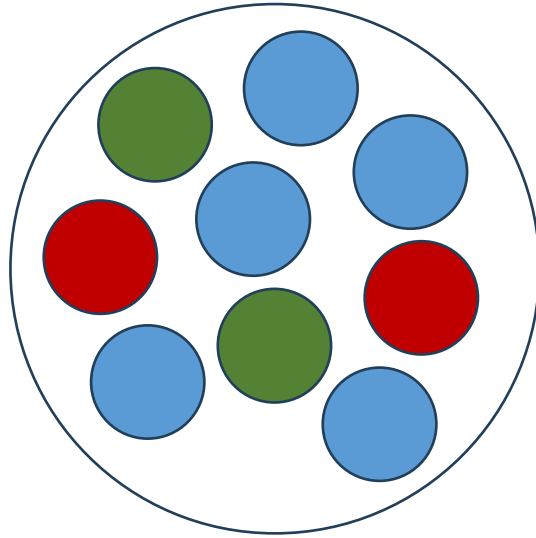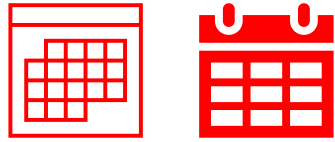

A   B   C

This method can be used to reward universities that have a brand that ranges across different disciplines and territories.

It is the diversity of respondents that count, not the number of votes.

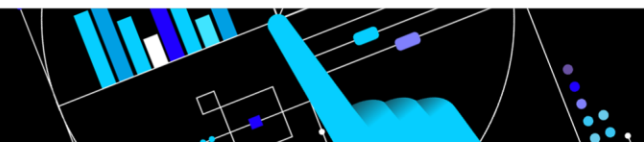# Data Source – Bibliometric data

2019-2023

Journal papers, conference proceedings, books, book chapters, reviews

Discontinued journals

Patent offices increased from 5 to 103 (of which 43 have valid data)

Partnership with Elsevier

THE and Elsevier have recently renewed their partnership agreement.

THE will now be calculating bibliometric measures directly from the source data, with support from Elsevier.

Both companies will share expertise, experience and data to support the sector.

Key building block: Bibliometrics
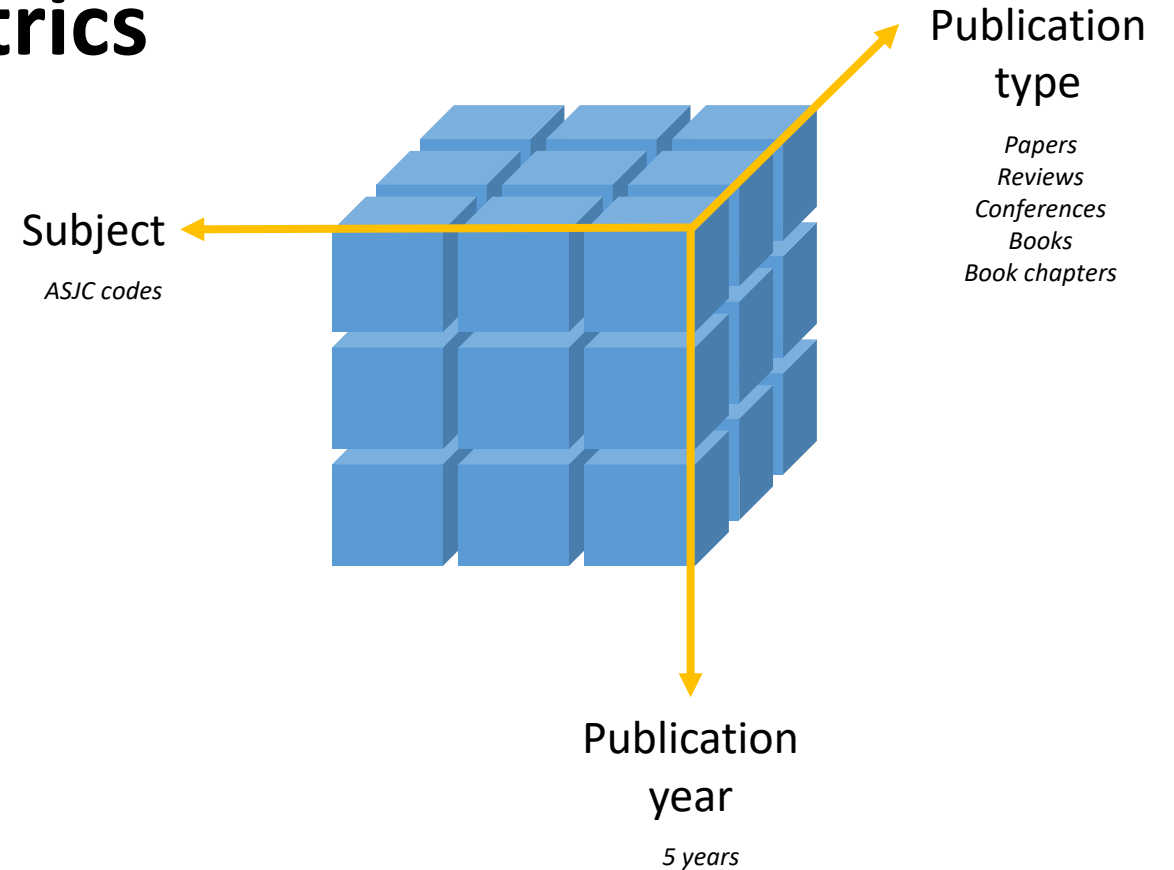
Data comes from Elsevier's Scopus dataset

A fundamental measure is Field Weighted Citation Impact.

We want to calculate the average number of citations that a piece of research from an institution receives

We normalise by

- Year
- Type of publication
- Subject

Within each cell we compare a paper to the average

Subject

ASJC codes

Publication type

Papers
Reviews
Conferences
Books
Book chapters

Publication year

5 years

Let's say I published a journal article in 2019 on artificial intelligence, and it received 6 citations so far…

…and the average number of citations received by publications of the same type, same year and same subject is 2…

…then the FWCI of this publication is 6/2 = 3

Research Quality Metrics

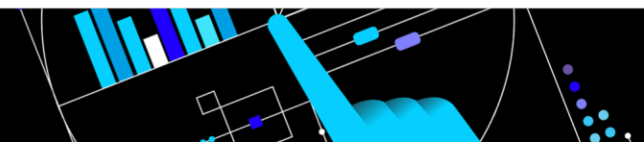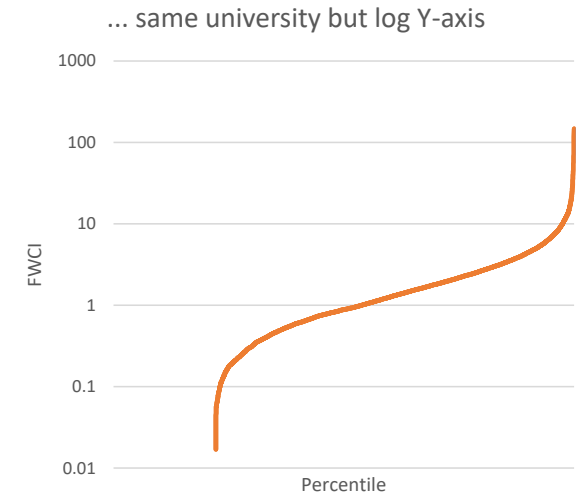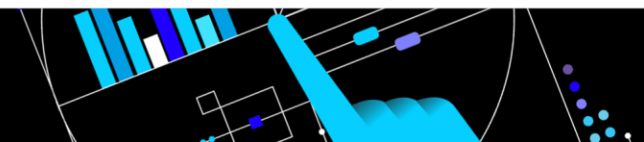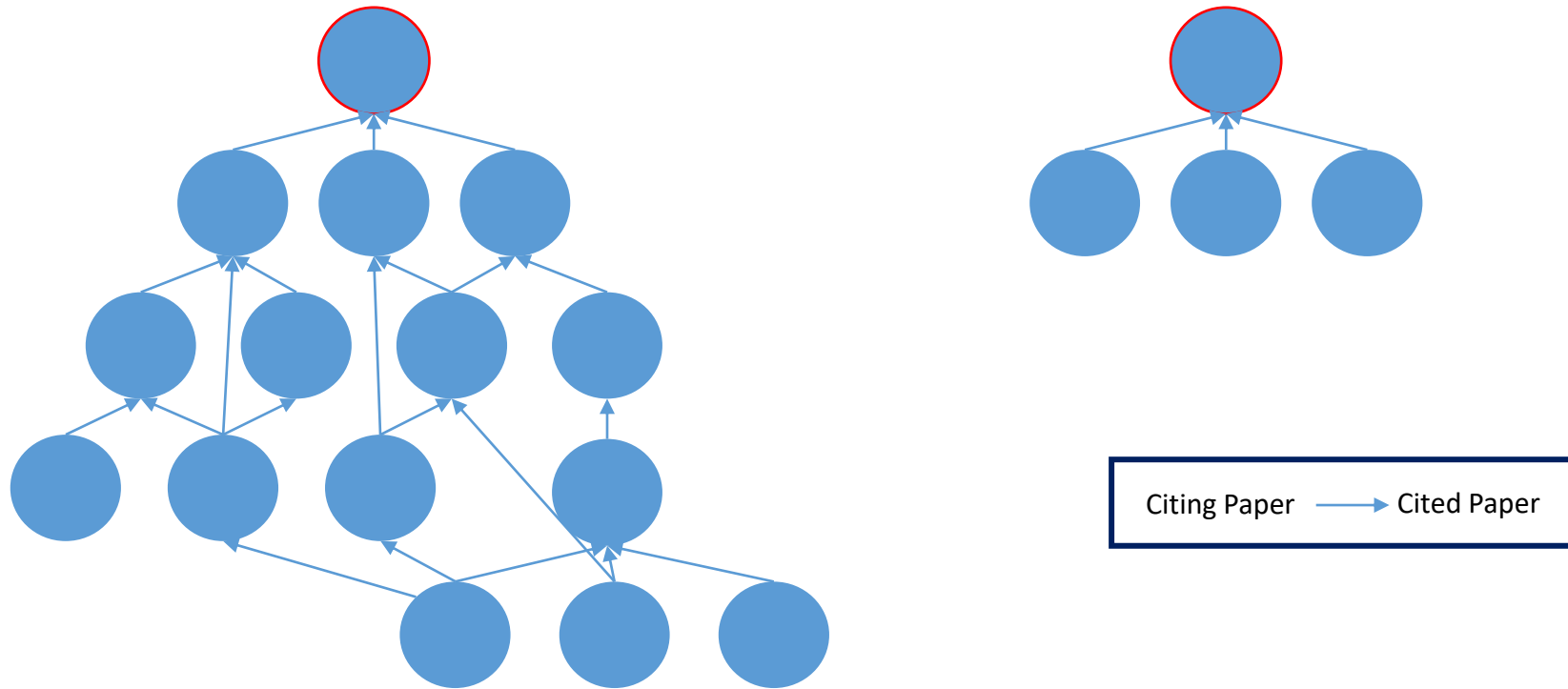| Citation Impact | • Mean FWCI of an institution's research ouput |
Research Strength	• 75th percentile FWCI of an institution's research output
Research Excellence	• Number of papers in top 10% by FWCI
Research Influence	• Network of citations rather than just one level of citation

... same university but log Y-axis

Research Influence - Papers

Taking a broader look at how citations interlink gives us deeper insight into the value of research

Citing Paper ⟶ Cited Paper

Research Quality in the World University Rankings

- Mean FWCI of an institution's output

- 75th percentile FWCI of an institution's output

Citation

Research Strength

Research Influence

Research Excellence

- Essentially a popularity contest for papers

- Number of papers in top 10% by FWCI
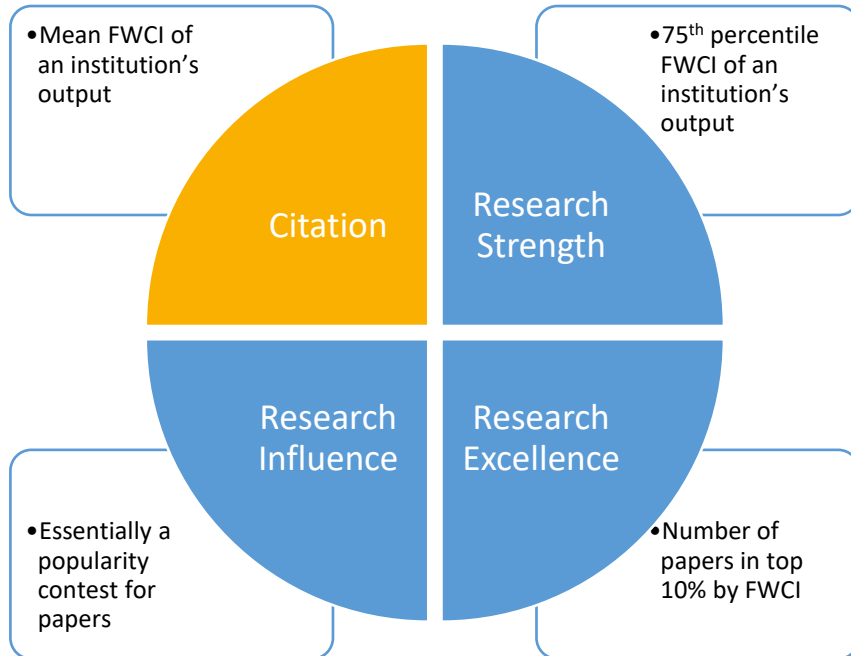
WUR 2025 Research Quality Top 10

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Stanford University
- Harvard University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- University of California, Berkeley
- Vita-Salute San Raffaele University
- Princeton University
- University of Oxford
- Imperial College London
- Humanitas University
- UCL
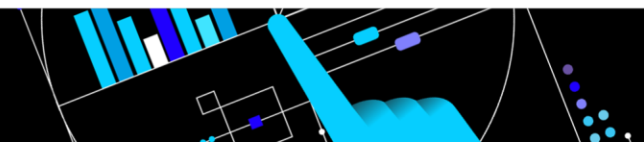
Effect on participation rules

Using a basket of bibliometric measures makes the assessment of quality more stable and robust.

We expect that this will enable us to reduce the number of papers required for participation in the World University Rankings

- Initial reduction in the number of papers per year (maintaining an overall requirement)

- Possible reduction in the overall number of papers required

- Ability to build more sophisticated approaches accounting for subject balance
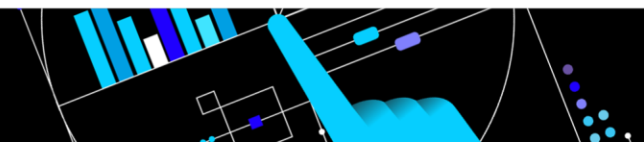
Industry: Patents

- The extent to which universities are supporting their national economies through technology transfer is an area that deserves greater recognition. We will be introducing an additional measure.

- Directly measures research output, specifically how much an institution's research is cited by patents. This is similar to one that we already use within the THE Impact Rankings (in SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure).

- This measure is subject weighted to avoid penalising universities producing research in fields low in patents.

- This is a count of patents, normalised by staff numbers.
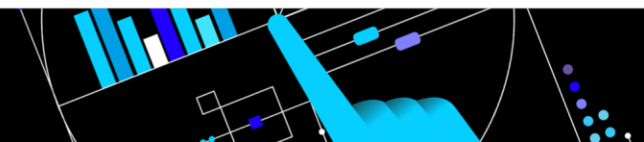
Subject weighting worked example

## Non subject weighted metric – Doctorate undergrad ratio

	Overall
Portal Data	
Doctorates Awarded	713
Undergrad Awarded	3562
Ratio	0.20
Statistics of ratio	
mean	0.08
stdev	0.12
Score	84.9

Subject weighted metric – Doctorate staff ratio

|	Arts	Medicine	Science	Total
Portal Data				
Doctorate awarded	43	173	72	288
Academic staff	128	286	92	506
Ratio	0.34	0.60	0.78	0.57
Statistics of Ratio				
mean	0.1	0.23	0.18	
stdev	0.13	0.41	0.23	
Z-score of ratio	1.81	0.91	2.62	
Weighted sum of Z-score				1.45
Statistics of weighted sum				
mean				0.00
stdev				0.80
Score				96.5
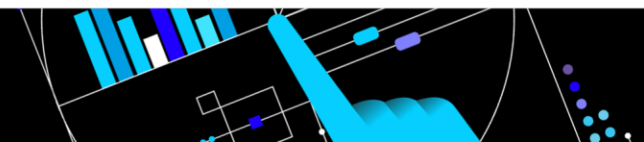
Fairness across subjects
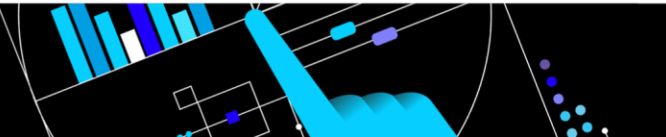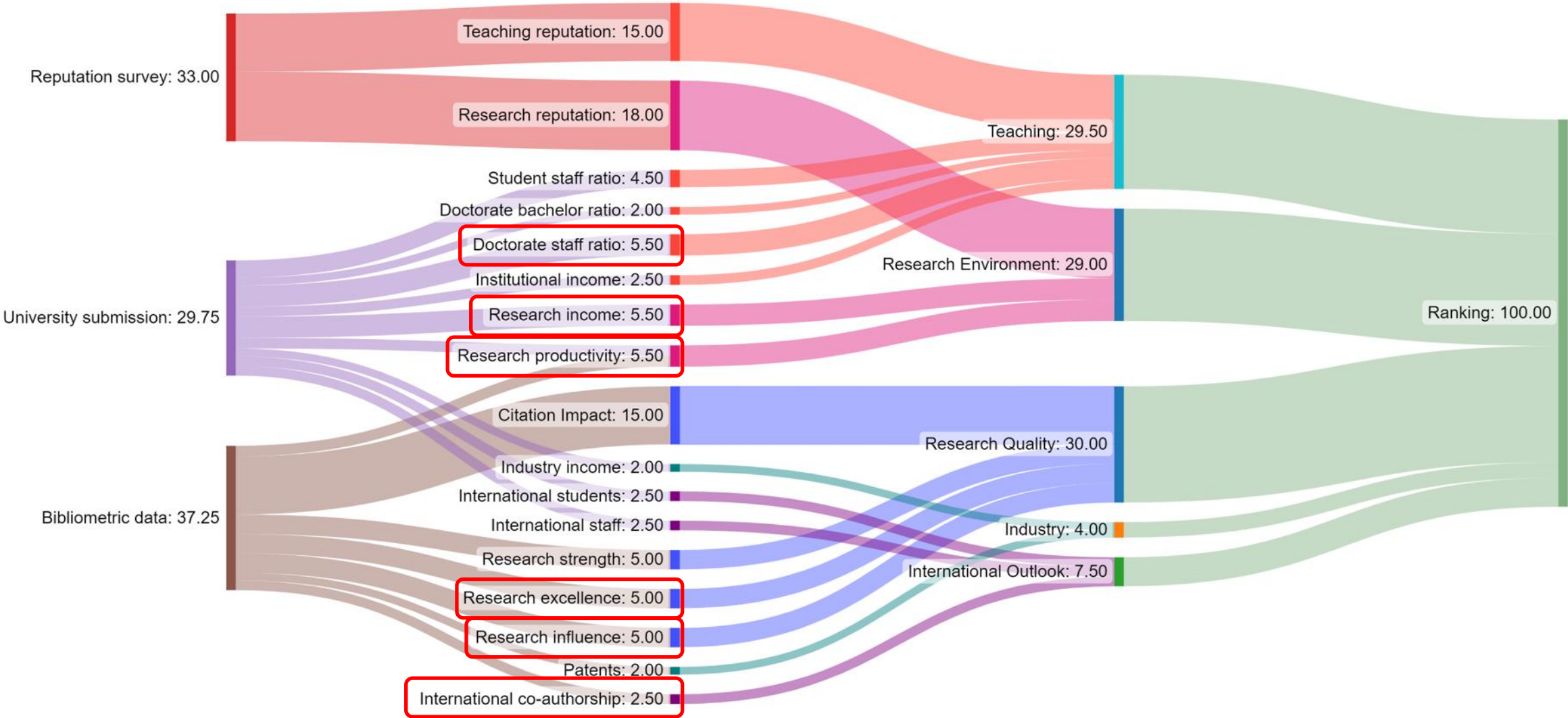
International Outlook: country size

- Large countries have been disadvantaged compared to small countries in our international metrics, in that it is more likely for staff and students at universities in small countries to have come to work/study from abroad.

- The international metrics are normalised to account for the populations size:
  - Proportion of international students
  - Proportion of international staff
  - Proportion of publications with at least one co-author from an international institution
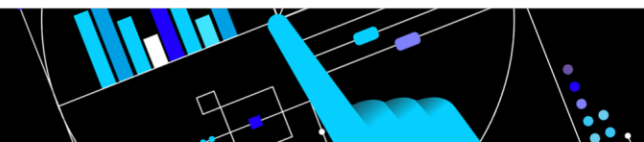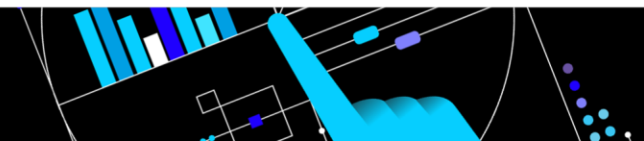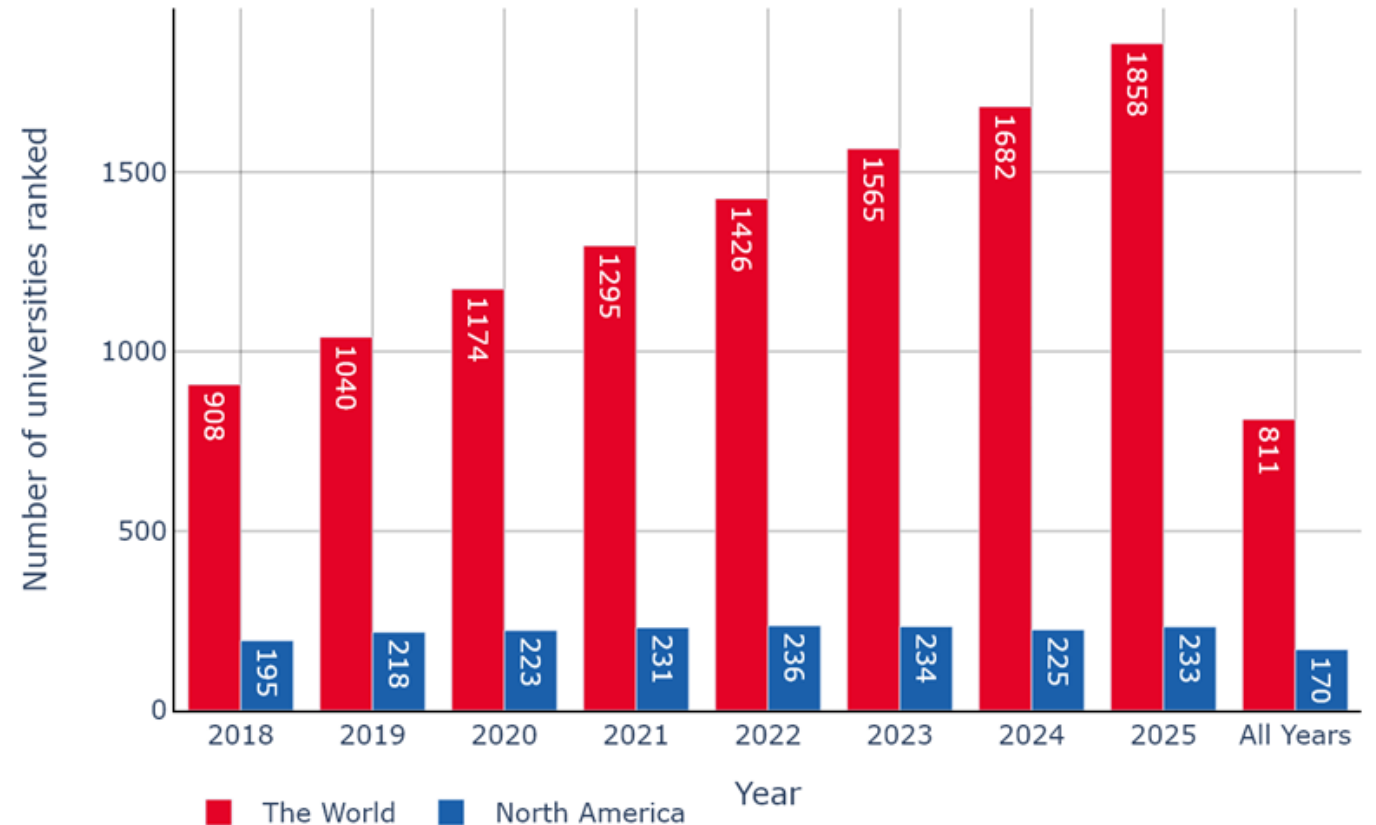
Fairness across countries
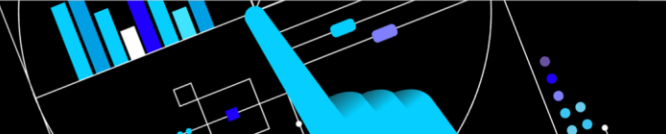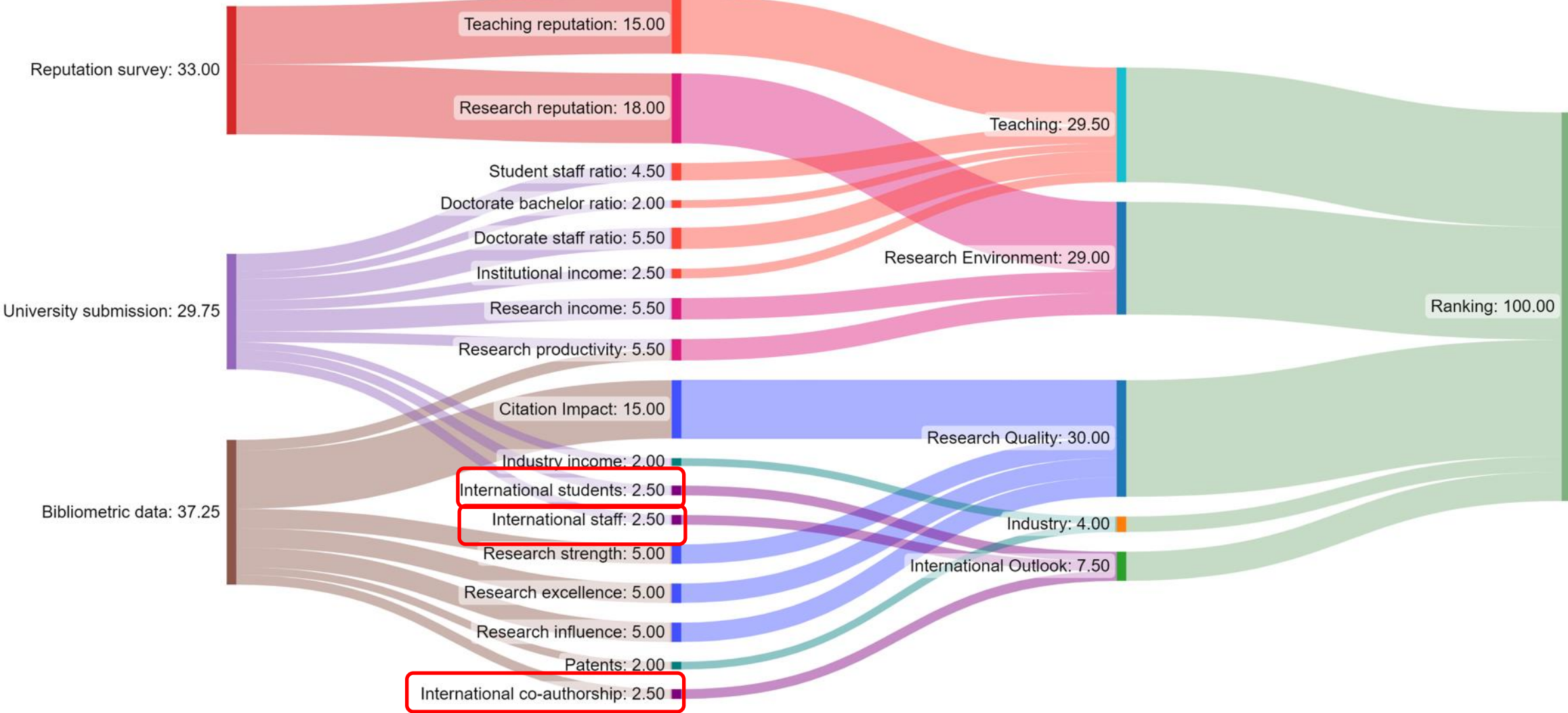
Insights
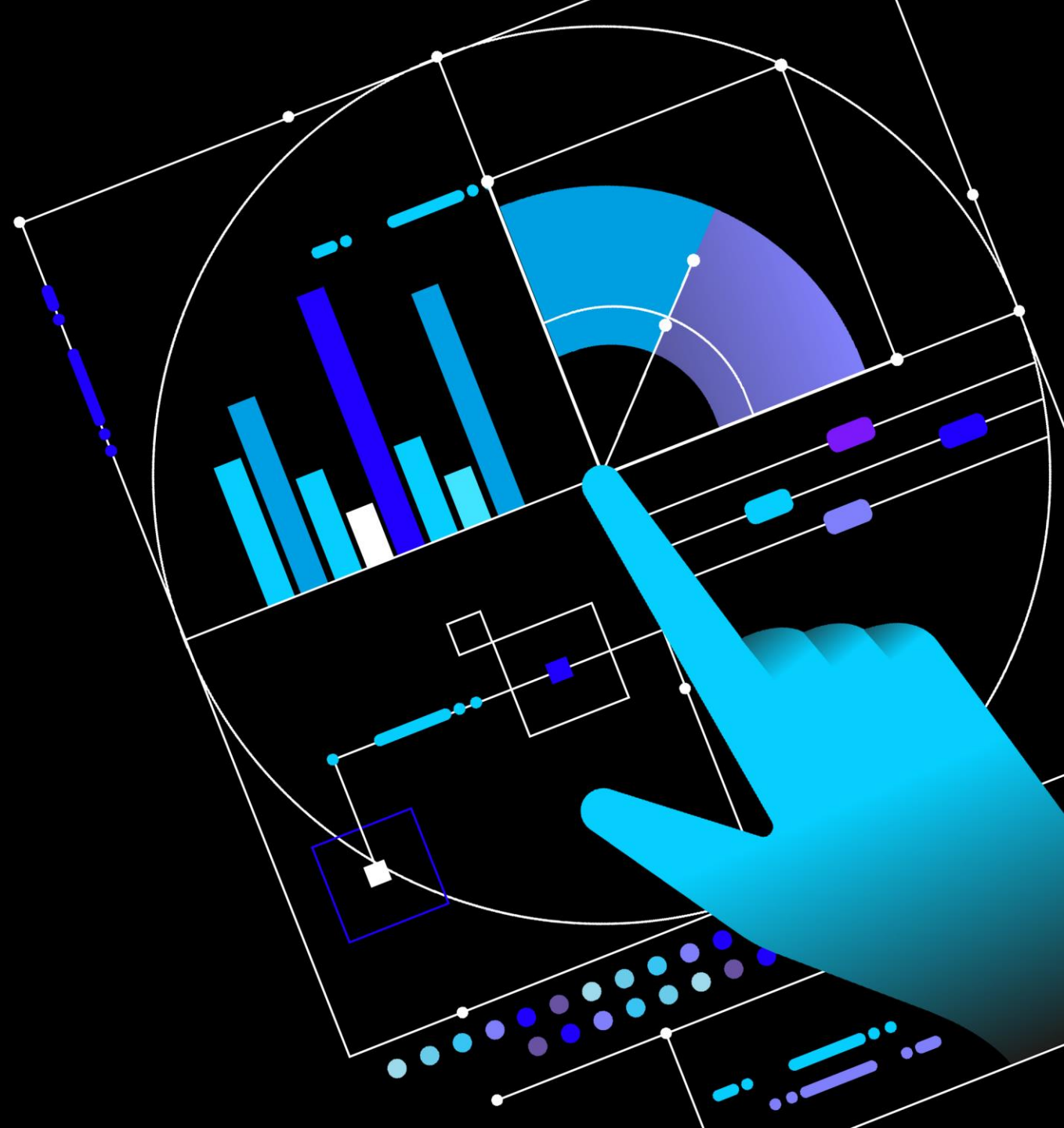
Ranking numbers

In 2018, North America represented **17.7%** of the 1103 universities ranked across The World.

In 2025, North America represented **11.1%** of the 2091 universities ranked across The World.

North America vs The World WUR Ranked per year

Top Universities

| Name	Rank
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	2
Harvard University	3
Princeton University	4
Stanford University	6
California Institute of Technology	7
University of California, Berkeley	8
Yale University	10
The University of Chicago	=14
University of Pennsylvania	=14
Johns Hopkins University	16
Columbia University	=18
University of California, Los Angeles	=18
Cornell University	20
University of Toronto	21
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor	=22
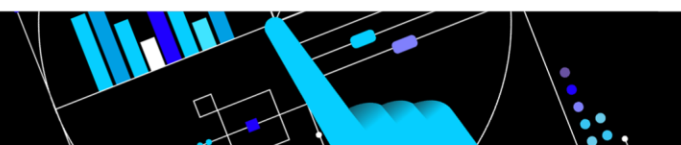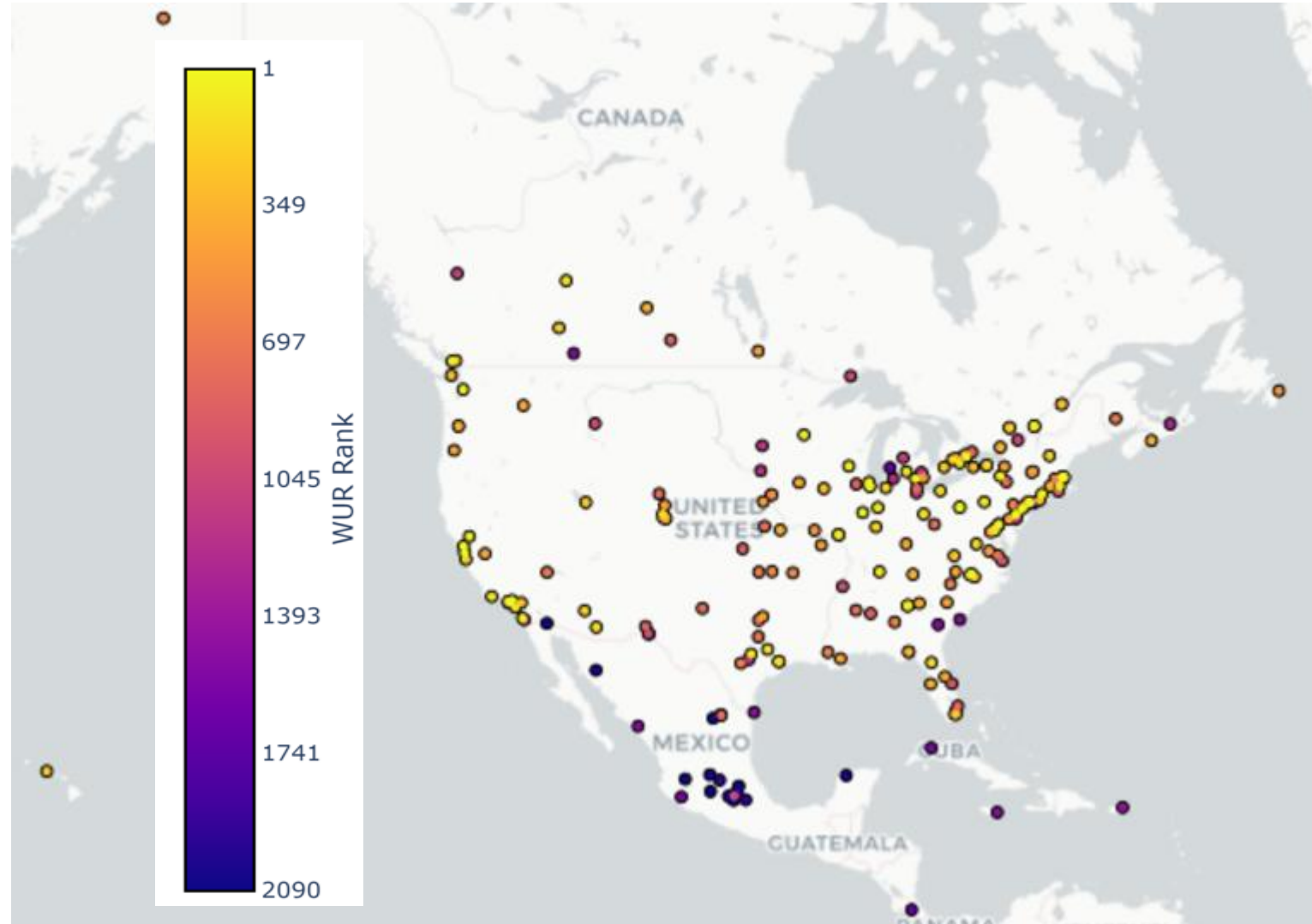
Subjects

Across North America, Physical Sciences was the most frequently ranked subject in 2025 where it was ranked for 215 universities.
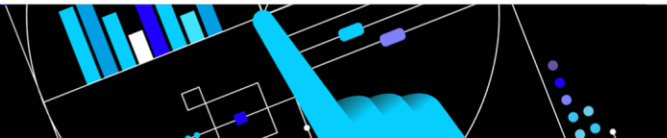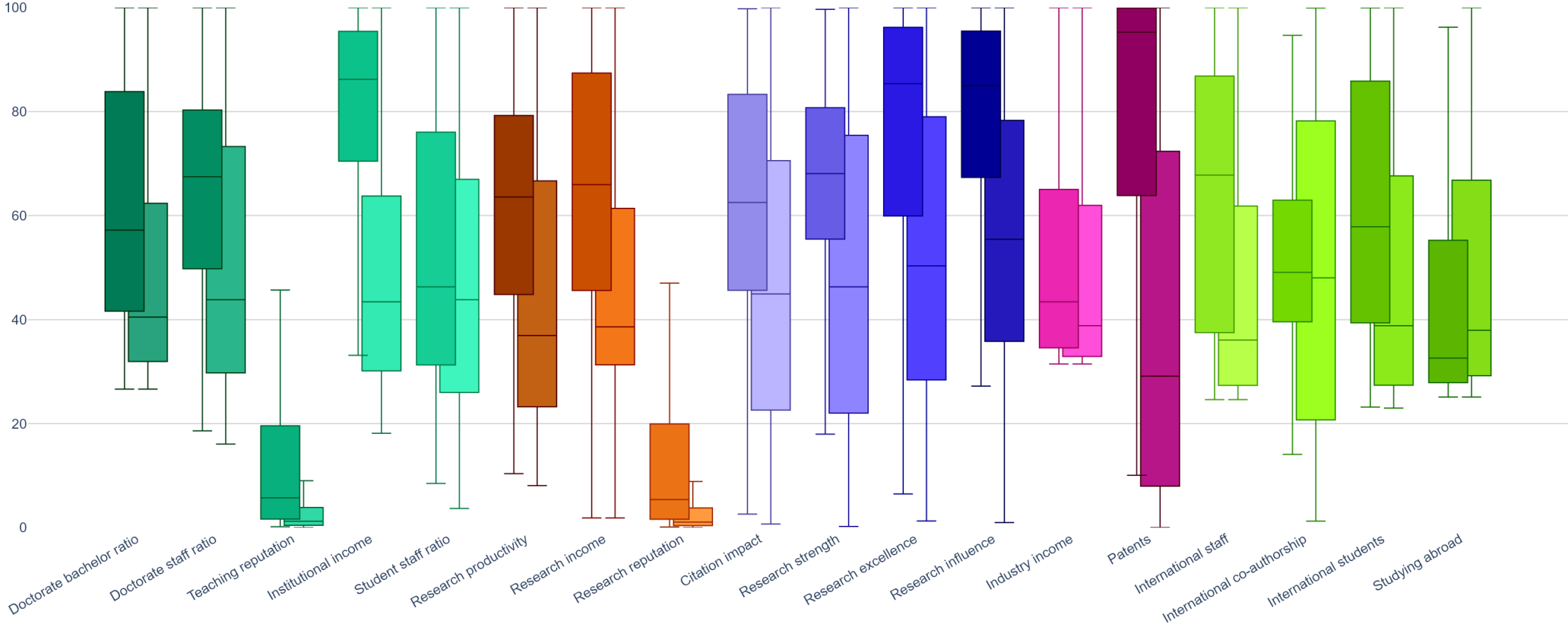
Law was the least frequently ranked subject in 2025 with just 89 universities ranked.

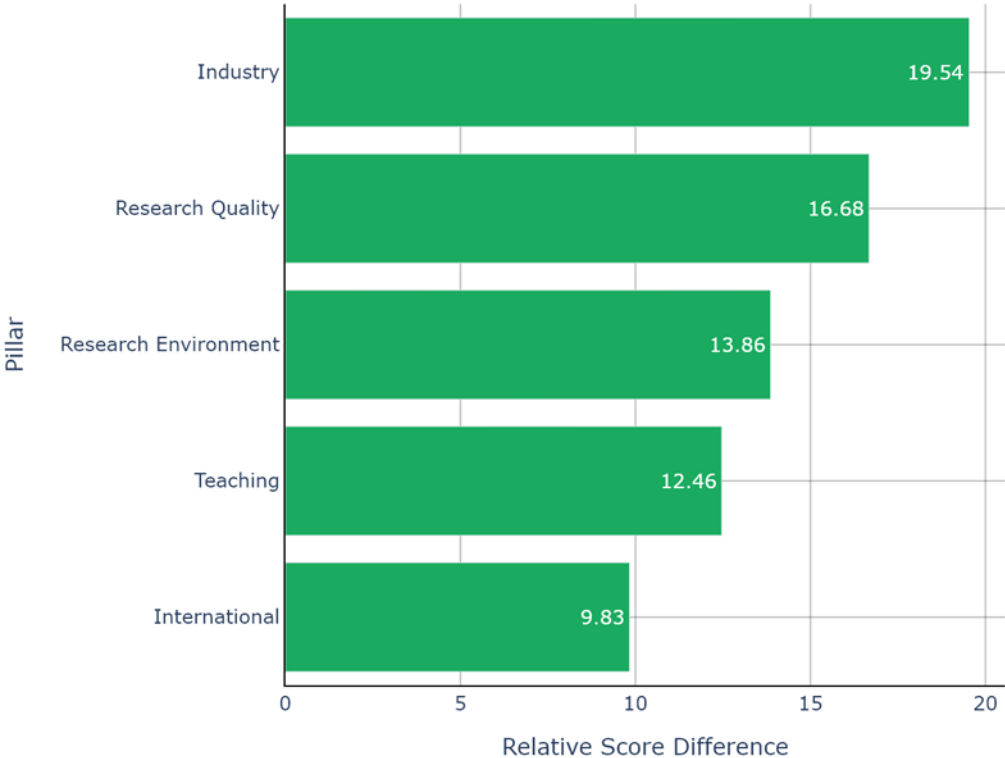Percentage of universities with subjects ranked in WUR 2025

The World   North America
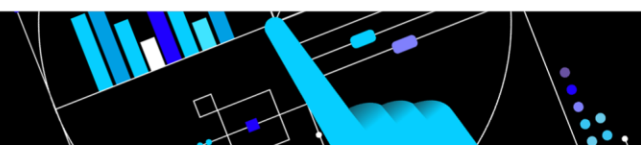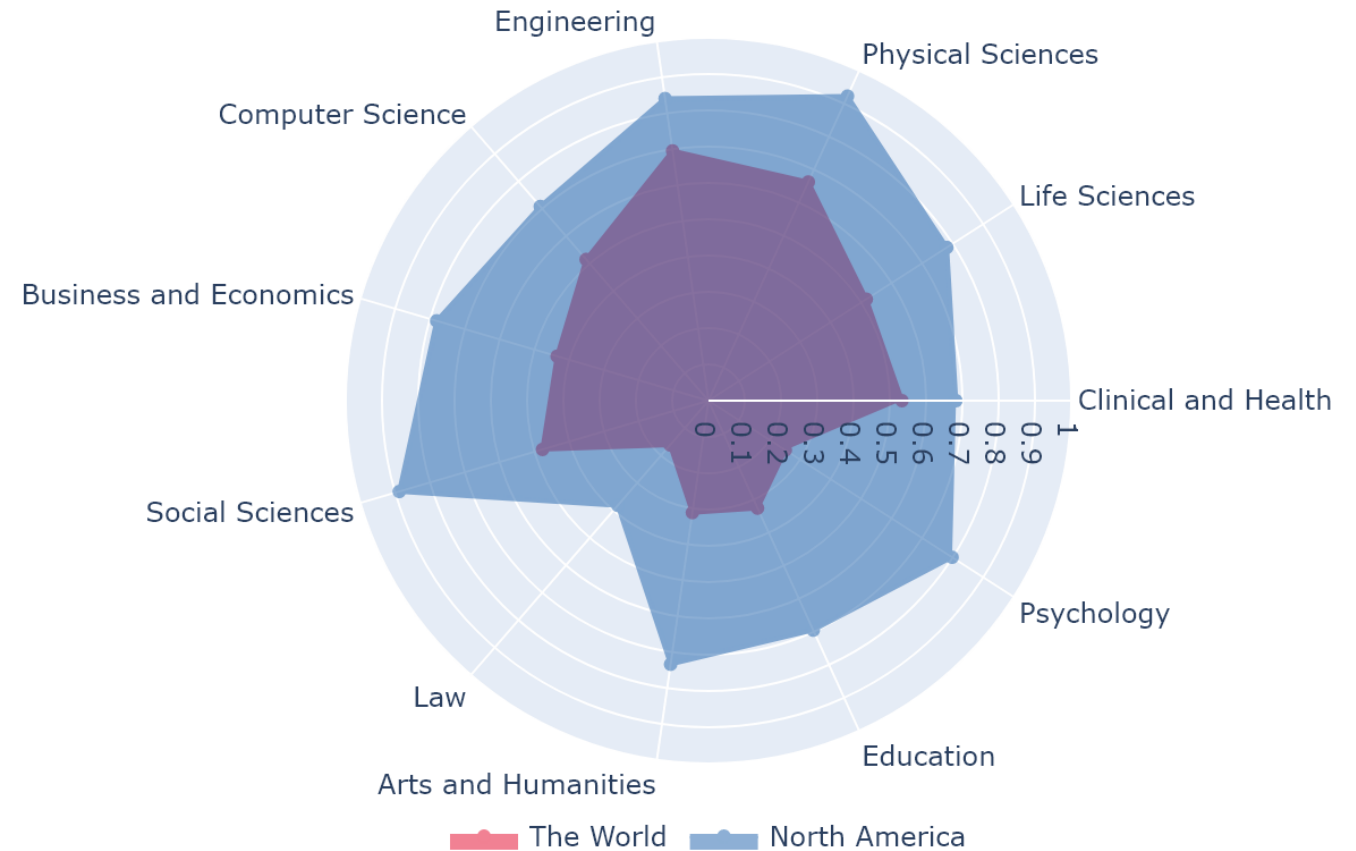
North America vs RoW WUR 2025 metrics comparison

North America vs The World World University Rankings 2025 metrics boxplot

World
University
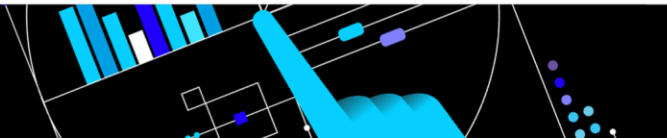Rankings 2025

North America vs RoW Pillars and Metrics

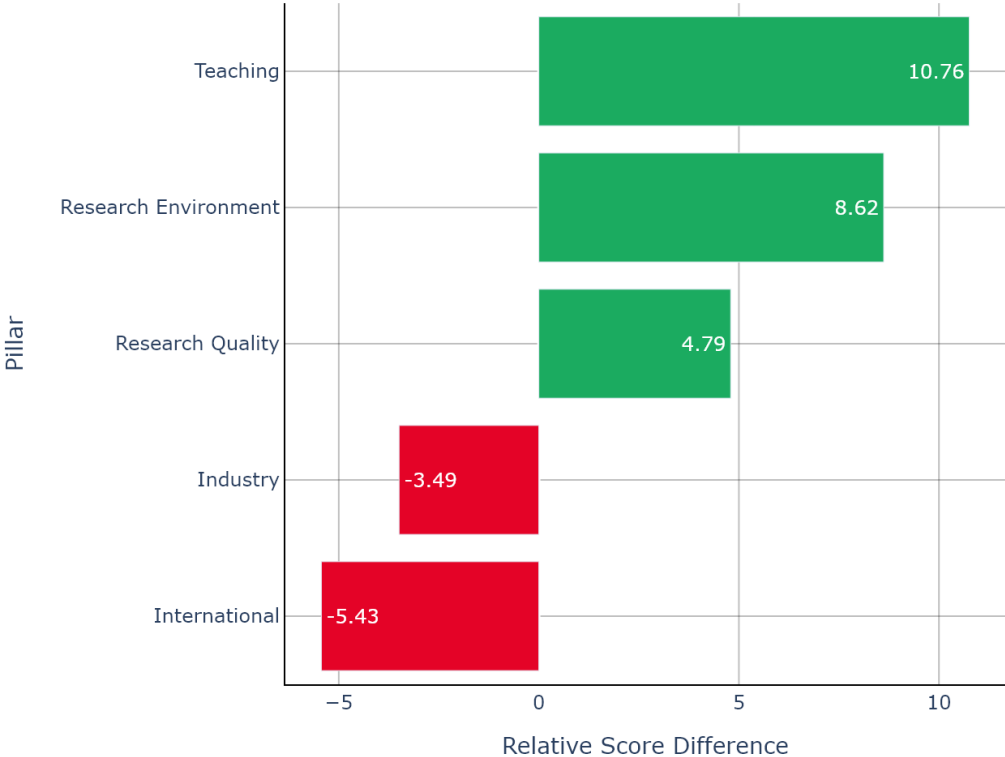North America vs The World Pillar Relative Score Difference 2025

Pillar	Relative Score Difference
Industry	19.54
Research Quality	16.68
Research Environment	13.86
Teaching	12.46
International	9.83

North America vs The World Metric Relative Score Difference 2025

| Metric	Relative Score Difference
Patents	37.45
Income/Staff	30.59
Research Excellence	20.98
Research Influence	19.81
Research Income/Staff	15.86
International Staff	15.72
Research Strength	15.69
FWCI	14.53
Publications/Staff	14.34
Research Reputation	13.11
Teaching Reputation	12.08
International Students	11.94
Doctorates/Staff	11.86
Doctorates/Undergrad	11.5
Staff/Student	4.85
International co-authorship	1.84
Industry Income	1.64
Studying abroad	-5.24

North America vs RoW Pillars and Metrics – Top 200

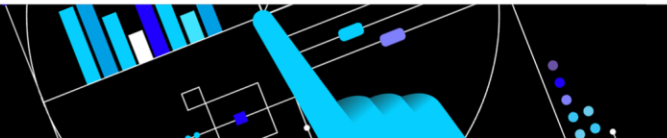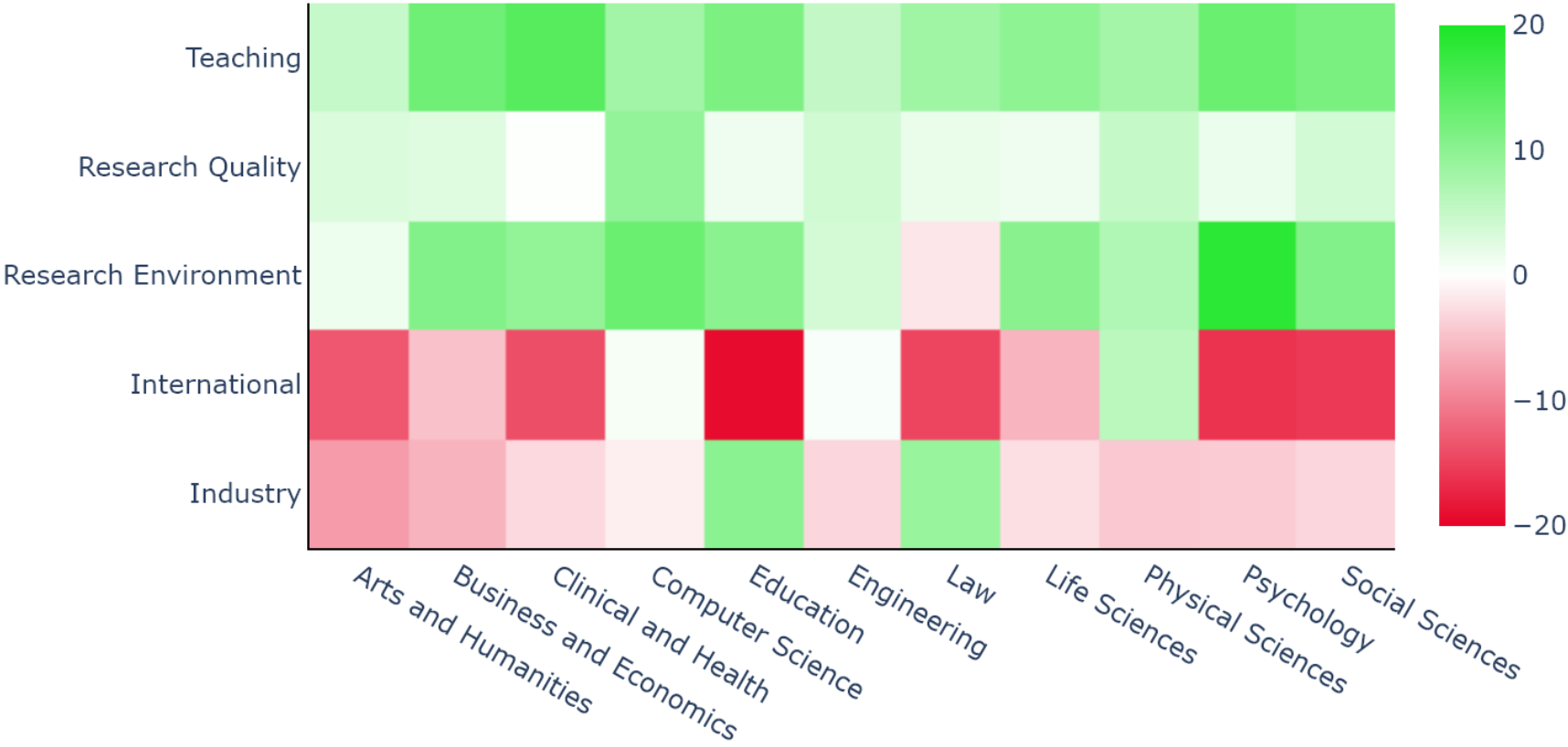North America vs The World Top 200 Pillar Relative Score Difference 2025

North America vs The World Top 200 Metric Relative Score Difference 2025
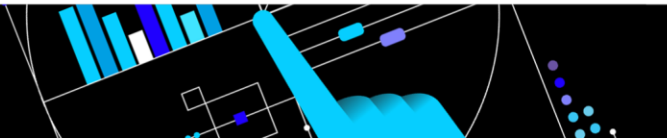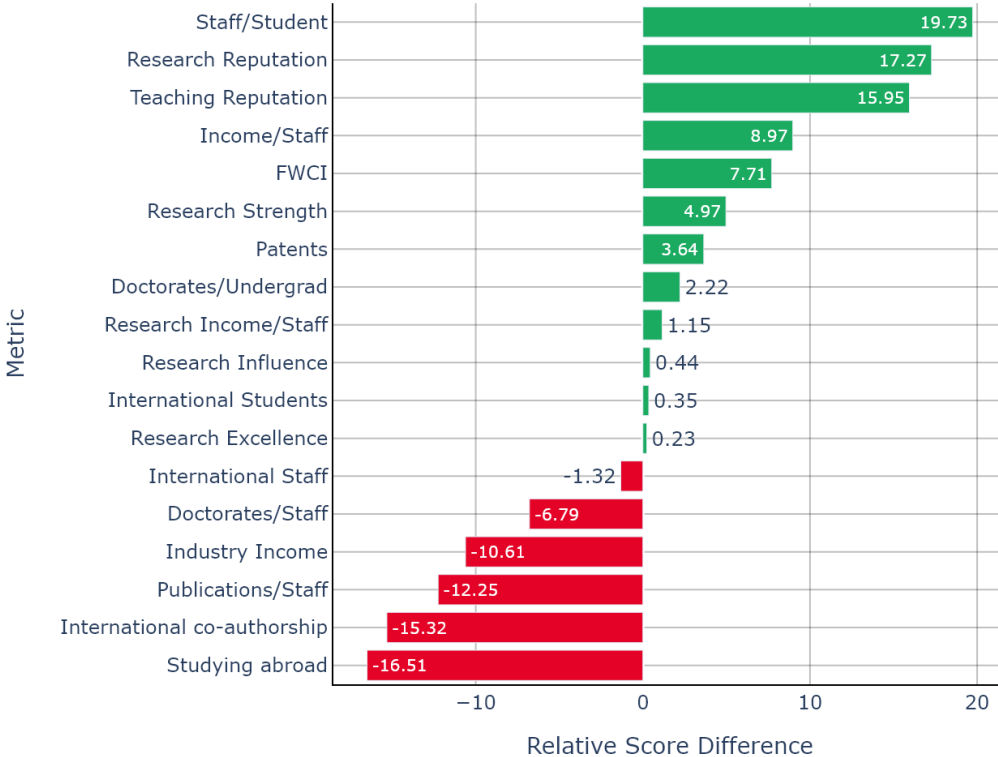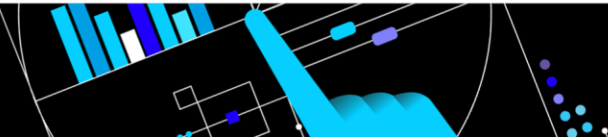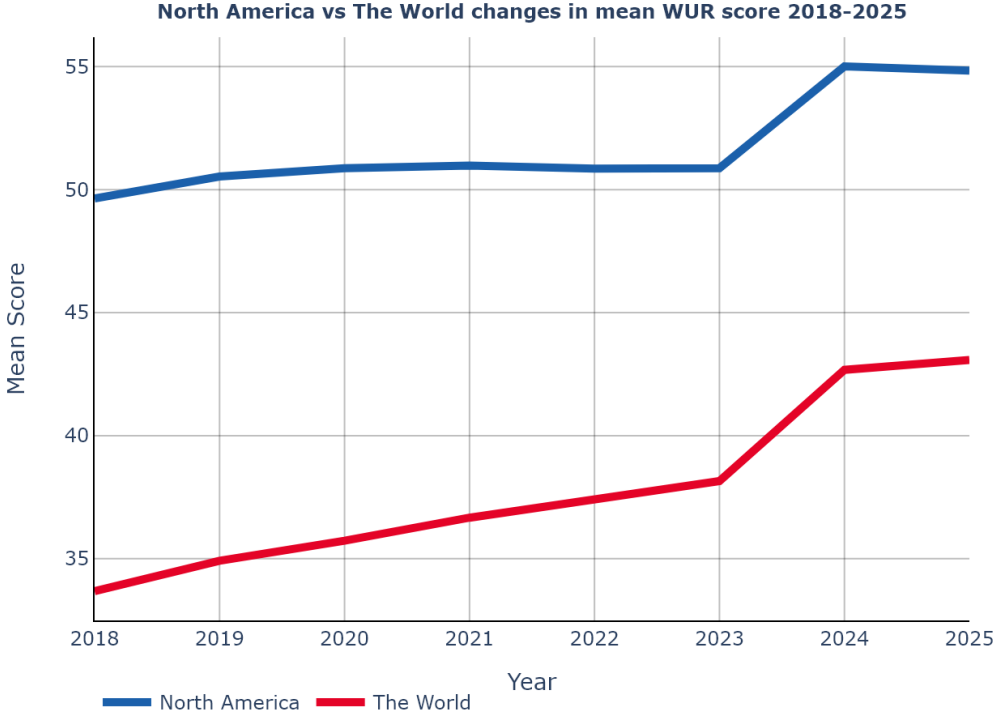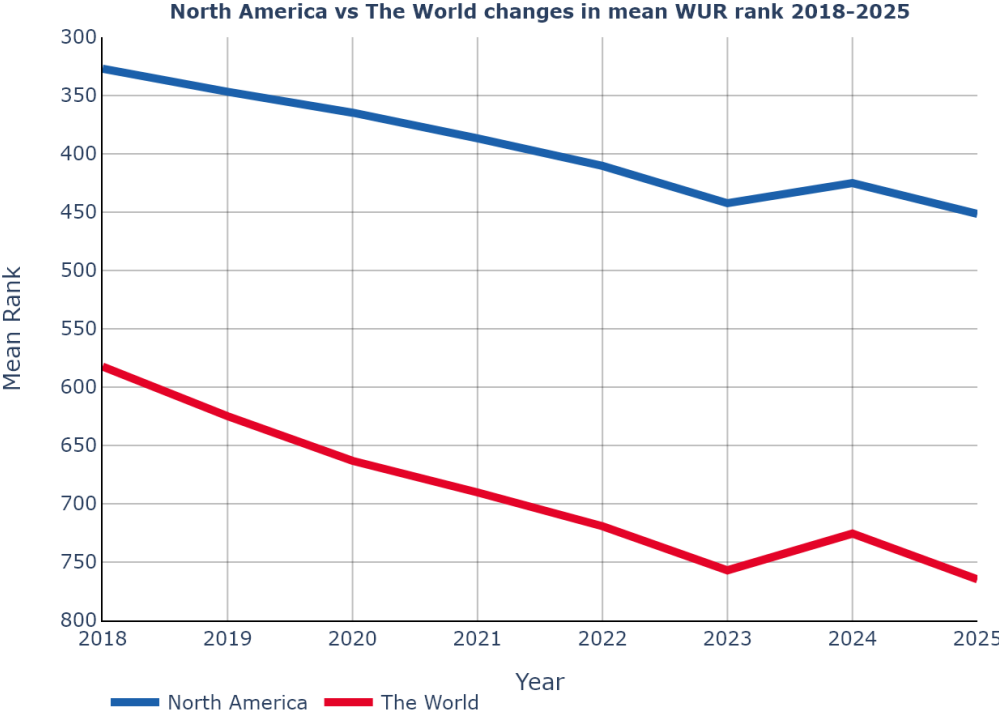
North America vs RoW Pillars and Subjects – Top 200

North America vs The World Top 200 WUR 2025 Comparison Heatmap

North America 2018-2025

North America vs The World changes in mean WUR rank 2018-2025

North America vs The World changes in mean WUR score 2018-2025
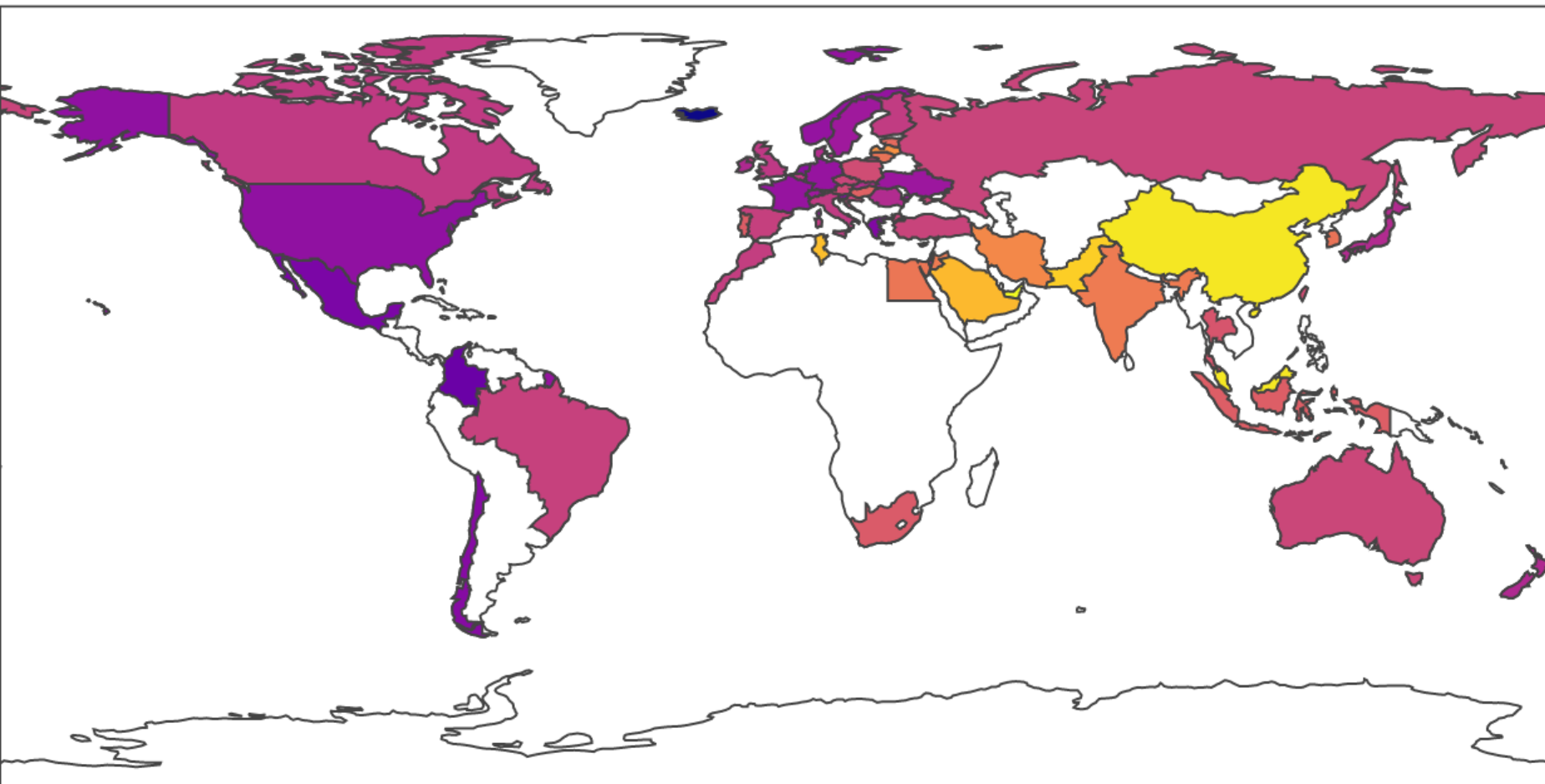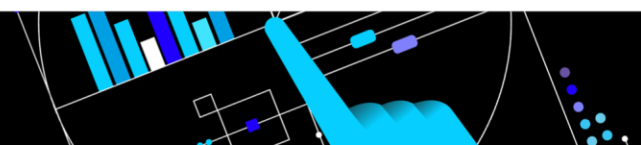
Countries average WUR score changes 2018-2025

The WUR Score for North America has increased by an average of 5.2 between 2018 and 2025

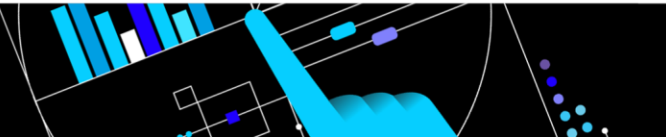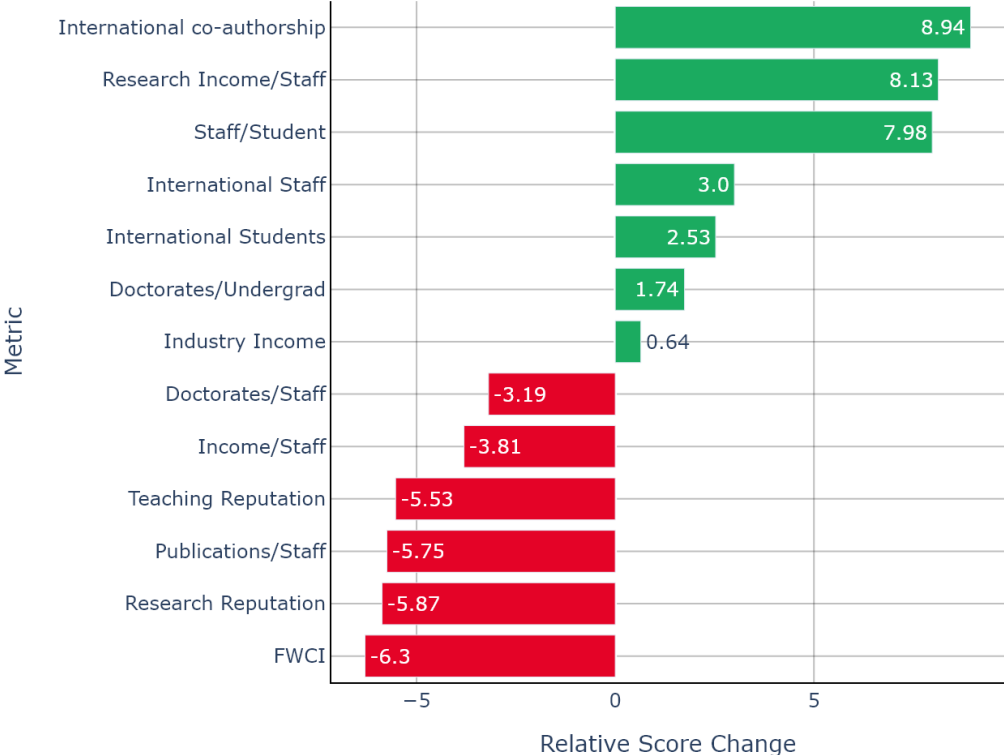The World has increased by an average of 9.4 during the same period.

N America vs RoW Top 200 2018-2025 Pillars and Metrics

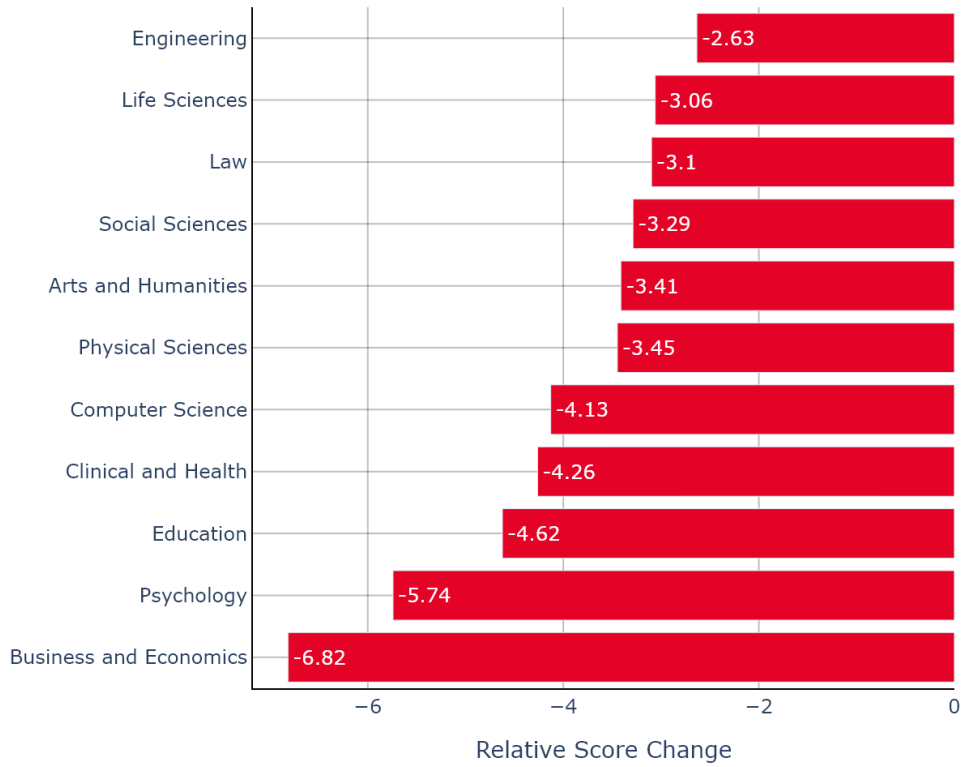North America vs The World Top 200 Pillar Relative Score Change 2018-2025

North America vs The World Top 200 Metric Relative Score Change 2018-2025

Subjects

North America vs The World Top 200 Subject Relative Score Change 2018-2025

North America vs The World Top 200 pillar comparison 2018-2025
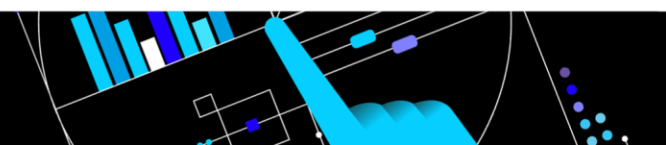
Ranking and Reputation

Universities ranked in WUR maintain a healthy level of reputation.

Mean Reputation Ranking based on participating in the THE World University Rankings (WUR)

- Dropped out (16)
- Never in WUR (75)
- In THE WUR (611)

World University Rankings 2025

North America: Summary

North America is strong compared to the Rest of the World, but is losing its advantage in key areas such as research quality

North America vs The World Top 200 Pillar Relative Score Difference 2025
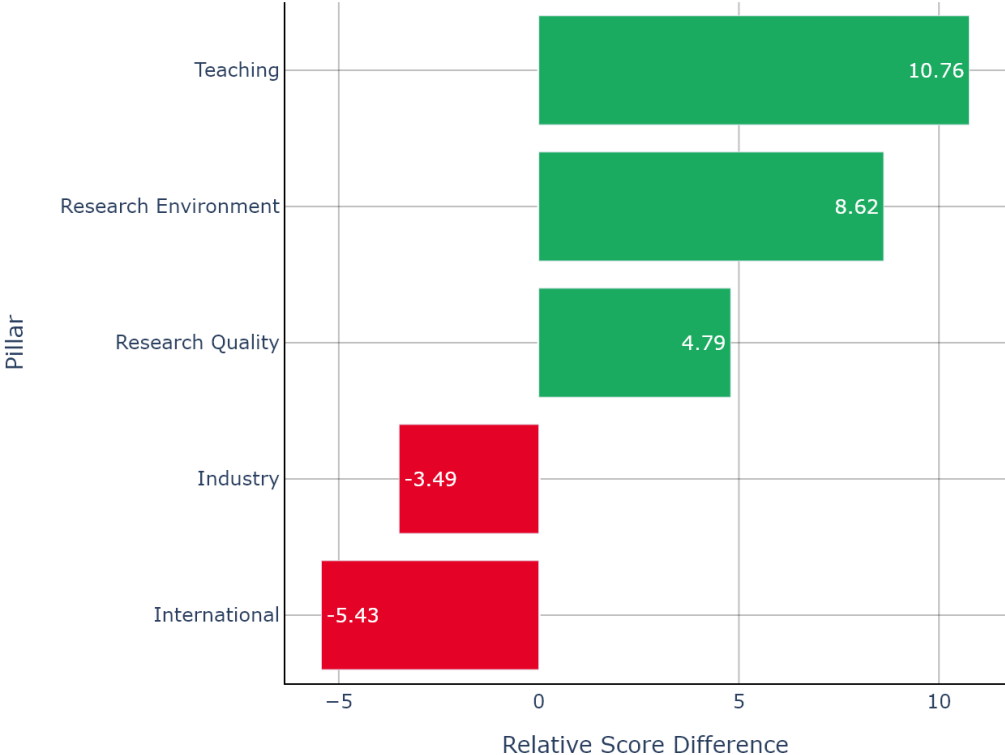
(Bar chart — Pillar vs Relative Score Difference)
- Teaching: 10.76
- Research Environment: 8.62
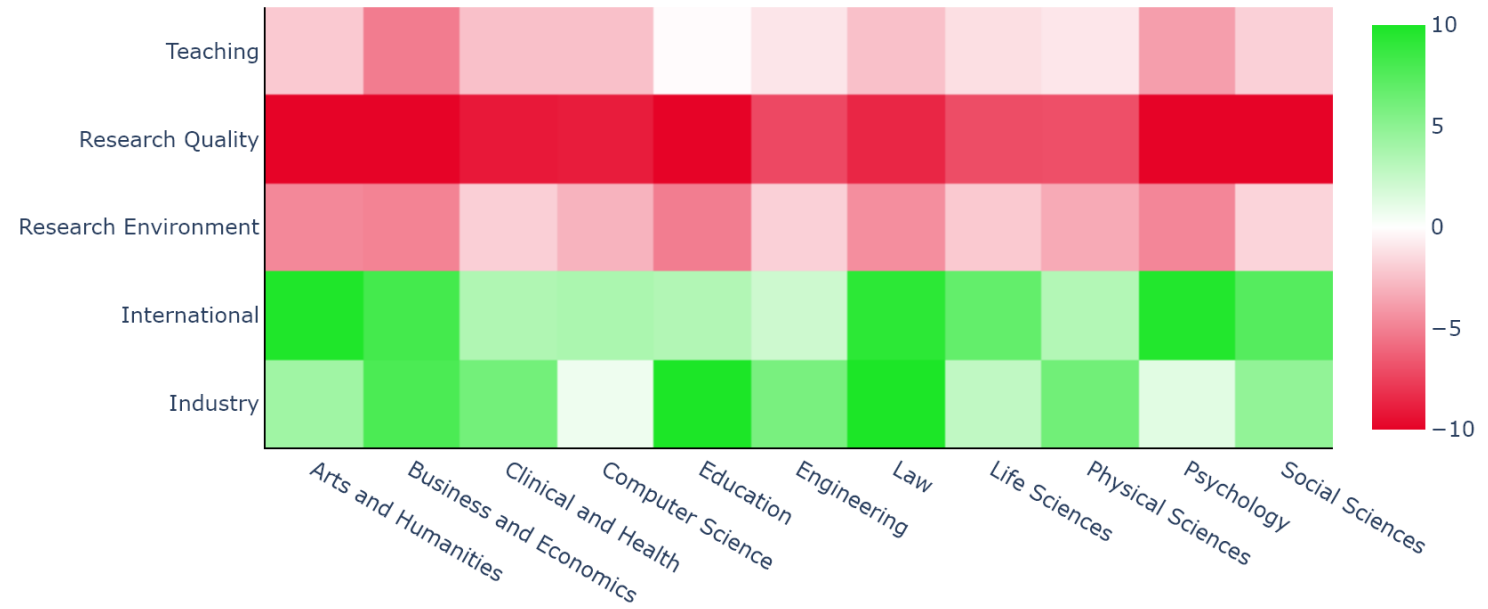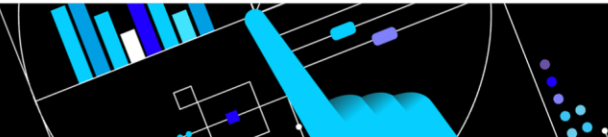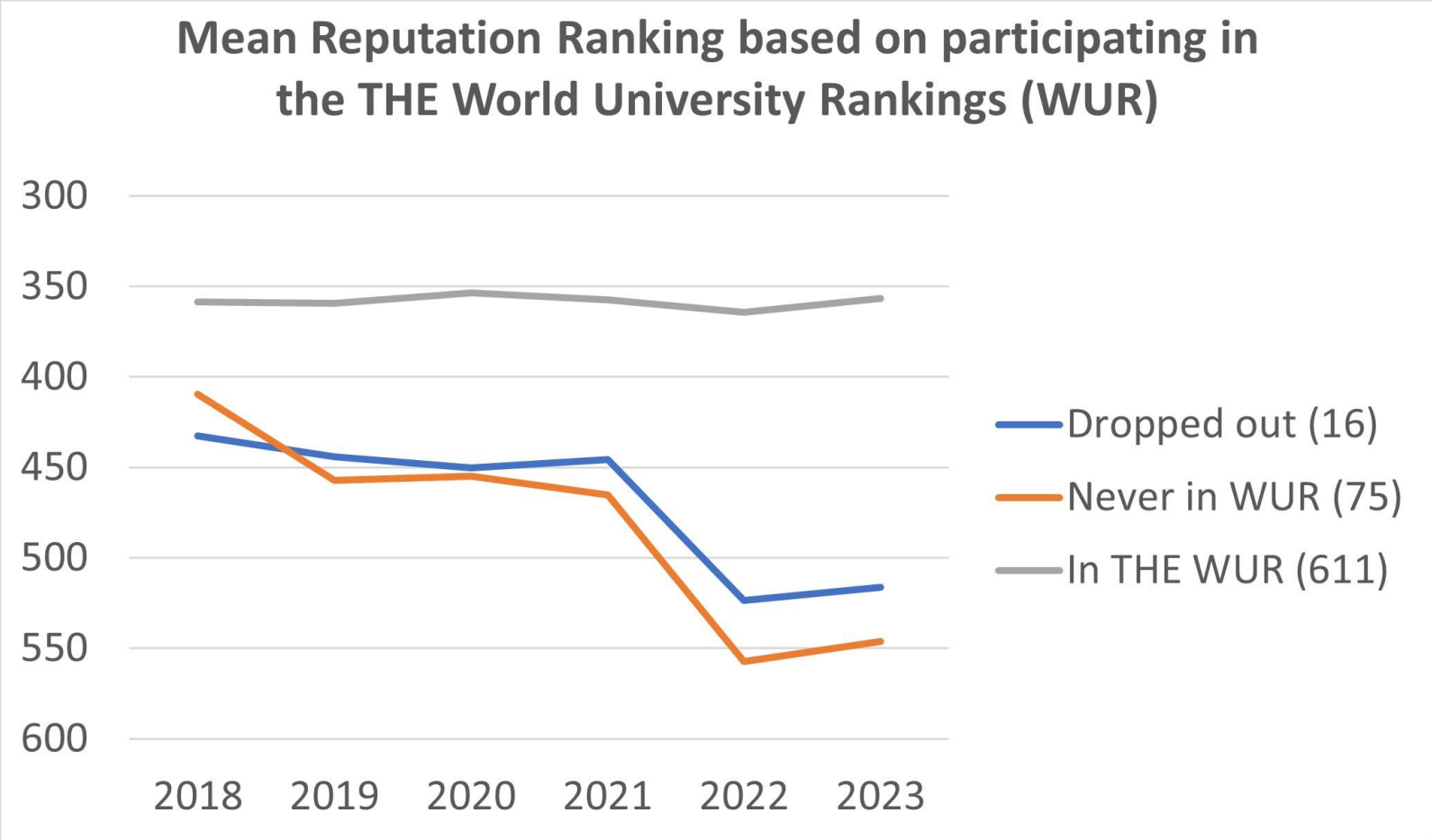- Research Quality: 4.79
- Industry: -3.49
- International: -5.43

North America vs The World Top 200 Pillar Relative Score Change 2018-2025

(Bar chart — Pillar vs Relative Score Change)
- Industry: 7.63
- International: 4.82
- Teaching: -2.02
- Research Environment: -2.55
- Research Quality: -9.34
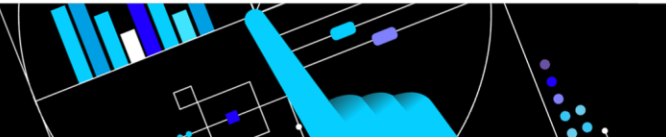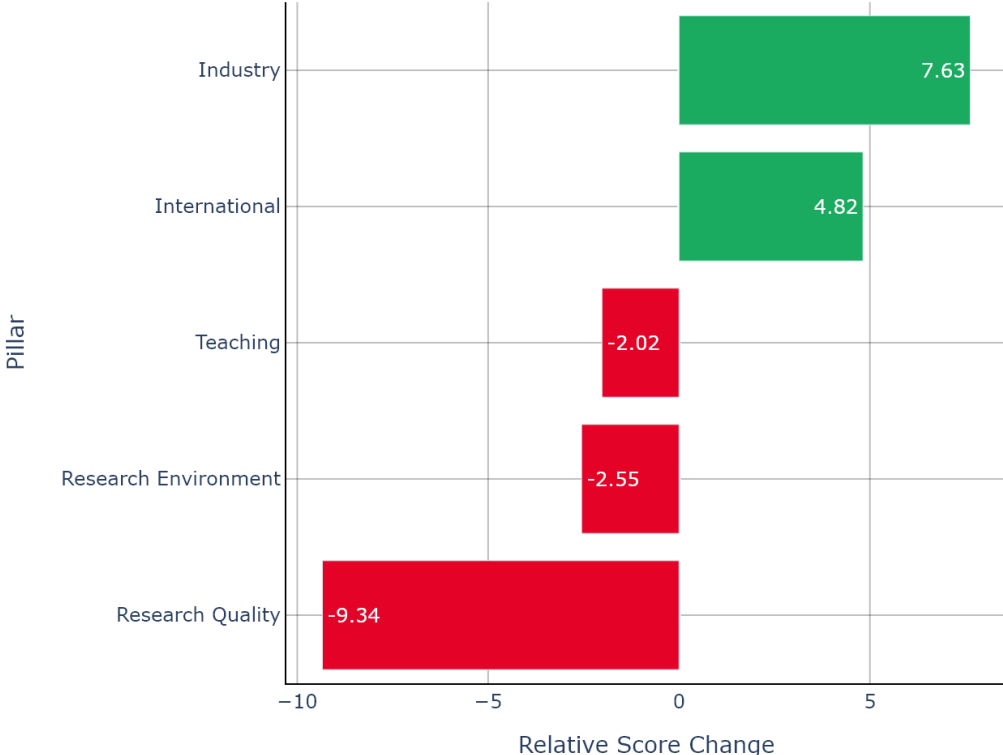
Participate this year

RESEARCH	IMPACT & SUSTAINABILITY

RESEARCH

THE World University Rankings

Data collection opens January 2025

IMPACT & SUSTAINABILITY

Times Higher Education Impact Rankings

Data collection open now, until November 11th

Thank you

THE World University Rankings 2025
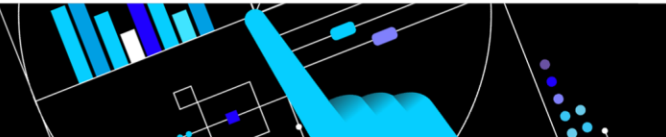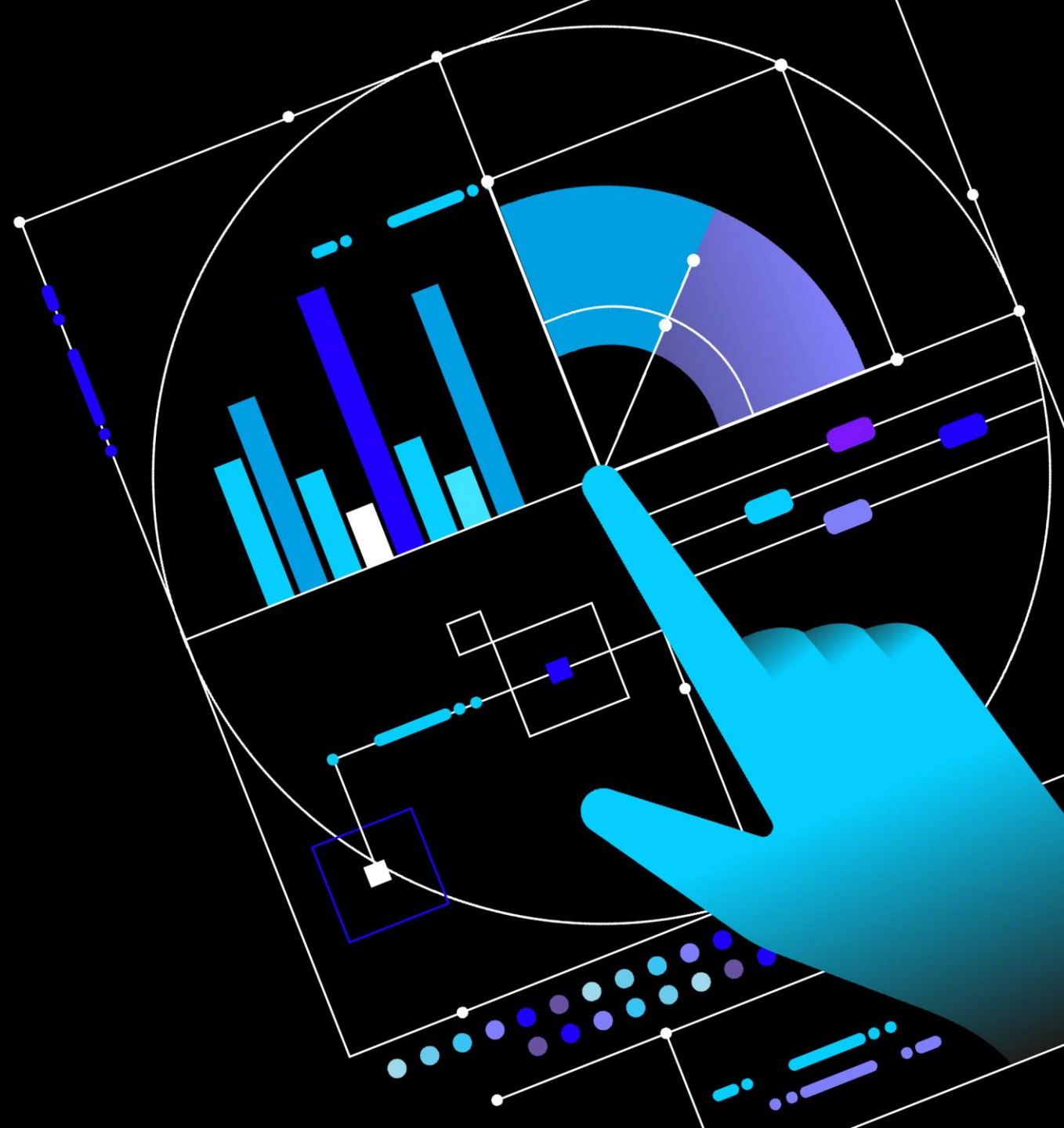
Consultancy Services

THE Consultancy

Empowering universities, governments and organisations around the world.

Rankings & Performance Analysis

In-depth analysis of institutional and subject level performance in THE's suite of global rankings. We also provide institutional level simulation of rankings performance for unranked institutions, with detailed analysis of strengths,...

Discover more

Internationalisation & Transnational Education (TNE)

Offering a bespoke Transnational Education (TNE) consultancy service powered by our world-leading higher education data and global network of universities.

Discover more

Portfolio & Course Analysis

Benchmarking portfolios across faculties and institutions using qualitative & quantitative methods

Discover more

Reputation & Brand

THE's Reputation and Brand consultancy services are built on our unparalleled experience supporting universities around the world to analyse, audit and track their global reputation and impact of their brand

Discover more

Research Strategy

THE Consultancy can support universities and ministries of education enhance their academic research strategies, using THE's bibliometric data and unique artificial intelligence tools

Discover more

Industry Insights

Our team work closely with industry and commercial organisations to provide insights and tailored thought leadership on a topical basis to support with market awareness, sector engagement, reputation and to help in forging strategic...
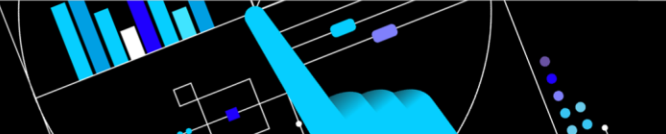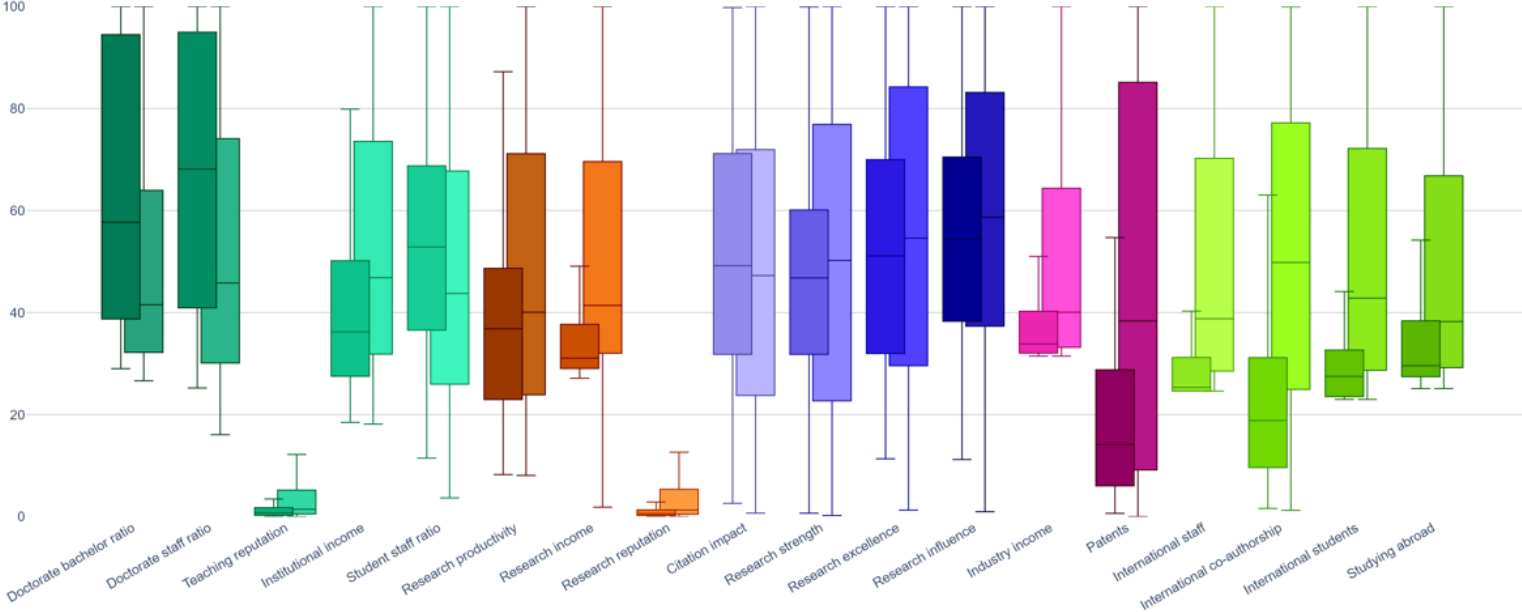
Discover more
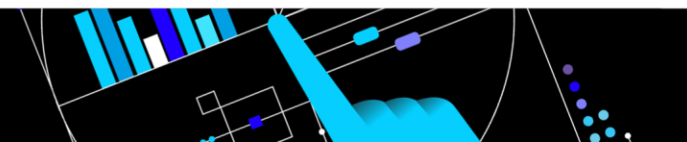
WUR Performance Analysis and Simulation

Understand your institution's performance across all metrics, benchmarked against competitors

WUR Performance Analysis and Simulation

1

Metric-by-metric analysis

- Analysis of each of the metric scores benchmarked against competitors
- Analysis of temporal change
- Broken down by 11 subject areas
- Evaluation of performance across each of the metric pillar categories

### 2

Reputation vote analysis

- Detailed breakdown of institutional votes from the THE academic survey
- Analysis of sources of voting, benchmarked against peers
- Broken down by 11 subject areas
- Provides insight into difference between teaching and research reputation

3

Strategic recommendations

- Creation of KPIs for each of the metrics to support institutional strategy
- Broader institutional change management strategies, linked to research partnerships and academic networks, reputation and international profile
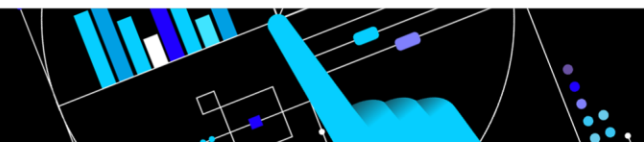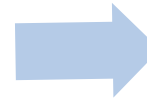
Academic Network Analysis

Develop high quality research collaborations using our tool to find academic partners outside your current network

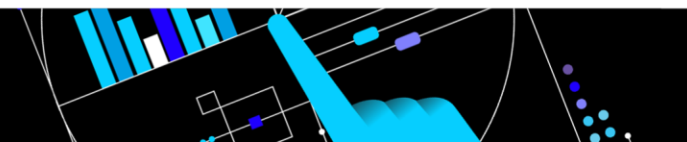**University A's chosen subjects**

Examples of subjects:
Neuroscience
Computer Science – artificial intelligence
Economics – management
Medicine – internal medicine
Social Psychology
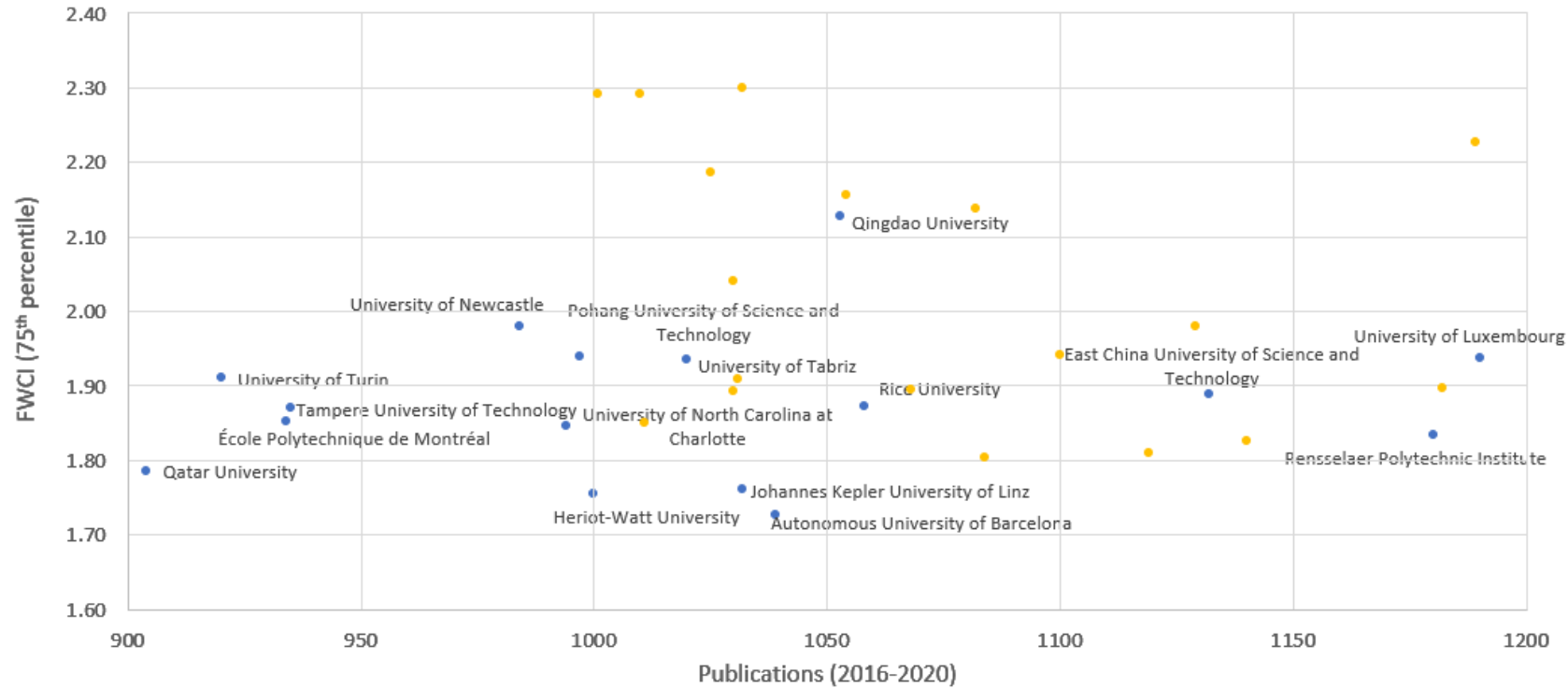Electrical Engineering

+

Competitor bibliometric database profile

University 1
University 2
University 3
University 4
University 5

Academic networks
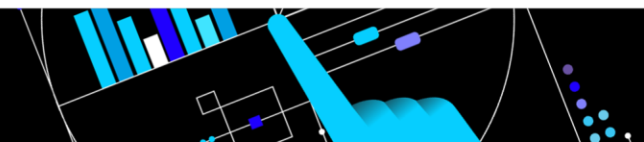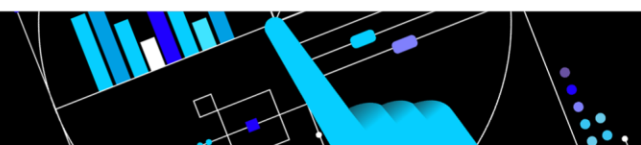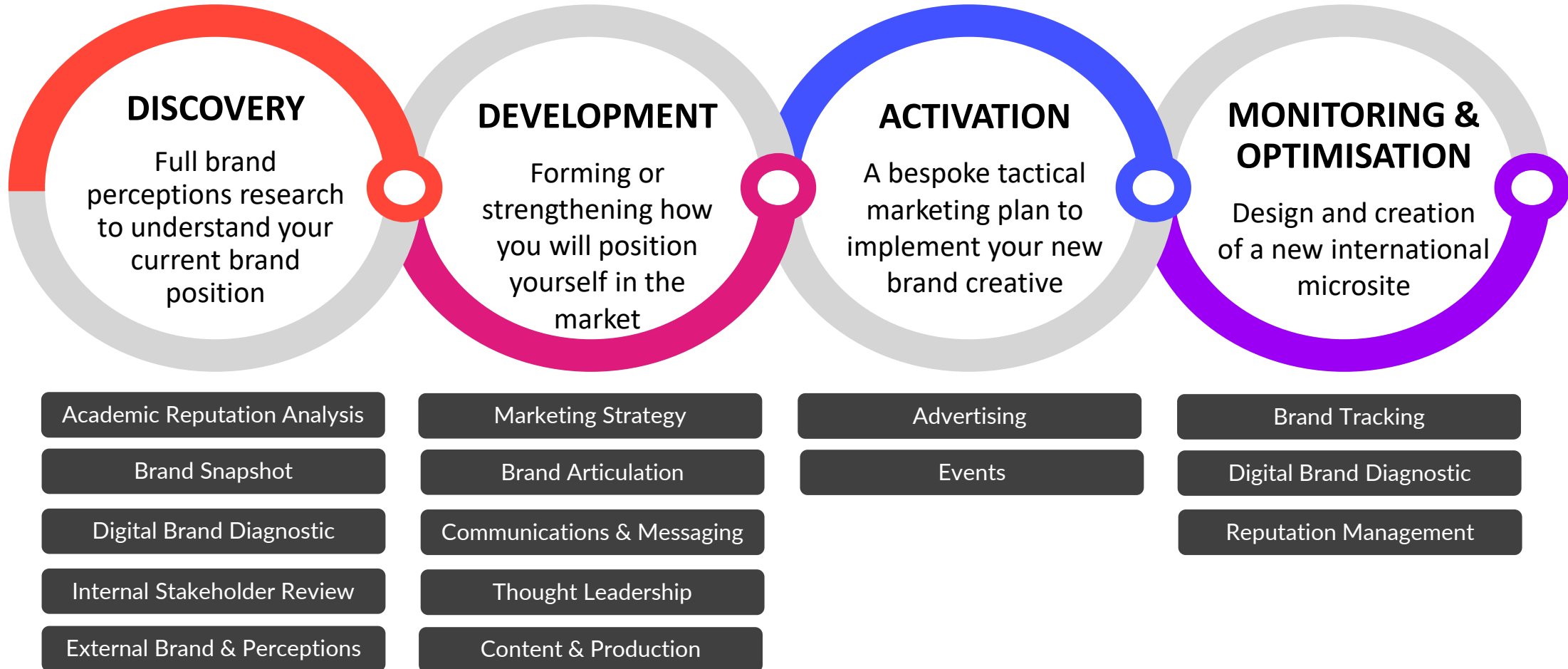
Academic Network Analysis

This tool provides insight into the quality and quantity of research partnerships

In yellow are University A's current collaborators

In blue are the collaborators of your chosen peers in the same subject area

Brand and Reputation Transformation Framework

DISCOVERY
Full brand perceptions research to understand your current brand position

DEVELOPMENT
Forming or strengthening how you will position yourself in the market

ACTIVATION
A bespoke tactical marketing plan to implement your new brand creative

MONITORING & OPTIMISATION
Design and creation of a new international microsite

Discovery	Development	Activation	Monitoring & Optimisation
Academic Reputation Analysis	Marketing Strategy	Advertising	Brand Tracking
Brand Snapshot	Brand Articulation	Events	Digital Brand Diagnostic
Digital Brand Diagnostic	Communications & Messaging		Reputation Management
Internal Stakeholder Review	Thought Leadership		
External Brand & Perceptions	Content & Production		

Internationalisation and TNE Framework

Discover, develop and deliver unparalleled educational collaborations with leading global universities, tailored to meet national development goals and enhance global educational standards

Discover

- Market Intelligence
- Competitor Environment
- Key Recruitment Pools
- Programme Portfolio

- Policy research
- Desk research
- Internal and external dataset analysis

Develop

- Global Academic Partnerships
- Reputation and Brand
- Marketing Campaigns

- Network analysis and partnership building
- Surveys and focus groups
- Marketing tools and creative service

Deliver

- TNE Growth
- KPI Toolkits
- Global Benchmarking

- Agile project management
- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- QA tools