THE's Impact Rankings: Make the most of your participation and key changes in 2025

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings

Hannah Peacock
Head of SDG Rankings

September 2024

THE Rankings

TEACHING

THE Online Learning Rankings

Focus: student satisfaction, employer reputation, graduation rate + more

Participation rules: ranking specific

IMPACT & SUSTAINABILITY

Times Higher Education Impact Rankings

Focus: research, teaching, stewardship and outreach against the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Participation rules: all UG or PG higher education institutions

RESEARCH

THE World University Rankings

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

Participation rules: 1,000+ publications over 5 years, teach undergraduates across a range of subjects

Sustainable Development Goals

- Goals agreed by the UN in 2015
- A common framework for evaluation and a commitment to deliver
- Broad and comprehensive
- 17 Goals
- 169 Targets
- Over 230 indicators

THE Impact Rankings

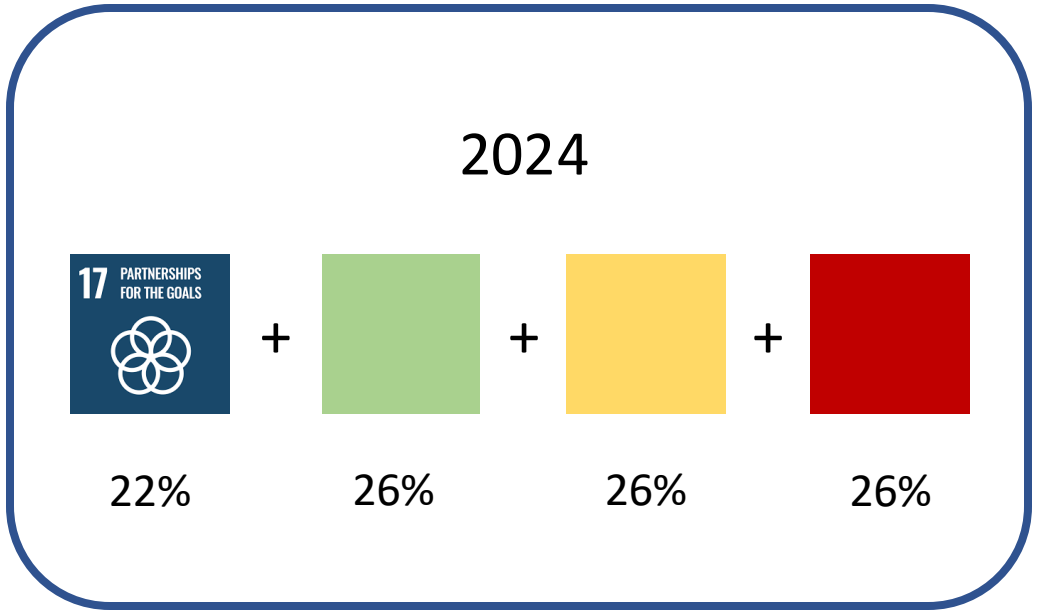
- Created in 2017
- First edition in 2019
- Takes into account all 17 SDGs
- Focused on driving continuous improvement
- Makes sustainability a strategic focus of university leaders

What are the Impact Rankings?

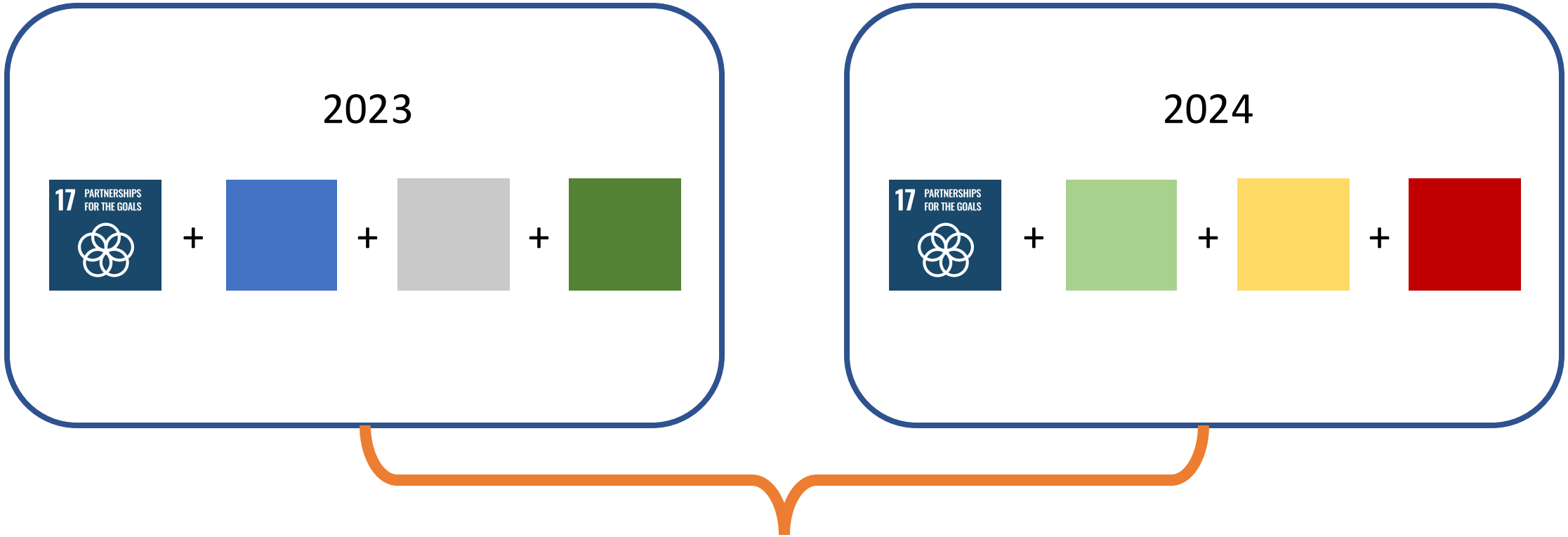
- 18 different rankings
- One for each SDG
- One overall ranking
- Data from Universities and from Elsevier

How do we measure what universities do?

Calculating an annual score



Overall score



Overall Score
Average of two years

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings

The largest and most comprehensive global university ranking dedicated to the UN sustainable development goals

2,152
Universities

283,000+
documents collected

3.7m
publications on the SDGs

125
Countries and regions

30,000+
person hours (mainly evidence validation)

269,000+
measurements

75
metrics*

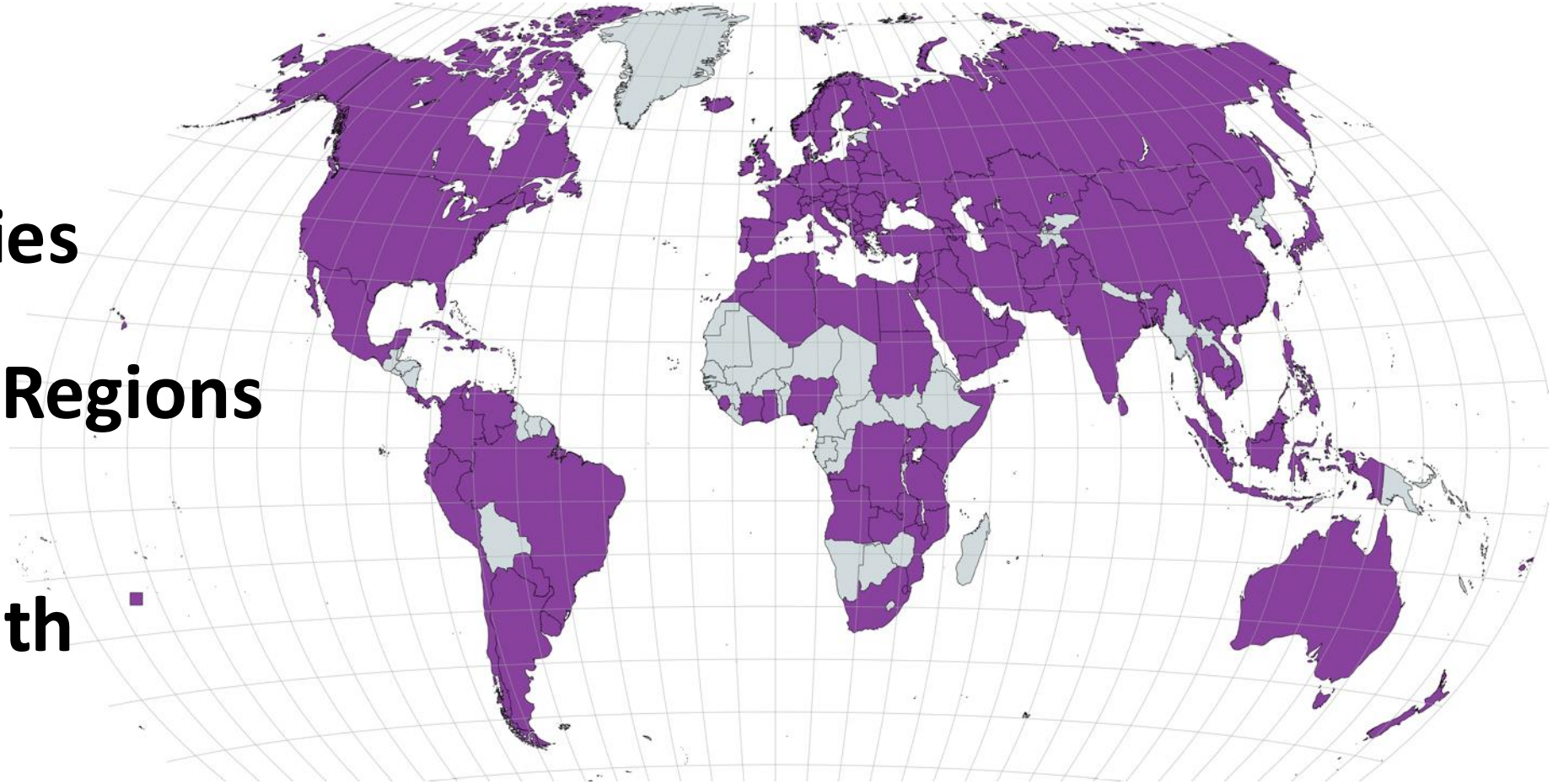
251
indicators*

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings 2024

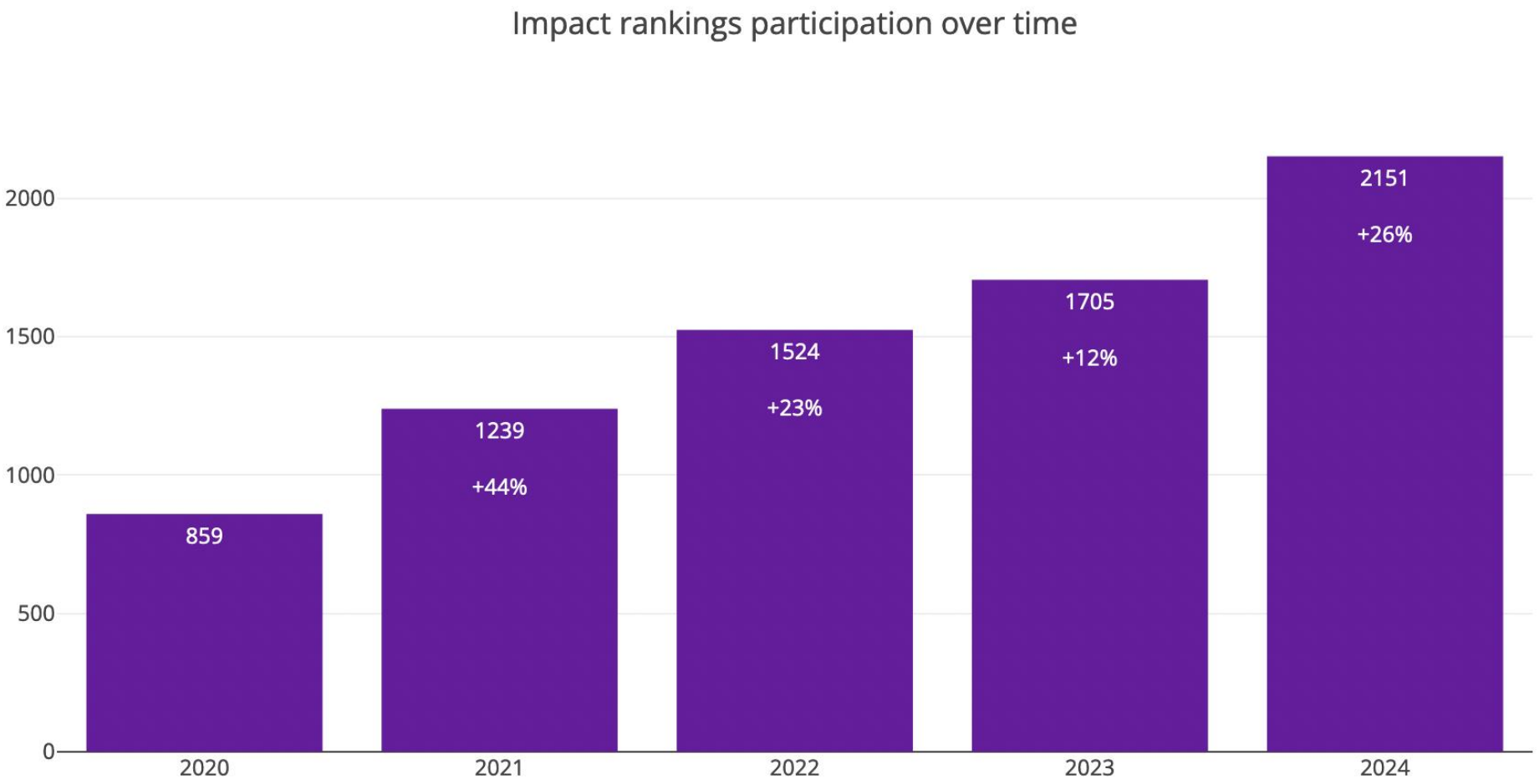
2152 Universities

125 Countries/Regions

Global north and Global south



Growth 2020-2024



How to Submit Data

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings

Choosing SDGs

- You can submit to just one SDG and you will be ranked

- Overall ranking – minimum 3 SDGs + SDG 17

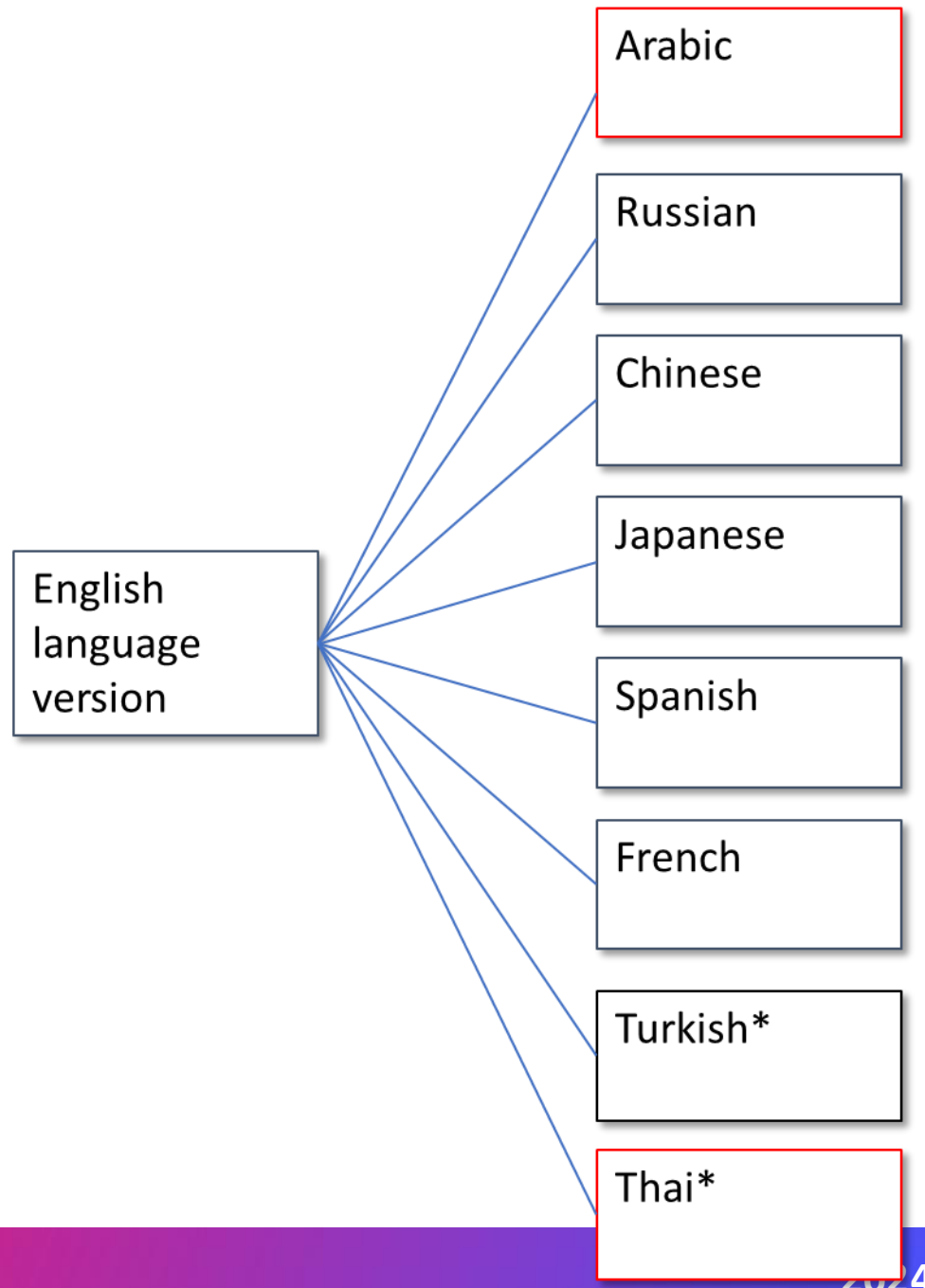
- How to choose which SDGs to participate to?
  - Based on your institution's mission
  - Regional
  - Relevant to the activities at the university

You can take an SDG quiz to see what ones are relevant to your institution, or which ones can be worked on in the future.

https://www.timeshighereducation.com/datapoints/sdg-quiz

Methodology

- Few changes from 2024
- Multiple languages
  Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, French, Arabic, Thai
- English language is master document for decisions



*Reduced version

Dates

A university “year” may be a calendar year or may be seasonal. Some institutions’ academic years are different from their financial years. “Year” for the purposes of this ranking is defined as follows:

- The calendar year January to December 2023
- The academic year that ended in 2022-23
- The financial year that ended in 2023

You may use the most appropriate annual cycle that best fits your data, but ends in 2023.

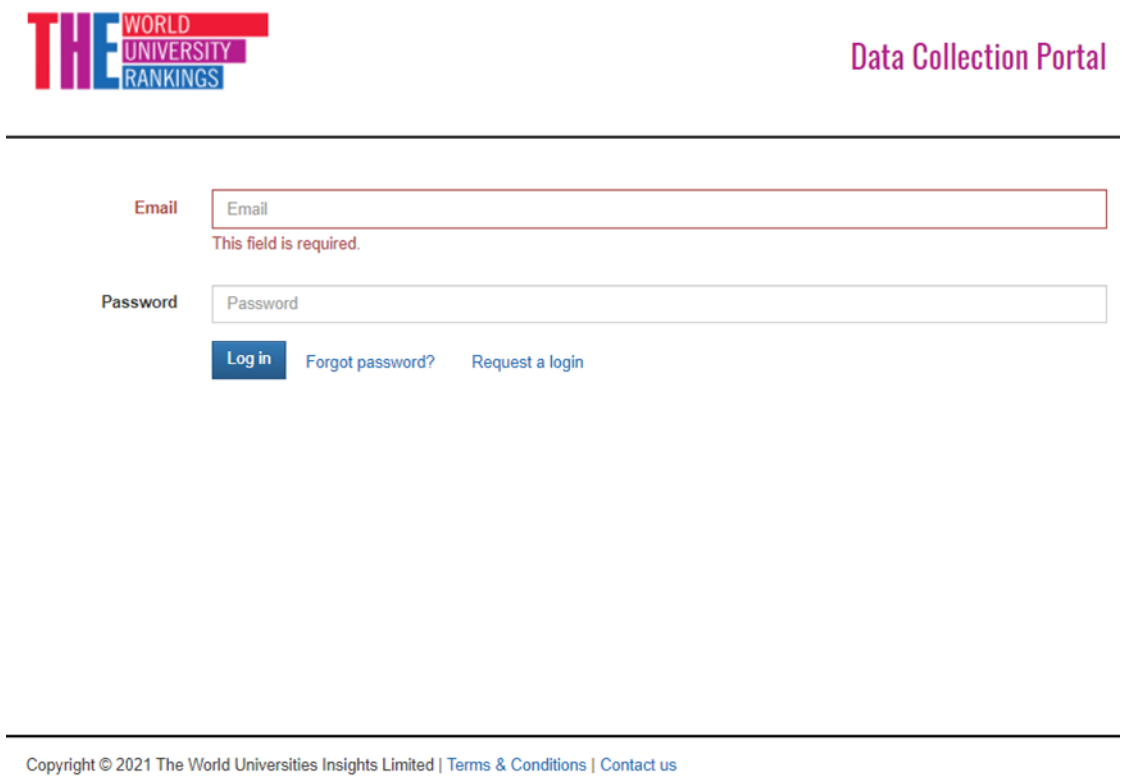
Research Evidence

- Make sure that your university is correctly identified in Scopus

- Explore the SDG queries on Mendeley:
https://elsevier.digitalcommonsdata.com/datasets/y2zyy9vwzy/1

- Work with your researchers to make relevance to SDGs clear

Data Collection Portal



The data collection runs from 16th September to 11th November, followed by a period of validation. To submit your data for this year's rankings, you will need to do the following:

1. Nominate a Data Provider

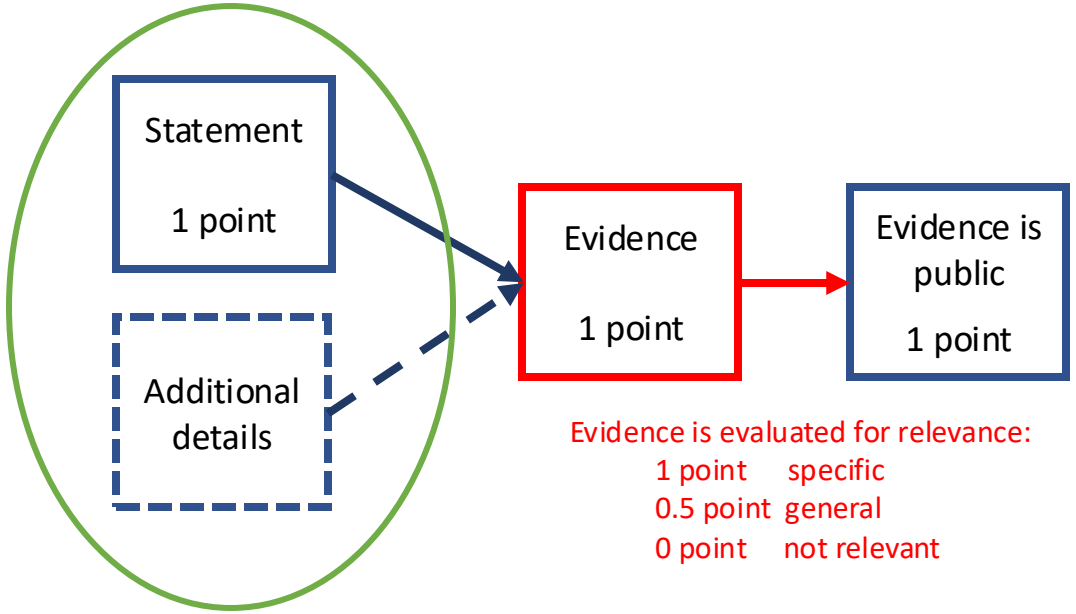
This will be a contact from your institution who will be responsible for submitting institutional data.

2. Login to the data collection portal

https://www.timeshighereducation.com/wur/portal/

Evaluating qualitative data

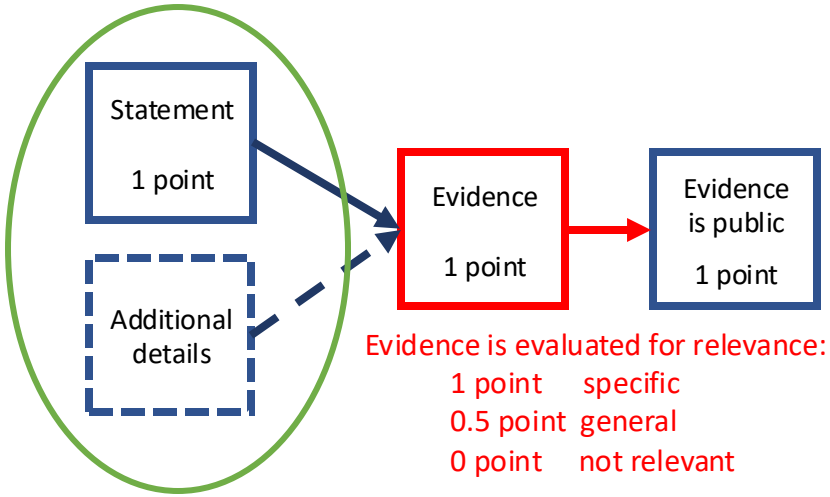
How do we calculate the score for evidence?



Maximum possible 3pts

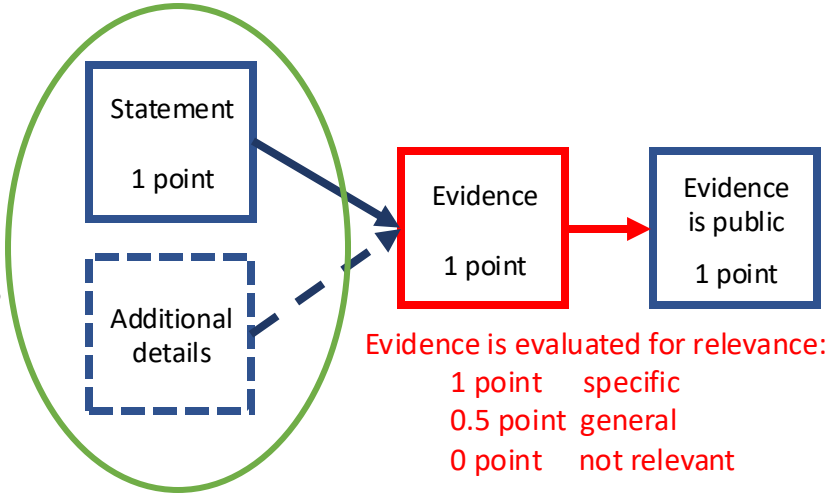
Submitting Evidence: Types

- We only accept **1** piece of evidence
- URLs are preferred type
- Uploadable types include .doc, .pdf, .xls, .gif, .jpeg, .png
- Video and Audio files are not accepted
- Evidence should be clear and direct



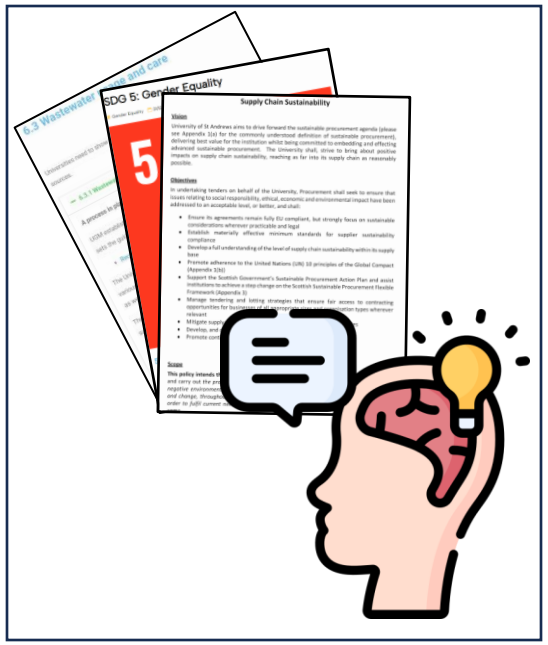
Submitting Evidence: Public or Private

- Public evidence gets additional credit
- Universities will be able to select private or public for each piece of evidence
- Accepted as public:
  - University websites that can be accessed by people outside your university network
  - Documents that can be found easily online
  - Google drive documents that are set as open
  - External websites
- Examples of confidential evidence:
  - Documents with sensitive information
  - Google drive documents set as private or only available for those with access to link



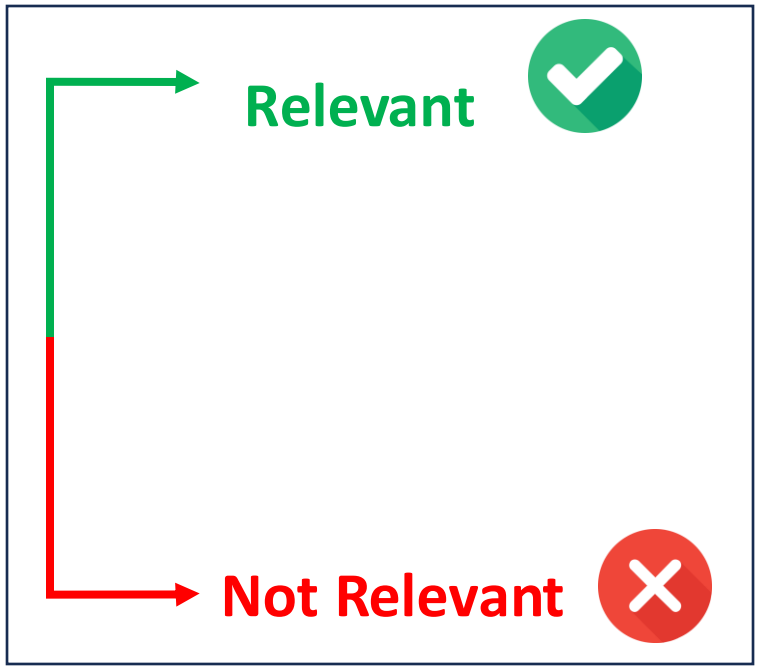
Evidence validation process

The Past



280K evidence to validate

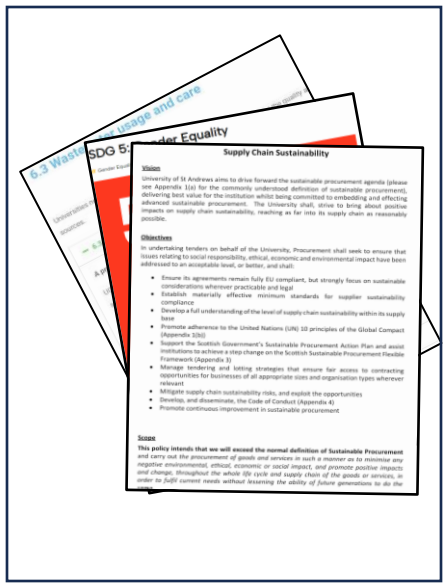
A team of **65 people** working for **3 months.**



Evidence validation process

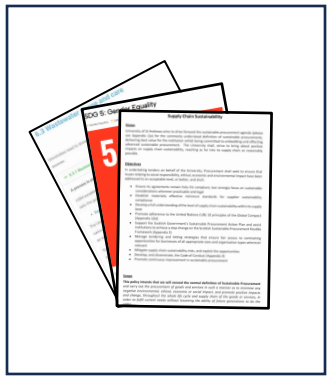
The Future

AI



AI

Humans



A **smaller** team

Rejected

QA

(Also humans)

Methodology changes

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings

Methodology & validation changes

- We only accept 1 piece of evidence per indicator
- We have split the indicators where we ask for two things
- Added metric 7.5 : Low-carbon energy use
- Added indicator 17.4.4 Sustainability literacy
- AI LLM Evidence validation
- More extensive continuous validation & QA checks

BEFORE			AFTER		
SDG	**ref_id**	**indicator**	**ref_id**	**exact titles TBC**	**comments**
2	2.3.2	Students hunger interventions	2.3.2	Students hunger interventions	title is same but means something else, 1 new ID
			2.3.5	**Staff** hunger interventions	
3	3.3.5	Mental health support	3.3.5	Mental health support **for students**	new title, *students* stays at 3.3.5, 1 new ID
			3.3.7	Mental health support **for staff**	
5	5.6.3	Maternity and paternity policies	5.6.3	**Maternity** policies	new title, *maternity* stays at 5.6.3, 1 new ID
			5.6.9	**Paternity** policies	
6	6.5.2	Promoting conscious water usage	6.5.6	Promoting conscious water usage **on campus**	new title, old indicator removed, 2 new IDs
			6.5.7	Promoting conscious water usage **in the community**	
8	8.2.2	Employment practice unions	8.2.2	Employment practice **unions**	title is same but means something else, 1 new ID
			8.2.9	Employment practice **labour rights**	
10	10.6.4	Anti-discrimination policies	10.6.4	**Anti-discrimination** policies	title is same but means something else, 1 new ID
			10.6.11	**Anti-harassment** policies	
15	15.2.5	Sustainable management of land for agriculture and tourism	15.2.5	Sustainable management of land for **agriculture**	new title, *agriculture* stays at 15.2.5, 1 new ID
			15.2.6	Sustainable management of land for **tourism**	
17			17.4.4	Sustainability literacy	Not scored

Affected indicators

Metric 7.5 Low-carbon Energy use – same metric used in SDG 13. Tackles UN target 7.2

7.3. Metric changed the weight due to addition of new metric (7.5): Low-carbon energy use
The energy use density weight is 17% in SDG

7.5 Low-carbon energy use

Year: 2022

This indicator is normalised and is worth 10% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 2.6% of the overall score).

Data Collected	Definition
Total energy used	Total energy used in Gigajoule (GJ) for the year 2023
Total energy used from low-carbon sources	Energy used from low-carbon sources in 2023 in Gigajoule (GJ)

Affected indicators

17.4.4 Sustainability Literacy

This metric is exploring the measurement of sustainable literacy. Although we are focusing on the Sulitest TASK system we recognise that other systems are available.

17.4.4	**Sustainability Literacy** **Year: 2023** This question explores how you evaluate your students' ability to learn and retain key concepts of sustainability. For 2025 we will not score this question but will use it to inform our decisions for 2026. Measure the sustainability literacy of students.	**0.0 % in SDG**

Best Practices

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings

SDG 1 – Best Practice

CONVOCATION

UMP launches Ready to Eat food package using retort technology

7 December 2022

PAYA BESAR, 7 November 2022 - Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) launched the Ready to Eat food package using retort technology under the food@campus (UMP Campus Pantry) initiative in collaboration with the various parties.

The launch took place in conjunction with the inauguration ceremony of the Malaysian Taste Food Festival and ExpoConvo 2022 which was officiated by the Chairman of the UMP Board of Directors, Tan Sri Dato' Sri Dr. Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman.

Also present were the UMP Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Ts. Dr. Yuserrie Zainuddin, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni), Associate Professor Ts. Dr. Mohd Rusllim Mohamed who performs the functions of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International) and President of the Wings Motor Gang Society (WMGS) Motor Club, Dato' Ahmad Azhar Othman (Awie).

With the aim of Zero Hunger on campus, this initiative is a preparation for providing food and emergencies to students who need to get ready-to-eat food.

In addition, this effort was formulated as a long-term plan by developing a comprehensive Sustainable Campus Life Planning covering food plans, hostels, transportation, devices, and others for students.

Does your university as a body provide support (e.g. food, housing, transportation, legal services) for students from low income families to enable them to complete university?

Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA), Malaysia

1 NO POVERTY

SDG 4 - Best practice

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

WE ARE A

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Aalborg University Library is a public library with free access. Our main task is to service and support Aalborg University. However, any permanent resident may obtain a free library card and use our print collections and library facilities during regular opening hours at no charge. The library computers also provide free access to our online resources.

- Create a profile (library registration form)
- Branches and opening hours

Good news and bad news

We might as well tell you right away, private individuals with no current affiliation to Aalborg University *cannot* use our electronic resources from home! But you *can* access the resources, if you come to one of our branches during regular opening

Does your university as a body provide free access to educational resources for those not studying at the university, e.g. computers, library, online courses, access to lectures, etc?

Aalborg University, Denmark

SDG 6 – Best Practice

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Drought Tolerant Planting

Does your university as a body plant landscapes to minimise water usage? (e.g. use drought-tolerant plants)

October 17, 2022

When selecting plants we consider the environment, and plants needing additional regular watering – other than for establishment – are not used. Our aim is to enhance habitats, to encourage year round wildlife activity and introduce adaptability to cope with any impact of the effects of global warming.

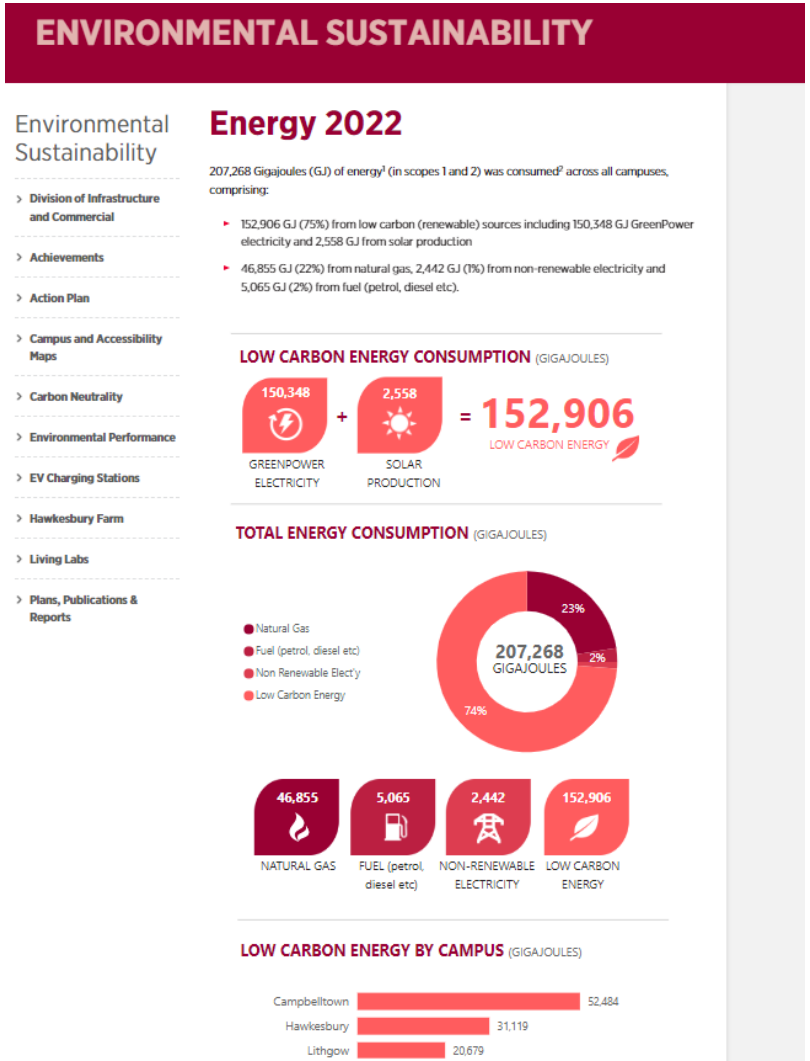
Since 2019 we have been using drought tolerant varieties of tender perennials including Rudbeckia, Dahlia and Salvia.

This year the Environment Agency declared droughts across most of the UK including the South West. The photos below, taken this summer, demonstrate how adept these drought tolerant species are to drought conditions with no watering whatsoever!

The Salvia have established here very well, are softly structural and full of colour. In the past this area would have been planted with an annual bedding scheme which can require watering during difficult phases of weather.

University of Exeter, United Kingdom

SDG 13 Best practice



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental Sustainability

- Division of Infrastructure and Commercial
- Achievements
- Action Plan
- Campus and Accessibility Maps
- Carbon Neutrality
- Environmental Performance
- EV Charging Stations
- Hawkesbury Farm
- Living Labs
- Plans, Publications & Reports

Energy 2022

207,268 Gigajoules (GJ) of energy[1] (in scopes 1 and 2) was consumed[2] across all campuses, comprising:

- 152,906 GJ (75%) from low carbon (renewable) sources including 150,348 GJ GreenPower electricity and 2,558 GJ from solar production
- 46,855 GJ (22%) from natural gas, 2,442 GJ (1%) from non-renewable electricity and 5,065 GJ (2%) from fuel (petrol, diesel etc).

LOW CARBON ENERGY CONSUMPTION (GIGAJOULES)

150,348 GREENPOWER ELECTRICITY + 2,558 SOLAR PRODUCTION = 152,906 LOW CARBON ENERGY

TOTAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION (GIGAJOULES)

Natural Gas
Fuel (petrol, diesel etc)
Non Renewable Elect'y
Low Carbon Energy

46,855 NATURAL GAS | 5,065 FUEL (petrol, diesel etc) | 2,442 NON-RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY | 152,906 LOW CARBON ENERGY

LOW CARBON ENERGY BY CAMPUS (GIGAJOULES)

Does your university as a body measure the amount of low carbon energy used across the university?

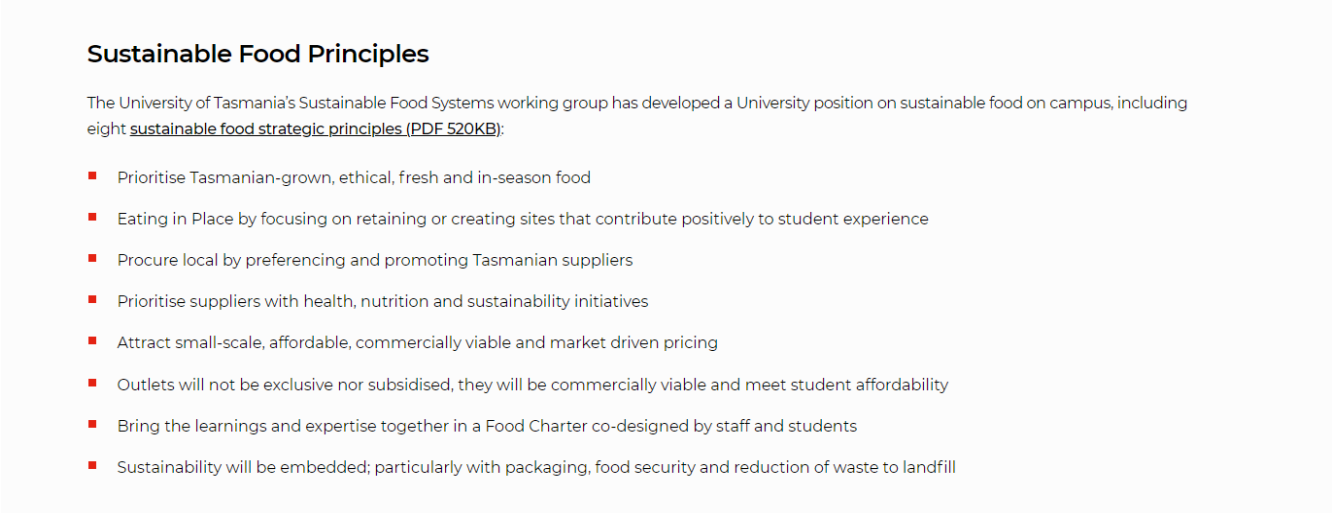
Western Sydney University, Australia

13 CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 15 Best practice

15 LIFE ON LAND

Does your university as a body have policies to ensure that food on campus is sustainably farmed?



Sustainable Food Principles

The University of Tasmania's Sustainable Food Systems working group has developed a University position on sustainable food on campus, including eight sustainable food strategic principles (PDF 520KB):

- Prioritise Tasmanian-grown, ethical, fresh and in-season food
- Eating in Place by focusing on retaining or creating sites that contribute positively to student experience
- Procure local by preferencing and promoting Tasmanian suppliers
- Prioritise suppliers with health, nutrition and sustainability initiatives
- Attract small-scale, affordable, commercially viable and market driven pricing
- Outlets will not be exclusive nor subsidised, they will be commercially viable and meet student affordability
- Bring the learnings and expertise together in a Food Charter co-designed by staff and students
- Sustainability will be embedded; particularly with packaging, food security and reduction of waste to landfill

University of Tasmania, Australia

SDG 17 Best practice

2.1 Progress towards UN Sustainable Development
Goal 1 - No Poverty

529 students from underrepresented groups received financial support from JCU to attend uni

3,046 low SES students enrolled in JCU in 2022, 2918 in 2023, approx 15% of all enrollments

645 (22%) low SES students graduated JCU in 2022

63 JCU publications for SDG1,FWCI 1.67, 2018 - 2022

In this section

2.1.1 JCU Institutional equity targets for students
2.1.2 Monitoring course completions for students from low socio-economic backgrounds
2.1.3 JCU Financial aid for students
2.1.4 Providing free, or low-cost basic services – JCU Health Services
2.1.5 JCU Ideas Lab - local start-up support
2.1.6 Research into global poverty
2.1.7 JCU participating in government policy

END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

2.1.1 JCU Institutional equity targets for students

In Australia, the School Disadvantage Index is a calculated value for a school based on the average Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSD) of the address of students that attend that school. The IRSD is a general socio-economic index published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that summarizes a range of information about the economic and social conditions of people and households within an area. This index includes only measures of relative disadvantage. A low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage in general. A high score indicates a relative lack of disadvantage in general. Every year, JCU sets ambitious targets to enrol students from Queensland schools with low IRSD scores. Annual UniX Roadshows provide information to students in these locations about pathways, scholarships, and future career options.

Domestic Enrolments by Socio-economic Status and Year

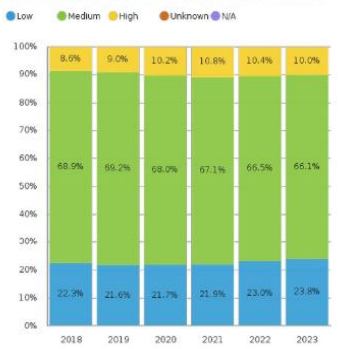


Figure 2.1: Socio-economic status of JCU students enrolled at JCU from 2018 to 2023

JCU also reports on its progress towards these targets through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP)

- In 2022 JCU exceeded its target of 3,000 enrolments of students from low SES backgrounds by 46 enrolments.
- 702 Indigenous students were enrolled, missing the ambitious target of 800 students by 98 enrolments.
- 9,930 students from rural and remote areas were enrolled, missing the target of 10,000 students by only 61 enrolments. This followed a pattern of decreasing enrolments at James Cook University for this time.
- In 2022, 23% of students enrolled at JCU were from a low SES background, which is an increase on previous years enrolments.
- In 2023, 23.9% of students enrolled at JCU are from a low SES background.

Please indicate if your university publishes progress against SDG1

James Cook University, Australia

How to make the most of your participation

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings

- Choose SDGs which are relevant to your institution
- When submitting evidence, it should be direct and clear and preferably public
- Coordinate with your teams to access the right data for your submission
- Reply back to us if we have any queries regarding the data

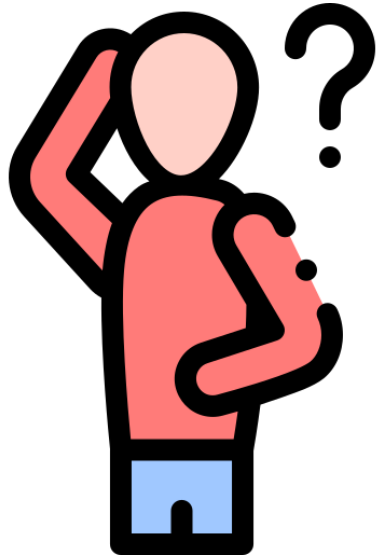
DataLabs
SDG Impact AI

Powerful AI-driven guidance to empower intelligence & SDG implementation, driven by THE's Impact Rankings.

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings 2025

What are Universities' challenges for Impact ranking?

Providing the right evidence is **a lot of work**

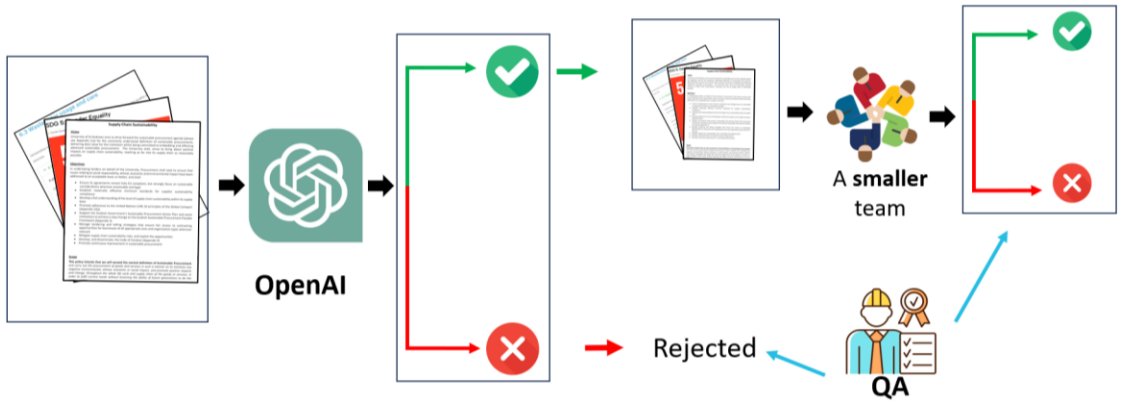


Complex guidelines, hard to know if you **fit the requirements**

AI (LLM)

Ranking engine

(Internal use)



Products

(External use)

- Evidence reviewer
- SDG Best Practices

DataLabs
SDG Impact AI

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings 2025

The Evidence Reviewer Module

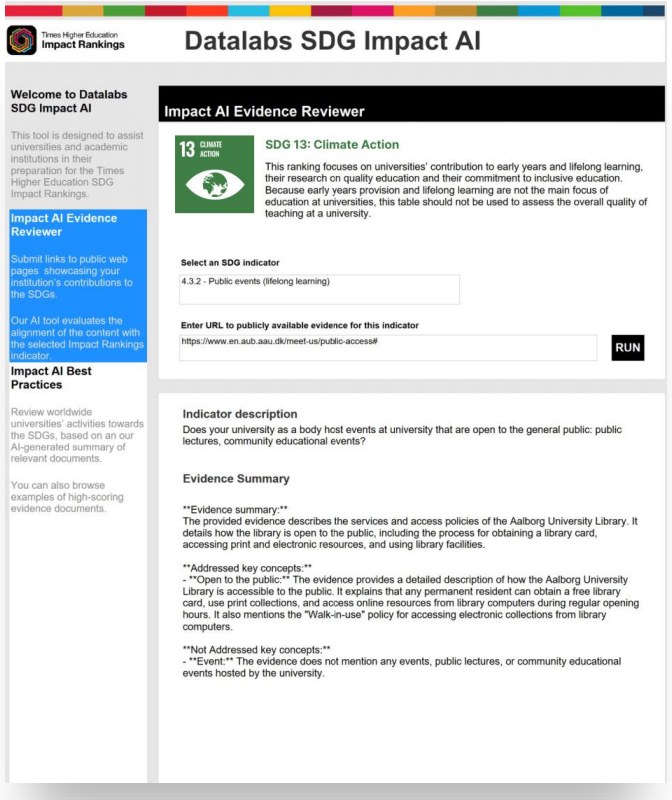
Precision in Evidence

Features:

The Evidence Reviewer uses AI-driven feedback to help you refine and elevate your SDG submissions, proving your contribution towards the SDG agenda, in line with THE's Impact Rankings 2025 methodology.

Benefits:

- Improved Evidence Quality: Refine your evidence submissions, supporting higher relevance and accuracy.
- Actionable Insights: Use detailed feedback to guide improvements, making your submission process more transparent and informative.
- Efficiency: Reduces your submission workload by rapidly accelerating research and comparison.



DataLabs
SDG Impact AI

DataLabs SDG Impact AI

Welcome to DataLabs SDG Impact AI

This tool is designed to assist universities and academic institutions in their preparation for the Times Higher Education SDG Impact Rankings.

Evidence Reviewer

Submit links to public web pages showcasing your institution's contributions to the SDGs.

Our AI tool evaluates the alignment of the content with the selected Impact Rankings indicator.

Evidence Reviewer

Select SDG

Select an SDG indicator

4.3.1 - Public resources (lifelong learning)

Enter URL to publicly available evidence for this indicator

https://www.en.aub.aau.dk/meet-us/public-access#

RUN

Best Practice Guide

Review worldwide universities' activities towards the SDGs, based on an our AI-generated summary of relevant documents.

You can also browse examples of high-scoring evidence documents.

Indicator description

Does your university as a body provide free access to individuals who are not formally affiliated with the university, such as non-students, non-faculty members, or non-staff to educational resources such as one of the following: computers, library, online courses, access to lectures etc?

Evidence Review

Results for:
Indicator: 4.3.1
Link: https://www.en.aub.aau.dk/meet-us/public-access#

The provided evidence describes the access policies of Aalborg University Library. It states that the library is a public library with free access, allowing any permanent resident to obtain a free library card and use print collections and library facilities during regular opening hours at no charge. However, electronic resources can only be accessed from the library's computers and not from personal devices or from home. The evidence emphasizes that private individuals without a current affiliation to Aalborg University cannot use electronic resources from home.

The evidence provided addresses the following concepts:
- free access to library

The evidence provided does not address the following concepts:
- open access to educational resources
- free access
- online courses
- free resources

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SDG Impact AI

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings 2025

Best Practice Guide Module

Access Global Insights

Features:

The Best Practice Guide provides access to a curated selection of top-performing examples of SDG practices, tailored to your region and needs.

Benefits:

- Knowledge Sharing: Learn from the best and drive a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.
- Time-Saving: Streamline your process of finding relevant examples, saving time and effort.
- Enhanced Implementation: Adapt actionable insights and strategies to improve SDG-related practices.

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Best Practice Guide

Select SDG

4.3.1: Public resources (lifelong learning)

Relevant activities

Examples of relevant evidence

- Aaldborg University (Denmark)
- Hong Kong Baptist University (Hong Kong)
- University of Worcester (United Kingdom)

4.3.2: Public events (lifelong learning)

Relevant activities

Examples of relevant evidence

- Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (India)

Submit links to public web pages showcasing your institution's contributions to the SDGs.

Our AI tool evaluates the alignment of the content with the selected Impact Rankings indicator.

Best Practice Guide

Review worldwide universities' activities towards the SDGs, based on an our AI-generated summary of relevant documents.

You can also browse examples of high-scoring evidence documents.

4.3.1: Public resources (lifelong learning)

Relevant activities

Providing Free Access to Educational Resources for Non-Affiliated Individuals

This guidance document aims to provide a comprehensive framework for universities to offer free access to educational resources for individuals who are not formally affiliated with the institution, such as non-students, non-faculty members, or non-staff. The document draws on examples from various universities to propose actionable steps that can be implemented to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in educational offerings.

Free Access to Library

Free access to library resources is a crucial step in democratising education and knowledge. Libraries serve as a hub for learning, research, and community engagement.

- **Open Library Membership**: Implement a system where non-affiliated individuals can apply for a library membership, allowing them to borrow books and access digital resources. For instance, *Lancaster University* offers community membership to the public, enabling them to borrow materials and access certain e-resources.
- **Visitor Access Days**: Designate specific days or times when the library is open to the public without the need for membership. This can encourage community engagement and promote the library's resources.
- **Digital Access**: Provide remote access to digital library resources, such as e-books and journals, for non-affiliated individuals. This can be facilitated through a registration process that grants temporary access credentials.

Open Access to Educational Resources

Open access to educational resources ensures that knowledge is not confined within the walls of the university but is shared with the broader community.

- **Open Courseware**: Develop and offer Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that are accessible to anyone with an internet connection. Institutions like *Padjadjaran University* have successfully implemented MOOCs to provide free educational content globally.
- **Institutional Repositories**: Create an online repository of research papers, theses, and dissertations that are freely accessible to the public. This enhances the visibility and impact of the university's research outputs.
- **Public Lectures and Seminars**: Organise regular public lectures and seminars on various topics, inviting community members to participate. *The University of Patras*, for example, hosts events that are open to the general public, fostering a culture of learning and dialogue.

Free Access to Online Courses

Free Resources

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