

RANKING OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

Introduction

Ranking of higher education institutions has become very popular in recent decades. Ranking is done by various ranking systems of which the most famous are ARWU-Jiao Tong or Shanghai List (China), CWTS Leiden (Netherlands), THES Times (UK), Webometrics (Spain) and others, which mainly use bibliometric systems through open databases data, such as ISI (Information Science Institute), WoS (Web of Science), Scopus, or Google Scholar.

Ranking serves a variety of purposes: responds to user requests for information regarding the position/reputation of higher education institutions, stimulates competition between higher education institutions, provides specific annotations that can be used for funding, and helps differentiate between different types of institutions and programs and disciplines. Rankings are very popular with students and their parents when choosing a higher education institution, they are important to the management of institutions from the aspect of the position of the institution as well as the amount of tuition fees, and provide a wide range of stakeholders with their explicit (measurable) indicators. They also contribute to the definition of “quality” of higher education institutions within the higher education system, complementing quality assessments conducted in external evaluation procedures.

The UNESCO European Center for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES) in Bucharest and the Institute for Higher Education Policy in Washington DC established the International Expert Group on Ranking (IREG) in 2004. Based on this initiative, at IREG's second meeting held in Berlin in May 2006, a set of principles on quality and good practice in the ranking of higher education institutions, the so-called Berlin principles on the ranking of higher education institutions, was discussed. These principles set the framework for the detailed design and dissemination of rankings, whether covering the national, regional or global level, leading to a system of continuous improvement and refinement of the methodologies used to conduct these rankings. The Berlin ranking principles contain 16 principles divided into four basic groups: the purposes and objectives of the ranking, the design and weight of the indicators, the collection and processing of data and the presentation of the ranking results.

Given the heterogeneity of ranking methodologies, these principles for good ranking practice will be the basis for ranking in the Republic of Srpska as well.

Purpose of ranking in Republika Srpska

- better information on the higher education system of all stakeholders, from students and researchers to decision makers at the institutional level,
- through comparable information, facilitating the choice of higher education institution for students and researchers,
- better information for the development of future strategies in the field of higher education,
- Encouraging higher education institutions for continuous development and improvement of the quality system for better positioning on the lists,
- increasing scientific productivity in the context of international visibility and recognition.

Ranking principles in Republika Srpska

- multidimensionality (should cover different areas of activity of institutions: education, research, innovation, internationalization and community relations),
- independence (should be carried out by experts in the field of quality system and ranking outside the higher education system of the Republic of Srpska),
- transparency (should offer users a clear insight into all factors used to measure results),
- globality (should be comparable to existing recognized ranking methodologies)

Indicative ranking criteria

- The ranking criteria are based on the Berlin principles of ranking with a special focus on the evaluation of the three missions of the university: teaching, scientific research and cooperation with the economy and the community. It is planned to determine a set of criteria for each component and weight factors for each criterion.

Data collection and processing

- It is planned to obtain part of the data related to scientific research productivity in cooperation with one of the respectable organizations dealing with evaluation in science (Webometrics, Center for Evaluation in Education and Science - CEON or some other organization with a similar scope of work). Dimensions/indicators of scientific performance would refer to productivity expressed by the number of published papers, the number of published fractions of papers, the impact of papers expressed through realized citations and the impact of papers expressed through realized citation fractions. In doing so, one should especially keep in mind the specifics of the Republic of Srpska in terms of a rather modest scientific performance and the impossibility of its adequate differentiation by the methodologies used at the global level. Therefore, citation information on international performance needs to be taken from citation databases in which data on authors are given in a more complete and reliable form, with the addition of performance achieved in regional and national journals not represented in global citation indices.
- For the part of the data related to the infrastructure and resources of the higher education institution, an on-site inspection is planned, by a visit of an expert team to the higher education institution.

Stakeholder involvement

- It is planned to hold 2-3 seminars with higher education institutions and a presentation of the adopted ranking criteria.

Project holders

- Agency for Higher Education of the Republic of Srpska and an expert team consisting of experts in the field of ranking from the region (expert team would consist of experts in the field of quality and ranking systems from B&H, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia) and institutions for evaluation in science (Webometrics or CEON).

Project duration

- March-September 2021