

Rankings in Europe

By Paul Marshall, Executive Director

23.11.2009

Who are the 1994 Group?

Established to promote excellence in research and teaching. To enhance student and staff experience within our universities and to set the agenda for higher education.

- > University of Bath
- > Birkbeck, University of London
- > Durham University
- > University of East Anglia
- > University of Essex
- > University of Exeter
- > Goldsmiths, University of London
- > Institute of Education, University of London
- > Royal Holloway, University of London
- > Lancaster University
- > University of Leicester
- > Loughborough University
- > Queen Mary, University of London
- > University of Reading
- > University of St Andrews
- > School of Oriental and African Studies
- > University of Surrey
- > University of Sussex
- > University of York

1994 group >

The Bologna Process

- "Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees".
- "Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries."

The Bologna Process

- > Building on our rich and diverse European cultural heritage, we are developing an EHEA based on institutional autonomy, academic freedom, equal opportunities and democratic principles that will facilitate mobility, increase employability and strengthen Europe's attractiveness and competitiveness.
- > 18 May 2007, *London Communiqué* 1.3

The Bologna Process

Transparency tools:

- > Diploma Supplement
- > Qualifications framework
- > Quality Assurance standards and guidelines.

On 28 and 29 April 2009, the Ministers responsible for higher education in the 46 countries of the Bologna Process met in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve to establish the priorities for the European Higher Education Area until 2020. They highlighted in particular the importance of lifelong learning, widening access to higher education, and mobility.

Classification of European Institutes of Higher Education (CEIHE) by the Centre for Higher Education and Policy Studies (CHEPS)

- > *‘Institutional Profiles, towards a Typology of Higher Education Institutions in Europe’*
 - > August 2005
- > to assess the need for a European classification of higher education institutions;
- > to develop a conceptual model upon which such a classification could be based;
- > to propose an appropriate set of dimensions and indicators for such a classification.

Classification of European Institutes of Higher Education (CEIHE)

- > Stakeholder Aims:
 - > Transparency for students
 - > Transparency for business & industry and other organisations
 - > Facilitate consortia formation between institutions
 - > Enhance system transparency
 - > A basis for diversified policy approaches
 - > A methodological and analytical tool for research
- Proposed Classification Dimensions:
 - *Educational Profile*: looking at degree levels and the subject areas covered.
 - *The Student Profile*: including total enrolments and part-time numbers.
 - *Research Involvement*: measuring research income, peer-reviewed publications and the like.
 - *Investment in Knowledge Transfer*: judged by elements such as patents and licensing income.
 - *International Orientation*: including a measure for overseas academic staff.
 - *Regional Orientation*.

Phase III – U-Map

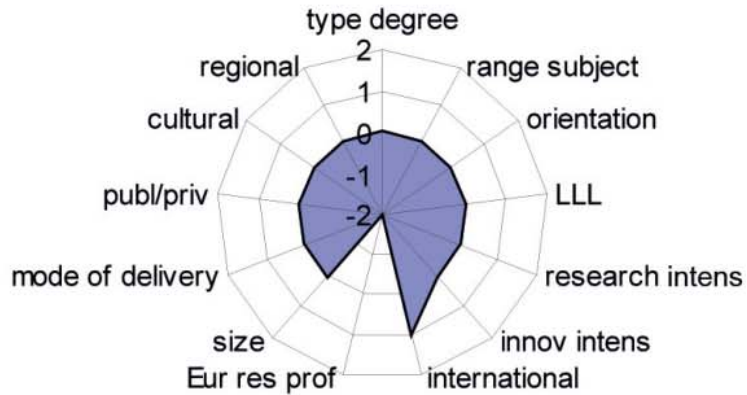
The classification maps the European higher education landscape and will make the institutional diversity of that landscape more transparent. U-Map will not rank the institutions league-table-style, but will position institutions on a number of dimensions, each representing an aspect of the function and performance of higher education institutions.

Dimension Indicator

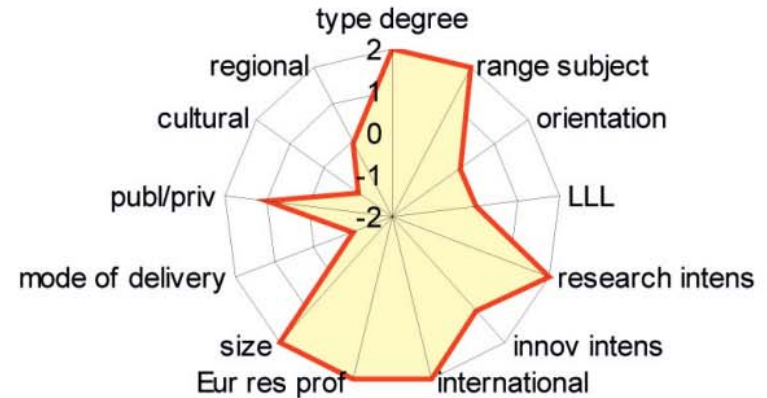
- 1: types of degrees offered
- 2: range of subjects offered
- 3: orientation of degrees
- 4: involvement in life long learning
- 5: research intensiveness
- 6: innovation intensiveness
- 7: international orientation: teaching and staff
- 8: international orientation: research
- 9: size
- 10: mode of delivery
- 11: public/private character
- 12: legal status
- 13: cultural engagement
- 14: regional engagement

Phase III – U-Map

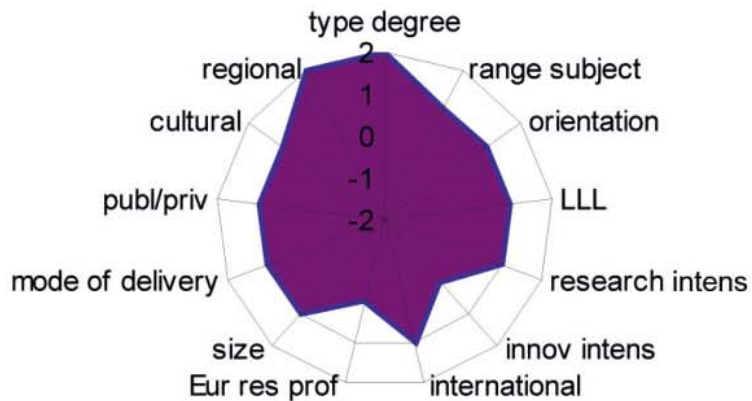
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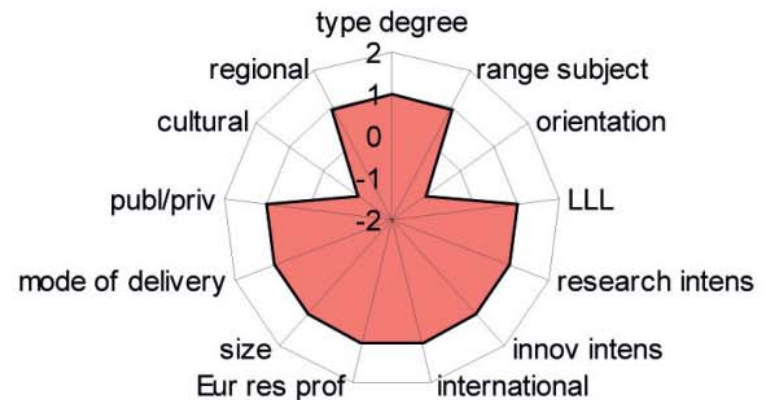
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The Centrum fuer Hochschulentwicklung (CHE) Ranking

‘We undertake research on higher education and develop political scenarios, but ultimately our activities aim at the realisation and testing of new organisational as well as steering and controlling models of higher education practice.’

- Multi-dimensional online ranking of German Universities
- Current pilot project to incorporate Dutch and Flemish HEIs
- <http://www.che-concept.de/cms/?getObject=302&getLang=en>

Centre for Higher Education (CHE)

- > Construct your own rankings criteria according to individual needs
- > No numerical ranking
 - > ‘Good’/’Medium’/’Bad’
- > No hierarchical false impression
- > Relevance to individual students increased
- > More informed choice
- > Similar motivation behind CEIHE

Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) by OECD

- > *Purpose:* to assess whether it is possible to measure what undergraduate degree students know and can do at the international level, in order to provide relevant information to HEIs, governments, and other stakeholders including students and employers.
- > *Motivation:* This information could contribute to HEIs' knowledge of their teaching performance, and thereby provide a tool for development and improvement.
- > *Aims:*
 - > First, to test the science of the assessment – whether it is possible to devise an assessment of the outcomes of higher education which enables to make valid and reliable statements about the performance/effectiveness of learning in HEIs of very different types, and in countries with different cultures and languages.
 - > Second, to test the practicality of implementation – whether it is possible to motivate HEIs and students to participate. In addition, the feasibility study will involve related work exploring other options for capturing indicators of higher education quality indirectly.

But why?

- > ‘Rankings are not going to go away. After all, they can provoke some useful questions, such as “why exactly are we not in the top group?”, or indeed, “how can we maintain this lead?” Government and universities will still use them, as fierce competition between universities induces copycat behaviour unless policy encourages diversity. Whether they serve as an accurate guide to higher education is therefore strictly academic.’

‘Breaking Ranks’ in *The Observer*, October 2008, No 269

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