

WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) University Rankings

■ Meaningless Metrics

■ Rita Akhtar, Executive Director, The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan

December 3, 2016

[Six Pakistani universities ranked among world's best 800 institutes ...](#)

www.samaa.tv/pakistan/.../six-pakistani-universities-ranked-among-worlds-best-800-i... ▼

Sep 6, 2016 - KARACHI: Six Pakistani varsities are ranked among the world's top 800 institutes on the 13th edition of the **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings**. National University of Science and Technology (Nust) continues to be the country's highest-ranked institute, remaining in the 501-550 band.

[No Pakistani university among top 100 Asian Institutes : QS Rankings ...](#)

<https://en.dailyakistan.com.pk/pakistan/no-pakistani-university-in-top-100-asian-insti...> ▼

Jun 14, 2016 - ISLAMABAD (Web Desk) - Ten Pakistani universities have been named among the best universities in Asia, according to global higher ...

[QS Rankings: Pakistani universities fail to make mark in top 100 in ...](#)

www.pakistantoday.com.pk › National ▼

Jun 14, 2016 - Ten Pakistani universities have been named among the best universities in Asia, according to global higher education analysts, **QS** ...

[QS World University Rankings 2015-2016: 6 Pakistani Universities in ...](#)

feed.pk › Education ▼

Mar 8, 2016 - **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)** has come up with 'World University Rankings 2015-2016,' the list compiled of the best universities of the world ...

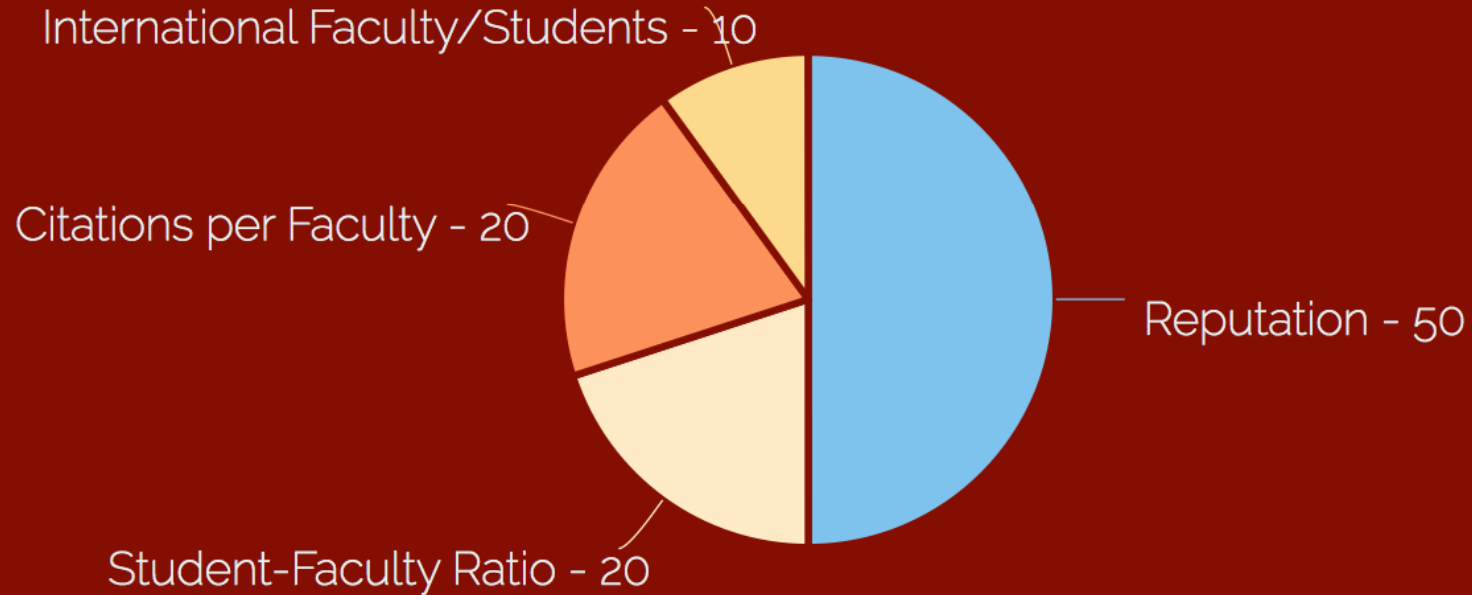
[Dailytimes | Six Pakistani universities ranked among the world top 800](#)

dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/.../six-pakistani-universities-ranked-among-the-world-top-... ▼

Mar 9, 2016 - As per the **QS World University Rankings** for 2015-16, the Pakistani universities that made it to the top 800 are, University of Karachi (KU), ...

QS Rankings are taken seriously in Pakistan

QS quality indicators



The annual QS World University Rankings highlights 900+ of the top universities in the world, based on six indicators.

1. Academic reputation (40%)

Academic reputation is measured using a global survey, in which academics are asked to identify the institutions where they believe the best work is currently taking place within their own field of expertise. The aim is to give prospective students a sense of the consensus of opinion within the international academic community.

In other words, someone's heard of it

Even setting aside charges that it may have used a paid Internet survey site where professors are paid "\$1 to \$5 a pop" to complete their survey and that the potential for conflict of interest is large given that QS also receives money from university recruiters, academics' opinions about more than a handful of universities would rest on little more than name familiarity.

(<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/05/29/methodology-qs-rankings-comes-under-scrutiny>)

2. Employer reputation (10%)

The employer reputation indicator is also based on a global survey, taking in more than 44,200 responses for the 2015/16 edition. The survey asks employers to identify the universities they perceive to be producing the best graduates. This indicator is unique among international university rankings.

In other words, someone's heard of it

Employers' opinions would be even less informed.

3. Student-to-faculty ratio (20%)

This is a simple measure of the number of academic staff employed relative to the number of students enrolled. In the absence of an international standard by which to measure teaching quality, this indicator aims to identify the universities that are best equipped to provide small class sizes and a good level of individual supervision.

US News gives 1 per cent to this factor in its rankings.

Awfully large weightage for very small differences

There are many problems with this, apart from just a bias toward small universities with enrollments under 5,000, the foremost being that there just is not that much difference among universities. *Times Higher Education* illustrates this well, noting that, "The California Institute of Technology – both the best small university in the world and the top institution overall – just makes the top 50 with almost seven students for every teacher. The University of Dhaka in Bangladesh has the same student-to-staff ratio despite counting more than 62,000 current students, making it the largest student body in the top 100."

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/news/top-100-universities-best-student-staff-ratio>

4. Citations per faculty (20%)

This indicator aims to assess universities' research impact. A 'citation' means a piece of research being cited (referred to) within another piece of research. Generally, the more often a piece of research is cited, the more influential it is. So the more highly cited research papers a university publishes, the stronger its research output is considered.

Let the gaming begin...

Problems include: bias against social science and humanities subjects which produce far fewer publications; poor but controversial research (such as the retracted article linking autism to vaccines) can be frequently cited; and "citation stuffing."

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When a feature of the economy is picked as an indicator of the economy, then it inexorably ceases to function as that indicator because people start to game it.

Goodhart's Law

5 & 6. International faculty ratio (5%) & international student ratio (5%)

The last two indicators aim to assess how successful a university has been in attracting students and academics from other nations. This is based on the proportion of international students and faculty members at the institution.

International students at U.S. universities

Rank	Place of Origin	Number of Students	Percent of Total
1	China	328,547	31.5%
2	India	165,918	15.9%
3	Saudi Arabia	61,287	5.9%
4	South Korea	61,007	5.8%

<http://www.iie.org/Services/Project-Atlas/United-States/International-Students-In-US#.WDuglrJg6os>

International students at U.S. universities by discipline

Rank	Field of Study	Number of Students	Percent of Total
1	Business and Management	200,312	19.2%
2	Engineering	216,932	20.8%
3	Other/Unspecified Subject Areas	185,107	17.7%
4	Mathematics and Computer Sciences	141,651	13.6%
5	Social Sciences	81,304	7.8%

<http://www.iie.org/Services/Project-Atlas/United-States/International-Students-In-US#.WDuglrJg6os>

Percentage of international students at UK universities

19.9 and 15.4

Cambridge and
Oxford

58.1

Buckingham (#55
on League Tables)

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“The methodology is designed to underweight the performance of US universities that tend not to have a high proportion of foreign students or foreign faculty members -- but who cares about that? It is unclear whether having more foreign students and faculty should even have a positive rank; less is probably better.”

David Blanchflower

<http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/david-blanchflower/2011/09/world-university-faculty>

Why should you care?

Fulbright Placement: Since 2005, working with IIE, we have sent more than 1,500 Pakistanis to 178 different universities in the U.S. for Masters or PhD degrees. Of these 178 universities, 58 do not appear in the QS rankings at all and another 84 have QS rankings below the top 500.

"US Fulbright programme is helping Pakistani students but these students need to be sent to the top US universities to learn science, mathematics and related subjects," Ishrat said adding that currently majority of Pakistani students were placed in less famous universities as it cost less. To this, Husain Haqqani argued that Pakistani students were not enough talented to get admission to the top Ivy League universities prompting a response from Ishrat. "This is not true I know many Pakistani students in my institute who are brilliant and could get admission anywhere," Ishrat, who served as dean and director of the prestigious Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in Karachi, said.



The screenshot shows the top of a news website. At the top right, it says 'INTERNATIONAL THE NEWS'. Below that, there are navigation links for 'HOME' and 'LATEST'. A 'Hot Topics' section lists 'Panama Leaks', 'Pak-India Ties', 'US Election', and 'CPEC'. The main headline is 'Heated exchange between Haqqani, Ishrat over Pak-US ties'. Below the headline, it says 'By Waqar Abbasi' and 'November 10, 2015'. There are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The article text begins with 'WASHINGTON: It was like a talkshow on a Pakistani news channel when two top former officials of Pakistan had a heated exchange at a reputed US institution about the future of US-Pakistan ties and the Coalition Support Fund (CSF).'

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/165794-Heated-exchange-between-Haqqani-Ishrat-over-Pak-US-ties>

Call to action

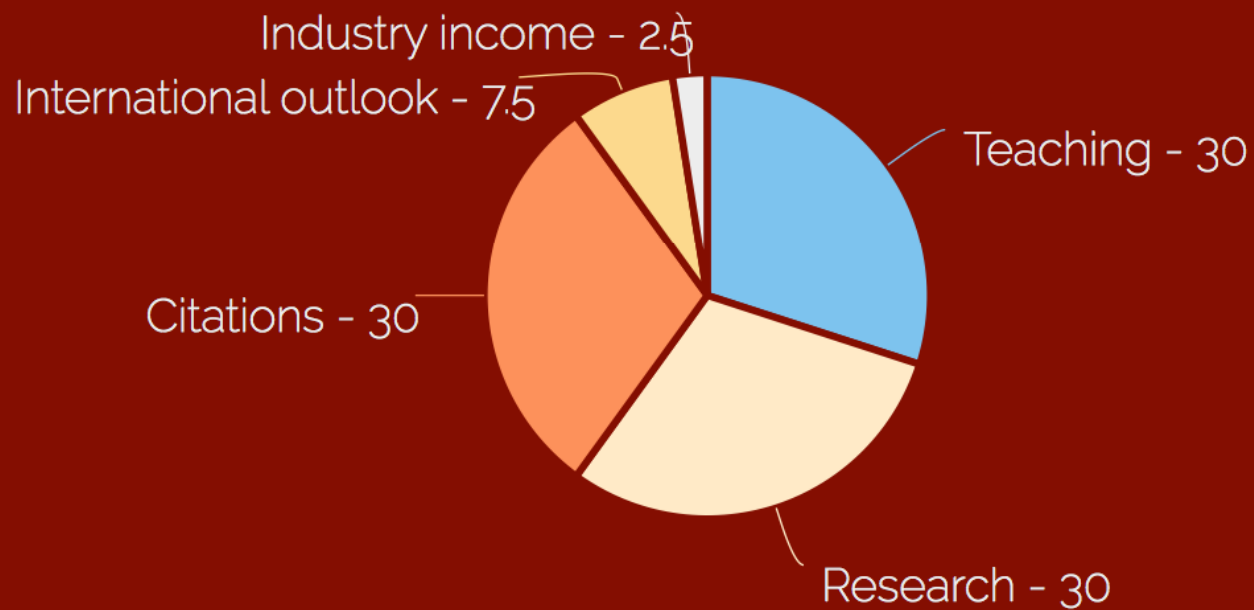
Please find ways to let the public and influentials know about the quality of the programs at your university - especially those of you who did not attend Ivies.

Other Ranking Formulas

Ranking indicator	Weight
Global research reputation	12.5%
Regional research reputation	12.5%
Publications	10%
Books	2.5%
Conferences	2.5%
Normalized citation impact	10%
Total citations	7.5%
Number of publications that are among the 10 percent most cited	12.5%
Percentage of total publications that are among the 10 percent most cited	10%
International collaboration	10%
Number of highly cited papers that are among the top 1 percent most cited in their respective field	5%
Percentage of total publications that are among the top 1 percent most highly cited papers	5%

U.S. News and World Report Global Rankings

Times Higher Education World University Ranking Indicators



<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ranking-methodology-2016>

