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FUTURUM



NEWSLETTER

MAYO COLLEGE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS PROGRAM (HEAP)

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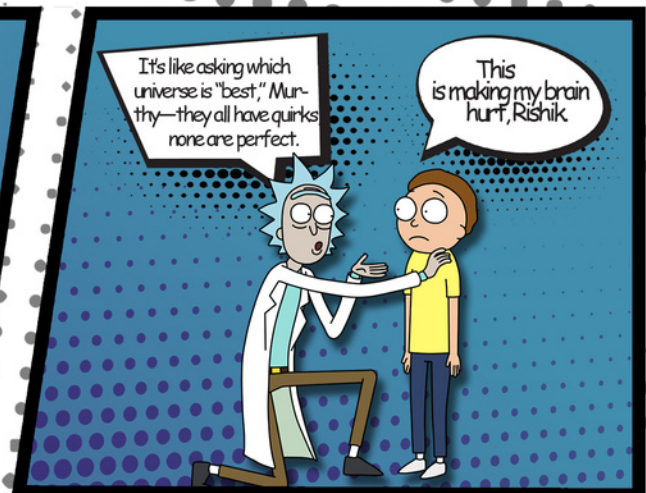
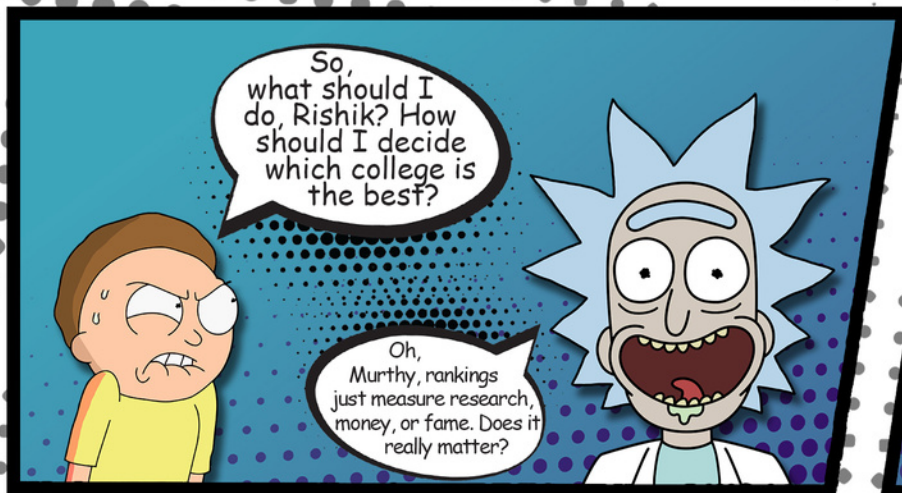
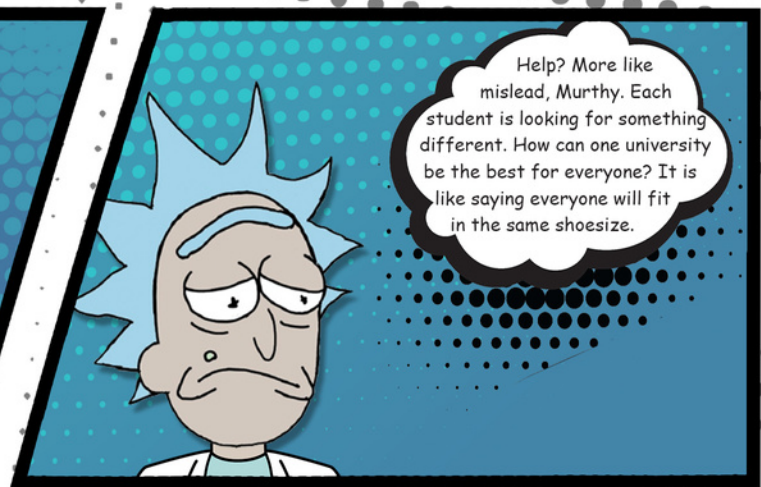
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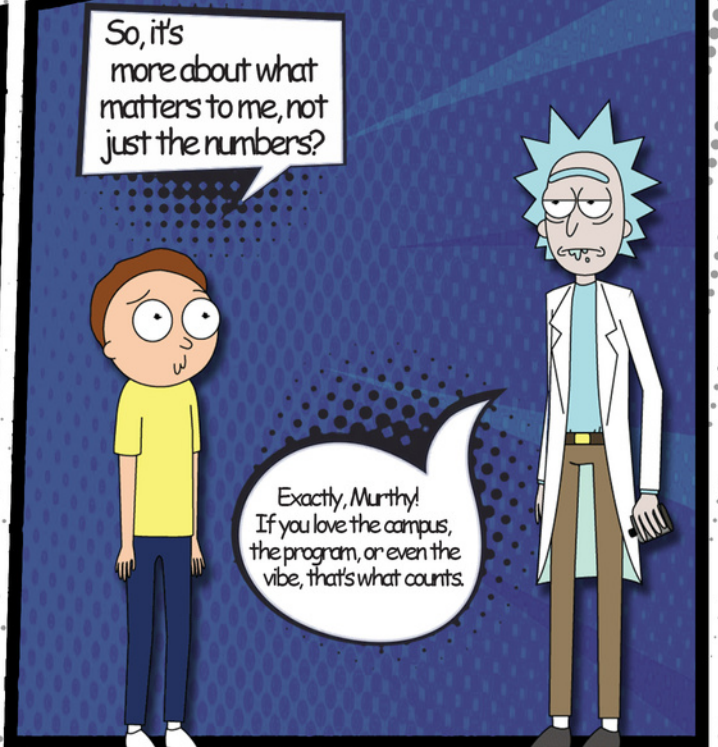
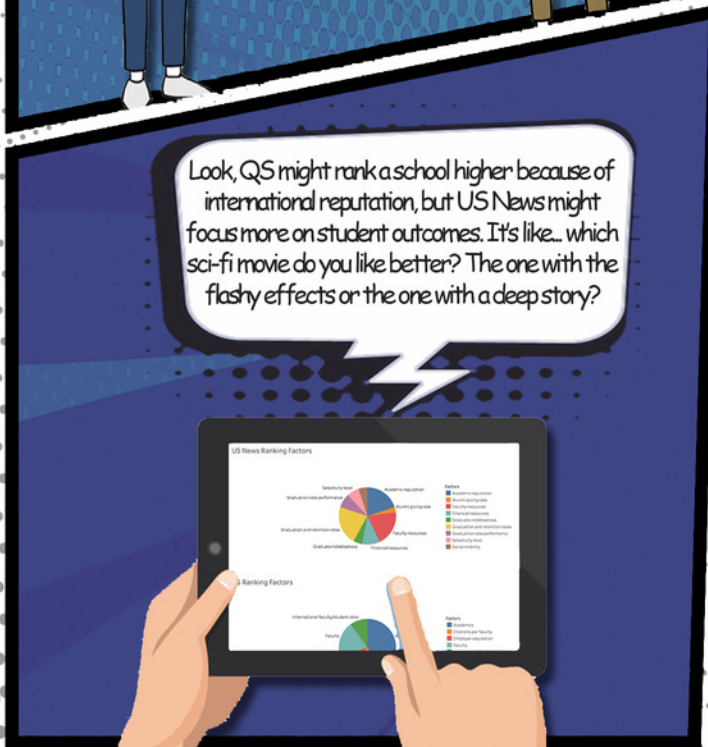
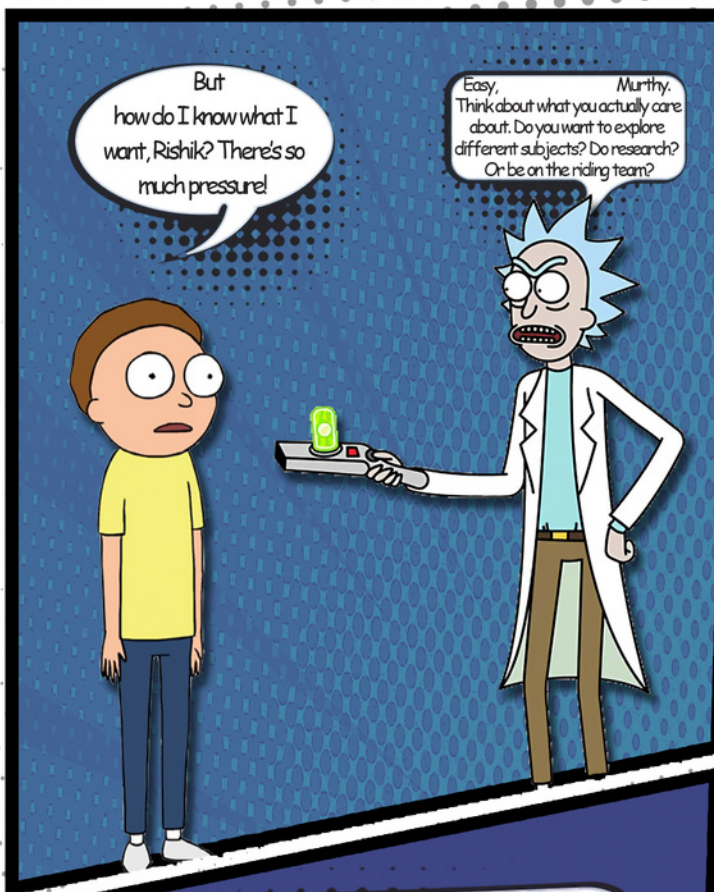
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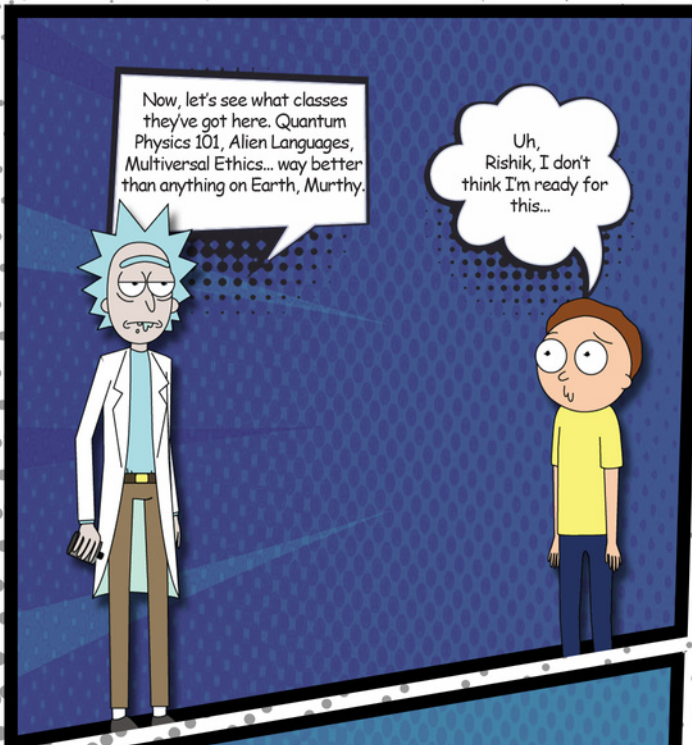
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**Quiz on
Rankings**

PROF RISHIK AND MURTHY







ALUMNI

INTERVIEW

Priyakrit Singh Rathore

Mayo College, Class of 2021,
University of Florida,
Class of 2025 (BE in Aeronautical Engineering)



What were the biggest challenges you faced when transitioning from Mayo College to university in the US ?

The biggest challenge was transitioning from Mayo College's bubble. In Mayo, you're secure in your position—you're clear about who you are, having grown into it over the years. But at the University of Florida, I had to figure out who I was from scratch. In Mayo, I was Priyakrit Singh Rathore: a debater, dramatics winner, horse rider, and a high achiever. But in the US, surrounded by equally accomplished people, I had to figure out where I fit in. It took time to navigate that uncertainty, especially since I knew I wanted to do aerospace engineering, but I wasn't sure what my journey would look like there.

Were there any aspects of Mayo College that you found particularly helpful or unhelpful in preparing for your college?

Mayo College was helpful in teaching me to be a generalist rather than a specialist, which allowed me to apply a wide range of skills, from community service to construction, in various situations.

This versatility helped me connect with people and contribute to organizations like Engineers Without Borders. However, the insular nature of Mayo made me very secure in my identity there, but outside of Mayo, I struggled to find that same sense of security, which made it hard to figure out who I was beyond the 300 acres.

And any advice that you can give, like to cope up with the things which were unhelpful?

My advice would be to practice retrospection. Looking back at how I was uncertain in 4th grade but overcame it by setting small targets really helped me. If younger me could do it, so could older me. Additionally, understanding that every action has consequences is key. Be mindful of why you're doing something, whether it's to achieve a goal or as a result of something else. Knowing the purpose behind your actions helps build confidence and clarity in who you are.

And what were your expectations before starting college and how did the reality differ?

Before college, I expected to continue doing everything I loved, like being in the play or taking part in activities. But it was hard to balance that with my goal of becoming an aerospace engineer. I realized it's tough to be a generalist when you have a specific focus. I also expected to perform well from the start because I was confident, but starting from zero again made it difficult to keep up. The biggest shift was realizing I had to rebuild everything from scratch.

And how has your time at the University of Florida contributed to your personal and professional growth?

My time at the University of Florida taught me independence, from managing my own schedule to taking care of myself, like doing laundry. In Mayo, everything was structured for us, but in the US, I had to regulate myself. I also developed new skills, like coding, which became a major focus for me.

Additionally, being in the US made me more aware of the privilege I had growing up in Mayo. It shifted my perspective, making me feel a responsibility to give back, especially considering the immense resources I had access to, which most people in India don't. This sense of humility and the desire to help others really grew during my time there.

So what we are told is that our grades of 9 th , 10 th , 11 th doesn't matter. So is that true?

Grades definitely matter, especially if you're aiming for top universities. You need to maintain strong grades, generally above 90%, in 9th, 10th, and 11th grades. A sudden drop, like getting a 65% in 11th grade, won't be overlooked. For schools like Stanford, they'd expect consistent high marks and a strong SAT score. That said, your grades don't define everything.



Thanks Priyakrit for sharing your wonderful experience and advice for our young Mayoites. Good Luck!

And a piece of advice that you would like to give to current mayo college students who are preparing for college life, especially those planning to study abroad?

The key takeaway is to stay open to change—whether it's adjusting your mindset, habits, or state. Being receptive to new ideas, people, and teaching methods helps you adapt better to the world outside Mayo. Flexibility is a skill not many have, but it's crucial, especially in college, where being adaptable is a great asset.

DECODING POPULAR RANKINGS

QS

US

THE

"College rankings measure prestige, but true success is built on passion, persistence, and the pursuit of personal growth beyond the numbers."



QS

US

THE

The Times Higher Education (THE) rankings, U.S. News & World Report College Rankings, and QS World University Rankings are three of the most influential university rankings globally, each with its own methodology and impact.



GLOBAL UNIVERSITY RANKINGS EXPLAINED

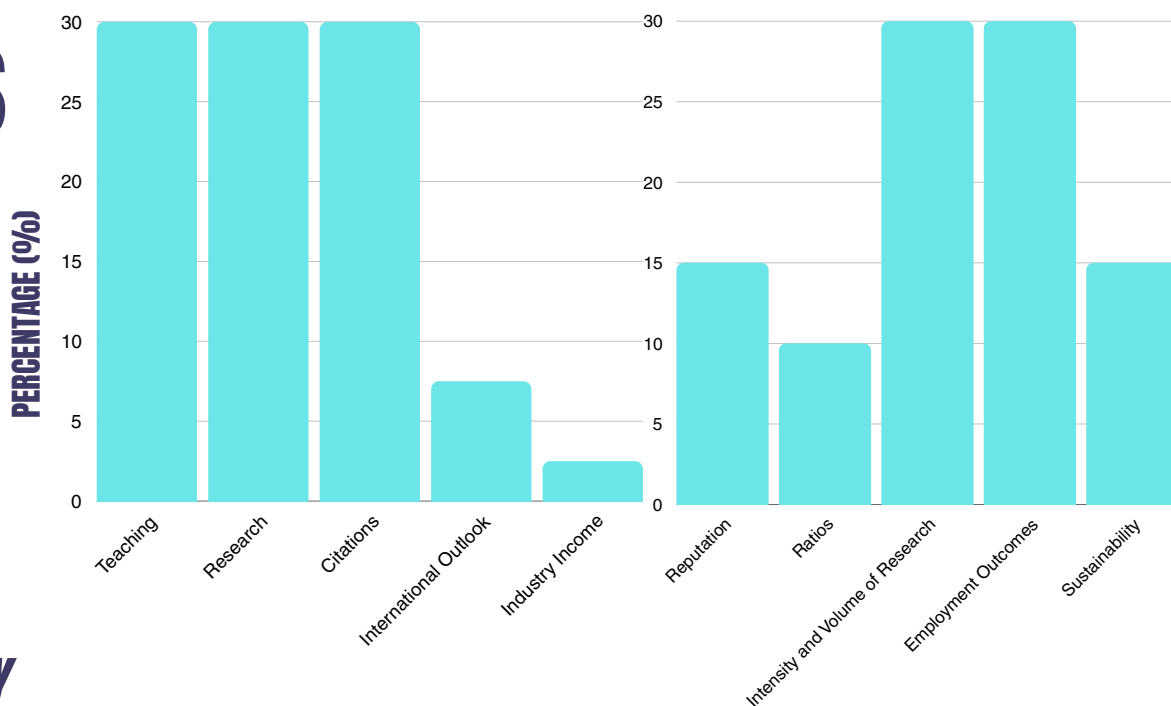
THE, U.S. News, and QS are major global rankings, each with different focus areas: research, reputation, and diversity.

UNDERSTANDING THE THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION COLLEGE RANKINGS

(THE) is a UK-based publication specializing in higher education. It provides news, analysis, and rankings of universities worldwide, notably the World University Rankings. THE is influential in academia, helping students and professionals assess institutions based on teaching, research, citations, international outlook, and industry income.

METRICS

These metrics collectively provide a comprehensive overview of a university's performance across various aspects of higher education.



WHY IS IT HIGHLY CRITICISED?

- **Overemphasis on Research:** A 60% weight on research and citations may undervalue teaching and student experience.
- **Reputation Bias:** Surveys favoring well-known institutions can reinforce hierarchies rather than actual performance.
- **Lack of Transparency:** The unclear methodology makes it hard for universities to understand or improve their scores.
- **Global Diversity Issues:** Favoring English-language journals may disadvantage non-Western institutions.
- **Focus on Quantitative Metrics:** Heavy reliance on data like publication counts overlooks qualitative factors like teaching innovation and student development.
- **Behavioral Impact:** Universities might prioritize rankings over educational goals, risking a decline in teaching quality.

UNDERSTANDING THE ***U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT*** COLLEGE RANKINGS

THE U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT COLLEGE RANKINGS, FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1983,

are a highly influential evaluation of colleges and universities, shaping public perception of higher education. These rankings emphasize research and academic reputation, using metrics like publication rates, citation impact, and international collaboration. In the 2024-2025 rankings, Harvard University secured the top spot, reflecting its enduring academic prominence.

However, critics highlight flaws such as **reliance on self-reported data, overemphasis on prestige measured through peer reviews**, and the challenge of comparing institutions with different missions and resources. A Maths professor at Columbia University explored the data used to maintain the university's second-place ranking in the US News and World Report, and found **much to question** the veracity of the data.

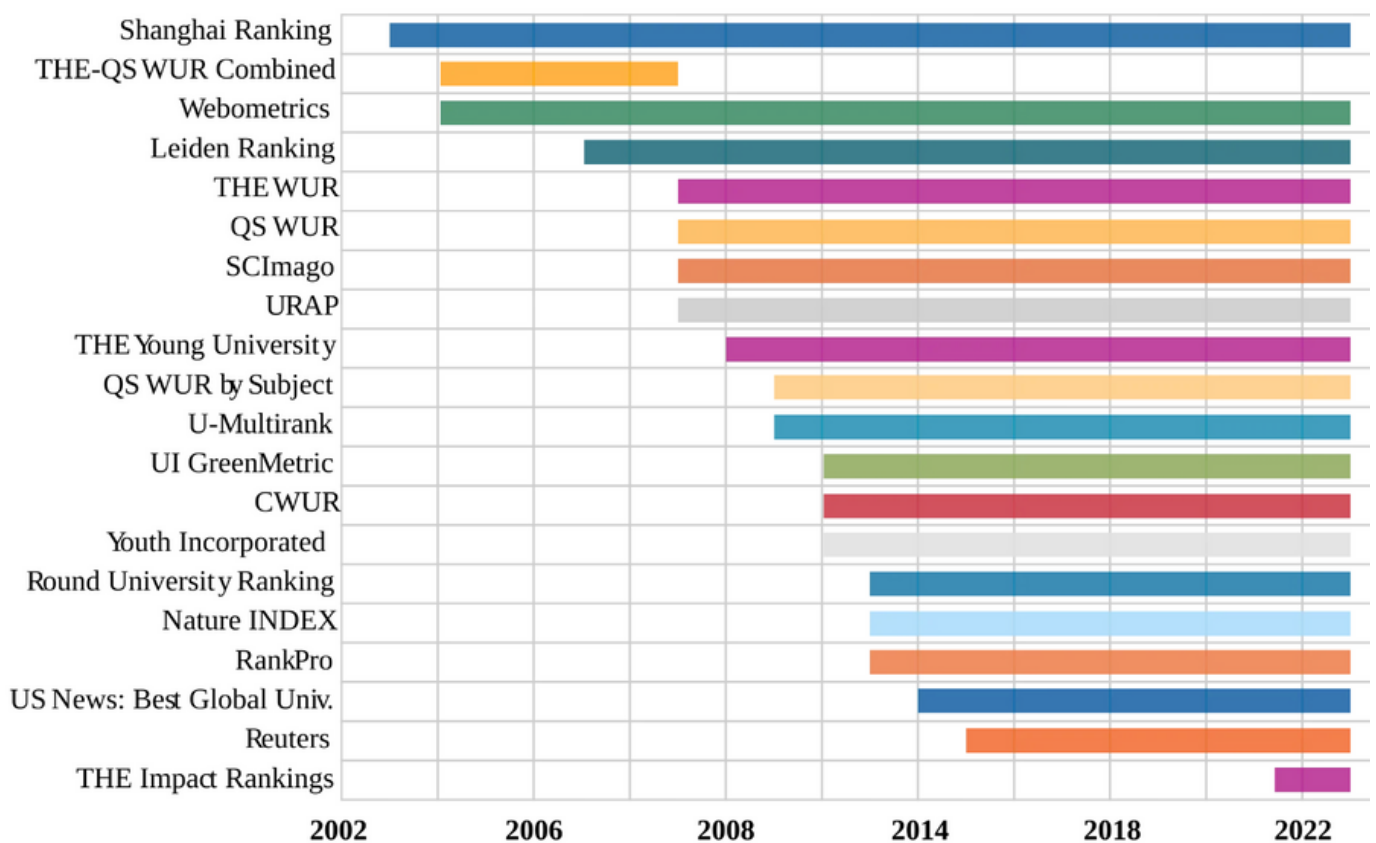
YOU CAN READ HIS DETAILED ANALYSIS IN HIS ARTICLE “AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FACTS BEHIND COLUMBIA’S U.S. NEWS RANKINGS” BY MICHAEL THADDEUS.

IN NOVEMBER 2022,

a group of the top law schools, including Yale, Harvard, Columbia, and Stanford, pulled out of the U.S. News & World Report rankings. And then in recent weeks, a similar thing has happened with medical schools: Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, and Penn all dropped out. A comprehensive critique of U.S. News & World Report's college rankings is presented in the article "Why New 'U.S. News' Rankings Are Flawed" published by Inside Higher Ed.

THE AUTHOR

argues that the rankings' methodology is **fundamentally flawed**, leading to **misleading representations** of *institutional quality*. The rankings have since **made some changes to their methodology** but remain **highly controversial**. While covering over **2,250** institutions in **100+ countries**, the **US News rankings** are **evolving**, adding **subjects like ecology and environmental engineering**. Despite their value, these rankings should be viewed critically, acknowledging both their strengths and limitations.



International ranking organizations and the year they were established.

SOURCE: <https://www.elsevier.com/academic-and-government/university-rankings-guide>

RANKINGS ARE MANY, AND NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL

QS RANKINGS

The QS World University Rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds are well-known and use metrics like Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, and Citations per Faculty. However, they are often criticized for heavily relying on reputation, which tends to favor historically prestigious institutions over those with strong current performance. Additionally, the emphasis on research-intensive metrics can overlook universities that prioritize teaching excellence or community service.

COMPARISON AND CONCLUSION

University rankings like THE, U.S. News & World Report, and QS provide useful insights but have notable limitations. THE emphasizes reputation and research, often overlooking regional contexts, while U.S. News relies on self-reported data and applies a uniform approach that may misrepresent smaller institutions. QS similarly favors historically prestigious universities, sidelining those excelling in teaching or community service.

In summary, while these rankings are useful for comparing universities on a global scale, they come with limitations. It's important to interpret them cautiously, keeping in mind their inherent biases and methodological differences.



I won't let these rankings decide my future...

These rankings, while valuable, are imperfect and should be interpreted with caution. Prospective students should use them as one of many tools, considering personal priorities and institutional fit to make informed decisions.

TEN QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN MAKING YOUR COLLEGE LIST

If Blindly Following Rankings Isn't the Best Way to Select Colleges, what Is?

College is a **challenging adventure** that pushes you *academically and socially*. You'll leave behind familiar faces and step into a completely new environment. For students studying abroad, this leap out of your comfort zone is even bigger. While it fosters growth and learning, taking it blindly can be detrimental. Many students realize too late that their chosen college isn't the right fit, leading to wasted time, money, and emotional energy. Avoid this by carefully reflecting on these key questions as you build your college list.

1. How Comfortable Are You in Large Groups?

Do you make friends easily? Are you comfortable raising your hand in a room full of people? If these scenarios feel intimidating, consider college size carefully. Large universities in the U.S. can have up to 70,000 students, with introductory classes hosting 500–1,000 people. On the other hand, smaller colleges like Harvey Mudd, with around 900 students, provide a more intimate and personal learning experience.

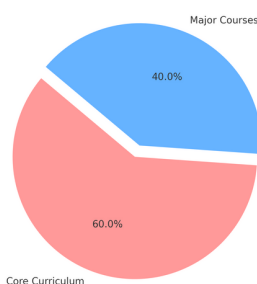


3. How Sure Are You About Your Major?

In the U.S., many universities offer the flexibility to change your major after starting your degree. However, if you're considering studying in the UK, be ready to declare your major upfront. Even within the U.S., flexibility varies between institutions. While the U.S. and UK represent two ends of this spectrum, other countries and colleges fall somewhere in between, offering varying degrees of adaptability.

Pro Tip: *If you're undecided, lean toward systems that offer flexibility.*

Distribution of Core Curriculum and Major Courses
in a Typical Liberal Arts Program



2. Do You Thrive as a Big Fish in a Small Pond or a Small Fish in a Big Pond?

If you're used to being "Top of the Class," think about how you'll feel in a college filled with equally or even more competent peers. Some students thrive in a competitive environment, while others may find it overwhelming. At a college where you're in the top percentile, you'll likely stand out for competitive opportunities. However, being surrounded by equally talented peers can also challenge you to elevate your performance and grow.

Tip: *Consider your reaction to competition. Do you rise to the occasion or feel discouraged?*

4. Are You Curious About Many Things?

Some education systems, especially in the U.S., require students to complete a "core curriculum" in addition to their major. This includes a variety of disciplines, providing a well-rounded education. For some, it's an opportunity to explore new interests; for others, it might feel like a distraction from their primary field of study. Consider whether you prefer a broad academic experience or an intense focus on a single subject.

5. Are You a Good Exam Taker?

Are you more comfortable with exams or projects? Do you prefer working in groups or independently? Select a college where the assessment style matches your strengths. If exams aren't your forte, it might be wise to avoid paths like competitive exams (e.g., JEE) or programs like CA that rely heavily on continuous testing.

Tip: Research the assessment styles of your target colleges to see if they match your strengths.

7. What Do You Want to Study?

Some countries excel in specific fields, like Switzerland for Hospitality or Italy for Design. Similarly, certain regions serve as industry hubs—like Silicon Valley for Computer Science. If you're drawn to a unique combination of subjects, look for a college that offers the flexibility to explore both areas of interest.

Pro Tip: If you're undecided, lean toward systems that offer flexibility.



Are you planning to settle in another country, or do you see yourself returning home after graduation? If you're aiming to live abroad permanently, consider post-study work visas and residency options. For fields like Law and Medicine, it's generally best to study in the country where you plan to practice, as qualifications may be specific to that region.

The Most Important Question: Is It Affordable?

No matter how perfect a college seems, you must ask: Is it affordable? Start by knowing your budget, then compare it to the college's Cost of Attendance (COA), which includes tuition, living expenses, and other fees. Scholarships can help, but they are highly competitive. If you're relying on scholarships, early planning with your Career or College Counselor is essential to maximize your chances.



JEE (Main)

Joint Entrance Examination



6. What Are Your Career Goals?

Are you aiming for a job at a prestigious firm or planning to pursue advanced studies like a Master's or PhD? If impressing employers is your goal, the reputation of your degree holds significant weight. Entrepreneurial students should prioritize colleges with strong networking opportunities. For those considering graduate school or a PhD, attending a smaller college where you can build close relationships with professors might be the smarter choice.

Tip: Tailor your college search to align with your post-graduation plans.

8. What Is Important to You Outside of Academics?

Is horse riding your passion? Or maybe mountain climbing or mastering Bharatanatyam? You don't have to give up your hobbies in college. Choose a college that offers opportunities to continue pursuing your interests, whether through clubs, teams, or specialized programs.

9. Where Do You Want to Live Short-Term?

Do you prefer the hustle and bustle of a big city or the calm of a small town? Think about the climate, location, and whether you'd like to study abroad or stay in your home country. These factors can have a big influence on your overall college experience.

10. Where Do You Want to Live Long-Term?

Final Thoughts

Remember, no one college is perfect for everyone. Create your own list based on what matters most to you. It's not just about getting in; it's about thriving once you're there. Be self-aware and choose a college where you're likely to succeed and grow both academically and personally.

QUIZ



1. Which university is ranked #1 in global university rankings for 2024?

- A) Alumni satisfaction
- B) Research output and global diversity
- C) Campus beauty and amenities
- D) Social media popularity

- A) Harvard University
- B) Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- C) Stanford University
- D) University of Oxford



2. What does the QS World University Ranking primarily consider when evaluating colleges?



3. Which of the following is a major factor that affects a university's position in global rankings?

- A) Box of chocolates
- B) Roadmap
- C) Compass
- D) Puzzle piece

- A) The university's sports programs
- B) The faculty-to-student ratio
- C) The number of study-abroad opportunities
- D) The quality of the cafeteria food



4. Complete the following statement: College rankings are like a _____ — they help you decide, but not everything about a university can be ranked.



1.B), 2.B), 3.B), 4.A)

Spectacular, Murthy! Your understanding of global college rankings is getting better and better!





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