Quality and Rankings

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2nd Athens International Conference on
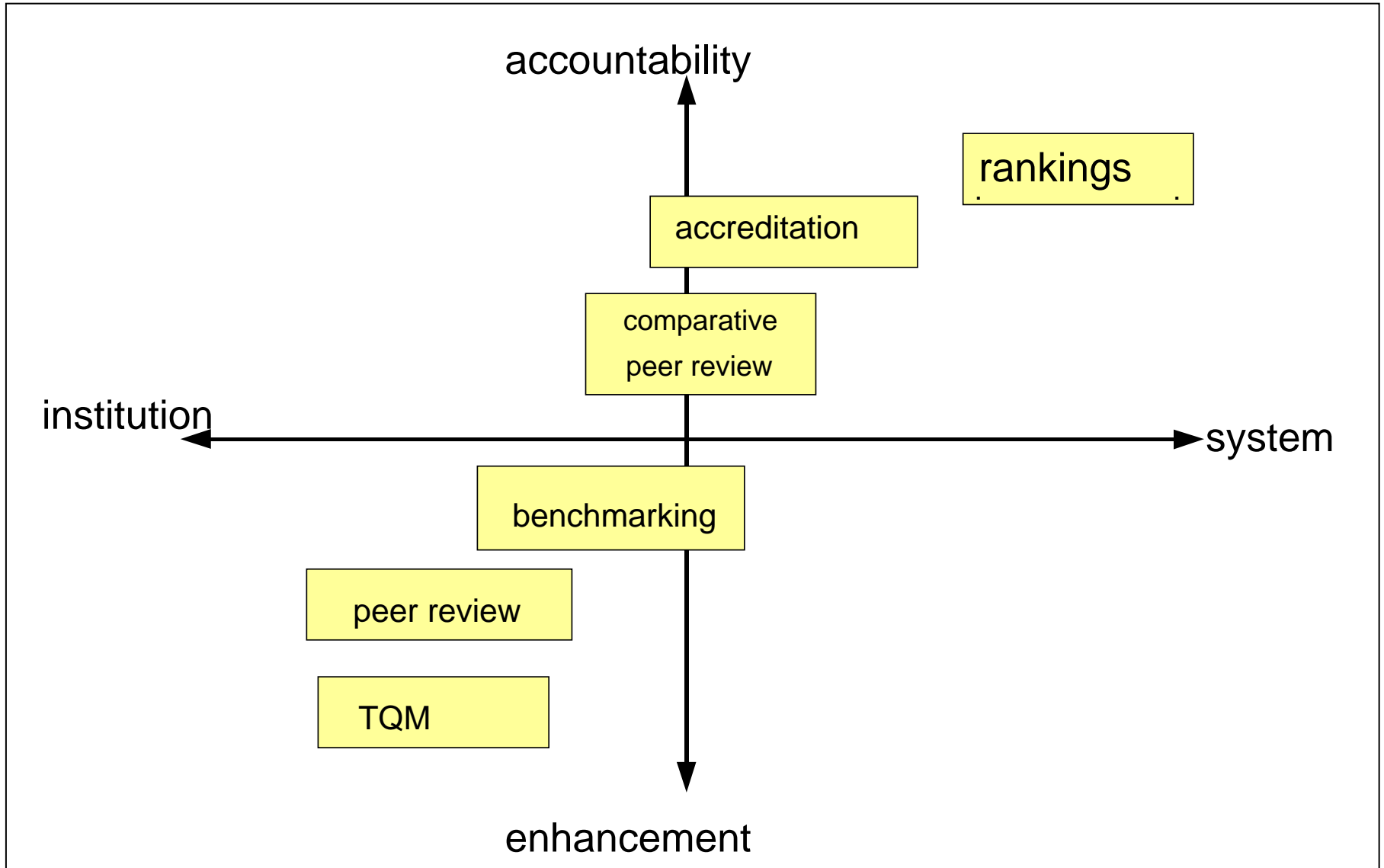University Assessment
12 -14 October 2007, Athens, Greece

www.che.de

Content

- private, non-profit organisation
- founded in 1994 by Bertelsmann Foundation and German Rectors Conference
- mission: to promote reforms in German higher education
- activities:
    - policy issues: financing, Bologna, accreditation system, comments on HE laws
    - consulting (e.g. strategic development, budgeting/internal money allocation, staff strcutures)
    - ranking
- staff: 30 people
- more information: www.che.de

- Increasing national and international competition in HE for students, staff, finance (➔global rankings)

- Massification of HE created demand for transparency (e.g. Germany > 10.000 undergraduate programmes)

- policy change: growing autonomy of HEIs led to growing demands for accountability, associated with change from input to output oriented manegement

■ Europe: „Bologna process"

- ■ emergence of a European higher education area:
- ■ joint degree strcutures (three cycles: BA / MA / PhD)
- ■ growing mobility of students and staff
- ■ common „standards and guidelines for quality assurance"
- ■ European register of Quality Assurance Agencies

- Evaluation, assessment and assurance of academic quality have an intrinsic relation to higher education and science

- Traditional procedures are:
  - peer review in academic journals
  - peer review of research proposals
  - publication of results and public discussion
  - some countries: habilitation as a rite of initiation to academic profession

accountability

rankings

accreditation

comparative
peer review

institution ← → system

benchmarking

peer review

TQM

enhancement

- instrument most external to institutions

- market orientation: **transparency** for market actors as main aim

- rankings are at the same time outcome and a medium of competitive structures in HE:

  - there existence reflects competitive markets *and*

  - they at they reconstruct competition by their results

- method: comparison & hierarchisation of institutions by numeric indicators

- term refers to method that is independant from target groups, particular goals
  - information for prospective students (US News, CHE)
  - information about global positioning (Shanghai Jiatong)
  - Information for HE community (Germany: National Science Foundation Ranking of Research Grants)
  - even: basis for accreditation (e.g.Nigeria)

Rankings vary in aims and target groups as well as „in terms of what they measure, how they measure it and how they implicitly define quality" Usher & Savino)

- most rankings do not have an explicit concept of quality

- BUT iplicitly define quality by their indicators and their weights
  - teaching and/or research
  - most (national) rankings measure **input**
  - process and output measures are much more diverse
  - national rankings: e.g. quality of incoming students
  - plus staff quality, ability to attract research grants

Indicator	Weight
Reputation	25 %
Student selectivity	15 %
Faculty Ressources (class size; qualification of staff, student – staff ratio)	20 %
Graduation and retention rates	20 %
Financial resources	10 %
Alumni giving	5 %
Graduation rate performance	5 %

Indicators in global rankings:

Shanghai Jiaotong Ranking		THES World Rankings	
Indicator	Weight	Indicator	weight
Academic reputation	40 %	SCI publications	20 %
Citations	20 %	Publications in Science & Nature	20 %
Student-staff-ratio	20 %	Highly cited authors	20 %
Reputation among employers	10 %	Nobel & Field medal price winners	20 %
International students	5 %	Alumni with Nobel price	10 %
International staff	5 %	Size of the institution	10 %

- **THES ranking primarily relies on reputation (50 % of total score)**
  - sample of peers and employers, but no transparency about structure of sample (regions, disciplines)
  - reputation is heavily dependant from the structure of the sample
    - by groups of respondents
    - by disciplines
    - by regions/nations
  - reputation is not the same than performance

- Shanghai & THES ranking:
    - research indicators based on <u>bibliometric analysis</u>
    - based on Science Citartion Index
    - biased in favour of
        - natural / biomedical sciences
        - English speaking countries
    - even stronger in Jiatong ranking, as publications in Nature & Science are counted double

Shanghai Jiatong ranking:

- Nobel Prices / Fields Medals
  - only available for small number of fields
  - historic indicator ?
  - assignment to institutions ?

- only in THES World Rankings: indicators on internationalisation
- indicators: percentage of international students/staff
- problems
  - definition
  - comparability of indicators

validity of world rankings is highly questionable:
„the global higher education community needs to begin to look at how best to collect and report data on institutions so as to permit thoughtful and useful international comparisons" (Usher & Savino)

Most rankings give definitions of good performance by defining the relative importance of indicators (by weights)
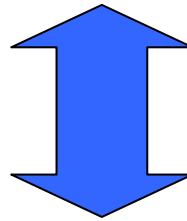
„Quality is in the eye of the beholder"

IV. The CHE Ranking

- first ranking published in 1998 after two years of preparation
- in co-operation with academic community
  - advisory board consisting of acdemic associations
- published in co-operation with media partner: since 2005 weekly newspaper „Die Zeit"
- Since 2004: internationalisation
  - Austria, Switzerland
  - currently: pilot project Netherlands/Flanders
  - 2008: University of Bozen/Bolzano

1. Information for prospective / mobile students

= primary target group

2. Information for HEIs (benchmarking)
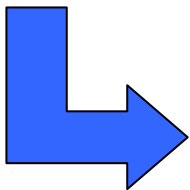
Balance between reduction of complexity for least informed group and detailed information for HEIs

Methodische Grundprinzipien

ranking of disciplines / fields

no ranking of whole universities

multidimensional ranking

no aggregated overall score

multiperspektive ranking

not only one data source

**rank goups
Top ☐ Middle ☐
and Bottom group ☐**

no league tables

city, university	students	study outcome
internatio-nalisation	teaching	ressources
research	labour market, employability	overall assessment (students, professors)

20 – 25 indicators ...

... from different data sources…

research

- publications /citations (bibliometric analysis)

- research grants (faculties/departments)

- research reputation (professors survey)

... facts as well as judgements

teaching

- student-staff-ratio (fact)

- student assessment of contact between students and professors

- student assessment of course organisation

Selection of 5 indicators according to personal preferences

1. Indicator:	many publications (F)	▼	⦿ ○ ○	
2. Indicator:	many citations (F)	▼	○ ○ ⦿	
3. Indicator:	much third party funding (F)	▼	⦿ ○ ○	
4. Indicator:	Research Reputation	▼	○ ○ ⦿	
5. Indicator:	Overall study situation (S)	▼	○ ○ ⦿	

(F) stands for Facts, (S) for Students opinions and (P) for Professor's tip.

show

focus on research

Universities	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Uni Frankfurt a.M.	▲ 20,3	▲ 9,1	▲ 363	➡ 4,3	➡ 2,4
Uni Heidelberg Medizinische Fakultät Heidelberg	▲ 19,8	➡ 5,9	▲ 438	▲ 44,1	➡ 2,3
Uni Heidelberg Medizinische Fakultät Mannheim	▲ 23,5	➡ 6,5	▲ 356	▲ 44,1	◼
Uni Tübingen	▲ 22,1	➡ 7,4	▲ 484	➡ 19,9	▼ 2,4

IV. CHE ranking - internet

1. Indicator: Overall study situation (S)

2. Indicator: good support relationship (F)

3. Indicator: good results in the preliminary examination

4. Indicator: Study organisation (S)

5. Indicator: Dovetailing pre-clinic - clinic studies (S)

(F) stands for Facts, (S) for Students opinions and (P) for Professor's tip.

show

focus on student experience

Universities	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Uni Regensburg	▲ 1,6	▲ 16,9	▲ 67,0	▲ 2,0	▲ 2,1
Uni Greifswald	▲ 1,8	➡ 18,6	▲ 63,1	▲ 1,9	▲ 2,2
Uni Würzburg	▲ 1,9	➡ 18,1	▲ 62,3	▲ 2,2	➡ 2,5

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