

CESAER workshop 18 June, 2024

Reimagining University Rankings: Exploring Strategic Priorities and Alternative



“You may have heard: Utrecht University has not been included in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking 2024.”

Professor Paul Boselie, UU Chief Open Science


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Utrecht University @UniUtrecht in the Netherlands has withdrawn itself from the World University ranking @THEworldunirank provided by @timeshighered. As this has generated quite some reactions – praise, questions, some doubts, I want to provide some context. Hence a thread 📖 1/16

RANKING		SCORES			
Rank	Name Country/Region	No. of FTE Students	No. of students per staff	International Students	Female:Male Ratio
	Utrecht University 📍 Netherlands	32,532	17.1	13%	62 : 38

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970



NETHERLANDS

University rector defends decision to quit ranking system



Liz Newmark 18 October 2023



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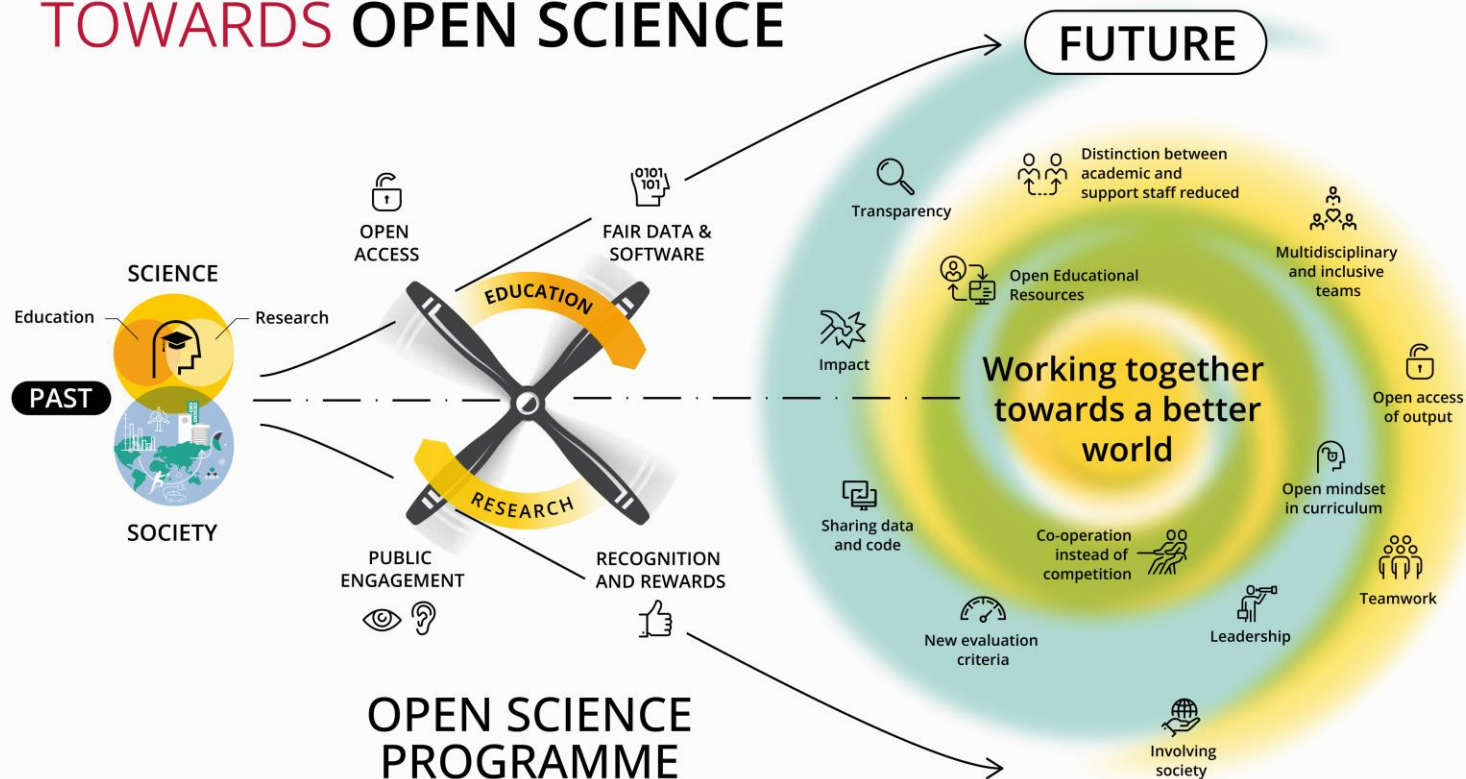
Pulling out of the *Times Higher Education (THE)* World University Rankings will not affect Utrecht University's standing or popularity among current or future students. That was the message of Professor Dr Henk Kummeling, rector magnificus of the Netherlands' university, whose areas of responsibility include student policy, academic affairs and cooperation in higher education.

"Utrecht University [UU], like many other Dutch and foreign universities, has been critical of rankings for a long time," Kummeling told *University World News*.

"UU has now chosen to no longer actively participate in rankings that do not adhere to principles of open science, as it is not in line with our values and ambitions and what we propagate in the ... academic community," he said.

The university accepts that the absence of UU in the London-based *THE* magazine's ranking may affect the perception of UU, he said. "But people are expected to choose to study, work or collaborate with UU based on content and quality, not on a spot in a ranking with limitations", said Kummeling who advocates strategic choices, making UU "a university with a head and a heart".

TOWARDS OPEN SCIENCE



Impact factor abandoned by Dutch university in hiring and promotion decisions

Faculty and staff members at Utrecht University will be evaluated by their commitment to open science.

By [Chris Woolston](#)

A Dutch university says it is formally abandoning the impact factor – a standard measure of scientific success – in all hiring and promotion decisions. By early 2022, every department at Utrecht University in the Netherlands will judge its scholars by other standards, including their commitment to teamwork and their efforts to promote open science, says Paul Boselie, a governance researcher and the project leader for the university's new [Recognition and Rewards scheme](#). "Impact factors don't really reflect the quality of an individual researcher or academic," he says. "We have a strong belief that something has to change, and abandoning the impact factor is one of those changes."

Why Journal Impact Factor (JIF) should not be used to assess individual researchers



Fig. 4.3. Why JIF Should Not Be Used to Assess Individual Researchers (Plomp et al., 2021). Image license: CC-BY.

Why UU is missing in the THE ranking

Too much stress on competition

UU has chosen not to submit data. A conscious choice:

- Rankings put too much stress on scoring and competition, while we want to focus on collaboration and open science.
- In addition, it is almost impossible to capture the quality of an entire university with all the different courses and disciplines in one number.
- Also, the makers of the rankings use data and methods that are highly questionable, research shows. For example, universities have to spend a lot of time providing the right information.

Source: <https://www.uu.nl/en/news/why-uu-is-missing-in-the-the-ranking>

Ranking the university

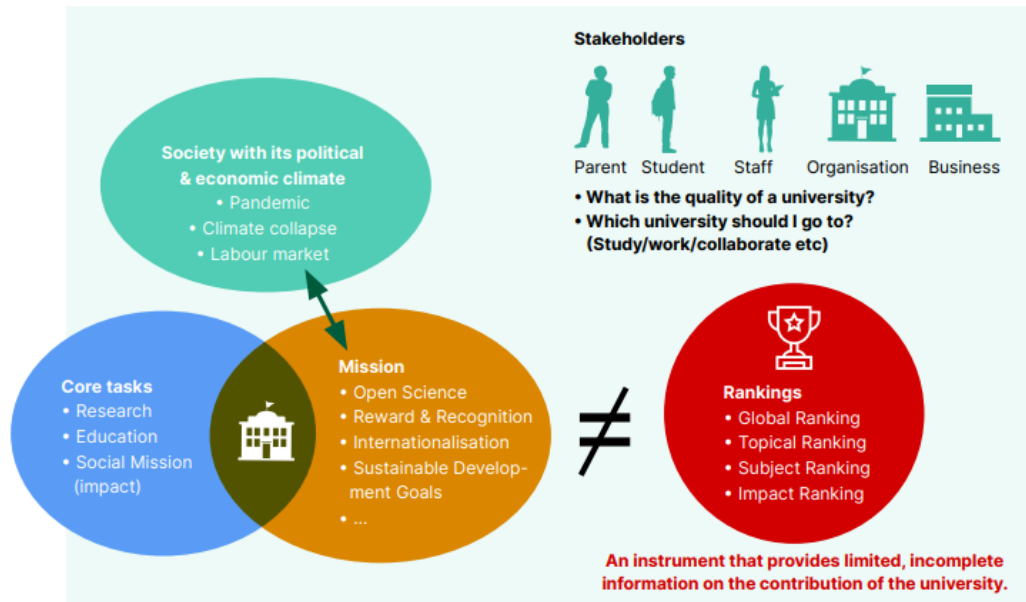
On the effects of rankings on the academic community and how to overcome them



Universities of
The Netherlands

National response, debate and position paper (2023)

Figure 1: University context in which rankings are used

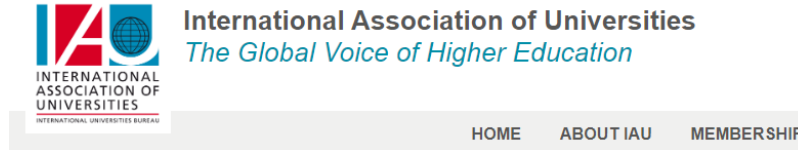


1 Two members of our expert group (Frans Kaiser and Ludo Waltman) are associated with U-Multirank.

Benefits and drawbacks ?

(+)

- Media attention, free publicity
- First mover advantage, global reactions such as 'brave'
- Global South enthusiasm :



Δ

- Involve Communication, avoid the element of internal surprise
- Check immigration regulations for students and employees
- The ranking and benchmarking addiction is both organizational and individual

Apendices

Coalition of the Willing

Focus on quality

- International : for example <https://coara.eu/>



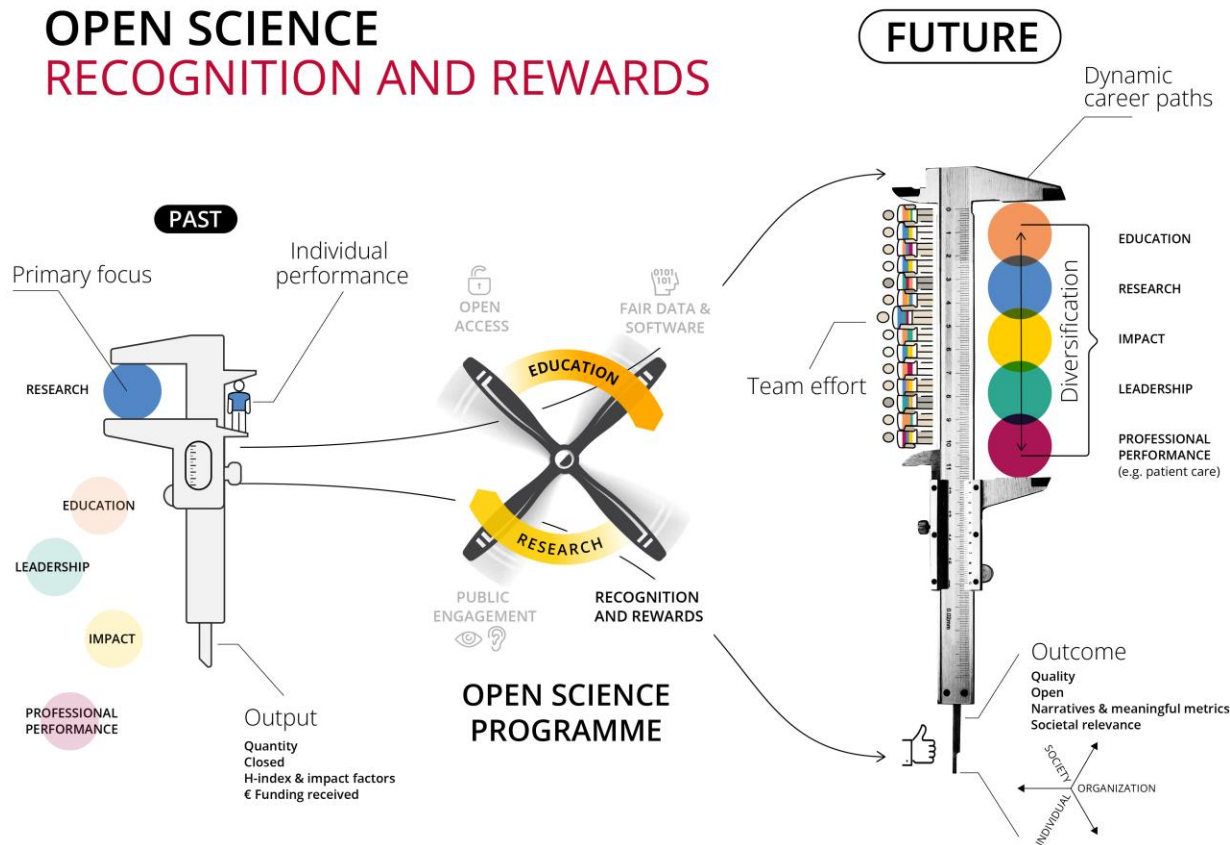
Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (2022) :

Our vision is that the assessment of research, researchers and research organisations recognises the diverse outputs, practices and activities that maximise the quality and impact of research. This requires basing assessment primarily on qualitative judgement, for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.

- International : for example DORA declaration
"Announcing plans for DORA's 10th Anniversary Celebration" (Dec, 2022)
- National : UNL (see position paper 2019)



OPEN SCIENCE RECOGNITION AND REWARDS



Recognition & Rewards Transformation

Utrecht University
Open Science Programme 2018-2021

Version 1.0, 2018-08-08

Open Science Team
This document is a living document and will be updated as the Open Science Programme evolves. It is intended to provide a clear overview of the Open Science Programme and its goals, and to serve as a reference for the Open Science Team and the wider community.



Open mind,
open attitude
open science
IMPROVING THE WORLD
SUSTAINABLY TOGETHER



2018

- UU OS programme: Rewards & Incentives section

2019

- NL Position Paper: Room for everyone's talent

2020

- UU Strategic plan: Open Science

2021

- UU Vision Recognition and Rewards

2023

- NL Roadmap: Room for everyone's talent in practice

2023

- UU Vision Recognition and Rewards updated



- TEAM
- RESEARCH
- IMPACT
- PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE
- LEADERSHIP
- EDUCATION

New R&R Vision September 2023

1. University staff (UP)
2. Principles
 1. We work together
 2. Leadership is key
 3. Room for development
 4. Transparency (open science)
 5. Quality over quantity
3. TRIPLE (broadened) as a tool

