



The ranking influencers

How academics and employers determine the best universities

When surveyed by ranking organisations such as the Times Higher Education, QS and US News & World Report, thousands of academics and employers from across the globe determine which universities are the best in their fields. In our annual research project for 2016/17, we aimed to find out how they make their choices and what influences them to nominate certain universities.

We surveyed and interviewed....



> 800

Academic and professional staff surveyed online



62

Academics interviewed



69

Different nationalities



31

Different countries



95

Universities world-wide



486

Employers surveyed

"I spent about as much time as I would on a TripAdvisor review"

Academic invited to fill out a reputation survey



While many academics see the rankings as fundamentally flawed, the rankings are the first place most go to get a feel for a university's reputation



Academics spend very little time filling out the surveys, often doing no research to back up their choices



Personal connections are what matter most when it comes to forming opinions on reputation



Few academics understand the high weighting given to reputation in the three world rankings



Employers and academics have little understanding of who is teaching students well



Academics and employers say there is very little shift in their opinion over a five-year period

5

Academics can, on average, name five universities that are strong in their field. For other nominations they rely on 'superbrands'



Those surveyed claim to be largely uninfluenced by the media, but many cited news and online media as how they had heard of universities that had impressed them

A summary of the key findings and details of how to purchase the full report, is available on the [World 100 Reputation Network's website](#).

For more information about the World 100 Reputation Network's research project *"The ranking influencers: How academics and employers determine the best universities"*, please contact Nadya Anscombe (research@theworld100.com)