

Activities

- **An online survey** on the influence of rankings on institutional strategic decision-making, policies and organisation (March-June 2013).
- **A series of site visits** (October-December 2013).
- **A roundtable** (May 2014) with senior university managers selected through an open call for participation to provide comments and inputs. The roundtable will also offer an opportunity for peer-learning through sharing experiences.
- **A final publication, including policy recommendations** (end 2014-beginning 2015) will be available in English and French, and launched through two events with an opportunity for discussion, in Brussels (for the English version) and Paris (for the French version).

Questions and further information

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Project partners



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RANKINGS IN INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES AND PROCESSES (RISP) 2012-2015



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About the project

The RISP project will be the first pan-European study of the impact and influence of rankings on European higher education.

The project seeks to build understanding on how rankings and similar transparency tools impact the development strategies of higher education institutions (HEIs), and to propose recommendations on how they can be used to promote institutional development. RISP therefore aims to promote transparency of the diversity and performance of HEIs, as well as improve strategic leadership of HEIs supported by stringent management systems.

Objectives

- To gain a deep understanding of the impact and influence of rankings and similar transparency tools on European higher education and institutional strategic decision-making.
- To identify how HEIs can use rankings and similar transparency tools as a strategic tool to promote institutional development, as well as the pitfalls deriving from the influence of rankings on institutional strategies.
- To provide input to the HE policy community on the potential effects of rankings on HE systems.
- To enhance European cooperation and sharing of good practices in the field.

Background

Universities worldwide are increasingly being confronted with ranking and classification initiatives both at national and international level. While many institutions have reservations about the methodologies used by the ranking compilers, there is a growing recognition that rankings and classifications are here to stay and many feel the need to respond.

Recent research on institutional responses further shows that despite the widely acknowledged methodological shortcomings, rankings and classifications have a growing impact on institutional decision-making and actions.

Shedding light on the ways in which universities respond to rankings and other transparency tools – consciously or unconsciously – will be the first step towards identifying opportunities for using rankings in beneficial ways for institutional development.

"We are not well placed in the rankings ... perhaps we should recruit a Nobel Prize to climb a little bit. I would be curious to know how other institutions manage this kind of situation."

"Great, up 10 places, I should update our marketing materials!"

"How could the data collected for ranking indicators be useful for making strategic decisions at my institution's level?"

"I would like to know how my university can use rankings as a tool for strategic decision-making and to help benchmark our performance against comparable peer universities."

"The growing popularity of rankings has brought university administrators additional pressure. I would like to discuss if there can be overall solutions to minimise ranking impacts on university life."