

World University Rankings 2024 by subject: results announced

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A more diverse range of universities and countries are excelling across disciplines, but it is still harder than ever to compete with the elite in the UK and the US, according to the the latest *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings data.

The number of territories represented in the top 10 of the 11 subject rankings has grown from five to eight in five years, with Australia, China and Singapore joining Canada, Switzerland, Hong Kong, the UK and the US in the latest tables, published this week. The subject rankings cover arts and humanities; business and economics; clinical and health; computer science; education; engineering; law; life sciences; physical sciences; psychology; and social sciences.

The education list is the most diverse at the top, with five territories – the US, UK, Hong Kong, China and Canada – featuring in the top 10 of the 2024 edition, up from just three in the 2020 edition. Meanwhile, six new countries have joined the top 100: Austria, Brazil, Russia, South Africa, Spain and Turkey.

The [University of Hong Kong](#) is the highest-ranking institution outside the US and the UK, in sixth place, followed by [Tsinghua University](#) in China in seventh and Canada's [University of Toronto](#) in ninth.

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Gerardo L. Blanco, academic director at [Boston College](#)'s Center for International Higher Education, said that "low-cost and high-impact research are within reach" for many countries in education, making it a more level playing field than in other subjects.

"Even the poorest countries have created normal schools, teachers' colleges or pedagogical universities, so lack of investment is not as acute in education," he said, contrasting it with subject areas such as the sciences, which are dependent on facilities like lab equipment.

The business and economics ranking has also diversified over the past five years. While just one more territory is represented in the top 10, and the same number of countries feature in the top 50, the dominance of the UK and the US is waning. These two countries claim 25 of the top 50 places this year, compared with 32 in the 2020 edition.

China is the only country outside the US and the UK that makes the top 10, but it claims two places: [Tsinghua University](#) is eighth and [Peking University](#) is 10th. Singapore, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands and Japan are among the other countries whose institutions are ranked in the top 50.

"They are, generally speaking, well-developed economies that have enjoyed large-scale academic mobility," observed Dr Blanco.

Usha Haley, W. Frank Barton distinguished chair in international business and professor of management at [Wichita State University](#), said that visa issues and political perceptions in recent years had affected how international students valued US and UK institutions. Students from China and India who secured work visas after studying for an MBA in the US still struggled with getting jobs because of citizenship requirements, she said.

At the same time, many other countries had developed great executive programmes with strong links to industry, she added.

Regional “indigenous business-school models” were also being created across the world, diverging from the dominant US approach, she said. These were “increasingly adapted towards their own cultural, political and economic systems” and they had been gaining acceptance from accreditation agencies, leading to “substantial reputational gains” for business schools outside the US and the UK.

Florian Stahl, professor of marketing and vice dean for student affairs at Germany’s University of Mannheim, agreed that agency accreditation was crucial for the success and global renown of business schools.

The business school at his institution, which is ranked 37th in the business and economics table, is among only 1 per cent to have received the “triple crown accreditation” in management education from three international agencies. Demanding accreditation standards along with a “continuous improvement” mentality has helped to keep the university in the top 50 group, he said.

But, despite the increased diversity in the education and business and economics tables, the top 10 for arts and humanities, social sciences and life sciences still exclusively feature US and UK institutions (although the social sciences table has a greater range of countries in the top 50 group).

And although there is increasing global competition in the full tables for all subjects, it is getting harder to break through the elite to reach the very top of a discipline. Just 13 different universities make the top five of the 11 subject rankings this year, down from 15 in the 2020 edition. Stanford University is still the only institution to feature in all 11 top fives.

Dr Blanco said that the “Anglo-American dominance” in fields such as the arts and humanities could probably be attributed to the “highly subjective or low-consensus” nature of these disciplines, which rest on reputation – a marker that is not easily shifted.

Lower- and middle-income countries might also lack the investment or the policy backing for such subjects, with the exception of China, which seemed to buck this trend despite high censorship, he added.

Apart from infrastructure, Professor Haley said that the lead of the UK and the US in the sciences could be because of legal systems that protected patents and copyrights, diverse sources of funding and the ability to attract expert talent.

“Students have little difficulty finding jobs anywhere in the world after studying in STEM fields in the US and UK,” she said.

tiya.alexander@timeshighereducation.com

Number one-ranked institutions across World University Rankings 2024: by subject

Ranking	University	Country/region
Arts and humanities	<u>Stanford University</u>	United States
Business and economics	<u>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</u>	United States
Clinical and health	<u>University of Oxford</u>	United Kingdom
Computer science	<u>University of Oxford</u>	United Kingdom
Education	<u>University of California, Berkeley</u>	United States
Engineering	<u>Harvard University</u>	United States
Law	<u>Harvard University</u>	United States
Life sciences	<u>Harvard University</u>	United States
Physical sciences	<u>California Institute of Technology</u>	United States
Psychology	<u>Stanford University</u>	United States
Social sciences	<u>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</u> <u>Stanford University</u>	United States