

U-Multirank's 2015 bibliometrics: information source, computations and bibliometric indicators

Information source: bibliographic records of research publications and patents

Web of Science database

All bibliometric scores are based on information extracted from publications that are indexed in the *Web of Science* (WoS) database (*Science Citation Index Expanded*, *Social Sciences Citation Index*, and *Arts & Humanities Citation Index*). CWTS operates the database under a commercial license agreement with Thomson Reuters, the WoS producer.

The WoS contains some 12,000 active sources, mostly peer-reviewed scholarly journals. The underlying bibliographic information relates to publications classified as 'research article' and 'review article'. The WoS database is incomplete (there are many thousands more science journals worldwide) and it is biased in favor of English-language. Hence, there will always be missing publications. WoS-based bibliometric data are never comprehensive and fully accurate; scores are therefore always estimates with a margin of statistical error.

Nonetheless the WoS is currently one of the two best sources, covering worldwide science across all disciplines. The only possible alternative database, Elsevier's *Scopus* database, has more or less the same features. All in all, one may expect comparable bibliometric results from both databases, especially at higher aggregate levels.

The WoS-indexed publications in Arts and Humanities (A&H) journals have not been included in the three citation-based indicators: (i) mean normalized citation score, (ii) top 10% most frequently cited publications, and (iii) interdisciplinarity indicator. There are three reasons: (1) the citation frequency counts are often zero or low; (2) citation patterns and counts tend to be much more affected by journal- or sub-field specific characteristics; (3) the relatively low level of validity of WoS-indexed peer-reviewed A&H journals as fully representative publication outlets of all research activities in these research disciplines.

The compounded effect of these three constraints is the high likelihood of unreliable and biased outcomes. In combination, the numbers of citations are usually too low to ensure representative, reliable and statistically robust citation-based indicators. Especially in those cases where a *higher education institute* (HEI) produces low numbers of A&H publications, some of which happen to be (highly) cited, this will give an overly positive view of the HEI's true citation impact in such fields.

Note that publications in arts and humanities are included in all publication-output based indicators – if only to reflect the fact that an HEI is actively engaged in these domains.

For further general information about the Web of Science: <http://thomsonreuters.com/thomson-reuters-web-of-science/>

Subject Categories

The field-based rankings within U-Multirank are related to fields of science, each of which are defined by collections of peer-reviewed scholarly journals. These journal collections are derived from Thomson Reuters' classification system of *Subject Categories* (SCs). Each WoS-indexed journal is assigned to one or more SCs, according to the general (multi-)disciplinary contents of its publications. There are about 250 SCs in the current system. The four fields within U-Multirank's 2015 edition are defined as follows:

| U-Multirank field | Thomson Reuters Subject Category |
|--------------------------|--|
| Computer sciences | Computer sciences - artificial intelligence |
| Computer sciences | Computer sciences - cybernetics |
| Computer sciences | Computer sciences - hardware and architecture |
| Computer sciences | Computer sciences - information systems |
| Computer sciences | Computer sciences - interdisciplinary applications |
| Computer sciences | Computer sciences - software engineering |
| Computer sciences | Computer sciences - theory and methods |
| Psychology | Psychology - applied |
| Psychology | Psychology - biological |
| Psychology | Psychology - clinical |
| Psychology | Psychology - developmental |
| Psychology | Psychology - educational |
| Psychology | Psychology - experimental |
| Psychology | Psychology - mathematical |
| Psychology | Psychology - multidisciplinary |
| Psychology | Psychology - psychoanalysis |
| Psychology | Psychology - social |
| Medicine | Allergy |
| Medicine | Andrology |
| Medicine | Anesthesiology |
| Medicine | Audiology and speech-language pathology |
| Medicine | Cardiac and cardiovascular systems |
| Medicine | Clinical neurology |
| Medicine | Critical care medicine |
| Medicine | Dermatology |
| Medicine | Emergency medicine |
| Medicine | Endocrinology and metabolism |
| Medicine | Gastroenterology and hepatology |
| Medicine | Hematology |
| Medicine | Infectious diseases |
| Medicine | Medicine - general and internal |
| Medicine | Obstetrics and gynecology |
| Medicine | Oncology |
| Medicine | Ophthalmology |
| Medicine | Orthopedics |
| Medicine | Otorhinolaryngology |
| Medicine | Parasitology |
| Medicine | Pathology |
| Medicine | Pediatrics |
| Medicine | Peripheral vascular disease |
| Medicine | Primary health care |

| | |
|----------|--|
| Medicine | Psychiatry |
| Medicine | Public - environmental and occupational health |
| Medicine | Respiratory system |
| Medicine | Rheumatology |
| Medicine | Surgery |
| Medicine | Transplantation |
| Medicine | Tropical medicine |
| Medicine | Urology and nephrology |

Please consult the Thomson Reuters websites for the list of journals per SC:

<http://ip-science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jlsubcatg.cgi?PC=D>

<http://science.thomsonreuters.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=K>

PATSTAT database

Patent publications usually contain references to other patents and sometimes also to other ‘non-patent’ literature sources. A major part of these *non-patent references* (NPRs) are citations to scholarly publications published in WoS-indexed sources. The NPRs are the so-called ‘front page citations’. These citations are mainly provided by the patent applicant(s) or by the patent examiner(s) during the search and examination phases of the patent application process.

The citing patents were clustered by using the ‘simple patent family’ concept – that is groupings of patent publications containing all equivalent, in legal sense, patent documents. A simple patent family therefore addresses one single ‘invention’. Each patent family contains at least one EP patent (published by EPO, the *European Patent Office*) or a WO patent (published by WIPO -*World Intellectual Property Organization*), AND at least one patent published by USPTO, the *US Patent and Trademark Office*. All NPRs within each family were de-duplicated. Each NPR is therefore counted only once per family. The NPRs were matched against the bibliographical records in the WoS. Our current information indicates that the majority of the WoS records are identified.

The patent database used to collect the NPRs from is the April 2013 version of the EPO Worldwide Patent Statistical Database (PATSTAT). CWTS operates an EPO-licensed version of PATSTAT.

For further general information about this source:

<http://www.epo.org/searching/subscription/raw/product-14-24.html>

Bibliometrics: data collection, computations, definitions and other technical specifications

Data preprocessing

The bibliometric indicators are applied to two groups of institutions: (a) the 750 universities that are included in the 2014/2015 edition of the CWTS *Leiden Ranking* (www.leidenranking.com/ranking/2014); (b) the main institutions that registered for the U-Multirank. These latter institutions are identified and delineated by CWTS through processing all available author affiliate address information in the publication. CWTS cleans, harmonizes and augments this source of information. The processing involved a mix of sophisticated pattern recognition software, manual checks and corrections, and extensive usage of a CWTS thesaurus of institutional name variants which includes misspellings, acronyms and truncations. For practical and budgetary reasons, this data cleaning and disambiguation work was done ‘top down’ by CWTS without consulting the HEIs subjected to this process. Some institutions provided input to CWTS on frequently occurring name variants of their originations, which was duly and fully processed.

A key challenge in the delineation and definition of each main institution is the handling of publications originating from closely affiliated research institutes and associated hospitals. Among academic systems a wide variety exists in the types of relations maintained by universities with these affiliated institutions. Usually, these relationships are shaped by local regulations and practices and affect the comparability of universities on a global scale. As there is no easy solution for this issue, it is important that producers of university rankings employ a transparent methodology in their treatment of affiliated institutions.

U-Multirank follows the allocation procedure applied by CWTS for its Leiden Ranking, which distinguishes three different types of university-affiliated institutions: component; joint research facility or organization; associated organization.¹ In the case of components the affiliated institution is actually part of the university or so tightly integrated with it or with one of its faculties that the two can be considered as a single entity. The University Medical Centres in the Netherlands are examples of components. All teaching and research tasks in the field of medicine that were traditionally the responsibility of the universities have been delegated to these separate organizations that combine the medical faculties and the university hospitals. Joint research facilities or organizations are the same as components except for the fact that they are administered by more than one organization. The *Brighton & Sussex Medical School*, the joint medical faculty of the *University of Brighton* and the *University of Sussex* and, *Charité*, the medical school for both the *Humboldt University* and *Freie Universität Berlin* are both examples of this type of affiliated institution. As for associated organizations, the third category, take the case of *Addenbrooke’s Hospital* in Cambridge (UK), which not counted as an organization associated with *Cambridge University* when it occurs as the only author

¹ This paragraph is largely copied from the explanatory text on the Leiden Ranking website (18-2-2015).

affiliate address on a publication. However, if it is mentioned in combination with another address referring to Cambridge University, for example the Medical Center, it is seen as related to the university and will contribute to the fraction of the publication assigned to Cambridge University.

Organisational sub-units that registered for participation in U-Multirank - such as individual faculties, schools, departments, or institutes – were excluded from the CWTS bibliometric data collection. Mainly because many of these sub-units are extremely difficult to delineate from the parent organization because the verification of author address information, and additional data collection, requires extensive input and feedback from knowledgeable representatives of the sub-units.

These data processing complexities also occurred in the U-Multirank registered *Islamic Azad University*, located in Teheran, where the available address information proved of insufficient quality to consolidate this institution at the main organizational level. Hence, no reliable bibliometric data could be provided for this university as a whole. Information is provided for some branches of this university where sufficiently reliable address information was available.

Indicators, metrics and computational issues

All the CWTS-generated bibliometric indicators presented in this section are either fully or partially derived from pre-existing generally available indicators, or based on prior CWTS ideas or research that occurred outside the U-Multirank project. In some cases the bibliometric scores on these indicators were derived from prior CWTS-developed data-processing routines or computational algorithms, or modified/upgraded versions thereof. The WoS-based bibliometric scores relate to the publication years 2010 up to and including 2013, as a single measurement window, with the exception of the ‘Patent citations to research publications’ metrics.

The bibliometric indicators in U-Multirank are closely related to those in the Leiden Ranking. The main difference between both is the fact that LR is based on WoS-indexed ‘core research publications’ in international peer-reviewed scientific journals. Publications in other WoS-indexed sources (national scientific journals, trade journals, and popular magazines) are not included. The same applies to research publications in languages other than English. Also publications in journals that are not well-connected, in terms of citation links, to other journals are left out. (These are mainly, but not exclusively, journals in arts and humanities fields of science). For a brief explanation of the idea of core publications, see <http://www.leidenranking.com/methodology/indicators#core-journals>. In contrast, U-Multirank includes all WoS-indexed sources and publications (although for some indicators A&H publications are left out – see below).

The bibliometric indicators fall into two groups, depending on the counting scheme (fractional or full) and the coverage of the arts and humanities research publications (included or excluded). The following indicators use full counting and include the arts and humanities: Research publication output; International co-publications; Regional co-publications; Co-publications with industrial partners. Three of other indicators exclude arts and humanities publications and use a fractional counting scheme: Interdisciplinary research score; Mean normalized citation score; Frequently cited publications. Finally, Patent citations to research publications also excludes arts and humanities publications, but it uses full counting. We refer to the recent publication by Waltman and Van Eck

(2015; <http://arxiv.org/abs/1501.04431>) to justify our use of fractional counting for some of these indicators.

Measurement processes and bibliometric data that are based on low numbers of publications are more likely to suffer from ‘small size effects’, where small (random) variations in the data might lead to very significant deviations and discrepancies. Higher education institutions (HEIs) with a only few publications in WoS-indexed sources should therefore not be described by WoS-based indicators (alone). To prevent this from happening threshold values were implemented. No bibliometric scores will be computed for the institutional ranking if the institution produced less than 50 WoS-indexed publications during the years 2010-2013. This count is based on a full counting scheme where each publication is allocated in full to every main institution mentioned in the publication’s author affiliate addresses. Where the institutional ranking relates to all research publication output, irrespective of the field of science, the three field-based rankings relate to specific fields: Computer sciences, medicine, psychology (the delineation of the fields is explained above). The lower publication output threshold for each field is set at 20 (full counted) WoS-indexed publications. Both these cut-off points were approved in December 2013 by U-Multirank’s Advisory Board.

Note that these same two lower thresholds also apply to the indicator ‘Patent citations to research publications’, which applies an extended 10-year time-period for computational reasons (see below) and enables the accumulation of larger numbers of publications. Hence, in some cases data is provided for this particular indicator but not for the others.

Research publication output (indicator of the volume of research activity)

Metric: frequency count of research publications

The number of WoS-indexed publications produced by a main institution reflects the magnitude of international-level research activity. The publication frequency count data are based on a whole counting system, where each publication is assigned in full to every main organization mentioned in its author affiliation list. Publication output counts do not necessarily reflect the volume of in-house research capacity, due to the existence of significant disciplinary differences between publication propensities and the output-boosting effect of research cooperation with external institutional partners.

Interdisciplinary research score (indicator of knowledge usage from different scientific disciplines)

Metric: share of publications within the field’s top 10% publications with the highest interdisciplinarity scores

The frontiers of science are often at the edge of disciplines – those dynamic domains of cross-fertilization where insights, ideas and information from other disciplines lead to new understanding and scientific breakthroughs. The term ‘interdisciplinarity’ is used to capture this feature of a HEI’s research profile. Our measure of the average interdisciplinarity of the publications of an institution aims to capture the diversity in the knowledge sources of publications. The interdisciplinarity score of a single publication is determined based on the references (‘citations’) within that publication to other WoS-indexed publications. The more a publication refers to publications belonging to different fields

of science, and the larger the cognitive distance between these fields, the higher the interdisciplinary score of that publication will be. More precisely, the interdisciplinarity score of a publication equals the average, calculated over all pairs of cited publications, of the distance between the fields to which the cited publications belong. The distance between two fields is determined based on citation relationships between fields. The more two fields cite to the same fields (as calculated using the so-called cosine measure), the smaller the cognitive distance between the two fields.

After the interdisciplinarity scores of all publications in *Web of Science* database in the period of analysis have been calculated, we refer to the top 10% research publications with the highest interdisciplinarity score as 'highly interdisciplinary' publications. The results of our sensitivity analyses indicates that the ranking is relatively insensitive to the choice of the percentage that are classified as interdisciplinary; choice of the percentage that is classified as interdisciplinary (either 10% or another percentile).

In order to obtain the interdisciplinarity score of an institution, its proportion of interdisciplinary publications is calculated across all fields of science collectively. Mathematically, the interdisciplinarity score of an individual publication can be written as:

$$I^{\text{pub}} = \frac{1}{m^2} \sum_{i,j} d_{ij}$$

where m denotes the number of references in the publication to other WoS-indexed publications and where d_{ij} denotes the distance between the field of reference i and the field of reference j . The distance d_{ij} equals 0 if reference i and reference j are in the same field. The maximum possible value of d_{ij} is 1.

The interdisciplinarity score of an institution equals the proportion of the publications of the institution that are regarded as highly interdisciplinary, or in other words, the proportion of the publications of the institution that belong to the top 10% publications with the highest interdisciplinarity score in their field per year. In mathematical terms, this can be written as

$$I^{\text{inst}} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_k \# \left(I_k^{\text{pub}} \geq I_{\text{threshold}}^{\text{pub}} \right)$$

where n denotes the number of publications of the institution, I_k^{pub} denotes the interdisciplinarity score of publication k , and $I_{\text{threshold}}^{\text{pub}}$ denotes the minimal interdisciplinarity score a publication must have in order to belong to the top 10% publications with the highest interdisciplinarity score.

We refer to Porter and Rafols (2009)² for a further discussion of the above approach for measuring interdisciplinarity, in particular the approach for calculating the interdisciplinarity score of an individual publication. This publication also explains in detail how the distance between two fields can be calculated using the cosine formula.

² Porter, A.L., & Rafols, I. (2009). Is science becoming more interdisciplinary? Measuring and mapping six research fields over time. *Scientometrics*, 81(3), 719–745.

Percentage of international co-publications (indicator of cross-border research cooperation)

Metric: share of research publications with at least one author affiliate address located in another country

The percentage of the publications, within a HEI's research publication output, with one or more co-authors publishing with an affiliate address in another country. Each international co-publication is assigned in full to all main organizations listed in those addresses. These co-publication counts are slightly affected by (temporarily employed) researchers with one or more appointments abroad. The international co-publication propensity is discipline-specific; it is relatively high in the natural sciences; relatively low in the social sciences, and extremely low in the arts and humanities fields.

Percentage of regional co-publications (indicator of research cooperation with local external partners)

Indicator: share of publications with two or more author addresses located within close proximity of the university

This indicator captures the extent to which HEIs collaborate and co-publish with external institutional research partners located at close proximity. The metric is defined in terms of physical distance (measured in kilometers) between the HEI and its partner. The local 'region' is defined as a 50 km radius around the city center of the university's main location. A publication is considered to represent a short distance collaboration for a particular institution if, apart from the address of this institution, at least one other address is mentioned in the address list of the publication and if this other address is within 50 km of the address of the institution of interest.

Percentage of co-publications with industrial partners (indicator of research cooperation with business enterprises)

Metric: share of publications with at least one author affiliate address referring to a for-profit business company

The percentage of an institution's research publications with co-authors employed by 'industry' - delineated as for-profit business companies, but excluding private-sector education institutions and hospitals/clinics. Most of the enterprises therefore operate in manufacturing industries. The share of co-publications with industry is discipline-specific and depends on the type of HEI; it is relatively high in industry-relevant fields within the engineering sciences and life sciences, and among universities of technology. It is important to note that this indicator may also comprise of cases where staff have (temporary or permanent) dual appointments of affiliations both within a university and a business companies, or where former PhD students, recently employed by industry, still publish about their academic work under their previous university address.

Mean normalized citation score (indicator of international scientific impact)

Metric: average citation impact of research publications corrected for field-specific characteristics worldwide

The absolute number of citations received by a publication is often highly dependent on the field of science, the topic of the publication, and sometimes even the source in which it was published. Proper citation counting needs to take this into account, in order to compare across research domains and different types of HEIs.

The average number of citations, from other WoS-indexed publications, to publications of an institution, normalized at the global level for the field and the year in which a publication appeared. This normalization aims to correct for differences in citation characteristics between publications from different fields and different years. Citations are counted up to and including the third quarter of 2014, where author self-citations are ignored in the computations.

Contrary to the previous 2014 edition, which used a full counting scheme, this edition has adopted a fractionated counts in the citation analysis, where a cited publication is allocated to an institution in proportion to the number of times the main organization is mentioned in author affiliate addresses.

Percentage of highly cited publications (indicator of high-level scientific impact)

Metric: share of research publications within the top 10% most highly cited of their field worldwide

Citation distributions are highly skewed – the top 10% most highly publication collect on average some 50-60% of all citations worldwide. This indicator captures the share of a HEI's publication output that belongs to the top 10% most frequently cited per field worldwide.

This measure is occasionally introduced as an indicator of 'international research excellence': HEIs with well over 10% of their publications in this top percentile are among the top research institutes worldwide. Note that these very highly cited publications are very often internationally co-authored publications.

Citations are counted up to and including the third quarter of 2014, where author self-citations are ignored in the computation.

Similarly to the Mean normalized citation score (see above), the citation counts are based on a fractional counting scheme.

% research publications cited by patents (indicators of the impact of scientific research on technological development)

Metric: share of research publications cited in patented technologies

The percentage of a HEI's research publications that were mentioned in the reference list of at least one international patent – the so-called 'front page' references which are assembled separately from the patent's main text. An 'international patent' is defined here as a patent belonging to a DOCDB patent family, which each of consisting of equivalent patent publications, describing the same invention, published either by the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), the European Patent Office (EPO) or the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

This indicator reflects the *technological relevance* of scientific research at the HEI, in the sense that it explicitly contributed, in some way, to the development of patented technologies. It does not necessarily reflect the *innovation performance* of HEIs; a patented technological only becomes an innovation when the related product or process is introduced into the marketplace.

Note that not all references in patents reflect a direct link between the ‘cited’ science and ‘citing’ technology, and that the cited publications can be co-authored with other organizations. Nonetheless, a relatively large share of cited research publications will reflect that HEIs in the recent past have been, and most likely still are, engaged in research of (future) technological importance.

To compensate for the relatively low number of NPRs to WoS-indexed publications, a 10-year time-period was adopted for the citing patents (2004-2013) in order to capture sufficiently large numbers for statistical meaningful comparisons. Because of patent publication delays, PATSTAT’s coverage for 2012 and especially 2013 is incomplete.

The citation window for the cited research publications is 2004-2013. The number of patents citations to research publications is relatively low; scores on this indicator therefore have to be treated with due care because of statistical error.