

XXXI General Assembly Compostela Group of Universities

CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMPOSTELA CAFE ON *The impact of international university ranking* (Vila Real, Portugal, 16 September 2025)

Thematic panel: *The different ranking scenarios and its comparability.*

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Conclusions:

University rankings do not uniformly capture the diversity of higher education institutions, as the criteria employed often privilege particular characteristics. For instance, some rankings place significant weight on indicators such as the number of Nobel Prize laureates affiliated with an institution. This measure is unattainable or irrelevant for many universities.

Although rankings can serve as a marketing tool, **institutions must critically assess which indicators are most closely aligned with their mission, vision, and strategic priorities**. It is neither advisable nor sustainable to reshape a university's overall strategy solely in response to ranking methodologies. We should be aware that each ranking has a sponsor-training team, which will represent a bias on this area.

Institutions should cultivate an informed awareness of rankings and utilize them selectively as one of several tools to enhance visibility and competitiveness. More importantly, higher education **institutions should ground their evaluations in their long-term objectives**, ensuring that performance metrics reflect areas of genuine institutional value. In certain cases, alternative frameworks such as ratings may provide a more constructive lens, as they assess institutional performance against defined benchmarks rather than through direct comparison with other universities.

Institutions should focus on indicators that represent them, indicators that are meaningful for the institution based on their mission and vision. **The Group recommend to incorporate procedures in the university** to improve their daily activities, to achieve long-term goals.

People outside the education arena usually do not know what rankings represent for institution, therefore **there is a need to inform people about it**.