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Directorate „Higher Education”
„Development of Rating System for Higher Education Institutions in Republic of Bulgaria”

56 Solunska Str., Sofia 1000
Consortium «IOO-MAMD-S»

RATING SYSTEM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
INTRODUCTION

Consortium «IOO-MAMD-S»

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The **Bulgarian University Ranking System Portal** has been developed to support education service users in their choice of a university. It provides broad information about accredited universities in Bulgaria and allows for comparison by professional field based on various criteria. The ranking system allows producing rankings of different scope and type depending on the specific priorities and needs of the different education service users.

Ranking by Professional Field

At the time this rating system is developed, over 50 universities operate in Bulgaria offering various majors distributed across more than 50 professional fields. No higher education institution covers all professional fields. That is why the ranking system allows no single general ranking of Bulgarian universities but rather individual rankings of universities in each professional field taught in the Bulgarian higher education.

Possible applications

The present ranking system may be used in two ways: users may acquire information about the universities of their choice or obtain a ranking of universities by professional fields.

Information about universities

To get information about universities, select the "University" button. Then, from the list of universities, select the one you are interested in. The system will give you basic information about the selected university, the professional fields and majors it offers, as well as the degrees in which training is available (Bachelor, Master or PhD). Furthermore, you can derive indicator-based data for the chosen university, as well as for each professional field it offers.

Producing a ranking

If you wish to obtain a ranking of universities in a specific professional field, select the "Rankings" button, and follow the instructions. In four steps you will receive the desired ranking. The system gives you the opportunity to review a preset standardized ranking of all university or to produce your own custom ranking. Once you review the ranking of universities in the professional field of your choice, you may compare each of them against the individual indicators used in the ranking process.

Standardized rankings

These are rankings made for a particular pre-selected professional field, which have been developed by a team of experts based on a set of predefined indicators. In a standardized ranking the number of indicators and their weight are preset and users cannot modify them. Before producing rankings of this type, experts study the weight of individual indicators for each group of users, and take into consideration the number of selected



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indicators, as well as the interrelation among them.

Custom rankings

The system gives users an opportunity to produce his or her personal ranking, based on their individual priorities and needs. In making his or her own ranking, the user can select independently the indicators by which he or she wishes to compare universities in a given professional field, as well as assign importance (weight) to each group of indicators to be considered in the final ranking.

Indicators

More than 50 indicators have been incorporated into the system, allowing users to compare universities against a variety of criteria. These indicators have been developed based on statistical data, as well as results of sociological surveys conducted among various user groups, including university students, professors, graduates and employers. (A full list of indicators and information on how they have been developed are available under "Documents and Links").

Groups of indicators

Indicators are divided into 6 groups reflecting the main categories used to rate higher education institutions. These groups are: 1) Teaching and learning; 2) Resources for T&L; 3) Science & research; 4) Social and living; 5) Prestige; 6) Professional & career. (For a detailed description of indicator groups, see "Documents and Links").

How are results calculated

Since indicators use different units of measure (number, attitude scale, proportion, currency, etc.), a proper ranking requires standardized values of these indicators. The recalculation uses a classic statistical procedure (so called z-scores) which keeps the same order and the same distances between values. This method is based on the mean and standard deviation of each indicator. Z-scores are a bit difficult to grasp, so we have presented the final score for each indicator on a scale from 0 to 100.

How to use the rankings

University rankings should be used with caution. The mere fact that one university rates better than another does not necessarily mean that it is the best for you. Sometimes a particular ranking (or rating) may reflect minor differences or indicators that are not that important to you. We would like to emphasize that when the differences between universities in a ranking are in the range up to 5 points in most cases this means that these schools are actually in the same league and offer comparable conditions. Similar differences are advised to be interpreted as negligible. Therefore, we advise you to use this ranking system as the starting point of a more extended and detailed review of education opportunities offered by Bulgarian universities.



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Constraints

Any ranking system is bound to have some constraints. The present one makes no exception. In cases when the available data are insufficient to allow for reliable conclusions, we have listed the universities involved separately, "below line". This means that data on individual indicators for such universities are available to users but the universities are not included in the overall ranking for the respective professional field.

Documents and links

Such a short introductory text does not allow for describing all the specifics, procedures and sources of information, that determine the capabilities and constraints of the present ranking system. A more detailed description of the methodology used, calculation methods and the way individual indicators have been configured, as well as other important materials are available under "Documents and Links".

Acknowledgments

The development of the present rating system has been made possible by the effort of a large group of professionals and institutions. We would like to thank in particular the teams of AdminSoft and National Social Security Institute who offered us invaluable support in collecting statistical information, as well as the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science experts who have been our key partner in the development of the system. First and foremost, however, we would like to thank the Bulgarian universities without whose assistance and cooperation the development of such a ranking system would have been impossible.

About us

This portal has been created by a Consortium of three organizations: the Open Society Institute - Sofia, the MBMD Sociological Agency and the Sirma Group, under the "Development of a Rating System for Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Bulgaria" project implemented by the Higher Education Directorate at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science with the financial support of the Operational Program for Human Resource Development.