

## The Methodology behind the CHE University Ranking

What is the target group for the CHE and DIE ZEIT University Ranking?

- anybody who wants to take up a course of academic studies, but is uncertain about where
- students who would like to change to another university
- academics, researchers and university staff who want to know how their university performed in comparison with other institutions in Germany and some neighbouring countries.

What's special about the CHE University Ranking?

**The most comprehensive ranking to date** Since 1998 over 130 universities and over 150 universities of applied sciences (Fachhochschulen) have been included in the CHE University Ranking. In the current ranking the judgements of about 200,000 students and about 15,000 professors are included.

**Not an overall ranking, but a detailed analysis** The ranking deliberately chooses not to add the results of the survey together to produce an overall points score. Why? Because there simply is no "best higher education institution", not in one subject and certainly not in all subjects. For example, a university may indeed be a leader in the field of research, but the equipment it offers its students may be miserable, or it may be strong in German Studies, but poor in Economics and Business Administration. Instead of crowning some presumed overall winner, we offer a multidimensional ranking. Several ranking (league) lists produced on the basis of quite different criteria paint a differentiated picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual universities.

**League Groups instead of League Positions** The CHE University Ranking has no "league positions" for the individual universities as commonly found in other rankings, but rather places the universities into one of three groups: Top Group, Middle Group or Bottom Group. The use of league positions bears the risk of minor differences produced by random fluctuations being misinterpreted as real differences. If the universities are positioned close to each other, there is also a chance that minimal differences can make up a lot of league positions. By contrast, CHE's League Group approach ensures that the top and the bottom groups deviate to a statistically significant extent from the arithmetic mean, which is also why we always arrange the universities in alphabetical order in the various league lists.

**Subject Specificity** The CHE University Ranking is exclusively subject specific. Just as universities are not all equally good, so there is no "the" best university. The universities' performance in the individual disciplines, subjects and departments differs far too greatly. Aggregation at the level of whole universities offers no useful information as a decision-making aid for prospective students who want to study a specific subject. It also obscures the differences between the subjects at a university, some of which are actually explicitly based on profile decisions. This is why the individual rankings are always subject specific.

**Methodological** Diversity Rankings should draw a differentiated picture of the universities from various perspectives. This is why, besides facts on the departments and degree programmes, the perspective of university teachers and students is also considered in the ranking. This produces a more differentiated view than rankings based solely on the survey of one group of persons (e.g. only students, only HR/personnel managers) and so allow subjective assessments and objective indicators to be contrasted.

[Complete description of the methodology \[http://www.che-ranking.de/methodenwiki\]](http://www.che-ranking.de/methodenwiki)

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