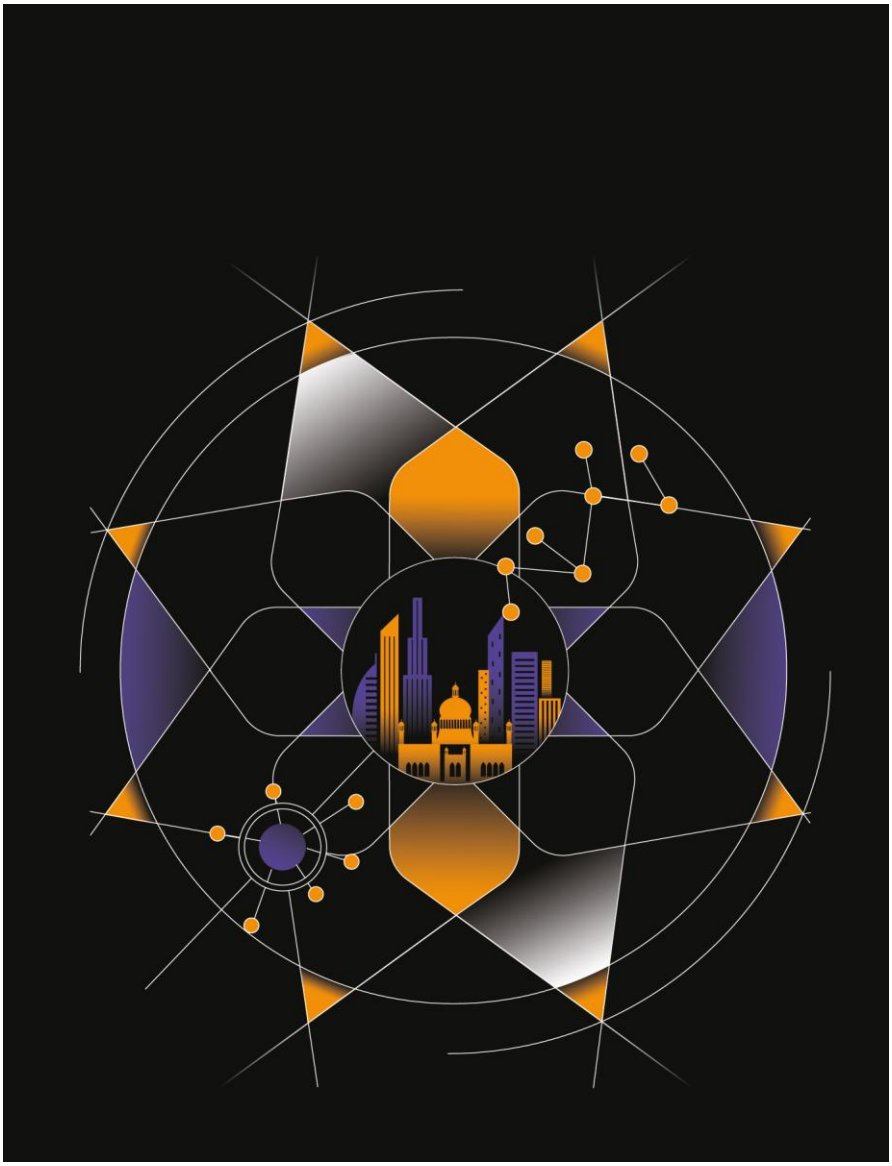
METHODOLOGY FOR THE *TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION* ARAB UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2026

November 2026



Times Higher Education Arab University Rankings (AUR):

Times Higher Education is the data provider underpinning university excellence in every continent across the world. As the company behind the world's most influential university ranking, and with almost five decades of experience as a source of analysis and insight on higher education, we have unparalleled expertise on the trends underpinning university performance globally. Our data and benchmarking tools are used by many of the world's most prestigious universities to help them achieve their strategic goals.

The annual *Times Higher Education (THE)* World University Rankings (WUR), started in 2010, aims to provide the definitive list of the best universities, evaluated across five key areas of Teaching, Research Environment, Research Quality, International Outlook and Industry. *Times Higher Education*'s data is trusted by governments and universities and is a vital resource for students, helping them choose where to study.

Within our World University Rankings, Arab universities are improving their underlying scores across a range of metrics compared to the rest of the world, in particular in citations and reputation metrics. However, this improvement can be lost within the World University Rankings due to the growth of the ranking.

We believe that it is important that Arab universities are able to understand their performance and strengths in an objective way within the structure of universities across the Arab region.

Director's Statement:

This document (the "Methodology") sets out our end-to-end process for generating the THE Arab University Rankings 2026 (the "Rankings"). As directors and management of Times Higher Education, we state that we have followed our Methodology and correctly applied the specific procedures denoted by (i) - (xii) and marked with the symbol "Ω".

Signed: 

Print: Elizabeth Shepherd

Role: Chief Data & Analytics Officer, *Times Higher Education*

Date: 10 November 2025

For and on behalf of *THE* World Universities Insights Limited

Summary of the Rankings methodology:

The methodology for the *Times Higher Education* Arab University Rankings is looking at research-intensive universities across all their core missions: teaching, research environment, research quality, industry, and international outlook.

The basic methodology for the Arab University Rankings is now more aligned with the World University Rankings, notably deriving the reputation data from the Academic Reputation Survey as used in the World University Rankings, instead of an Arab region-specific survey which was used until the previous rankings. In other words, in the Arab University Rankings, we now have the same scores for Teaching Reputation and Research Reputation as in the Word University Rankings, looking at the number of all global votes for the universities in the Arab countries.

Other adjustments – a research collaboration metric between universities within the Arab world and the addition of two measures based on participation and performance respectively in the *THE* Impact Rankings – have now been removed.

Finally, this year, as part of our general work to re-align research-focused rankings with the World University Rankings and its methodology, we have introduced the following changes:

- AUR now holds the same year in its name as in the World University Rankings, in which the same data set is used. For this change, this year's rankings, published in November 2025, are called **Arab University Rankings 2026,** while the previous one was called 'Arab University Rankings 2024'. However, no yearly data has been skipped for this change.
- Rankings now use the same data set and broadly the same range of indicators as the overall world rankings. The scoring is carried out on the full population of universities submitting data to the World University Rankings. We then restrict to the Arab countries only and recalibrate weightings accordingly.
- Following formerly used AUR-specific metrics have been dropped:
    - Collaboration within the Arab world
    - Impact Rankings participation
    - Impact Rankings performance

The Arab University Rankings are composed of 17 carefully calibrated performance indicators to provide the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons, trusted by students, academics, university leaders, industry and governments. The performance indicators are still grouped into five areas:

- **Teaching**
    - Teaching Reputation
    - Student Staff Ratio
    - Doctorate Bachelor Ratio
    - Doctorate Staff Ratio
    - Institutional Income
- **Research Environment**
    - Research Reputation
    - Research Income
    - Research Productivity
- **Research Quality**
    - Research Strength
    - Research Excellence
    - Research Influence
- **Industry**
    - Industry Income
    - Patents
- **International outlook**
    - International Students
    - International Staff
    - International Co-authorship
    - (Studying Abroad*)

* This metric is not used in the calculation for the ranking.

Note:

‘AUR 2026’ (ranking year): means the Arab University Rankings 2026 published in Autumn 2025.

‘2025’ (publication year): means the publication year of that ranking, so 2025 is the year when the Arab University Rankings 2026 was published.

Text with an omega (Ω) symbol found in red-shaded boxes from the next section indicates it is part of the core ranking rules. At the end of this document, a list of ranking rules is provided with the corresponding omega symbol numbers for a quick glance at the core rules.

1) Data collection and sources

Institutional data – self-submitted on the *THE* Portal

A named representative from each institution submits and authorises their institutional data for use in the Rankings Ω[i], via *THE*'s designated online portal, with confirmations that they have:

- Provided true and accurate information for their institution for the year ending in 2023 (in accordance with the definitions and exceptions below); and
- Understood and complied with the *THE* terms and conditions → https://www.timeshighereducation.com/terms-and-conditions;

Times Higher Education will not self-submit data for an institution without positive confirmation from the named representative of the institution. Ω[ii]

Prior to submission of data within the portal, the draft data undergoes certain automatic validation checks to ensure that data is complete and accurate, for review by the named representative. Ω[iii]

For the purposes of the portal data collection, a "year ending in 2023" may be defined as any of the following:

- The calendar year January to December 2023
- The academic year that started in 2022 and ended in 2023
- The financial year that ended in 2023
- Any other appropriate annual cycle that the institution finds to best fit their data and ends in 2023

Elsevier

Bibliometric data

This year, our bibliometric data supplier Elsevier provided us for examination more than 174.9 million citations to 18.7 million journal articles, article reviews, conference proceedings, books and book chapters published over five years. The data include over 28,700 active peer-reviewed journals indexed by Elsevier's Scopus database and all indexed publications between 2020 and 2024. Citations to these publications made from 2020 to 2025 are also collected.

The bibliometric measures help to show us how well each university is contributing to the sum of human knowledge: they tell us whose research has stood out, has been picked up and built on by other scholars and, most importantly, has been shared around the global scholarly community to expand the boundaries of human understanding, irrespective of discipline.

- **Research Strength** represents the 75th percentile FWCI of all papers published by an institution.

  The FWCI score indicates how the number of citations received by an entity's publications compares with the average number of citations received by all other similar publications. 'Similar publications' are understood to be publications in the Scopus database that have the same publication year, type, and discipline, as defined by the Scopus journal classification system.

  A FCWI of 1.00 indicates the global average.

  The Citations performance of an institution is determined by calculating the 75th percentile of the FWCI score of all of its publications in scope. Where a publication involves multiple institutions, each institution receives full credit for its performance.

  The 75th percentile FWCI scores of institutions are calculated by Elsevier, per subject and overall

- **Research Excellence** is calculated as the number of publications within the top 10 per cent of all publications by FWCI, normalised by year, subject, and staff size of the institution. This measure is subject-weighted. This measure is calculated by Elsevier.

- **Research Influence** measures the level of thought leadership by considering how influential the citing papers are. It differs from the other FWCI-based measures as it examines not only the number of the citations, but also the "importance" of citing publications. This measure is subject weighted.

- We also collect the total number of publications overall, plus the total number of publications with international co-authorship per institution and the total number of publications that are cited by patents, by subject and overall, providing they meet our 'sufficient publications' criteria (detailed in section 2). For the purposes of these metrics, as well as the publication threshold determination, we use the kilo-authored fractionally counted publication count. All metrics are calculated by Elsevier aside from Research Influence which is calculated by THE.

The citations help to show us how much each university is contributing to the sum of human knowledge: they tell us whose research has stood out, has been picked up and built on by other scholars and, most importantly, has been shared around the global scholarly community to expand the boundaries of human understanding, irrespective of discipline.

Academic reputation survey

A survey was sent to a sample of selected academics selected by THE, in which we ask them to nominate the universities that they perceive to be the best for Teaching and/or Research in their field. For the 2024 and 2025 surveys, academics were asked to nominate up to 15 institutions for Teaching and up to 15 institutions for Research globally.

The most recent Academic Reputation Survey (run annually by THE) that underpins this category was carried out between November 2024 and January 2025. We have run the survey to ensure a balanced spread of responses across disciplines and countries. Where disciplines or countries were over- or underrepresented, THE's data team weighted the responses to fully reflect the global distribution of scholars.

The 2025 data are combined with the results of the 2024 survey, giving more than 108,000 responses.

The Teaching and Research scores for an institution at the global level were the count of mentions they received in each category, weighted both to reflect the distribution of scholars across the world (using data from UNESCO for the 2024 survey, and data on the global distribution of research papers for the 2025 survey) and the distribution of respondents by subject in the survey.

In 2023 we have introduced a self-voting cap. This reduces the self-vote share to 10% of the total votes for any given university. Self-votes are still allowed and are included but are weighted down in much the same way as we apply country and subject weightings. The majority of ranked institutions are unaffected by this adjustment.

While employing a self-voting cap will address intra-university voting, it would not deal with arranged voting relationships between institutions. Since the World University Rankings 2025 we have implemented an additional measure where we look at vote concentration to help deal with any potential cases of this issue.

When we look at the number of different institutions that vote for a particular university, we see that generally universities have a broad range of respondents. However, should any institutions be part of a closed ring, this would be reflected in a much narrower spread of voters. This is represented by a high number of votes-per-respondent-institution (VPRI) for a given university.

When this happens, we can set a maximum threshold value for VPRI and adjust vote weights accordingly, in much the same way we dilute votes for the self-voting adjustment above. This treatment is applied fairly across the entire survey dataset, and our analysis shows that this affects only a very small number of universities.

The academic reputation score for a university is based on the number of mentions they received in the 2024 and 2025 surveys for the global teaching and research sections. Where a university received no votes, they were allocated a zero score.

Total reputation score for each university was calculated based on the aggregate of individual respondent data. Ω[iv]

Reference data

THE incorporates reference datasets into its model to convert country-level data provided by institutions via the portal (e.g. research income in a local currency) to a single comparable dataset for all institutions. We also use reference datasets to verify institutional data submissions.

The sources of this data are:

- The HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly datasets: [https://www.trade-tariff.service.gov.uk/exchange_rates/monthly?year=2023] which provides accurate foreign exchange rates to convert datasets into GBP and then back into their local currency if an institution reports in a foreign currency
- The World Bank Purchase Power Parity (PPP) dataset [http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/PA.NUS.PPP], which is used to convert the local currency to common-PPP-scaled USD. PPP is used to exemplify the differing currency strengths in each country while allowing for easy cross-country comparisons;
- Where data for a country doesn't exist in the World Bank database, a dataset from the IMF [https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2023/April] or UN data [https://data.un.org/Data.aspx?d=WDI&f=Indicator_Code%3APA.NUS.PPP] is used;
- The World Bank Population data: [https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL], which provides the total population per country; and
- UNESCO data [https://databrowser.uis.unesco.org/] for the 2024 survey, and data on the global distribution of research papers for the 2025 survey.

2) Criteria for exclusion, inclusion, and data processing

Exclusion and inclusion criteria

1. They are required to publish 500 or more relevant publications over the previous 5 years.

AND

2. They must have supplied “overall” numbers for the ranking year.

AND

3. They must not be focused on a single narrow subject area (more than 80% of their publication output is from one subject area).

AND

4. They must not have more than two of the critical values (academic staff, international academic staff, research staff, students, international students, outbound exchange students, undergraduate degrees awarded, doctorates awarded, institutional income, research income, research income from industry and commerce) as empty or unavailable. Missing values will cause any metric based on that value to also be invalid.

AND

5. They must mark at least one subject as applicable. If no applicable subjects have been reported the institution is excluded.

AND

6. They must be based in one of the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

AND

7. They must not be featured in the custom exclusions list. Institutions that have requested not to participate in the ranking or that are not eligible for other institution-specific reasons have been excluded.

Data adjustments

After the deadline of the submission of data via the Portal by institutions, ***management review and approve all institution submissions data for appropriateness and accuracy, based on prior year values and gaps within datasets*** Ω[vi] as described below.

On the occasions where an institution does not provide a data point which would result in the inability to generate a metric, the missing metric may be calculated by imputing the value as the higher of:

- The average of the two lowest metric scores for an institution; or
- The minimum score awarded across the whole population for that metric.

Data processing pre-rankings

Data provided by institutions for financial information is converted into USD using international PPP exchange rates Ω[vii] (provided by the World Bank), for use in the Rankings calculation.

The datasets used in the rankings have been accurately mapped by university name and ID. Institution-level bibliometric (Scopus and/or SciVal) obtained by Elsevier is mapped to THE institution data via THE's institution ID. Ω[viii]

3) Calculation, scoring and ranking

Calculation of metrics

There are 16 indicators, each combined into 5 categories, or "pillars", which are weighted according to relative importance.

The pre-weighted indicators are calculated for each university Ω^{ix} based on the definitions below:

1. *Teaching*

Teaching Reputation

- The most recent Academic Reputation Survey (run annually by THE) that underpins this category was carried out between November 2024 and January 2025. It examined the perceived prestige of institutions in teaching. This metric is the total number of votes obtained from the reputation survey from the last two years. Each year is calculated as the number of global teaching votes from respondents of the reputation survey, weighted by subject and country to be representative of the distribution of academics globally. Only non-zero values will be standardised using a logarithmic function, and universities that received no votes are scored a zero for this metric.

Student Staff Ratio

- The student staff ratio is defined as total full time equivalent (FTE) number of staff employed in an academic post divided by FTE number of students in all years and of all programmes that lead to a degree, certificate, university credit or other qualification. This variable is normalised after calculation.

Doctorate Bachelor Ratio

- This metric is generated by dividing the total number of doctorates awarded by the total number of undergraduate degrees awarded. This variable is normalised after calculation.

Doctorates Staff Ratio

- As well as giving a sense of how committed an institution is to nurturing the next generation of academics, a high proportion of postgraduate research students also suggests the provision of teaching at the highest level that is thus attractive to graduates and effective at developing them. This metric is generated by dividing the total subject weighted doctorates, by the total subject weighted number of academic staff. This metric takes into account an institution's unique subject mix, reflecting that the volume of doctoral awards varies by discipline. This variable is normalised after calculation.

Institutional Income

- This measure of income indicates an institution's general status and gives a broad sense of the infrastructure and facilities available to students and staff. This metric is generated by dividing the institutional income adjusted to PPP, by the total number of academic staff. This variable is normalised after calculation.

2. *Research Environment*

Research Reputation

- The most recent Academic Reputation Survey (run annually by THE) that underpins this category was carried out between November 2024 and January 2025. It examined the perceived prestige of institutions in research. This metric is the total number of votes obtained from the reputation survey from the last two years. Each year is calculated as the number of global teaching votes from respondents of the reputation survey, weighted by subject and country to be representative of the distribution of academics globally. Only non-zero values will be standardised using a logarithmic function, and universities that received no votes are scored a zero for this metric.

Research Income

- This metric is generated by dividing the total subject weighted research income adjusted for PPP, by the total subject weighted number of academic staff and is normalised after calculation. This is a somewhat controversial indicator because it can be influenced by national policy and economic circumstances. Income is crucial to the development of world-class research, and because much of it is subject to competition and judged by peer review, our experts suggested that it was a valid measure. This indicator takes account of each institution's distinct subject profile, reflecting the fact that research grants in science subjects are often bigger than those awarded for the highest-quality social science, arts and humanities research.

Research Productivity

- This metric is generated by dividing the total subject weighted number of papers published in the academic journals indexed by Elsevier's Scopus database per scholar, divided by the sum of the total subject weighted number of FTE research staff and FTE academic staff. This metric is normalised after calculation. The indicator gives a sense of the institution's ability to get papers published in quality peer-reviewed journals. The measure includes a method to give credit for cross-subject research that results in papers being published in subjects where a university has no staff. For subjects where there are papers, but not staff, we will reassign the papers to subjects where there are staff. We will do this proportionally according to the number of staff in populated subjects, and according to the median publications per staff for populated subjects. We will have a maximum threshold of the proportion of papers that we are willing to reassign (10% of the total of papers).

3. *Research Quality*

Research Strength

- Our research strength indicator looks at universities' role in spreading new knowledge and ideas. We examine research influence by capturing the 75th percentile of the Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) of all papers published by a university. We look at the academic journals indexed by Elsevier's Scopus database and all indexed publications between 2020 and 2024. Citations to these publications made in the six years from 2020 to 2025 are also collected. The data is normalised to reflect variations in citation volume between different subject areas. This means that institutions with high levels of research activity in subjects with traditionally high citation counts do not gain an unfair advantage.

Research Excellence

- This metric recognises the institution's contribution to the best research in each subject and overall. Excellence is measured by capturing the total number of publications by an institution that are among the top 10% of publications worldwide by FWCI. We adjust this number by year, subject, and the total number of academic and research staff.

Research Influence

- This metric analyses the influence of an entity's publications by analysing their corresponding citations. The importance of a publication is determined based on the importance of other papers citing it. We adjust this number by year, subject, and the total number of academic and research staff.

4. *Industry*

Industry income

- An institution's ability to help industry with innovations and inventions has become a core mission of the contemporary global academy. This category suggests the extent to which businesses are willing to pay for research and an institution's ability to attract funding in the commercial marketplace – useful indicators of institutional quality. The indicator seeks to capture such knowledge-transfer activity by looking at how much research income an institution earns from industry (adjusted for PPP), divided by the by the total number of FTE academic staff it employs. This variable is normalised after calculation.

Patents

- This metric recognises the extent to which universities are supporting their national economies through technology transfer. It measures the count of patents citing an entity's published research. This measure is subject weighted to avoid penalising universities producing research in fields low in patents. We also normalise this by the sum of academic and research staff.

5. *International Outlook*

International Students

- This metric captures the proportion of international students on campus. International students are those whose nationality differs from the country where the institution is based. The metric is calculated as the total FTE number of international students divided by the total FTE number of students. This variable is normalised to account for the country population's size.

International Staff

- This metric captures the proportion of international academic staff on campus. International staff are those whose nationality differs from the country where the institution is based. The metric is calculated as the total FTE number of international academic staff divided by the total FTE number of academic staff. This variable is normalised to account for the country population's size.

International Co-authorship

- In the third international indicator, we calculate the proportion of an institution's total research journal publications that have at least one international co-author. The metric is generated by dividing the total subject weighted number of publications with at least one international co-author by the total subjected weighted number of publications. This accounts for an institution's subject mix. This variable is normalised to account for the country population's size.

Studying Abroad

- Based on the number of outbound exchange students, this metric assesses international student mobility. The headcount number of exchange students going abroad is divided by the total FTE number of students. This metric is subject-weighted and adjusted by the country's population. It has a zero weight for the ranking calculation.

Normalisation

Moving from a series of specific data points to indicators, and finally to a total score for an institution, requires us to match values that represent fundamentally different data. To do this we use a standardisation approach for each indicator, and then combine the indicators in the proportions indicated below.

The standardisation approach we use is based on the distribution of data within a particular indicator, where we calculate a cumulative probability function, and evaluate where a particular institution's indicator sits within that function.

For all indicators except the Academic Reputation Survey metrics, Research Excellence, Research Influence, and Patents, we calculate the score using a normal cumulative probability function using a version of Z-scoring. The distribution of the data in these exceptional metrics require us to use an exponential component.

Weightings of metrics to final scores and rankings

The 17 performance metrics representing the five pillars are weighted according to *THE*'s assessment of relative importance.

Once the final population of universities and indicators has been prepared, the scores for each university are generated by weighting the metrics and the Final Rankings are calculated according to the following percentage breakdowns: Ω^x

Pillar	Metric	% weighting
1. Teaching	Teaching Reputation	15.00%
	Student Staff Ratio	4.50%
	Doctorate Bachelor Ratio	2.00%
	Doctorate Staff Ratio	5.50%
	Institutional Income	2.50%
2. Research Environment	Research Reputation	18.00%
	Research Income	5.50%
	Research Productivity	5.50%
3. Research Quality	Research Strength	15.0%
	Research Excellence	7.50%
	Research Influence	7.50%
4. Industry	Industry Income	2.00%
	Patents	2.00%
5. International Outlook	International Students	2.50%
	International Staff	2.50%
	International Co-authorship	2.50%
	Studying Abroad	0.00%
		100%

4) Publication and reporting

Final rankings preparation

All institutions were ranked overall and are published in the final rankings table on the *THE* website. On the website, the overall score and pillar scores are displayed.

Precise overall scores are shown for the institutions ranked in the top 100. Banded overall scores are presented for the institutions ranked in bands (e.g. from 101 to 125). Precise individual pillar scores are displayed for each ranked institution.

For the institutions ranked 1-100 overall, an individual rank position is listed. The next institutions are assigned to the following bands: 101-125, 126-150, 151-175, 176-200, 201+. Institutions that are ranked within bands are listed in alphabetical order. All the universities ranked within the same band have the same position.

Institutions with the 'Reporter' status appear at the end of the table in alphabetical order, and they do not have any rank or scores.

Review and sign-off

The Rankings are formally signed off by *THE* World Universities Insights Limited management prior to being published in print and online.

The Rankings results are reviewed and signed off by THE's Chiel Data & Analytics Officer. Ω[xi]

Reporting

The Rankings for the top 100 universities and banding allocation below top 100 are accurately reported on the THE website. Ω[xii]

The specific procedures for the Arab University Rankings are located on the *Times Higher Education* website at: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/arab-university-rankings-2026-methodology

Ranking rules

Rule number	Methodology section	Rule description
(i)	Data collection and sources	A named representative from each institution submits and authorises their institutional data for use in the Rankings.
(ii)	Data collection and sources	*Times Higher Education* will not self-submit data for an institution without positive confirmation from the named representative of the institution.
(iii)	Data collection and sources	Prior to submission of data within the portal, the draft data undergoes automatic validation checks reviewed by the named representative.
(iv)	Data collection and sources	Total reputation score for each university was calculated based on the aggregate of individual respondent data. There are adjustments to take account of self-voting and unusual voting patterns.
(v)	Criteria for exclusion, inclusion and data processing	Universities meeting the seven key inclusion criteria are included in the rankings
(vi)	Criteria for exclusion, inclusion and data processing	Management review and approve all institution submissions data for appropriateness and accuracy, based on prior year values and gaps within datasets.
(vii)	Criteria for exclusion, inclusion and data processing	Data provided by institutions for financial information is converted into USD using international PPP exchange rates.
(viii)	Criteria for exclusion, inclusion and data processing	Institution-level bibliometric (Scopus and/or SciVal) obtained by Elsevier is mapped to *THE* institution data via *THE*'s institution ID.
(ix)	Calculation, scoring and ranking	The pre-weighted indicators are calculated for each university
(x)	Calculation, scoring and ranking	Once the final population of institutions and indicators has been prepared, the scores for each university are generated by weighting the metrics and the Final Rankings are calculated according to the above mentioned percentage breakdowns.
(xi)	Publication and reporting	The Rankings results are reviewed and signed off by *THE*'s Chief Data & Analytics Officer.
(xii)	Publication and reporting	The Rankings for the top 100 universities and banding allocation below top 100 are accurately reported on the *THE* website. The 'Reporters' are listed at the end of the table.