



# STARS

RATED FOR EXCELLENCE

# QS Stars

## University Methodology





# SHINING A LIGHT ON EXCELLENCE

*The global standard recognizing individual strengths  
of diverse institutions worldwide*

*Over 275 institutions rated in more than 45 countries*

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# Thresholds & Pre-requisites

Please see below the scoring thresholds and pre-requisites for the QS Stars™ Evaluation:

OVERALL	1000
1 Star .....	100
▪ Must have the authority to grant valid degree level programs in its own name	
2 Stars .....	250
3 Stars .....	400
4 Stars .....	550
▪ Must have at least 75 academic referees OR at least 2 citations per faculty member (for any institution not focused exclusively in two or fewer of our broad faculty areas)	
▪ Must have at least 1% (OR 25% of the regional average) of international students	
5 Stars .....	700
▪ Must have at least 150 academic referees OR 3 citations per faculty member (for any institution not focused exclusively in two or fewer of our broad faculty areas)	
▪ Must have at least 5% international faculty	
▪ Must have at least 5% international students	
▪ Must have at least 85 points in the Employability category	
▪ Must have at least 70 points in the Facilities category	
5 Stars Plus .....	900
▪ Must have 5 star rating in all categories and meet all the pre-requisites needed for 5 Stars	

Please see below the scoring thresholds for the individual categories, divided into their respective areas:

Core Criteria Categories	150	Specialist Criteria Categories	150 or 200
1 Star .....	15	1 Star .....	20
2 Stars .....	35	2 Stars .....	50
3 Stars .....	60	3 Stars .....	80
4 Stars .....	85	4 Stars .....	110
5 Stars .....	105	5 Stars .....	140
Learning Environment Categories	100	Advanced Criteria Categories	50
1 Star .....	10	1 Star .....	5
2 Stars .....	25	2 Stars .....	15
3 Stars .....	40	3 Stars .....	20
4 Stars .....	55	4 Stars .....	30
5 Stars .....	70	5 Stars .....	35

Please note the time referred in all the indicators (unless stated otherwise) refers to the latest completed financial or academic year. It is not our objective to request additional work on the institution's side so please enquire if you have any doubt.

## Core Criteria

These criteria feature the key building blocks of a university whether focused globally, domestically or locally. All categories in this section are mandatory for the evaluation.

### TEACHING 150

- Faculty student ratio ..... 50

*Maximum points for a 10:1 ratio (10%) scaled down to a ratio of 50:1 (2%)*
- Overall student satisfaction OR Completion ..... 40

<p><b>Overall Student Satisfaction</b></p> <p><i>75% student satisfaction or higher with scaled scores down to 50% student satisfaction. Results based on a minimum 20% response rate OR 1000 respondents using the National Student Satisfaction Survey or equivalent</i></p>	<p><b>Completion</b></p> <p><i>90% of students scheduled to graduate succeeding in doing so scaled down to 60%</i></p>
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- Satisfaction with teaching OR Faculty with PhD ..... 40

<p><b>Satisfaction with teaching</b></p> <p><i>75% student satisfaction or higher with scaled scores down to 50% student satisfaction. Results based on a minimum 20% response rate OR 1000 respondents using the National Student Satisfaction Survey or equivalent</i></p>	<p><b>Faculty with PhD</b></p> <p><i>80% scaled down to 60% of faculty with PhD or equivalent terminal degree</i></p>
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- Further study ..... 20

*30% scaled down to 10% of graduated students pursuing further study within 12 months of graduation*

### EMPLOYABILITY 150

- Employer reputation OR Campus employer presence (max 30 points) ..... 50

<p><b>Employer reputation</b></p> <p><i>50 employer nominations received from the latest QS global employer reputation analysis</i></p>	<p><b>Campus employer presence</b></p> <p><i>200 distinct companies OR a number equivalent to 1% of the FTE student body present at events on campus in a recent 12 month period (for example, an institution with 10,000 students will require the presence of 100 to score 30 points)</i></p>
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- Graduate employment rate ..... 50

*90% scaled down to 50% of graduated students employed within 12 months of graduation (excluding those not actively seeking work e.g. pursuing further study)*
- Career service support ..... 50

*10 FTE career advisors scaled down to 2 OR 1 FTE career advisor per 1000 students OR 25 FTE staff working in the careers office*

## RESEARCH

150

- **Papers per faculty OR Arts-related outputs** ..... 40
  - Papers per faculty*
  - 7 papers per faculty member on Scopus™ in the last 5 years*
  - Arts-related outputs*
  - Recognition of academic outputs in disciplines where journal articles are not pervasive*
- **Citations per paper** ..... 40
  - 8 citations per paper on Scopus™ over a recent 6 year period, as per the QS World University Rankings (adjusted for specialist institutions with negligible activity in medicine, science and technology)*
- **Academic reputation** ..... 40
  - 200 academic nominations received from the last QS Global Academic Survey drawing results from the last 3 years.*
- **Acclaimed academic experts** ..... 30
  - Up to 30 points available through a combination different types of award winners:*
    - i) *IREG International Academic Award winners (2 points each up to 30/30 points, maximum 15 experts)*
    - ii) *Open award winners (1 point each up to 10/30 points, maximum 10 experts)*
    - iii) *Restricted award winners (0.5 points each up to 5/30 points, maximum 10 experts)*

## INTERNATIONALIZATION

150

- **International faculty** ..... 20
  - 25% international faculty members*
- **International collaborations** ..... 50
  - 50 university research collaborations yielding publications in Scopus™ in the last 5 years or joint-degree programmes with QS top 500 universities in previous 3 years published rankings*
- **International students** ..... 20
  - 20% international students*
- **Religious facilities** ..... 10
  - 1 place of worship for a minimum of 3 major religious groups (Christianity, Islam, Sikhism/Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism or Judaism) OR 1 non-denominational facility for use by any religion*
- **Inbound exchange students** ..... 20
  - 2% inbound academic students against total number of students*
- **Outbound exchange students** ..... 20
  - 2% outbound academic students against total number of students*
- **International diversity** ..... 10
  - 50 nationalities scaled down to 5 represented in student body*

# Learning Environment

There's more to universities than research and teaching. The criteria below outline the key areas that enhance the learning environment of the university, which in many cases the centre of the students' lives. Institutions typically select one of the two learning environment categories below.

## FACILITIES\* 100

### ■ Sporting Facilities ..... 20

2 points for each of the following on-campus facilities with 4 bonus points for 6 or more:

- iv) swimming pool
- v) fitness gym
- vi) indoor sports court
- vii) outdoor sports court
- viii) outdoor sports pitch
- ix) athletics track
- x) stadium
- xi) full-time sports coach or dedicated sport medical staff

### ■ Medical Facilities ..... 10

1 on-campus medical centre with minimum 1 full time qualified medical doctor OR 1 full time nurse per every 3000 full time students

### ■ Student societies ..... 10

50 scaled down to 10 student administered organizations

### ■ Student accommodation ..... 20

Maximum points for the same number of rooms available in student residences as first year students

### ■ IT infrastructure ..... 20

1 on computer per 5 students OR internet access in every university provided student residence OR WIFI access across 90% scaled down to 60% of campus area (excluding parks and sports fields)

### ■ Library Facilities ..... 20

Investment of \$250 USD scaled down to \$10 per student over the past year OR 3 scaled down to 1 new library catalogue entry per student

■ **Student services and technology ..... 20**

2 points for each of the following with 2 bonus points for 7 or more:

- i) Tablet compatible
- ii) Windows Compliant
- iii) iOS Compliant
- iv) Android Compliant
- v) Low Bandwidth capacity access
- vi) Application for smartphone
- vii) Digitized library
- viii) Customised access for users with special needs
- ix) Online access to career centre / dedicated online career advisor

■ **Track record ..... 10**

10 years' operating successful online programs since the first graduating class, scaled down to 0

■ **Student faculty engagement ..... 20**

2 points for each of the following with 4 bonus points for 6 or more:

- i) Dedicated point of contact (tutor or similar)
- ii) Scheduled conversations (phone/video conference)
- iii) Face to face component: opportunity to meet faculty (dedicated to online/distance students) in drop-in sessions. It can be at regional centres.
- iv) Live tutoring
- v) Live streaming course video
- vi) Pre-recorded course video
- vii) 24/7 support for students (Time-Zone sensitive)
- viii) Faculty assessment

■ **Student interaction ..... 20**

5 points for each of the following:

- i) Online forum / discussion board
- ii) Alumni Network
- iii) Group Work / Team Assessment
- iv) Peer Assessment

■ **Commitment to online ..... 10**

75% of degrees available at the university that can be taken through online/distance learning, scaled down to 25%

■ **Reputation ..... 20**

10 points for each of the following:

- i) 5 organizations using programs and technology for staff training
- ii) 10 completed applications per enrolment scaled proportion of the points down to a ratio of 2: 1

**\*Universities will only be evaluated in one of the sections in this area as part of the QS Stars Evaluation. A maximum of 100 points can be scored.**

# Specialist Criteria

Excellence in a narrow field is as valid a claim to world-class status as competence in the round. These criteria are designed to extend credit where it's due. Institutions should select one of the categories below.

## SUBJECT RANKING

200

- Broad subject area ranking **OR** Subject ranking ..... 150

*Broad subject area ranking*

*Subject ranking*

Highly ranked in any of one of 5 broad specialist areas based on the QS World University Rankings by Subject. Maximum points for ranked position 1-50, scaled down to 10 points at position 300.

Highest scoring discipline based on one of the QS World University Rankings by Subject or respected alternate global subject rankings. Maximum points for ranked position 1-20, scaled down to 10 points at position 200.

- i) Engineering & Technology
- ii) Natural Sciences
- iii) Life Sciences & Medicine
- iv) Arts & Humanities
- v) Social Sciences & Management

For a full list of subjects please visit <https://www.topuniversities.com/subject-rankings>

- Internationally recognized **AND/OR** Nationally recognized accreditations ..... 50

25 points for an international or 10 points for a national accreditation relative to a specific, named degree program (maximum 50 points)

## PROGRAM STRENGTH

MAX 150

**\*All indicators in this category relate specifically to the specialist program\***

- Graduate employment rate ..... 20

95% scaled down to 80% of graduates employed or stated a business within 12 months

- Average years' work experience **OR** Completion ..... 20

*Average years' work experience*

*Completion*

2 years' work experience scaled down to 0 (based on months)

95% of students scheduled to graduate succeed in doing so on time, scaled down to 75%

- Student satisfaction ..... 30

Maximum points for 90% student satisfaction scaled down to 75%

- Student/faculty ratio ..... 10

Maximum points for a 5:1 ratio (20%) scaled down to a ratio of 20:1 (5%)

- Applications per place ..... 10

10:1 ratio scaled down to 2:1 of number of completed applications against spaces available

- International students ..... 10

30% scaled down to 10% international students

- Internationally recognized **AND/OR** Nationally recognized accreditations ..... 50

25 points for an international or 10 points for a national accreditation relative to a specific, named degree program (maximum 50 points)



## Advanced Criteria

For a university to be truly world-class, its mission and its impact must extend further than the basics. This selection of criteria looks at important factors that a university with a solid foundation in the core criteria might target to advance to a higher level of performance and recognition. Since institutions vary in specialization, this section gives universities the option to select two of the categories in this area to showcase their strengths.

### ARTS & CULTURE\*

50

■ **Arts and culture facilities** ..... 15

2 points each, with 3 additional points for 6 or more from the list, to a maximum 15 points; all facilities must be open to students and faculty but do not have to be open to the public.

- i) Purpose-built museum
- ii) Purpose-built theatre^
- iii) Concert hall^
- iv) Dedicated art studio
- v) Campus art exhibition program
- vi) Dedicated recording studio OR music practice rooms
- vii) Campus radio station, TV studio, or TV channel
- viii) Cinema^
- ix) Outdoor art space (e.g. sculpture garden)

^Must feature at least 10 performances per year to be considered

■ **Concerts, events, and exhibitions** ..... 15

150 scaled down to 50 (OR events numbering 1% to 5% of the student population, i.e. for 600 students, thresholds are 6 to 30 events) on-campus concerts, events, or exhibitions in the last academic year (12 month period)

■ **Artistic and cultural accolades** ..... 10

50 scaled down to 5 awards or accolades given in the last academic year (12 month period) to students, staff, departments, or the institution as a whole for publicly accessible works relating to the arts or local/national culture.

■ **Community art and cultural investment** ..... 10

Contributing 0.5% of turnover OR \$1 million USD to public art projects outside the university, and to cultural preservation on or off campus (but within the university's own country).

### INNOVATION\*

50

■ **Patents** ..... 20

50 active patents registered with national or international patent offices (no limitation of time)

■ **Spin-off companies** ..... 10

5 spin-off companies established in the last 5 years still operating and no longer requiring support from the university

■ **Industrial research** ..... 20

10 distinct corporations (non-university) yielding publications in Scopus™ in the last 5 years

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY\*

50

- **Community investment and development** ..... 20  
*1% of turnover OR \$2 million USD contribution to community projects within 200km of any campus of affiliated facility*
- **Charity work and disaster relief** ..... 10  
*1% of turnover OR \$2 million USD contribution to national or international causes and charities*
- **Regional human capital development** ..... 10  
*50% scaled down to 30% of graduates employed in the region OR 50% to 30% of students hailing from the region*
- **Environmental impact**..... 10  
*2 points for each of the following:*
  - i) Sustainability website
  - ii) Energy conservation program
  - iii) Water conservation program
  - iv) Recycling program
  - v) Transportation policy

## INCLUSIVENESS\*

50

- **Scholarships and bursaries** ..... 20  
*2% of turnover spent on funds for scholarships OR attendance made possible for 200 students on 50% scholarships*
- **Disabled access**..... 10  
*Based on presence of a map identifying wheelchair access points, 80% scaled down to 40% of campus area with wheelchair access*
- **Gender balance**..... 10  
*50:50 scaled down to 60:40 for either gender*
- **Low-income outreach** ..... 10  
*15% scaled to 5% of students identified as low-income OR 1% of turnover or \$2 million USD investment in promotion to low-income families*

*\*Universities will only be evaluated in two of the sections in this area as part of the QS Stars Evaluation. A maximum of 100 points can be scored.*

# WHY QS STARS?

***It is your time to shine.***

***These are some of the reasons why QS Stars is for you***



***Increases your International Recognition***

Enhance your branding and visibility, reaching out more prospective students and improving your recruitment efforts



***Highlights your areas of excellence***

Emphasise your strengths and be recognised in your fields of expertise, standing out among other universities



***Provides evaluation to improve your performance***

Get the QS Stars Development Roadmap with comprehensive inputs, identifying weaknesses and areas for improvement, to increase your award level

*“QS Stars is a mechanism for us to project our specific strengths to the world. It has given us a better understanding of what are our weaknesses, as well as our strengths, within the university.”*

Edilio Mazzoleni Head of Operations,  
International Office, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Italy

## ***Find out more***

If you have questions about the QS Stars Methodology, feel free to contact:  
QS Stars Product Manager, Shiloh Rose: [shiloh@qs.com](mailto:shiloh@qs.com)

If you are considering an audit from us, please get in touch with:  
QS Intelligence Unit Commercial Director, Jason Newman, [jason@qs.com](mailto:jason@qs.com)



## QS - OUR MISSION

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