

In an increasingly globalised world, where graduate and academic careers flow around the world and where research funding is not limited by borders, many universities find it increasingly important to be [internationally focused](#). This is what U-Multirank measures as ‘international orientation’.

Among the metrics we use is ‘[international joint publications](#)’ (IJPs), the number of research publications that each university has produced where its academics have worked jointly with at least one other researcher from another country.

The figure is measured as a percentage which, along with the other measures we use in the international dimension, shows how international the university’s focus really is. It reveals how well connected the university research is to international networks.

Working on research across international boundaries is understood to be a key strategy to answer the major questions facing the world today. These grand challenges – such as climate change or health-related problems – are complex and pressing issues that concern not only individual countries, but humanity as a whole. Joint research between teams based in several countries brings together differing knowledge, skills and facilities to tackle these tough problems.

Like any metrics, IJPs can never be a perfect measure of research collaboration. Sometimes joint publications are credited as international, but the authorship may not have been so collaborative in practice. Conversely, sometimes international collaborations don’t result in joint publications. As an indicator of international orientation, it can only ever be a ‘proxy’.

Other situations might also result in IJPs. For example, exchanges and partnerships between smaller universities in developing countries and prestigious foreign universities can be more about disseminating understanding than collaborative research. There are also university researchers who are themselves international: holding positions in more than one university or research organisation located in different countries.

IJPs that come about in these ways aren’t wrong and they still demonstrates internationalism, but it’s worth understanding what ‘international joint publication’ really means. IJPs often get cited more widely than research conducted by a single university or by national collaborations only.

U-Multirank’s latest (2015) [data](#) features more than 1,200 higher education institutions. Their average share of IJPs is 35.5%, i.e. around a third of publications are produced with foreign research organisations.

However, the variation is big. Universities with the largest publication output (e.g. over 10,000 a year) have a percentage of IJPs fairly typical of the global average, ranging from 30% to 60%. But in universities where less research gets published, the variation can be huge: in some, 80% to 90% of their publications are IJPs, but in others, no publications are produced with foreign authors at all.

The university with the highest percentage of IJPs is Austria’s [University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt](#) where 93.1% of their publications are international. It’s a similar story at the [University of Namibia](#) (81.6%) and Italy’s [University Guglielmo Marconi](#) (81.3%).

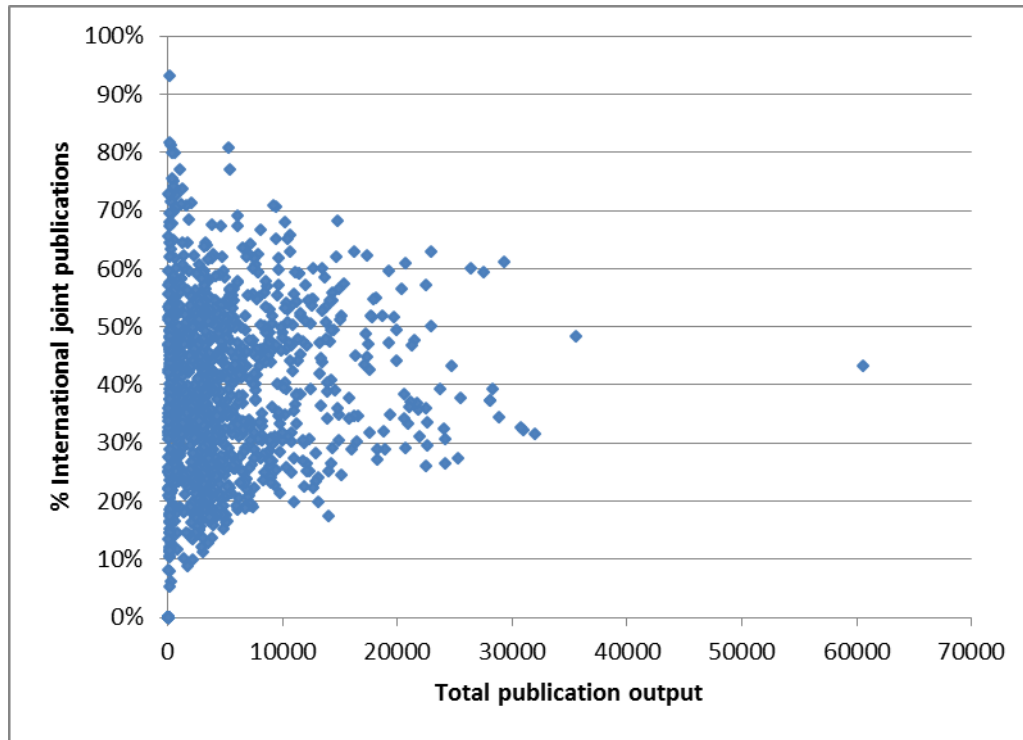


Photo: Scatterplot showing the share of international joint publications of all 1,200+ universities in U-Multirank.

For more information on this indicator, or on U-Multirank, please visit our website, at www.umultirank.org, or contact us at, E: info@umultirank.org; T: +49 (0) 5241 9761 58.