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U-Multirank creates new ‘Higher Education Cooperation Index’, showing the key to strategic success is cooperation

(EUROPE, 21. SEPTEMBER 2021) In its eighth annual publication, [U-Multirank](#) showcases how universities that collaborate with their local ecosystem and across borders perform better than those that do not. The latest analysis of a new Cooperation Index – exclusive to U-Multirank – shows two main trends:

- 1) Cooperation works: higher education institutions that work together with other institutions, businesses and industries, governments, regional bodies or across borders generally perform better than those that are less focused on cooperation;
- 2) European universities cooperate more intensively in comparison to other regions, especially in the performance areas of teaching & learning, research, knowledge exchange and internationalisation.

The wide scope of U-Multirank data demonstrates the positive effects of cooperation in different dimensions of performance. The top institutions of the new U-Multirank Cooperation Index are more successful in graduation in time of their graduates (82% of master students compared to 73%). Among the top cooperation institutions, the founding of graduate companies is much more common (32 graduate companies per 1000 graduates compared to only 17 among all institutions). Additionally, their publication output (size-normalised) is almost double compared to all universities.

By comparing data on almost 2,000 universities across a six-year span, U-Multirank shows that despite the global effects of COVID-19, external cooperation is still a major part of higher education. To analyse cooperation, U-Multirank developed a new ‘Cooperation Index’ taking into account seven aspects of cooperation: strategic partnerships, international joint degrees, internships, international co-publications, co-publications with industrial partners, regional co-publications and co-patents with industry.

A breakdown of these cooperation aspects by region reveals that universities located within the European Union show good performance in nearly every category of the Cooperation Index. They have more joint degree programmes: the EU institutions among the top 100 of the U-Multirank Cooperation Index have almost four times more than non-EU universities and are more successful in student mobility (incoming and outgoing). The new U-Multirank ‘higher education cooperation index’ shows that there is a large variety of university cooperation profiles. There is no university that is among the top 100 in all seven indicators reflected in the Cooperation Index. Rather the cooperation profiles relate to the specific strategic profiles of the institutions.

‘U-Multirank’s latest results show that cooperation really works in higher education. Whether institutions collaborate with colleague institutions and/or with other societal actors, such as business and industry, social and cultural institutions, as well as governmental bodies, in all cases there appears to be a positive effect on performance,’ said Professors Dr. Frans van Vught and Dr. Frank Ziegele, U-Multirank joint project leaders.

U-Multirank’s latest results not only give insights on the effects of external cooperation, but as a multi-dimensional global ranking it makes transparent the detailed performance of universities. In doing so,

students can make better informed choices about what, or where to study based on what matters most to them. Universities can use U-Multirank data to assess their strengths and weaknesses and find ways to create or strengthen their strategic plans, including aspects of cooperation.

The interactive tool assisting students to select their best matching university or programme is available at www.umultirank.org. New this year, U-Multirank offers an interactive map of the most cooperative universities worldwide ([LINK](#)).

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Notes for editors

For journalists and all users alike, U-Multirank offers tailor-made rankings and analyses, for example country reports focusing on university performance in a specific country, or its global 'Top 25 Performers' lists in areas like university-industry relations, or the most international universities. Since its first publication in 2014, U-Multirank has more than doubled the number of universities (higher education institutions) from 850 to 1,945 and increased the coverage of countries from 74 to 96, including more than 5,000 faculties and more than 12,000 study programmes across 30 subject areas.

U-Multirank is an alternative approach to comparing universities and offers a solution to the flaws of traditional league tables. Its multi-dimensional approach compares the performance of universities across a range of different activities grading each of them from 'A' (very good) to 'E' (weak). It allows users to identify a university's strengths and weaknesses, on the aspects that most interest them. The data included in U-Multirank are drawn from a number of sources, providing users with a comprehensive set of information: data supplied by institutions; and drawn from international bibliometric and patent databases; from national databases; and from surveys of more than 100,000 students at participating universities.

U-Multirank originated at a conference of the European Commission during the French presidency in 2008. Since 2017 it is funded by the Bertelsmann Foundation, the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme and Santander Group. U-Multirank is developed and implemented by an independent consortium led by the Centre for Higher Education ([CHE](#)) in Germany. The Center for Higher Education Policy Studies ([CHEPS](#)) at the University of Twente and the Centre for Science and Technology Studies ([CWTS](#)) from Leiden University, both in the Netherlands, as well as Fundación Conocimiento y Desarrollo ([FCYD](#)) in Spain are partners in the project. The consortium is headed by professors Frans van Vught (CHEPS) and Frank Ziegele (CHE).

Institutions that would like to participate in 2022 can express their interest [online](#).

Appendix

- [Interactive map showing the most cooperative universities](#)
- [Graphic illustration of cooperation effects](#)
- [Full lists of 'Global Top 25' performing universities \(including new Cooperation Index list\)](#)
- [Country reports on global and national performances of universities \(available for selected countries\)](#)
- [Full list of universities participating in the 2021 U-Multirank release](#)
- [FAQ](#)

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