

Participation of Uzbek Universities in International Rankings

*Abdukadirova Xalida Abduxamedovna*¹, *Mukumova Nargis Nuriddinovna*²

Abstract: The article considers current issues of ensuring the competitiveness of universities and national higher education systems, primarily Uzbek, in the context of globalization. Ensuring a high level of competitiveness of the education system on the world stage is based on effective strategies for the development of national universities. The implementation of these strategies should contribute to achieving the level of world standards in education, research and development. The most striking examples of a competitive university are the so-called "world-class universities" included in well-known international rankings (ARWU, THE, QS).

The strategy for achieving a competitiveness level by a particular university, which makes it possible not only to get into the international ranking and gain a foothold in it, but also to move up, is directly related to the national (state) strategy for the development of higher education. The experience of participation of Universities of Uzbekistan in international rankings is presented.

Keywords: global education system, world-class universities, global university rankings, competitiveness of universities, global education market.

Introduction. Education is the most important resource for the economic and social development of the state, guaranteeing a decent standard of living for citizens. Globalization of the economy has led to the globalization of competition. This process has affected such specific economic structures as universities. Meanwhile, determining which higher education institution is better and which is worse seems problematic for a number of reasons. If we are talking about universities in different countries, then assessing their quality is further complicated. In this regard, many countries are undertaking a great deal of work related to compiling global university rankings, designed to inform the public, at least, about the best universities in the world. At present, we can talk about a real "ranking fever", which seems to be close to its apogee.

Main part. The first international (but not yet global) university ranking was prepared in 1997 by AsiaWeek magazine, which compiled a classification of the largest universities in the Asia-Pacific region. However, for political reasons, which will be discussed below, the ranking ceased to exist in 2001 (Salmi, Saroyan, 2007). This negative experience served as a dress rehearsal for subsequent more successful efforts in this area. Thus, the first attempt to build an international ranking was undertaken in the Asian educational market.

Since 2003, the construction of a system of global (worldwide) university rankings has begun. It was in this year that Shanghai Jiao Tong University (China) began compiling an annual academic ranking of the world's leading universities (Academic Ranking of World Universities); hereinafter we will call it ARWU. The ranking is based on an assessment of the research achievements of universities according to six indicators. The integral indicator of a university is a weighted average of these indicators. The leading university is assigned an indicator of 100; the result of the other educational institutions is calculated as a percentage of the leader. It should be noted that the first global ranking started again in Asia. It was in 2003 that the new history of university rankings began using the "end-to-end" methodology for assessing universities in different countries.

¹ Associate Professor, PhD in Economics, Samarkand branch of Tashkent University of Economics

² Senior Lecturer, Samarkand State University of Architecture and Construction



Since 2004, the annual list of the best universities in the world has been offered by the British organization "TSL Education Ltd", it is published in the publication "The Times Higher Education" (The Times Higher Education, 2010). Since 2005, the ranking was compiled jointly with the company Quacquarelli Symonds and was called QS-THES (since 2009 - THE-QS). [3]

However, since 2010, as a result of the developers rethinking the accumulated errors and criticism from the global academic community, the above-mentioned ranking as a joint project of THE and QS ceased to exist, breaking up into two independent rankings. QS continues to compile its own version of the ranking, and Times Higher Education now collaborates with Thomson Reuters. In September 2010, the "new" THE World University Rankings (THE) was released. Thus, the holder of the established THE brand remained the company "TSL Education Ltd", and the QS ranking moved to the position of a competing assessment system; henceforth we will refer to it as QS. The formal birth date of the QS ranking is 2009.

In 2004, the international ranking movement was supported by the "Cybermetrics" laboratory, part of the research group of the Center for Information and Documentation of the National Research Council of Spain, which published its Webometrics ranking; henceforth we will refer to it as Web. This system evaluates the presence of universities in the virtual information space and relies mainly on Internet indicators of university sites. The Web's focus is on 16-20 thousand universities, as a result of which a final table is formed, which includes 4 thousand universities of the world. This is several times more than in other rankings. For example, ARWU analyzes only 3 thousand universities, and THE - 3-6 thousand. As the Web developers state, its goal is not so much to rank universities as to support the initiative to open access to the academic materials of universities.

The next significant step was taken in 2007 by the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan, which began publishing its own ranking – Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities (Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities, 2010); hereinafter we will call it PRSP. This ranking presents the world's top 500 universities, assessed in terms of research activity in terms of writing scientific papers. The five global rankings listed above – ARWU, THE, QS, Web and PRSP – act as generally recognized ones. [2]

Meanwhile, the beginning of the century was marked by numerous and largely unsuccessful attempts to build other ratings, which are still practically not taken into account by the world community. Nevertheless, some of them have the potential to become full-fledged participants in the relevant information market. The relatively short history of the existence of global university ratings shows that they are turning into one of the significant instruments of competitive struggle and educational policy.

New Uzbekistan, striving to strengthen its position in the world community, achieves success in the development of human capital, creating equal conditions for obtaining quality education, building a model of economic development based on science and innovation.

To achieve the goals of socio-economic development of Uzbekistan, important program documents have been developed that are aimed at developing education, science and innovation. In particular, the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 and the Strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030" define specific tasks facing our ministry. Among the priorities is the development of human capital as the main factor determining the level of competitiveness of the country in the world arena and its progress. In 2024, targeted work on the development of the higher education system, support for science and innovation made it possible to achieve significant results. [2]

Also in 2024, the State Educational Standard of Higher Education was updated. And in accordance with the credit-modular system, the ratio of full-time and independent learning is now 50/50 or 40/60 percent (according to the old standard - 90/10 percent). The role of optional subjects in the educational process has significantly increased, individual educational trajectories for students have been introduced. At the same time, since the 2024/2025 academic year, systematic work has been carried out to improve industrial practice in order to develop practical skills and professional competencies in students.



The organization of 15-week professional practice will help to combine the theoretical and practical knowledge of future specialists. Another important area of work is the development of a dual education system that combines theoretical and practical knowledge. It is being developed taking into account the specifics of bachelor's and master's degree specialties, fully contributes to the establishment of a close connection between theoretical training and production processes, and also serves to improve the quality of personnel training. Within the dual education system, the educational process is divided into two parts: three days of theoretical training at the university and three days of practice in production. This approach helps prepare competitive specialists for the labor market.

In 2024, 39 educational programs of seven higher educational institutions of Uzbekistan received international accreditation, which confirms their compliance with international educational standards. Thus, students of our country are gradually gaining access to modern and high-quality education. And thanks to the work carried out to ensure recognition of diplomas of domestic universities abroad, graduates have the opportunity to take high positions in the international labor market.

Conclusions. The Ministry of Higher Education of Uzbekistan announced the inclusion of three national universities in the prestigious international ranking of the best universities in the world, Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2025 by Subject.

The Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers (TIAME) showed the highest results, entering the ranks of the best universities in the world in two areas at once: "natural sciences, mathematics and statistics" (301-400 place) and "engineering" (501-600 place). This achievement indicates a high level of training of specialists in the field of agriculture and engineering sciences at this educational institution.

The National University of Uzbekistan (NUUz) also demonstrated competitiveness in the world arena, taking a position in the 601-800 range in the category "natural sciences, mathematics and statistics". The inclusion of NUUz in the THE ranking confirms its status as a leading national university and recognition of the quality of education provided in the field of fundamental sciences. Tashkent University of Information Technologies (TUIT) entered the ranking in the areas of "education" (601+ place) and "computer science and programming" (1001+ place). The presence of TUIT in the ranking highlights the developing potential of Uzbekistan in the field of information technology and training of IT specialists. The inclusion of Uzbek universities in the THE World University Rankings 2025 by Subject is an important indicator of the development of the higher education system in the country and its integration into the global educational space.

QS Asia University Rankings 2023

No	Name of the University	Place
1.	Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers" National Research University	301-350
2.	National University of Uzbekistan	351-400
3.	Tashkent Financial Institute	551-600
4.	Tashkent State Technical University	551-600
5.	Samarkand State University	601-650
6.	Tashkent State Agrarian University	601-650
7.	Karakalpak State University	701-750
8	Tashkent State Pedagogical University	701-750

On November 8, 2022, the results of the QS Asia University Rankings-2023 were announced. 760 universities from 23 countries took part in it, and 8 universities of Uzbekistan took a worthy place among them. "Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers" National Research University and the National University of Uzbekistan were among the top 500 universities.

In May 2022, the Presidential Resolution No. PP-246 "On measures to ensure the harmonization of scientific potential and practical activities in working with international ratings and indices" was



adopted, which establishes the procedure for the development and submission to the relevant ministries and departments by scientific organizations assigned to international ratings and indices of proposals for state programs for the implementation of the Development Strategy of the New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026. The document approved the Plan for the development of medium-term and long-term strategies for the accelerated development of regularly low-rated areas and industries within the framework of structural indicators of priority international ratings and indices. [1]

Undoubtedly, participation in rankings brings its fruits and is a good tool for managing the quality of education.

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