The Complete University Guide 2024 – Notes on Methodology

The main university table includes all providers with university status who offer full-time, first-degree courses, put in a full data return to HESA and are a multi-subject provider (defined as qualifying for at least three subject tables). A small number may have insufficient appropriate data or have requested not to be listed in the table. The subject tables include all universities in the main table plus other higher education providers with degree awarding powers and who submit a full data return to HESA.

Main Table

Indicator	Source	Notes
Student satisfaction	National Student Survey 2022	Average score out of 5 for all questions in the survey except the Students' Union question (ie 26 of the 27 questions).
Research assessment	REF 2021	Research quality outcomes were converted to a grade point average (4*=4, 3*=3 …). If no data were available, the minimum score for all providers in the table was used.
Research intensity	HESA 2019-20	Staff included in the SSR calculation who were eligible for the REF were multiplied by the overall percentage submitted (from REF data) and divided by the total number of staff included in the SSR measure. If no data were available, the minimum score for all providers in the table was used.
Entry standards	HESA 2021-22	Average UCAS tariff score for new first-degree entrants, excluding new entrants to a foundation year and students with highest qualification coded P94 in HESA data. Tariff points derived from Scottish qualifications were discounted by 25% to allow for the fact that the Scottish education system results in students having more opportunities to accumulate tariff points. The unadjusted average tariff was published in the table. A threshold of seven students with data is required for inclusion.
Student-staff ratio	HESA 2021-22	The number of students per member of academic staff. The staff FTE (Full Time Equivalent) was the total FTE of those whose primary function is teaching or teaching & research from the staff individual record plus the total atypical staff FTE. It was assumed that all atypical staff have some teaching function. Student FTEs excluded wholly franchised and distance learning students.

Academic services spend	HESA 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21	Average expenditure on academic services (HESA cost centre 201) over three years per the latest year student FTE. Student FTE was the total for the provider but excluded wholly franchised and distance learning students.
Facilities spend	HESA 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21	Average expenditure on student facilities (HESA cost centre 204) over three years per the latest year student FTE. Student FTE was the total for provider but excluded wholly franchised and distance learning students.
Graduate prospects - outcome	HESA 2019-20	The proportion of full-time, first-degree, UK domiciled graduates of known destination recorded as entering postgraduate study and/or highly skilled employment. Highly skilled jobs were those in groups 1-3 in the SOC coding scheme. Students whose most important activity was travel, caring, retired or other were excluded.
Graduate prospects – on track	HESA 2019-20	The proportion of full-time, first-degree, UK domiciled graduates of known destination who agree or strongly agree with the statement 'My current [activity] fits with my future plans'. Students whose most important activity was 'other' were excluded.
Continuation	HESA 2020-21, 2021-22	The proportion of young first-degree entrants who continued, qualified at that Institution or transferred to another provider.

The overall score is calculated as follows:

- The raw score on each measure was converted to a z-score (('score'-'mean score')/'standard deviation of scores'); that for student satisfaction was divided by 3 to avoid this measure having too great an impact on the table as the outcomes were closely spaced.
- The scores for student satisfaction, entry standards, SSR, good honours and graduate destinations were adjusted for subject mix; an expected score was calculated using the scores by subject (cost centre in the case of SSR) and the log of the difference calculated; a z-score was then calculated; this means that it is impossible to re-create the table using only the published data as the subject level data are also required.
- Each score was multiplied by the weight for the measure (Student satisfaction 1.5, Research assessment 1.0, Graduate prospects – outcome 0.67, Research intensity and the two spend measures 0.5, Graduate prospects – on track – 0.33, others 1.0) and summed
- The total weighted z-score was scaled so that the highest outcome was 1000 and the rest expressed as a proportion of the highest.

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Subject Tables

The methodology for the Subject Tables was essentially the same as the Main Table, with the main differences being those necessary to allow for the availability of data, smaller numbers and missing data. To qualify for inclusion, the provider must have relevant data for Student Satisfaction (except in a few cases where there is a known reason for the lack of data) and at least two of Entry Standards, Continuation and Graduate prospects - outcomes.

Indicator	Source	Notes
Student satisfaction	National Student Survey 2022	Average score out of 5 for all questions in the survey except the Students' Union question (ie 26 of the 27 questions). Level 3 subject data were used when available; where this was not available relevant level 2 data were used; where this was not available the previous year was used. For a few subjects at a very small number of providers the response rate to the NSS was too low for data to be published despite there being significant provision in the subject and in these cases the requirement for an NSS score was not implemented.
Research assessment	REF 2021	Research quality outcomes were converted to a grade point average (4*=4, 3*=3 …). If no data were available, the minimum score for all providers in the table was used. The proportion of eligible staff submitted for the REF was also used as an additional measure in the background but not published to avoid confusion with the research intensity measure in the main table and the fact that two thirds of the outcomes were the same at 100%.
Entry standards	HESA 2021-22	Average UCAS tariff score for new first-degree entrants, excluding new entrants to a foundation year and students with highest qualification coded P94 in HESA data. Tariff points derived from Scottish qualifications were discounted by 25% to allow for the fact that the Scottish education system results in students having more opportunities to accumulate tariff points. The unadjusted average tariff was published in the table. A threshold of seven students with data was required for inclusion.

| Continuation | HESA 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22 | As for main table, except that two years were combined to increase numbers. A threshold of 15 students with data available was required. The z-score was multiplied by 0.75 to avoid this measure having too great an impact on the table as the outcomes were closely spaced.

If the range of outcomes was very small (resulting in this measure having too large an impact on the overall outcome) the weight of this measure was reduced by a factor according to the value of the inter-quartile range:

| | | <table><tr><td>Inter-Quartile Range</td><td>Factor</td></tr><tr><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>0.2</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>0.4</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>0.6</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>0.8</td></tr><tr><td>5 or greater</td><td>1</td></tr></table> |

| Graduate prospects – outcomes | HESA 2019-20 | As for main table. A threshold of 10 students with data available was required and the result was rounded to the nearest 2% or 1% depending on the amount and distribution of the data. If insufficient data were available, aggregated data (CAH2) were used. If the range of outcomes was very small (resulting in this measure having too large an impact on the overall outcome) the weight of this measure was reduced by a factor according to the value of the inter-quartile range (see table, above). |
| Graduate prospects – on track | HESA 2019-20 | As for main table. The proportion of full-time, first-degree, UK domiciled graduates of known destination who agree or strongly agree with the statement 'My current [activity] fits with my future plans'. Students whose most important activity was 'other' are excluded. The same thresholds and rounding as for Graduate prospects – outcomes were used. If insufficient data were available, aggregated data (largely using NSS level 2) were used. If the range of outcomes was very small (resulting in this measure having too large an impact on the overall outcome) the weight of this measure was reduced by a factor according to the value of the inter-quartile range (see table, above). |

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The overall score was calculated as for the main table, except that:

- There was no need for an adjustment for subject mix.
- Student satisfaction, entry standards and continuation were weighted 1.0; research assessment 0.8, graduate prospects – outcomes 0.67; and graduate prospects – on track 0.33 (with the % staff submitted to the REF 0.2)
- To allow for missing data, the sum of the z-scores was divided by the number of measures with available data.
- The total z-score was scaled so that the highest outcome was 100 and the rest expressed as a proportion of the highest; the precise scaling varies between tables to ensure that the range of overall scores reflects the range of data for providers.

Changes for CUG 2024 league tables

New providers in the main table	None
New providers in the subject tables	None
New providers in the Arts, Drama & Music table	None
New subject tables	None
Continuation	A new measure of continuation was introduced as the old projected completion measure was no longer available. As the data were available at subject level this was included in the subject tables as a new measure.
Graduate prospects – outcomes	Where the ranges of values were small, a factor was applied to reduce the weight of this measure depending on the inter-quartile range of values (previously the weight in Medicine table was reduced to 0 and in the Nursing table to 0.5).
Graduate prospects – on track	Same factor applied as for Graduate prospects – outcomes.