

Using University League Tables

League tables, when used effectively, can play a part in choosing a university. They help you identify and refine a shortlist of institutions and courses to consider. However, for a truly rounded view of a university, you should use league table rankings as one source of information, but not the only one. Where a university stands in league tables can be relevant, but the quality of the course is an important factor, as well as location, accommodation and the structure of the course.

Factors to Consider:

- **Objective or subjective data:** understand the origin. Outside agencies statistics should be more objective, student feedback may be more subjective and influenced by factors
- **Bunching:** rankings can be separated by very small differences, so read them in context
- **Context:** not all categories are updated annually, e.g., the evaluation of a university's research quality may be several years old
- **Reputation:** newer universities may demonstrate different strengths to older universities
- **University overall vs subject ranking:** ratings for different subject areas may be a more useful assessment of what you are likely to encounter as a student
- **Employability/industry links:** certain courses are well regarded by employers in specific career areas, even though the universities may not be ranked highly overall

The three most widely used UK university league tables and the areas they report on are shown in the table below.

	The Guardian	The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide	The Complete University Guide
Entry Standards	✓	✓	✓
Student Satisfaction with Teaching	✓	✓	✓
Staff to Student Ratio	✓	✓	✓
Graduate Outcomes	✓	✓	✓
Research Quality		✓	✓
Academic Services Spend		✓	✓
Facilities Spend		✓	✓
Completion		✓	✓
Student Satisfaction with Course	✓		
Student Satisfaction with Feedback	✓		
Student Satisfaction with Overall Experience		✓	
Research Intensity			✓
Graduates On Track			✓
Spend per Student	✓		
Value added Score	✓		
Continuation	✓		
Proportion of First and 2:1 Degrees		✓	

NB this table is subject to change. Please check individual university websites for course entry requirements

Remember:

Just because a university is at the top of a league table it does not necessarily mean that it is the right university for you. All data can have limitations and so attending open days, researching courses carefully and talking to lecturers and university staff is essential. Looking at league tables should not be a substitute for undertaking thorough research into things such as the modules you will study and how you will be assessed.

Further Reading:

[Home - Discover Uni](#)

[UK University Rankings & League Table | StudentCrowd](#)

[Top 100 University Rankings & League Tables 2022 | Uni Compare \(universitycompare.com\)](#)

[Compare the Best University Degrees Courses UK | Whatuni](#)

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