University rankings
The UGR in international rankings (2019)

35 subjects at the UGR now feature in the Shanghai Ranking and 3 are among the global top 50

An upward trend

Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a definitive ‘university ranking’. Rather, what we have are rankings of certain attributes or characteristics of universities (much like those we might expect to observe in the case of an individual, for instance: age, weight, height or intelligence).

With this caveat in mind, when the criteria used in a ranking can be tracked over time, observing how a university’s relative position has evolved can provide valuable and pertinent data.

So, how has the University of Granada’s position evolved in recent years, according to international rankings? Let us examine a number of internationally renowned rankings based, to a large extent, on objective measurements of scientific and research output.

Perhaps the most high-profile of all is the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), also known as the Shanghai Ranking, which measures the output, quality and impact of research papers published by global institutions. In this ranking system, the UGR has substantially improved its position over the past decade, rising almost 200 places in total. The 2019 ARWU places the UGR as the fourth-highest ranked university in Spain and as among the top 300 universities on the globe, reaffirming our position as an institution at the forefront of national and international research.
Figure 1. Evolution of the UGR in the ARWU ranking since 2003

The UGR, which holds fourth place after the University of Barcelona, Complutense University of Madrid and Autonomous University of Barcelona in the 2019 ARWU, has also outperformed other important Spanish institutions such as Pompeu Fabra University, the Autonomous University of Madrid and the University of Valencia.

Viewed from the perspective of its performance in specific academic subjects, the University of Granada has also set a new record in 2019, with 3 UGR subjects now featuring among the global top 50 and a staggering 35 subjects in total featuring in the ARWU. In terms of these academic subjects, the University of Granada is only surpassed by the University of Barcelona (38 subjects) and the Autonomous University of Barcelona (37 subjects). The UGR is also the leading university in Andalusia, followed by the University of Seville (24 subjects), while the remaining universities in Andalusia have a combined total of 28 subjects in the 2019 ARWU.

Particularly noteworthy are the University’s achievements in the subjects of Library & Information Sciences (36th worldwide); Food Science & Technology (37th worldwide); Mining and Mineral Engineering (47th worldwide), Computer Science & Engineering (global top 76-100); and Mathematics (global top 76-100).

We find a similar trend reflected in another leading ranking system — the 2019 CWTS Leiden Ranking — in which the UGR is currently ranked 5th in Spain and 267th in the world (CWTS 2019). Elsewhere, in the NTU (Taiwan) Ranking, the UGR has reached 309th position internationally and is ranked 6th in Spain (NTU 2019). Meanwhile, the Scimago Institutions Rankings places the UGR 5th from among 59 higher education institutions in Spain in terms of research rank (SIR 2019). In the 2019 edition of the University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP 2019), the UGR has attained 242nd position in the world and 6th in Spain.
Finally, in the Webometrics Ranking of World Universities, an initiative developed by the Cybermetrics Lab (CSIC; Spanish National Research Council) which examines scientific activity, knowledge generation and scholarly communication through the Internet and on specific websites, the UGR currently holds 5th place from among 261 research institutions in Spain (Webometrics 2018).

The data presented in this article, highlighting the UGR’s continual progress in global university ranking systems, is just that; data. However, considering the socio-economic context in which the UGR operates and the resources-per-student at its disposal, this progression has been highly positive, and is a clear indication of the University’s unyielding commitment to excelling in higher education.

Given the University of Granada’s exceptional performance in these prestigious ranking systems, the 2019-2020 academic year promises to be yet another momentous era for our institution.