

Rankings and Guidebooks Task Force

Principles for Participation in Rankings and Guidebooks
Approved by Rankings and Guidebooks Task Force, August 2, 2018

Principles for participation

Rankings and guidebooks have proliferated in the last few years, taking up resources at the college and university-wide level. Participation should be considered carefully, using the following principles as a guide.

Northeastern should participate in a ranking or guidebook if it:

1. Attracts an active and discerning audience of students and parents
2. Enhances our reputation
3. Reports on a strategic area of interest
4. Has a publisher willing to engage with us to improve its methodology or survey response methods
5. Has a value of participation that is greater than the amount of work required
6. Includes our peers (both aspirational and current)
7. Meets criteria for a good quality ranking/guidebook (see below)

Criteria for a good quality ranking or guidebook

Many rankings and guidebooks, especially when new, lack solid methodologies, have poor data collection mechanisms which can lead to excessive work or mistakes, or ask questions that are unclear and ill-defined. Below are criteria that should be used in assessing whether a ranking or guidebook is sound, reliable and of good quality.

1. Solid methodology
 - a. The methodology is explained
 - b. The methodology is stable from year to year
 - c. The methodology is consistent with our way of doing business
 - d. The methodology is fair
 - e. Definitions for the collected data are explained, detailed, and clear
2. Good data collection mechanism
 - a. Secure data collection website
 - b. Easy of data entry, such as the ability to save and return to the instrument to edit
 - c. Provides documentation of submission for verification
3. Long history of existence
4. Reasonable total time to complete