

## Foreword

Germany's higher education institutions have been undergoing a process of differentiation for a long time. After some delay, this process has also begun to enter public perception. The orientation on the long-standing model of "all-rounder universities" has been replaced by universities' efforts to develop their own specific research profile and their realisation that they are competing at a state, national and global level. The German government's Excellence Initiative, which the institutions are currently implementing in cooperation with their academic environments, the DFG and the German Science Council, is accentuating this process.

The DFG's research ranking has taken on a crucial role in this competition. The data pool has increased yet again, with additional data from other funding organisations helping to provide a broader picture of publicly funded research at universities. An innovative methodology enables higher education institutions with similar research profiles to be identified, and a sound process highlights the diverse cooperation networks between institutions — including non-university institutions — that can be derived from the DFG's coordinated programmes.

Competition between higher education institutions centres only indirectly on competition for research grants, but rather around achieving the best results in research and teaching, and attracting the best researchers, academics and students. Nevertheless, we believe that research

funding, which is based on a strict DFG review process, is a good indicator for research performance and achievement. An interesting finding of this report is the strong correlation between funding awarded by the DFG and that awarded by other funding bodies.

These data have been compiled, analysed and checked thoroughly, and the resulting findings and comparisons are just as differentiated and significant. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have been involved in the process.

The interpretation of the tables contained in these results also requires due care. Useful as DFG funding may be as an indicator, it still only constitutes one area of a university's duties, and differs in meaning from one research area to the next. In relation to the number of professors in biology, for example, an average of seven times as much DFG funding is awarded, compared to mathematics or the humanities. A university that specialises in the humanities therefore occupies a different place in the ranking than one that specialises in the life sciences or engineering sciences. This is not to suggest, however, that these universities are less successful.

Finally, since the report elaborates and emphasises this aspect, these analyses provide valuable and comprehensive findings on the state of our science system. We recommend this report to all research stakeholders.



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