

Employers raise the bar: GEURS 2026 shows tougher, evidence-based criteria in global employability

Paris, October 2025 — The 15th edition of the *Global Employability University Ranking and Survey (GEURS)*, produced by **Emerging** and published by **Times Higher Education (THE)**, confirms a decisive shift in how employers assess universities worldwide.

After four years of post-Covid calm, the 2026 results show that the pause is over. Employer expectations are rising again, faster, sharper.

Based on **119,967 votes** from **12,350 corporate managers** in **32 countries**, the survey reveals a clear turn toward evidence-based evaluation. **Brand is now earned by impact**. Employers value **demonstrable capabilities** and **adaptability** over static credentials.

The top 250 global picture has started to move fast, and not always as expected:

- **The English-speaking bloc defies gravity**, bouncing back after years of decline as results finally overtake reputation.
- **Europe seizes momentum**, standing out as the most complete and confident employability market worldwide.
- **Asia holds its ground**. Its strength this year lies in precision rather than expansion, with **China** stabilising in a longer upward trend and **Singapore** setting the pace
- The **Middle East** and **Latin America** step forward, their lists showing visible reshuffles.

From reputation to proof:

- **Graduate Skills (n°1)** and **Work Expertise (n°2)** remain the backbone of employability, but the benchmarks are tightening. Employers are not changing what they value, but how they measure it: visible results, stronger metrics, and clearer links between training and market needs.
- **Internationality (n°3)** now drives many of this year's shifts, reflecting graduates whose skills and mindset travel well. **Academic Performance (n°4)** still matters but no longer propels reputation on its own, while **Social Impact & Leadership (n°5)** influence perception more than hiring. **Specialization (n°6)** declines as expertise becomes modular and transferable.
- The **AI turn**, partnerships with business, and research transfer now serve as visible proof of employability-driven innovation.
- **Visa restrictions in major English-speaking destinations** narrow entry for new students but do not reduce employer demand for global talent. They refine future pipelines and amplify the need for measurable quality.

The resulting ranking movements reflect **recalibration and greater selectivity**, not instability. Institutions with clear, measurable employability outcomes rise, while “big names” without tangible outputs drift relatively.

These shifts confirm that employability follows its own rhythm. Sharper lists and changing signals challenge assumptions, revealing a market driven by proof rather than perception.

Top 10 – Stability on the surface, change beneath

The Top 10 appears stable, yet it is profoundly reshaped beneath the surface. Behind the continuity of names, positions have shifted significantly. **UC Berkeley** makes a striking entrance at **6th place (+10)**, while **ETH Zurich** joins the Top 10 for the first time **(+7)**. In contrast, **Princeton (-8)** and **Tokyo (-3)** drop out. **MIT** retains the top position, but the balance is changing. The **Cambridge–Oxford** duo continues to rise, and the **National University of Singapore** advances again, confirming Asia’s growing presence among the world’s most sought-after universities.

Geurs2026 15th edition
Global Employability University Ranking & Survey

TOP 250 | GLOBAL EMPLOYABILITY UNIVERSITY RANKING 2026

GEURS RANK 2026	INSTITUTION NAME	COUNTRY	REGION	SUB-REGION	RANK 2025	TREND
1	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	USA	North America	-	1	0
2	Stanford University	USA	North America	-	3	+1
3	California Institute of Technology	USA	North America	-	2	-1
4	University of Cambridge	UK	Western europe	-	5	+1
5	University of Oxford	UK	Western europe	-	7	+2
6	University of California, Berkeley	USA	North America	-	16	+10
7	Harvard University	USA	North America	-	4	-3
8	National University of Singapore	Singapore	Asia	-	9	+1
9	Imperial College London	UK	Western europe	-	10	+1
10	ETH Zurich	Switzerland	Western europe	-	17	+7

If reproducing this list, please credit “Global Employability University Ranking and Survey (GEURS)” and include the link to the full table either at Emerging or the Times Higher Education.

- **View the full table on Emerging's website here** (live from 09:00 AM GMT Thursday 30 October 2025): <https://www.emerging.fr/geurs>
- **View the full table on THE's website here** (live from 09:00 AM GMT Thursday 30 October 2025): <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-graduate-jobs-global-university-employability-ranking>
- **Editorial analysis on this year’s results can be found here** (live from 09:00 AM GMT Thursday 30 October 2025): <https://www.emerging.fr/geurs>

The employers that took part provided around **312,000 graduate jobs** placements in 2024-2025 in total.

The survey, now in its 15th year, incorporated **119,967 votes** from **12,350** employers worldwide on which universities teach the key skills that students need to thrive in the workplace.

In 2017 Emerging introduced the concept of drivers which allows analysis of the motives behind each university's votes. The six drivers are: academic excellence, specialisation, focus on work expertise, graduate skills, social impact and leadership and Internationality.

Who are they?

- All operational managers with more than 5 years of experience. For this edition, the average experience is 13 years
- All recruiting and/or supervising more than 5 graduates a year.
- All used to recruit internationally or to supervise international teams.
- At least 2/3 work in companies of more than 500 employees, across most economic sectors, with an average influence score of 7.15/10 in recruitment processes
- Same share of corporate/business roles and IT/engineering roles.

How do they vote?

For the ranking they have up to 15 votes each to rate the employability performance of a list of + 1000 universities. They have to select the decisive factor behind each of these casted votes from a set of 6 drivers of employability performance.

- **The methodology is available in the attachment to this email. (live from 09:00 AM GMT Thursday 30 October 2025) here: <https://www.emerging.fr/geurs/methodology>**

⇒ ***Go to next page***

The Top 250 offers a panoramic view of employability



COUNTRY COUNT | GLOBAL EMPLOYABILITY UNIVERSITY RANKING 2026

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOLS IN GEURS 2026	TREND 2025 - 2026	COUNTRY	NUMBER OF UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOLS IN GEURS 2026	TREND 2025 - 2026
USA	52	0	Brazil	3	+1
Germany	19	-1	Norway	3	0
France	18	-1	Chile	3	+1
UK	16	+3	Singapore	2	0
Canada	13	+3	Belgium	2	-1
China	12	-3	Finland	2	0
India	10	0	Austria	2	0
Australia	10	+1	Saudi Arabia	2	0
Japan	8	-1	Ireland	2	+1
Switzerland	7	0	South Africa	2	0
Spain	7	-1	Indonesia	2	+1
Netherlands	6	-2	New Zealand	1	0
Sweden	6	0	Israel	1	-2
South Korea	6	-1	Lebanon	1	0
Italy	5	+1	Qatar	1	0
Hong Kong	4	0	Argentina	1	0
Denmark	4	0	Czech Rep	1	0
UAE	4	+1	Morocco	1	0
Turkey	4	+2	Colombia	1	0
Mexico	3	0	Thailand	1	NEW
Taiwan	3	0			

United States — Recognition for those who prove

America is back. After years of recalibration and a period of lost confidence, U.S. universities whose results are visible return to the forefront of employability. With **52 institutions in the Top 250** and **24 in the Top 100 (+3)**, recruiters have filtered more rigorously and are rewarding tangible, trusted outcomes. **UC Berkeley's** leap to sixth place captures the new mood.

English-speaking zone — Proof under pressure

Under global competition and tighter expectations, quality is being re-proven in **Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia**. These systems are clearly gaining ground despite headlines about visa restrictions that have not weakened their appeal with employers. We see notable rises across most universities in this bloc, reflecting a sharper, more selective profile. The **U.K.** stabilizes after years of volatility, with new institutions such as Loughborough University entering the list, **Australia** consolidates through its model of work-integrated learning and employer collaboration, and **Canada**, with three additional universities this year, is the clear magnet of this edition! Its experiential and co-op learning model travels particularly well across borders.

Continental Europe — Depth, density, and new dynamism

Continental Europe confirms its structural strength and growing depth, with **82 universities in the Top 250**. The region combines concentrated excellence at the top with a wide, stable capacity base. **Germany** shows the broadest system, adding one university this year and consolidating its applied-science profile. **France** maintains high elite visibility through its Grandes Écoles, while **Italy** and **Spain** post some of their best momentum in years. Smaller northern systems — the **Netherlands, Nordics, Switzerland, and Belgium** — add clarity and balance through mobility and transparent outcomes. Visa pressure elsewhere enhances Europe’s pull, making it the world’s most mobile and attractive employability ecosystem. Europe shows a dense, well-connected landscape where graduates move easily and recognition travels well.

Asia — A selective core

Asia maintains a strong but selective core, with **40 universities in the Top 250**. **China**, still dominant in AI and engineering talent, eases by three universities as recruiters look for broader, cross-sector outcomes. **Singapore** stands as the regional benchmark. **Korea** and **Japan** hold steady, and **India** broadens its presence through applied innovation and stronger institutional visibility. Across the region, **Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia** continue to rise. Asia’s next challenge is clear: to grow in depth across sectors for higher international recognition.

Middle East & Africa — Visibility through alignment

The region now counts **10 universities in the Top 250 (+3 vs 2025)**, marking steady and selective progress. The **UAE** and **Saudi Arabia** lead the region’s expansion. In the Arab world, **Qatar University** in **Qatar** and **Mohammed VI Polytechnic University** in **Morocco** stand out as national leaders, driving employability visibility. Progress remains anchored in alignment between higher education and economic transformation goals, with recognition growing across the region and beyond.

Latin America — From momentum to recognition

Latin America strengthens its visibility with **11 universities in the Top 250 (+2 vs 2025)**, confirming that regional momentum is now turning into global recognition. The region’s progress is steady and structural. **Mexico, Brazil, and Chile** continue to anchor performance, while **Colombia** and **Argentina** consolidate their positions.

Sandrine Belloc, Managing Director, Emerging Group, commented:

“Over the last fifteen years, GEURS has shown how employability and the way it is assessed have evolved. Employers themselves have matured; they know exactly what they value, and they express it with unprecedented clarity. The 2026 results mark a new stage, not instability but recalibration. Brand is now earned by impact. Institutions rise when they can prove with evidence that their graduates perform, adapt, and thrive in real workplaces, outcomes that

depend on strong work-integrated learning and deep partnerships with employers. It is a definitive shift from perception to proof, from assumed excellence to demonstrated success. And the renewed rise of internationality is especially telling at a time when student mobility is being questioned, a reminder that talents must travel.”

More information on the results and country analyses is available by contacting communications@emerging.fr.

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT THE

THE is the trusted global data partner for higher education. With five decades of expertise in the sector, web platforms attracting 50 million unique website users a year, and more institutions participating in our flagship university rankings than any other major provider, we draw on millions of individual data points to offer deeper and richer insight into global university performance than anyone else. From powerful data-driven insights and strategic consultancy support to agenda-setting events and hiring solutions, our products and services enable everyone in higher education to make smarter, more informed decisions. **For more information, visit: www.timeshighereducation.com**

ABOUT Emerging and GEURS Survey and Ranking Base

Emerging Group partners with universities and governments to align education with labour market needs. For over fifteen years, it has translated employer expectations into measurable indicators and strategic tools, combining methodological innovation with proven frameworks across more than forty countries.

Since 2010, Emerging has produced the **Global Employability University Ranking and Survey (GEURS)**, an independent, data-driven project guiding higher education leaders, students, and employers worldwide.

Published annually first in the *New York Times* and since in the *Times Higher Education*, it is now the first most used ranking amongst employers to assess the employability performance of Higher Education institutions.

The GEURS is the only Top 250 University ranking and survey exclusively based on employers' direct assessment. In the survey, these employers share their knowledge on the challenges of future training and their expectations of higher education. <https://www.emerging.fr/geurs>

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