

Do We Need The Official Ranking of Maritime Universities/Faculties Associated in IAMU?

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Abstract

This paper was prepared to provoke the international discussion on the subject: are we ready and do we need the official ranking of maritime universities/faculties? The Author presents the most objective from his own point of view the open criterions and their particular components which can help to establish such ranking. All presented criterions and assumptions are only samples and can be matter of dispute.

1. Introduction

The main object of the IAMU Working Group III is to promote the global maritime excellence. WG-III aims at the establishment of the global standardization of the maritime education system. To achieve this purpose, the academic discussions should be carried out regarding with the improvement of the existing education and certification system. To initiate the newly developed international system we should analyse and assess education system offered by existing maritime universities/faculties. Therefore we should try to establish ranking – picturesquely speaking – the list of maritime faculties or the whole maritime universities from the best ones to fair according to chosen criterions.

2. Purpose of the official ranking of maritime universities/faculties

Why should we assess existing maritime faculties/universities? The answer is very simple - to appoint the ranking leaders as the models to imitate by the rest of universities/faculties associated in IAMU. And only then we can commence:

1. The analysis and assessment of the current reality and the future needs of the education and certification system in the international maritime society.
2. The improvement of the existing education and certification system for competency of seafarers for the graduates of the high level maritime universities/faculties.
3. The initiation of the new global standard of the international certification system for competency of seafarers, including common examination and evaluation standards and methods.
4. The initiation of the new global standard of the international certification system for qualified experts in the field of maritime safety management, including common examination and evaluation standards and methods.

3. Open criterions

What should we assess?. The Author proposes the following open criterions, which are the matter of dispute in this paper:

1. **Academic position**
2. **Personnel potential**
3. **Orientation towards students**
4. **Co-operation, relation with environment**
5. **Selectivity**
6. **Infra-structure**
7. **Vocational market for the graduates.**

3.1. Academic position

In the final calculation it seems that this criterion should obtain the biggest weight factor – 20%. Academic position is defining by 8 components:

- academic authorisation to grant university degrees: BSc, MSc, DSc (and also in some countries special qualifying as assistant professor – *habilitation*),
- official government's education, research and maritime administrations categories,

- number of carried out postgraduate and doctoral studies,
- number of undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate and doctoral students,
- percentage of day's, evening, extra-mural and correspondence courses students,
- number of obtained scientific grants (local, national, foreign and international),
- number of faculties, branches of study, lines, specialisations, courses,
- possession of accreditation (for line, specialisation, studies, or specific program).

3.2. Personnel potential

In the final calculation this criterion should obtain the weight factor – 15%. Personnel potential can be defining by 15 components:

- number of academic teachers,
- number of students,
- number of teachers with highest sea diploma (masters and/or chief engineers),
- number of academic teachers to number of students ratio,
- number of professors to number of students ratio,
- number of full-time academic teachers to comprehensive number of all academic teachers ratio,
- number of full-time academic teachers to number of student ratio,
- number of teachers with highest sea diploma (masters and/or chief engineers) to comprehensive number of all academic teachers ratio,
- number of teachers with any sea diploma to comprehensive number of all academic teachers ratio,
- number of teachers with highest sea diploma (masters and/or chief engineers) to number of students ratio,
- number of academic teachers speaking in English to comprehensive number of all academic teachers ratio,
- activity of academic teachers on international conferences, number of presented papers,
- number of handbooks, monographs elaborated by academic teachers,
- obtained doctoral degrees and professors titles (for example in last 3-5 years),
- academic degree of lecturers allowing to conduct diploma and graduate seminars.

3.3. Orientation towards students

In the final calculation this criterion should obtain the weight factor – 15%. Orientation towards students can be defining by 8 components:

- range and form of individual studies,
- number of didactic publications,
- number of day's courses students to comprehensive number of all students ratio,
- number of hours in syllabus on diploma and graduate seminars,
- possibility, regularity and range of professors/lecturers and lessons assessment by students,
- form and range of social assistance for students (scholarship, research grants, hostels, etc.),
- cost of study and forms of payment,
- forms of extra-didactic and extramural activities of students.

3.4. Co-operation and relation with environment

In the final calculation this criterion should obtain the weight factor – 15%. Co-operation and relation with environment can be defining by 15 components:

- number of academic teachers calling out on business (travelling abroad) to comprehensive number of all academic teachers ratio,
- number of students calling out on business (travelling abroad) to comprehensive number of all students ratio,
- number of foreign visiting professors to comprehensive number of all academic teachers ratio,
- number of foreign students to comprehensive number of all students ratio,
- number of didactic programs prepared in foreign languages, especially in English,
- existing system of credit points (ECTS),
- institutional forms of contact and give aid to graduates,
- participation among first year students persons who came from other country regions,
- postgraduate studies scale,
- syllabus complying with national/international regulations and standards, e.g. STCW Convention,
- obligatory periods of special training and sea service,
- co-operation with ship owners and maritime administration,

- co-operation with international organisations and agencies, such as: IMO, IAMU, IMLA, IAIN,
- own academic magazine (common periodical for congregation and students),
- own publishing house and own editorial series.

3.5. Selectivity

In the final calculation this criterion should obtain the weight factor – 10%. Selectivity can be defining by 6 components:

- number of student candidates to admitted student on first year day's courses ratio,
- number of student candidates to admitted student on first year other modes courses ratio,
- formal requirements of enrolment on first year day's courses,
- formal requirements of enrolment on first year of other modes of courses,
- statutory number of allowed repeating examinations and provisory registrations,
- number of students names taken off the books (number of expelled students) to comprehensive number of all students ratio.

3.6. Infra-structure

In the final calculation this criterion should obtain the weight factor – 10%. Infra-structure can be defining by 7 components:

- possessed infra-structure objects,
- number of beds in academic hostels to comprehensive number of all students ratio,
- university library and its rank, number of possessed books,
- state of infra-structure,
- number of computers accessible for students,
- number of computer with access to internet to number of all possessed computers ratio,
- number of professional simulators (including full mission bridges/engine rooms).

3.7. Vocational market for the graduates

In the final calculation this criterion should obtain the weight factor – 15%. Vocational market for the graduates can be defining by 4 components:

- how many graduates obtains job in the first three months after graduate the university/academy,
- number of graduates obtained junior officer job on merchant vessels to comprehensive number of all graduates ratio,
- number of graduates with the highest sea diploma (masters and chief engineer) for merchant vessels to comprehensive number of all graduates ratio in last 50 years,
- number of graduates obtained lecturer job on home maritime universities/faculties to comprehensive number of all graduates ratio.

Particular components obtained by universities may be counted for example in scale from 0 to 100. Achievement of the highest values in the range of all components gives the result 100 points.

4. Conclusions

The Author does not think that presented criteria and their components are perfect to built official ranking - a full objective reference list, because he is standing on position that is very difficult to assess educational institutions. It is only Author's proposal to commence detailed discussion. Possible, acceptable ranking of maritime universities/faculties should be prepared not by one person but by international group of independent experts and with the utmost care. Author realises that reaching for other sources of information, receipt of new criteria for assessment or change of their weights can give brain different results. Therefore rankings prepared by different groups of experts may provide to different results, but no one group has a good reason for pretending to only accurate and objective appreciation. Ranking must be prepare very carefully and must be mature.

Ranking means the list of universities/faculties set in order from the best ones down according to successively reached results in competition in compliance with accepted open criteria. Due to applied quantity criteria we must be very careful when we want to form any quality assessments, opinions or automatic conclusions; for example: top of the ranking list = the best didactics and teaching methods. It can not be true.

What should we do? Author's suggestion is that we should establish working group of experts to prepare assumptions and criteria to establish independent, universal ranking. Next the working group should sent elaborated questionnaire to rectors, senators, academic teachers, students, graduates, ship owners, maritime administrations, and visit universities/faculties as many times as possible, if necessary also *incognito*. Why not?