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Every week, education expert Sanjeev Verma will answer your queries on studying abroad. E-mail queries to features@gulf-times.com

"Are rankings an important consideration

when deciding on studying abroad? How bona fide are these rankings and what is taken into consideration for the rankings?"

— Mohamed M

When contemplating on studying overseas, the first choice prospective students need to make is 'where to study'? Though critics declare rankings to often be subjective and misleading to international students, yet keeping aside all other admissions-related issues and aspects, ranking tends to be paramount importance to most applicants when they plan to study abroad.

Ranking educational institutions is also a business with an ever-increasing number of

leading dailies and publications coming up with their own forms of somewhat similar listings. In a majority of situations, these publications use very similar quality benchmarks for ranking; thereby ensuring results are very similar. However, one should first carefully examine these quality benchmarks/variables before proceeding to studying the rankings. Having said the above, it is unfair to completely disregard these rankings as they do merit a closer look, since they are regarded highly by some eminent educationalists. Many institutions, including those that are well-ranked, question both the procedures as well as the information relayed by some of these rankings but still keep tabs on the results of

these surveys and many-a-times use these results to their own advantage when it comes to marketing.

When considering rankings it is essential to acknowledge that reputation does have an impact on the degrees granted. I would recommend analysing the academic faculty and also if possible- actual visits to validate the assumptions that we derive from rankings, in order to ensure that the rankings reflect our interests.

(Sanjeev Verma began with Ernst & Young and progressed to set up the Gulf operations of IDP Education Pty. He now leads Intelligent Partners, developing a wide range of solutions in areas of international education.)