



# How the Shanghai Rankings have transformed France's System of Higher Education



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## Research Questions: How Have China's Shanghai rankings Impacted on Education in France? Will they impact on the USA and Beyond in the future?

Academic Ranking of World Universities



In 2003 for the first time Shanghai's Jia Tong University issued its first *Academic Ranking of World Class Universities*. The original intent of the rankings was to provide a benchmark or reference point for Chinese universities. Nineteen of the top 25 universities were American. Four were British. One was Swiss and one was Japanese.

One of France's most elite educational institutions Paris' *rue d'Ulm's École Normale Supérieure (ENS)* has produced Nobel laureates and all France's Fields medalists. Due to its mission and scope of activities, it is #71 on the Shanghai's rankings.

## Structure of French Higher Education



In May 1968 the government of President Charles De Gaulle was almost overthrown due to the discontent of French students and workers. The De Gaulle who had rallied France during the German Occupation managed to retrieve his government from the throes of collapse, however. 500,000 of his supporters filled the Champs Elysée on the evening of May 30th. On June 30, 1968, in a lopsided vote, his party and its allies took 394 of the National Assembly's 485 seats.

## French University System subdivided beginning in July 1968



De Gaulle remained in office another year. His Fifth Republic survives until today; however, the University of Paris numbered amongst the casualties of the May upheaval. The University of Paris was divided into 13 sub-units. Other universities followed suit. The first degree that is considered a University-level degree is the baccalaureate, awarded based on an exam at the end of secondary education. It guarantees admission into any French state-controlled University, where the first degree awarded is the Licence. France's best schools, however, are not the French universities but the so-called "Grandes Écoles," e.g., the École Normale Supérieure in Paris which has produced Nobel laureates and 11 Fields medalists (The Nobel for Mathematics), the same as the entire United States. Grandes Ecoles require a special exam taken two years after completion of secondary high school. Those two years of preparation are the equivalent of two years of university study and are credited as such. Most Grandes Ecoles do not offer doctorates but only Masters and Diplomes. The doctorate does not have the same "cachet" in France. Only medical doctors are addressed as "Doctor." Everyone else is addressed as "Mister," "Mrs." or "Miss."

## Shanghai's Top 25

1. Harvard University
2. Stanford University
3. University of California, Berkeley
4. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
5. University of Cambridge
6. California Institute of Technology
7. Princeton University
8. Columbia University
9. University of Chicago
10. University of Oxford
11. Yale University
12. University of California, Los Angeles
13. Cornell University
14. University of California, San Diego
15. University of Pennsylvania
16. University of Washington
17. The Johns Hopkins University
18. University of California, San Francisco
19. University of Wisconsin - Madison
20. Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich
21. The University of Tokyo
21. University College London
23. University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
24. The Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
25. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

71. *École Normale Supérieure de Paris!!!*



Harvard Yard Trees

## The Shanghai Rankings and France's Academic Reform

The Shanghai Rankings have had a defining influence on the current direction of French and much of EU higher education. The key criterion of the Shanghai Rankings is productivity in scientific research. Factors include an institution's alumni and faculty who garner Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals. They also monitor faculty publications in 21 key subject fields and the frequency that an institution's faculty and researchers are cited in leading journals.

Beginning in 2007 France initiated a reform through which Universities were merged with Grandes Ecoles, Research Centers and corporate trainings to encourage research and innovative product development and advances in all fields. The Hollande government has been explicit that the goal is higher Shanghai Rankings.



From the Riots of 1968 leading to University Decentralization, France has come full circle with Consolidation once more.



The Sorbonne was decentralization under DeGaulle (1968) as were all French universities.



A Reconsolidation under Presidents Sarkozy and Hollande (from 2008). University of Paris-Saclay (2014). Combines industry (cyclotron, e.g.), universities, research centers and grandes écoles to raise France's rankings..

## The Bologna Accords



The Bologna accords of 1999, initiated by the Council of Europe in conjunction with the European Union, have led to a standardization of European Education to facilitate mobility and measures to compare different levels of study across Europe's borders based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). They also made EU countries more aware of their different standings.

## What about the USA?

The goal of the Shanghai Rankings is more than rankings; it is benchmarking. Just as it is going forward in the fields of business, research, defense and trade, China intends to go forward in education. They are monitoring the best and inheriting from them.

American universities and accrediting agencies need to learn from France. French education, confident of its quality, turned into itself and now finds itself in the midst of catch-up. Unless the United States looks beyond its borders, US Education will face a similar challenge in a decade or two....



Many thanks to the the United States Fulbright Scholarship Commission for their support of this research.