QS Stars Case Study: Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

Why did you choose QS?

APU has been participating in QS rankings for quite some time because we recognize that QS is one of the most well-known university ranking services out there. We chose QS Stars because its comprehensive criteria enable us to learn more about our strengths as well as our potential areas for improvement.

What objectives have QS Stars helped you to achieve?

There are two things that come to mind. One is internal quality management and improvement, and the other is promotion and marketing. From a marketing standpoint, participating in QS Stars gives APU more visibility and allows us to reach more prospective students because they can see who we are and where we are in terms of global rankings and ratings. 50% of our students are international students coming from outside of Japan. Therefore, it’s very important for APU to present itself as an international institution to prospective students. With QS Stars, we can showcase our strengths based on indicators, like Internalisation, so that they know more about our university.

What are the key benefits of using QS Stars?

As I mentioned, QS Stars has really helped our internal decision-making procedures and has been a driving force for positive change at the university. It has been such a great tool for benchmarking our institution against other universities so that we can understand where we are in terms of teaching quality, facilities, programme strengths, and more. It has also helped us realize what we need to achieve to truly reach the international standard.

What challenges have you been able to overcome thanks to QS Stars?

The list of data we had to compile for the QS Stars project was long, and APU struggled to sort through and organize it all at first. But the QS Stars staff were really helpful. They responded to all our enquiries quickly and patiently and advised
us on all the steps we needed to take. QS Stars has also been a great help when it comes to defining the data mentioned in the Methodology and when it comes to tracking and maintaining evidence for activities.

What have you learnt from using QS Stars?

APU recognizes the importance of managing the quality of its programs. The QS Stars rating system provides the specific scores, percentages, and numbers we need to achieve the standard of quality we are aiming for. It also gives us new ways of measuring more concrete KPI figures.

Speaking of KPIs, those have become an integral part of our learning. By going through the QS Stars rating program, we’ve been able to identify which new indicators and key datasets we should be collecting in order to expand our self-assessment toolbox in the future. Take Inclusiveness and Social Responsibility, for example. QS Stars methodology taught us how to gauge our investments in these areas and track our performance in ways we weren’t even aware of.

QS Stars posed a question about what percentage of APU’s students are first generation. Universities in Japan don’t collect data on first generation students, so we have limited experience analyzing our student demographics from this perspective. This process has given us a new perspective on how we can evaluate ourselves and improve our decision-making to be more data-driven.
QS Stars explained

QS Stars is a globally recognised rating system for higher education institutions. Ratings are achieved through an in-depth assessment across at least eight categories, resulting in an overall rating of 1 to 5+ Stars and a rating of 1 to 5 Stars for each category.

Following the assessment, QS provides a detailed report summarising the results in each category. This allows institutions to recognise their strengths, as well as weaker areas which may require attention and improvement.

The QS Stars package also includes a set of badges with the ratings achieved overall and in each category. Institutions may use these in their own marketing materials to show prospective students their strengths in areas that matter most, such as Teaching and Employability.

For more information please contact
qsstars@qs.com | qsiusales@qs.com | raluca.grigorescu@qs.com

www.topuniversities.com/qs-stars
www.qs.com/qs-stars