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**Abstract**

The continued importance of university rankings has only served to fuel the growth of the 'world-class' university movement. There is a growing impression that, in a globalised and interconnected world, no country can do without a world-class university. No country, that is, except Brazil. While Brazil has the resources necessary to create a world-class university, evidence suggests there has been no attempt to create one. This paper draws on data from various sources to show that the government has instead focused on improving the quality of higher education in Brazil but has done so with a focus on national outcomes. Through government policies, Brazil has incentivised research, increased the number of doctoral degrees awarded and improved the quality of doctoral programmes. While these are the types of improvements needed for a world-class university, there is no evidence to indicate an interest in joining the world-class university movement. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)