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**Abstract**

Since 1980, national university departmental ranking exercises have developed in several countries. This paper reviews exercises in the U.S., U.K. and Australia to assess the state-of-the-art and to identify common themes and trends. The findings are that the exercises are becoming more elaborate, even unwieldy, and that there is some retreat from complexity. There seems to be a movement towards bibliometric measures. The exercises also seem to be effective in enhancing university focus on research strategy. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Hicks, Diana, E-Mail: dhicks@gatech.edu