

UM is 87th in global rankings

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UNIVERSITI Malaya (UM) has made history by being ranked 87th in the 2019 QS World University Rankings.

The country's premier university moved up 27 places from 114th last year.

Globally, UM is within the top 1% of approximately 26,000 universities. It has improved steadily from 151 in 2015 to 146 in 2016, 133 in 2017, 114 in 2018 and now 87 in 2019.

UM vice-chancellor Datuk Abdul Rahim Hashim described this as the pride of the nation.

He attributed this success to the commitment of all UM staff and their dedication towards achieving the goals set in the university's strategic plan to strengthen its fundamentals, particularly in teaching, research and international collaboration.

Abdul Rahim emphasised that the work done by his predecessors and the university in the past have laid a strong foundation for UM to be in the top 100.

"Further analysis into the ranking results showed that three indicators, namely academic reputation, employer reputation and citations per faculty helped to leapfrog the university into the top 100.

"The first two are indicators of the university's reputation among the academic community and employers respectively, and the third measures the impact of its publications," he said.

These, he added, represent global acknowledgement and recognition of UM's quality in teaching and research.

Congratulating Malaysian universities in the rankings, Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik said UM has shown consistent performance.

"It is clear that our universities have built a solid reputation among their international peers.

"The ministry will continue to support and facilitate our researchers in working with their international partners."

He hoped UM would break into the top 50 in the QS World University Rankings next year while other universities that were ranked in the top 200 could break into the top 100.

Dr Maszlee said the Government will keep to its promise of granting universities more autonomy.

This, he added, is essential to help them forge their own path forward and is in line with international practices.

"We want all universities to enjoy their autonomy and to cultivate a culture of freedom as well as academic freedom," he said.

On how UM could further improve, QS research director Ben Sowter said it could make significant improvements in its research impact performance.

"Only seven of the overall top 100 have

received lower scores for Citations per Faculty, indicating that most of the top universities that occupy this cohort have stronger research programmes. Doing so will also help improve the profile of UM's research, which could be expected to lead to improvements in the academic reputation indicator," he added.

Congratulating UM and the other universities in the rankings, Higher Education director-general Datin Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir said this achievement reflects the culture of academic excellence in research as well as teaching and learning.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia is in 184th place while Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) is ranked 202nd and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) is at 207th.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia is ranked 228th while Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Universiti Utara Malaysia, International Islamic University Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi Mara are also included in the rankings (see table for details).

UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datin Paduka Dr Aini Ideris said the university has constantly improved since 2013.

"UPM is on target according to its strategic plan to be in the top 200 of the rankings by 2020," she said.

USM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Asma Ismail recognises the fact that the people in USM, who have been driven by a culture of excellence, play a pivotal role in the betterment of the university.

"We have been rising steadily since 2014 by concentrating on the fundamentals and I think we have improved further because the people in this university realise the importance of providing the best possible learning experience for the global community," she said.

Setting a benchmark

UCSI University can now call itself Malaysia's top private university as it has beaten its peers by breaching the top 500 of the 2019 QS World University Rankings.

It is ranked 481, placing it in the top 2% of all universities in the world.

UCSI University vice-chancellor and president Senior Prof Datuk Dr Khalid Yusoff said the latest milestone caps a memorable year for UCSI.

"This is a culmination of university-wide push for excellence and performance with specific strategies. Our focus is to push UCSI further and higher. We are building the strengths of the university. Quality education is our priority and we want to be a standard bearer of thought leadership," he said.

Taylor's University vice-chancellor and president Prof Michael Driscoll said being listed in the world university rankings is the biggest achievement yet for Taylor's.

"This success, which is built on hard work and dedication of all our staff, will continue

to be an inspiration for the university to move on to bigger and better things in line with our aim to be one of Asia's top universities by the year 2022," he said.

Sowter said Malaysia is among the most improved countries in this edition of the rankings.

"Its higher education system has a solid reputation among both international academics and employers. To support this positive ascending trajectory, the local universities should continue to focus on increasing the impact of the research they produce," he said.

The QS World University Rankings is an annual table of the top universities in the

world where 1,233 institutions from 85 different countries were considered this year with 1,011 institutions ranked and 1,000 published.

It is based on four key pillars namely research, teaching, employability and internationalisation.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is the world's best university for a seventh consecutive year.

The National University of Singapore has risen to become the world's 11th best university and regains its status as Asia's best university.

For more information, visit <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2019>



Dr Maszlee (second from left) shares a light moment with UKM vice-chancellor Prof Tan Sri Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali (left), Abdul Rahim (second from right) and Prof Aini (right) before chairing a press conference on the rankings.

QS World University Rankings 2019



2019	2018	Institution
87*	114*	Universiti Malaya (UM)
184*	230*	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)
202	229	Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)
207	264*	Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)
228	253	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)
481*		UCSI University
521-530	601-650	Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP)
601-650		Taylor's University
601-650	701-750	Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
651-700	701-750	International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)
701-750		Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten)
751-800	751-800	Universiti Teknologi MARA (UITM)
801-1000		Multimedia University (MMU)

Note: * means shares the same ranking

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Source: QS Quacquarelli Symonds 2004-2019 <https://www.topuniversities.com/>