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What the VCs say

UNIVERSITI Malaya's improved position shows that the strategic plan which was implemented two years ago under the leadership of our Vice-Chancellor, Datuk Rafiah Salim, and the excellent support and teamwork of our staff is bearing fruit. Our focus in implementing the strategic plan is to ensure the international competitiveness of UM in recognition of the fact that we are now living in a borderless global community.

Universiti Malaya acting vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Muhamad Rasat Muhamad

Our target has been to get into the Top 200 lists of the five subject areas under the THE-QS World University Rankings 2008. We have done so through Life Sciences and Biomedicine (144th position), and Social Sciences (155). UKM missed the cut by one place in Natural Sciences.

The improvement in UKM's ranking is reflective of the collective efforts put in by its academics and staff.

We have worked very hard by consolidating our research, publishing our work, having more international collaborations, and monitoring the number of citations per month.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin

The improvement in the rankings was made possible by overcoming weaknesses that were identified when the university conducted an analysis of the previous year's results.

We have made improvements, especially in our research strength (the number of papers published in high impact journals),

an increase in citations, and the number of international students and staff.

Our aggressive internationalisation programmes helped improve our reputation at international level.

Universiti Putra Malaysia vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Nik Mustapha Raja Abdullah

Although UTM is not a research university, we managed to improve by 59 places compared to 2007.

UTM is also not a comprehensive university; it specialises in science and technology so the peer review would be limited to those areas.

By improving staff-student ratio and the citation index, we are confident that we can improve further.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Zaini Ujang

It is always difficult to comment when one drops in rankings because if you start to question the rankings or justify the drop, the excuses will certainly not be acceptable to the public.

I have always been with the school of thought that while this ranking is useful, it is certainly not absolute.

There is a need to scrutinise the data further to see the reason for the drop, but it is good to know that more Malaysian universities have gone up in the rankings. USM has always been aware of the need to improve, whether the rankings exist or not.

Universiti Sains Malaysia deputy vice-chancellor (Academic and International Affairs) Prof Ahmad Shukri Mustapa Kamal