

Local unis not in list

The two Malaysian public varsities which participated in an assessment conducted by an international rankings publication this year, were not among the top institutions in the line-up.



Baty says the THE rankings has been developed to identify an institution's performance regardless of size.



UKM's participation is to know where it stands on the indicators for better planning, says Prof Sharifah Hapsah.



Dr Radin Umar wants UPM to continue focusing on the fundamentals and do what is best for its students.

The Ti
Univer
Rank

1

2

2

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

By KAREN CHAPMAN

educate@thestar.com.my

THERE were no Malaysian public universities in the top 400 of the *Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2012-13*.

Phil Baty who is *THE World University Rankings* editor, said Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) both participated in the rankings this year.

"As in previous years, both varsities did not make the top 400 and so do not have a ranking position," he said in an interview.

Other prestigious Malaysian institutions such as Universiti Malaya (UM) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) did not take part in the rankings.

Baty explained that the institutions were invited to participate in the rankings exercise but were not compelled to do so.

"The invitation to take part is issued by our data provider Thomson Reuters. If they (varsities) do not want to do so, they are not included as is the case with UM and USM.

"We would like to encourage more institutions to work with us so that an even clearer picture of higher education in Malaysia can be formed, allowing it to create a better benchmark for itself against the world's very best," he said.

A total of 655 universities from 69 countries this year submitted data to Thomson Reuters and were therefore assessed for the rankings.

UKM vice-chancellor Prof Tan Sri Dr Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hasan Shahabudin said the university took part as the varsity wanted to know where it stood on the indicators for better planning and improvement.

"It is not a failure not to be in the top 400 but it's a failure if you choose not to know where you are on the measure," she added.

Prof Sharifah Hapsah said the THE used a different weightage for the ranking criteria compared to the QS World University Rankings.

Under the *QS World University Rankings 2012/3*, UM was ranked 156 while UKM was 261, USM 326, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia 358, the International Islamic University Malaysia 401-500 and Universiti Teknologi Mara 601+.

"As such we need to improve our research performance significantly to get into the top 400 of the world rankings.

"However, under the *Times Higher Education 100 Under 50* issued in June this year, UKM was the only Malaysian institution in the top 100 and we take this as a big motivation to work harder on research performance," she said. The varsity was ranked 98 on the list.

Prof Sharifah Hapsah said the university had realigned its strategies and would also be able to do more with better resources under the Budget 2013 tabled last week.

UPM vice-chancellor Datuk Dr Radin Umar Radin Sohadi said he took note that this time the institution ranked best among the public universities.

“UPM will work hard on the fundamentals and do what is best

for our students and the country," he said via a text message from the United States (US).

UM vice-chancellor Prof Tan Sri Dr Ghauth Jasmon said the THE rankings gave substantial marks for research funding, incomes and endowments.

"This criteria is unfair to universities in the third world, developing countries and relatively smaller economies like Malaysia.

"Our country does not have the culture of giving endowments unlike other countries," he said.

Prof Ghauth explained that the QS rankings measured outputs and outcomes whereas THE measured incomes as well.

Performance indicators

The *THE World University Rankings* is an annual list of the world's top institutions, using 13 separate performance indicators across five areas – industry outcome, teaching, citations, research and international outlook to comprehensively measure and assess all the core missions of a university using objective data over subjective opinion.

The core missions of any modern global university are research, teaching, knowledge transfer and international activity.

The list was announced on Oct 4 with the California Institute of Technology topping it for the second consecutive year (see table).

As with last year, Baty said US institutions still dominated the rankings, taking seven of the top 10 spots. This year the country had 76 institutions in the top 200, one more than the previous year. The highest-ranked Asian institutions were the University of Tokyo at 27, the National University of Singapore (29), University of

Hong Kong (35), Peking University (46), Pohang University of Science and Technology (50), Tsinghua University (52), Kyoto University (54), Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (65), Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (68) and Nanyang Technological University (86).

He said leading universities from across Asia have won significant improvements in their positions in the rankings. China's two top 200 institutions both rose – Peking University moved from 49 to 46 while Tsinghua University jumped 19 places from 71 to 52.

Outside the official top 200, evidence from the THE "best of the rest" table which lists institutions from 200 to 400, shows that other Chinese universities are moving close to the top 200.

He added that thanks to strong income figures, Singapore's two top 200 institutions were very successful with the National University of Singapore moving from 40 to 29, while Nanyang Technological University went from 169 to 86.

Baty said there was no question that the balance of power in global higher education is shifting.

"Strong support for world-class universities in the East, and a clear national commitment to driving the knowledge economy through investment in research and innovation, is paying off," he added.

In contrast, he said funding cuts are hurting the West with traditional powerhouses of the US and United Kingdom losing ground.

Baty said there were improvements in many Asian universities on a number of indicators with the dominating factors in the results of the academic reputation survey and also financial indicators.

"However, Malaysia does not

seem to be following this trend," he said when asked about what prevented local universities from being on the list.

"The single area where Malaysian universities are underperforming the most is with regards to research-related indicators, such as scholarly papers per academic and research staff, and citation impact," he said.

Focus on core activities

Baty said the *THE Rankings* relied on robust indicators that reflected the core activities of universities.

"That is, education at the highest level, high quality impactful research, knowledge transfer and international engagement. Unfortunately there is no short cut to improvements in rankings.

"A long-term strategic approach to create genuine improvements in teaching and research will ultimately achieve better performance and a higher ranking position," he explained.

Baty said the rankings were carefully calibrated to overcome language and geographical bias. "Policy such as the use of multiple languages in the reputation survey and geographical balancing of reputation survey and citation impact results make the list the most unbiased rankings available.

"As a result, there is in fact a very high degree of international diversity in the rankings results," he added.

There are many types of rankings available from the *THE World University Rankings* to the *US News & World Report*, the *Academic Ranking of World Universities* (ARWU) by the Shanghai Ranking Consultancy (formerly known as the *Shanghai Jiao Tong University's Academic Ranking of World*

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2012-13

Rank	Institution
1	California Institute of Technology
2	University of Oxford
2	Stanford University
4	Harvard University
5	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
6	Princeton University
7	University of Cambridge
8	Imperial College London
9	University of California, Berkeley
10	University of Chicago
11	Yale University
12	ETH Zurich
13	University of California, Los Angeles
14	Columbia University
15	University of Pennsylvania
16	Johns Hopkins University
17	University College London
18	Cornell University
19	Northwestern University
20	University of Michigan
21	University of Toronto
22	Carnegie Mellon University
23	Duke University
24	University of Washington
25	Georgia Institute of Technology
25	University of Texas at Austin

Copyright Times Higher Education with data supplied by Thomson Reuters.
Link: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/>

Universities) and the QS World University Rankings.

Baty said the *THE* rankings relied on an extremely detailed and robust methodology.

"We make every effort to ensure that a university's position in the tables paints a true, fair and whole picture of the institution in comparison to its global neighbours," he said.

THE, he added, is different from the *ARWU* as the latter measures research output and therefore tends to favour science and technology-focused institutions.

He said *ARWU* is also a volume-based rankings system so large institutions tend to do well.

"By contrast, the *THE* rankings has been developed to identify an institution's performance regardless of size, which is why the California Institute of Technology, though small, is rated number one in our list," he explained.

For more information, visit <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/>