

LEARNING CURVE

IN THE NEWS



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Mohd Amin Jalaludin
UM vice chancellor

UM's steady rise

STALWARTS: Four public universities in the country improve their position in the QS World University Rankings 2016



Aini Ideris



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QS World University Rankings 2016 witnessed four Malaysia universities — University of Malaya (UM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia — improving their standing. After making it to the top 150 last year, UM moved up 13 positions from 146 to 133 this year.

UM vice chancellor Professor Tan Sri Dr Mohd Amin Jalaludin said the university's global prominence has been attested by its position in the world university rankings.

He added that the steady rise in its world position over the years is a testament to the success in strengthening the fundamentals of the university through its long-term strategic plan that includes goals to push for increase in research productivity, diversification of institutional resources, consolidation of talents, enrichment of learning experiences, streamlining of work processes, and reinforcement of linkages with the industry, community and global partners.

"The university again emerged as the top higher learning institution in the nation, a position that it has maintained since its participation in this ranking exercise.

"It also remains top in the country in terms of academic reputation and its ability to produce graduates who meet the expectation of prospective employers," he said.

The ranking system also awarded UM a five-star rating which means it is "generally



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world class in a broad range of areas, enjoys a high reputation and has cutting-edge facilities and internationally renowned research and teaching faculty".

QS World University Rankings 2016 assessed more than 4,000 of the world's leading tertiary institutions based on six indicators — Academic Reputation (40 per cent), Employer Reputation (10 per cent), Faculty Student Ratio (20 per cent), Citations per Faculty (20 per cent), International Faculty (five per cent) and International Students (five per cent).

Meanwhile, UPM achieved the biggest leap when it went up 61 places to be among the world's top universities, moving up from 331st last year to 270th.

This is UPM's best achievement to be ranked among the world's top 300 universities since its participation in the ranking 10 years ago. UPM also came in second as Malaysia's top universities compared to fifth spot last year.

UPM vice chancellor Professor Datin Paduka Dr Aini Ideris said its efforts to strengthen the university fundamentals have borne fruit as shown in the latest QS rankings.

"This is in line with its vision to become a university of international repute, and QS rankings can assist in elevating its level of visibility, particularly in the aspects of teaching and learning as well as research and innovation," said Aini.

She added that although UPM had met its targets, the university community should not be complacent but continue to push for excellence due to stiff competition in the education industry. She described UPM's QS 2016 rank-

ing as a double victory within one week — on Aug 31, it was ranked the country's most innovative university in Reuters Top 75: Asia's Most Innovative Universities, based on its excellent performance in science, invention of new technologies and its assistance to drive the global economy.

Reuters also ranked UPM as the third best in Southeast Asia and Asia's Best 73, followed by UM (75th).

"The selection made by Reuters is generally based on a methodology that focuses on academic articles on basic research conducted at universities and patent filing to show the institutions' efforts in intellectual property protection and innovation commercialisation.

"With UPM's position as the best innovative university in the country, its global initiative to be among the world's top 200 universities by 2020 will be intensified."

Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP) has made its debut in the 2016/17 QS World University Rankings, in the 601-650 band.

UTP is the only local private university to make it into the rankings. It ranks sixth (sharing the same band of 601-650 with International Islamic University Malaysia) after UM, UPM, UTM, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

"UTP's reputation has been continuously strengthened. It has quickly gathered significant momentum and grew by leaps and bounds," said vice chancellor Datin Ir Dr Abdul Rahim Hashim.

In less than two decades since it was established in 1997, UTP has attained prestigious national and international recognition.

The university has improved its standing in the QS Asian University Rankings 2016, moving to 127th place from the ranking range of 151- 60 last year.

Its Engineering and Technology Faculty was ranked 288th in the QS World University Rankings 2015 by Faculty.

UTP has also made a commendable achievement in the QS World University Rankings by Subject in 2016. QS has recognised UTP as among the world's elite institutions in four of the 42 subjects — Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and Computer Science and Information Systems — featured in the rankings.

While USM was ranked 330 this year compared to 289 last year, it remains committed towards raising excellence in academics, while striving to remain as the nation's Research University.

USM vice chancellor Professor Datin Dr Omar Osman said: "USM puts emphasis on ensuring its academicians are duly recognised especially in relation to the quality of publications in indexed journals, highlighted by the number of citations of the university, as well as the enrolment of students with excellent academic backgrounds.

"USM recognises that its position in the QS World University Rankings will be subject to a 'rise or fall', which could change at any time, especially when the measuring instruments are beyond its control, for example the surveys on Academic Reputation and Employer Reputation which are based on perceptions.

"The achievements of USM in relation to citations in research journals have been maintained to be the best in the country for the past five years and among the best on the international stage."

He added that the university faced a significant drop in the aspects of International Faculty and International Students, both of which are closely related to the need to increase investment to attract more international lecturers and students of quality.

USM has maintained its total number of 24,500 full-time students and 2,200 academicians compared to other universities, which may have a much lower number of students, as it strives to provide more places for local students to pursue their studies, even at the postgraduate level.

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2016/17

| # Rank | Asean Universities |
|--------|---|
| #12 | National University of Singapore |
| #13 | Nanyang Technological University, Singapore |
| #133 | University of Malaya |
| #270 | Universiti Putra Malaysia |
| #283 | Mahidol University, Thailand |
| #288 | Universiti Teknologi Malaysia |
| #302 | Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia |
| #325 | Universitas Indonesia |
| #330 | Universiti Sains Malaysia |
| #374 | University of the Philippines |