

Malaysian universities in QS World University Rankings 2017/2018

Institution	2018 Rank	2017 Rank
Universiti Malaya (UM)	114	133
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	229	270
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	230	302
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	253	288
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	264	330
Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP)	601-650	601-650
International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)	701-750	601-650
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	701-750	701+
Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM)	751-800	701+

Source: QS Quacquarelli Symonds 2004-2018 www.TopUniversities.com

Varsities in world rankings

The hard work put in by Malaysian universities is paying off with improvements in global rankings.

By **REBECCA RAJAENDRAM**
educate@thestar.com.my

HAVING climbed up the annual *Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2018*, the country's five research universities have made it to the top 1% in the world out of 26,000, with its oldest university, Universiti Malaya (UM) on the verge of being among the world's top 100.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh said UM, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) generated more than RM6.18bil in research revenue between 2007 and 2016.

"This is a 55.3% return on research investment from the Government's initial investment of RM3.98bil," he said, adding that most of the varsities were also celebrating their 10th anniversary as a research university. UM, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) are now listed in the Top 300 according to the international rankings. (see table)

Idris was speaking to reporters after announcing the improvements made by the research universities. Also present were Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Mary Yap, Higher Education Ministry secretary general Tan Sri Dr Noorul Ainur Mohd Nur and director-general Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir.

A steady climb

The QS World University Rankings is an annual league table of the top universities in the world, which this year saw 4,854 institutions being considered and 959 institutions ranked.

UM deputy vice-chancellor (Academic and International) Prof Dr Awang Bulgiba Awang Mahmud stressed that it would not be easy to enter the top 100 because of the stiffer competition.

Still, he added, Malaysia's oldest university is up to the challenge.

"We have been making certain changes to our strategic plan going forward."

UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datin Paduka Aini Ideris said they had achieved the highest score among local universities for the international student indicator, besides improving in their academic reputation, employer reputation and faculty to students ratio.

She added that UPM has targeted to be at 230 this year but have surpassed it and now ranks at 229th.

"In our Putra Global 200 plan, the target is to be in the top 200 by 2020."

They also aim to strengthen their academic research and citations in renowned journals, she said.

USM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Asma Ismail said their success is due to "co-learning" and working together with the other research universities.

Although she is happy with USM's improvement, she said more work still needs to be done.

USM now ranks 264, a 66 place jump from last year. "We need to do everything possible to change things around but this time, it's by design," she said.

Prof Asma explained that "by design" means understanding what needs to be improved on using data, strategising and executing the planned policy.

"We will have town halls to meet the schools and have a web-based monitoring system to identify problems. We will go down and meet them and ask how we can help," she said.

In terms of funding, each dean has been given a business manual to show them ways to generate income.

Remaining relevant

UKM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali said although the university's 72 place jump to 230 is impressive, what matters more is the Malaysian public's perception of the university.

"We want to be a relevant, referred to and respected university," he said.

"We want to make sure our academia are doing the right things and creating an impact on society through their scholarly achievements," he said.

"As a university that isn't even 50 years old, UKM is very proud of this rise in the QS World University Rankings," he added.

UTM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Wahid Omar said the university only received its research university status in 2010, three years later than the other four institutions.

"We have been very consistent every year (in rising in the rankings) and we achieved the highest in academic reputation with 327," he said.

He stressed that in order to maintain its momentum, the university must receive enough resources including support from the



Idris (right) sharing a light moment with (from left) Prof Asma, Prof Wahid, Prof Noor Azlan, Prof Aini, Prof Awang Bulgiba, Dr Noorul Ainur, Dr Siti Hamisah (partially hidden) and Dr Yap.

ministry.

"We have top researchers and academic staff with 80% of them holding PhDs, and we work with many top institutions in the world including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and many Japanese universities."

Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) vice-chancellor Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr Hassan Said said that UiTM has made significant improvements in the 2018 QS World University Rankings in academic reputation, employer reputation and also a slight increase in citations per staff compared to the previous year.

"The increase in employer reputation is also another milestone for UiTM. As a comprehensive university with over 165,000 students, UiTM has grounded itself in its vision and mission," he added.

Prof Hassan said the university plans to carry out strategic initiatives to further enhance its achievements next year in indica-

tors on citations per faculty, student to faculty ratio, international faculty and students.

QS research director Ben Sowter said this had been a successful year for Malaysian higher education with the results indicating that Malaysia had nearly doubled its share of the top 300 universities.

Other Malaysian varsities in the ranking are Universiti Teknologi Petronas in the 601-650 bracket, International Islamic University Malaysia (701-750), Universiti Utara Malaysia (701-750) and UiTM (751-800).

MIT topped the rankings this year, followed by Stanford University and Harvard University.

Universities are ranked based on six indicators – academic reputation (40%), employer reputation (10%), faculty student ratio (20%), citations per faculty (20%), international students (5%) and international faculty (5%). For more information, visit <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2018>.