

UM rises in world ranking

Malaysia's oldest varsity receives its best position to date

By CHRISTINA CHIN
educate@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia has strengthened its presence in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2019.

Universiti Malaya (UM) made the global top 350 best institutions in the most rigorous performance table globally, with Universiti Teknologi Mara and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak joining in this year (see table).

UM, the country's oldest varsity, achieved its best position yet, thanks to improvements across the board – and in particular, its international outlook score.

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), the second highest-ranked local institution, maintained its hold in the rankings' 501–600 band, while Universiti Utara Malaysia broke into the top 1,000.

Malaysia has 11 institutions represented in the 2019 table – up from nine last year.

The annual table lists more than 1,250 higher education institutions from 86 countries.

While delighted, UM vice-chancellor Datuk Abdul Rahim Hashim said the varsity was “not chasing after rankings”, but its participation was to benchmark UM against other institutions of higher learning, to gauge the state and status of the university, and to plan for strategic improvements.

Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2019



Institution name	2019 global rank	2018 global rank
Universiti Malaya	301–350	351–400
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)	501–600	501–600
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia	601–800	601–800
Universiti Sains Malaysia	601–800	601–800
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia	601–800	601–800
Universiti Teknologi Petronas	601–800	601–800
Universiti Putra Malaysia	801–1,000	601–800
Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten)	801–1,000	801–1,000
Universiti Utara Malaysia	801–1,000	1,001+
Universiti Teknologi Mara	1,001+	NR
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas)	1,001+	NR

Source: Times Higher Education (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2019/world-ranking>)

tegic improvements.

He said while UM had improved in building on its fundamentals, it was also important to improve in strategic thrust areas for financial sustainability, to increase industry income, and wealth creation.

“To scale greater heights, we need funds to harness and train students in critical tech sectors like fintech, blockchains, smart apps, smart contracts and other robotics skills,” he added.

UTAR president Prof Datuk Dr

Chuah Hean Teik was proud that the 16-year-old varsity was again ranked despite being young.

“We use the ranking to benchmark for continual improvement, and will continue to work harder despite constraints like funding.

“A university is a place to train all-rounded future leaders. UTAR will not lose sight of its main duties to create, disseminate and preserve knowledge,” he said.

Congratulating the Malaysian universities, Education Ministry's

Department of Higher Education director-general Datin Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir said the achievement was a result of the inculcation of academic excellence that had been promoted over the years.

“The ministry would like to emphasise that ranking is not the sole indicator of higher education accomplishments.

“Instead, it is a by-product of the academic culture of excellence, which is progressively embraced by our higher education institutions,” she said.

THE Global Rankings editorial director Phil Baty said it was good to see UM making strong progress.

“Appearing in the 301–350 band may not be UM's highest position in the wide range of global rankings published, but the THE World University Rankings is the most comprehensive, most balanced and most rigorous in the world.

“We use 13 performance indicators to assess research universities across their core activities, including teaching, internationalisation, knowledge transfer and research.

“On this basis, it is also good to see more Malaysian universities appearing in the rankings overall, with two new entrants,” he said.

The global university performance table was launched at THE's World Academic Summit at the National University of Singapore last night.

Immigration probing abuse of power claim

JOHOR BARU: The state immigration department has started investigations following allegations by a Singaporean motorcyclist that his passport was torn and the immigration personnel asked for a bribe.

Johor Immigration director Datuk Rohaizi Bahari said that he did not tolerate such actions and would come down hard on the officer if the allegations were true.

Asked whether the personnel has been identified or suspended, he only said that investigations were still under way.

Rohaizi added that they had also posted a reply about the incident, which occurred on Sept 25, on the department's Facebook page.

The Singaporean, who is a performance auditor, said in a post that the deputy immigration chief of the Sultan Abu Bakar Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) complex had contacted him.

In his Facebook post, the victim alleged that the incident occurred at about 11.30pm at the CIQ.

“The officer told me to go back to Singapore as my passport was torn,” he claimed in his posting.

The victim was also not allowed to meet with the officer's supervisor, manager or team leader. The victim was instead told to park his motorcycle before the officer asked for a bribe to let him off.

The victim refused to pay.