

QUACQUARELLI SYMONDS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2020

LOCAL VARSITIES RISE IN RANKINGS

UM is the highest ranked at 70; UPM and UKM also make big gains

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SEVERAL Malaysian universities have recorded a rise in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2020.

In the latest edition of the international university rankings, Universiti Malaya (UM) rose from No. 87 last year to No. 70 this year, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) moved up from No. 202 to No. 159 and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) went from 184 to 160.

The universities were rated according to six components: academic reputation (40 per cent),

employer reputation (10 per cent), faculty-student ratio (20 per cent), citations per faculty (20 per cent), international faculty ratio (five per cent) and international student ratio (five per cent).

UM Vice-Chancellor Datuk Dr Abdul Rahim Hashim was happy with the result as UM made a big leap in the charts.

"Our goal is, and has always been, to benchmark UM against other top universities around the world with a view for improvement to raise the standard of Malaysia's higher education."

UPM Vice-Chancellor Professor Datin Paduka Dr Aini Ideris said she was happy that the university achieved the target of breaking into the top 200.

"This outstanding achievement has allowed UPM to set new goals, in line with the role of the university and the fundamentals of education.

"Although UPM's international student ratio is the highest in the

country this year, its highest jump was in the employer reputation ratio. This indicates that our students, research and extension activities are recognised," she said.

UKM Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Ishak Yussof said it was proud of its performance.

"This is the accumulation of UKM's hard work over the years and we will continue to do more to improve our standings.

"The ranking will help us attract the best brains as that (ranking) is what they look into when searching for a place to teach.

"The ranking lets others know what the university can provide to the talents.

"The ranking also helps when we want to find international partners for academic collaboration. They know us through our profile on the ranking."

Educationists say the rankings are not just for universities to show off.

It is important for parents and

students in searching for the best place to study.

Parent Action Group for Education (Page) chairman Datin Noor Azimah Abdul Rahim said she saw the pros and cons of rankings.

"Parents look out for rankings on where to send their kids.

"These universities will be where their kids will spend three or four years of their lives, so they need to look into the best ones.

"It would determine their placement in the workplace.

"On the other hand, the higher the ranking of a university, the harder it will be for students to get in as there will be more competition.

"Another aspect is the cost of tuition. The higher the ranking of a university, the higher the cost of studying.

"This also helps the university to generate income and not depend on government money.

"In this respect, the ranking system does have a place in the

education world."

Academician Dr Cheong Kee Cheok said that while he understood critics who said universities should not chase after rankings, he questioned how performance could be measured if not for the rankings.

"If not for the rankings, what should we chase? Happiness? Our own assessment?"

"If we do not go for rankings, we should have an alternative."

Another education expert, Professor Vincent Pang, said the ranking was fine to reflect the quality of universities, but institutions should not be driven by it, to the extent of compromising their goals.

"An overemphasis on ranking may divert the attention of universities in improving the economic and social wellbeing of the nation, especially for universities that have strong presence of national and community development in their mission statements."