

Moving in the right direction

TWENTY one of Malaysia's 29 top universities have risen in the 2020 edition of the *QS World University Rankings: Asia*.

Universiti Malaya (UM) reached its highest position and placed 13th in Asia.

The results demonstrate that Malaysian universities are becoming increasingly competitive, relative to regional peers.

UM is joined in the regional top 50 by its fellow research universities, all of which have improved their rank. (see table)

They are Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) (33rd, up one place); Universiti Sains Malaysia (37th, up six places); Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (39th, up two places), and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (46th, up one place).

QS has ranked the continent's 550 best institutions, according to a bespoke 11-metric methodology.

QS research director Ben Sowter said the dataset includes the world's largest surveys of global academic and employer opinion regarding university quality.

"Malaysia's rise is primarily attributable to its improving performance in the two key reputational surveys used by QS to compile the rankings," he said.

In the Academic Reputation indicator, which utilises the insights of over 94,000 academics regarding university quality, he said 22 of Malaysia's 29 ranked universities have improved their performance.

In the Employer Reputation indicator, which utilises the insights of over 44,000 employers regarding the quality of a university's graduates, 18 of Malaysia's 29 ranked universities have improved their rank;

"QS's dataset indicates that the increasing academic recognition being achieved by Malaysia's universities is primarily due to the work that its universities have done to improve their global research collaborations," he said.

To measure the diversity of a university's global network, Sowter said QS uses an indicator called International Research Network.

"UM receives the highest score of any Asian institution for International Research Network, and four of the top 10 scores are achieved by Malaysian universities," he said.

In total, 17 of Malaysia's 29 ranked universities have improved their International Research Network score.

Sowter said the overall scores achieved by the country's universities provide compelling evidence that they are moving in the right direction.

Continued improvements

UM vice-chancellor Datuk

Malaysia has 29 universities in the Asian rankings with UM leading the pack.



UM looks at rankings as a benchmark for it to gauge its position and plan for further improvement. — File photo

Abdul Rahim Hashim said the milestone achievement sees UM breaking its own record and moving upwards for the ninth consecutive year.

Since the start of this rankings in 2009, he said UM has consistently improved by 26 places, and remains as the nation's best in its overall position.

In addition, the university is also ranked top in the nation under six indicators, placing UM within the top 3% of the Asian universities ranked.

"The results serve to prove that UM is internationally competitive, with academic standards that are at par with the world's top universities," he said.

Abdul Rahim said UM looks at rankings as a benchmark for it to gauge its position and as a way of planning for further improvement.

The rise is evidence of the success in the implementation of UM's strategic plans, he said, adding these strengthen the university's fundamentals, and has led to a steady rise in UM's position both regionally in

Asia as well as in the *QS World University Rankings 2020*, of which UM is currently ranked 70th.

UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Aini Ideris said UPM has been progressing up the rankings for the past six years.



Top 10 Malaysian universities in QS World University Rankings: Asia 2020

	2020 rank	2019 rank
Universiti Malaya (UM)	13=	19=
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	33	34
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	37	43
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	39	41
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	46	47
Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP)	82	99
Taylor's University	109	135=
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	116=	128=
Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM)	119	137=
UCSI University	122	178=

Source: QS Quacquarelli Symonds 2004-2019 www.TopUniversities.com

The university scored highest in its International Research Network indicator, ranking eighth in Asia.

She said UPM will continue to focus on strengthening its research impact through collaborations with industry and international partners.

Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) moved up 18 places to 119th this year.

"The employer reputation remains UiTM's strongest position at 53rd in Asia," said UiTM vice-chancellor Emeritus Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Azraai Kassim in a statement.

He said the improvement in five indicators is a result of the synergised efforts of UiTM staff, students and management in developing strategies towards achieving a high performing university status.

Making their mark

Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) is the top private institution among its Malaysian counterparts. It is ranked in 82nd place.

UTP deputy vice-chancellor (Research and Innovation) Prof Dr Mohd Shahir Liew said the

university has focused on regional research concerns in a structured manner by understanding the various business and scientific needs of the various countries in moving forward.

"UTP has embarked on a transformational approach on its research strategy based on its capability and strength of the researchers in addressing two major trends and challenges namely Smart Living and Energy Sustainability," he added.

UCSI University is proud to have climbed 56 spots to rank 122nd this year. The university said it was on the right direction towards achieving academic excellence.

"Essentially, UCSI focuses on the fundamentals to provide the best for its students," it said in a statement.

Management and Science University (MSU) president

Prof Tan Sri Dr Mohd Shukri Ab Yajid is pleased with MSU's jump to 179th spot this year from the 271-280 band in the previous year.

"One of the the pillars at the university is building the research culture and ecosystem.

"This includes research projects and translational research as well as the commercialisation of the output," he added.

He said MSU has seen vast improvement over the last 12 months.

"We are glad that we can see the positive outcome of what we do, through the initiatives done by our Research Management Centre," he added.

Taylor's University vice-chancellor and president Prof Michael Driscoll said the increase in the ranking is a vote of confidence in the strategy that the university is pursuing.

"In the last few years we have totally transformed the university by introducing radical reforms to our approach to teaching and research and by broadening our international reach.

"Our employer partners have strongly signalled their approval of the direction Taylor's is taking," he said.

Taylor's University jumped 26 spots to rank 109th.

The National University of Singapore tops the listing followed by Nanyang Technological University and the University of Hong Kong.

For more information, visit www.TopUniversities.com.