Malaysian varsities flying high

All five research institutions ranked among the world's top 200

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PETALING JAYA: For the first time ever, all five Malaysian research universities are ranked among the world's top 200, according to the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.

Universiti Malaya (UM) continued to make great strides in the international rankings.

Malaysia's oldest university now ranks 59th, an 11 spot jump from 70th last year with a 70.1 overall score.

UM improved its performance across four of the six metrics utilised by QS, including rising 76 places in citations per faculty – the research impact indicator.

The country's other research universities – Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) – were all on an upward trend (see table).

UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Aini Ideris said despite their steady improvement, the university planned to continue enhancing its strengths while overcoming any weaknesses.

"Continuous improvement is very important because we aspire to become one of the top 100 universities under the QS World University Rankings in the next five years," she told The Star.

She also said that it was the strong support and commitment of the staff that propelled the university 27 spots up to 132nd position in the rankings.

UKM vice-chancellor Prof Dr Mohd Hamdi Abd Shukor said they improved from last year's position at 160th to 141st.

"UKM will stay focused on improving our fundamentals, especially in the areas of research, teaching and internationalisation," he said, adding that rankings should be viewed as a byproduct of a "great university".

"Ranking is important to benchmark ourselves with the rest of the top players in the world. It is obviously not an absolute scale but it serves as a reference," he said.

Meanwhile, Taylor's University (379th) recorded the most impressive year-on-year growth, jumping up 135 places to break into the world's top 400 universities with an overall score of 28.9.

Its vice-chancellor and president Prof Michael Driscoll said the latest QS World University Rankings confirms Taylor's University as the country's best private university.

"It also recognises the world-class education we provide for our students," he said.

A total of 19 local universities were ranked in the 17th edition of the international rankings.

QS research director Ben Sowter said the ascendancy of the Malaysian universities in the rankings was the result of concerted efforts and sustained investment.

"The leading Malaysian universities are committing a good level of teaching resources as measured by our faculty/student ratio.

"When it comes to research intensity and impact, the best national performer is UM (241st) while the next best is UTM (461st).

"An ambitious country like Malaysia, will surely aim for research excellence as well as continuing to invest in teaching excellence," he said in a press statement.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology remains number one in the world for the ninth consecutive year. Asia's top universities are the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University, at the 11th and 13th rank respectively.

For details, visit https://www.topuniversities.com.

Top 10 Malaysian universities in QS World University Rankings 2021

Institution	2021 Rank	2020 Rank
Universiti Malaya (UM)	59	70
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	132	159
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	141	160=
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	142	165=
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	187=	217=
Taylor's University	379	511-520
UCSI University	391	442=
Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP)	439=	482=
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	531-540	591-600
Management and Science University (MSU)	551-560	541-550

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