

By REBECCA RAJAENDRAM  
rebeccagr@thestar.com.my

# M'sian varsities leap in rankings

TAYLOR'S University made the biggest jump up the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021 among local varsities, while all five Malaysian public research universities ranked among the top 200.

Taylor's climbed an impressive 135 places, breaking into the world's top 400 universities for the first time ever. It now ranks 379 with an overall score of 28.9.

Its vice-chancellor and president Prof Michael Driscoll said this jump is a clear recognition of the "world-class education" it provides the students.

"The high ranking achieved by Taylor's follows the recent QS 5-Star rating (the highest level) for the quality of our online learning which is serving our students well during the government-enforced campus closure.

"Our world-class online learning is enabling our students to complete their studies without interruption and graduate on time," he told *StarEdu*.

UCSI University also made a huge 51 spot leap from 442 to achieve its 391 ranking this year.

UCSI vice-chancellor and president Senior Prof Datuk Dr Khalid Yusoff said the varsity continues to be placed among the top 2% of universities in the world.

"This continuing improvement and latest accomplishment reflect the strategies adopted and the dedication and commitment of all concerned," he added.

In welcoming the recognition, he said it places a great responsibility on the staff and students alike to continue consolidating and scaling up the excellence pathway.



**Prof Khalid:** UCSI continues to be among the world's top 2%.

The top Malaysian university according to QS is still Universiti Malaya (UM), which rose 11 spots to sit at 59 from 70 last year.

It has an overall score of 70.1. This is the highest position the university has been at since the rankings began in 2004.

UM vice-chancellor Datuk Dr Abdul Rahim Hashim said the results were a recognition of the varsity being a high calibre research and educational institution. UM's goal, he said, is to benchmark itself against outstanding universities worldwide to uplift Malaysian higher education and to enhance its reputation as a global institution of higher learning.

"Increased investment will enable UM to intensify international collaborations, enhance strategic research and industry partnerships, and improve graduate employability which are among our top priorities.

"UM also plans to widen its talent pool with excellent local and international staff.



**Prof Driscoll:** This is a recognition of Taylor's world-class education.

"While the university is committed to financial sustainability, its efforts are unable to yield immediate results amid a backdrop of heightened global economic and public-health risks," he said.

The country's other research universities also sit comfortably in the top 400 universities in the world.

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) ranked 132, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) ranked 141, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) ranked 142 and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) is at 187.

A total of 19 local universities made it into the 17th edition of the international rankings.

UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Aini Ideris said they maintained their position as the second best university in Malaysia after UM.

Thanking the UPM community comprising students, staff, alumni, stakeholders and strategic partners, for their strong support and contribution, she said the varsity was tested with challenging times and with various constraints in light of the

Covid-19 pandemic.

"We continue to use our guiding principles and incorporate them into organisational processes, team orientations, performance assessment, quality standard and efficiency in practices.

"Both academic and non-academic staff at UPM understand their roles, the commitment needed and the standards required to be competitive and internationally renowned.

"Undeniably, these excellent work culture and qualities echo into good university ranking," she said.

UKM vice-chancellor Prof Dr Mohd Hamdi Abd Shukor said their rise up the rankings is thanks to their focus on quality.

"I am a strong believer when it comes to everything quality. The impact of doing quality research is high impact publication, which in turn will get higher citation and recognition globally.

"Likewise, quality teaching produces caliber graduates which will be a vital resource for the nation and the industries," he said.

Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) vice-chancellor Prof Dr Mohamed Ibrahim Abdul Mutalib said the rankings enabled the varsity to position itself among its peers. They ranked 439 this year.

"UTP is not pursuing ranking just for ranking's sake, but as a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of our rigorous and continuous effort in continuing and enhancing our teaching and learning, research, students' development, and operational excellence," he added.

"They also help us to understand where our strengths and gaps are,

which will allow us to address them appropriately for continuous improvement."

The Higher Education Ministry said this is the country's best achievement so far in the rankings.

"This success will continue to place Malaysia as a higher education hub in the region and will help forge collaborations between institutions and world-renowned researchers," it said in a statement on Wednesday.

QS research director Ben Sowter said: "The ascendancy of the Malaysian universities in our rankings is the result of concerted efforts and sustained investment."

"The research and development budget was also increased," he said in a statement, adding that 19.1% of total government spending was allocated to education last year.

"The reputation of the local universities is growing steadily among the international academic community and global employers.

"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 continued investment in teaching excellence," he added.

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.

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