

QS World University Rankings 2027

US and European leadership challenged amid competition from Asia and Middle East

#QSWUR

London, 18th June 2026: International higher education experts QS Quacquarelli Symonds has today released the 23rd annual edition of the [QS World University Rankings](#)

For the fifteenth consecutive year, **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** retains the top spot. **Imperial College London** remains second for the third year in a row, now sharing the position with **Stanford University** which climbs from third after placing sixth the year before. The **University of Oxford** and **Harvard University** both remain fourth and fifth respectively.

Alongside the US and the UK, Switzerland and Singapore are the only other higher education systems represented in the top 10. **ETH Zurich** places eighth, down from seventh, and **National University of Singapore (NUS)** places tenth, down from eighth.

There are no new entries among the global top 10 while **Yale University**, **The Chinese University of Hong Kong** and **Johns Hopkins University** break into the top 20, ranking 16th, 18th and joint-20th respectively.

2027 Rank	2026 Rank	Institution	Location
1	1	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	US
2	3	Stanford University	US
2	2	Imperial College London	UK
4	4	University of Oxford	UK
5	5	Harvard University	US
6	6	University of Cambridge	UK
7	10	California Institute of Technology (Caltech)	US
8	9	UCL	UK
8	7	ETH Zurich	Switzerland
10	8	National University of Singapore (NUS)	Singapore
11	11	The University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong SAR, China
12	12	Nanyang Technological University (NTU Singapore)	Singapore
13	14	Peking University	China (Mainland)
14	17	Tsinghua University	China (Mainland)
15	15	University of Pennsylvania	US
16	21	Yale University	US
16	16	Cornell University	US
18	32	The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)	Hong Kong SAR, China
19	20	The University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney)	Australia

20	24	Johns Hopkins University	US
20	17	University of California, Berkeley (UCB)	US

Executive summary

- The US retains unmatched scale and quality. MIT extends 15-year global leadership while Harvard tops four performance indicators.
- The UK maintains global influence, led by Imperial College London, four universities place in the global top 10 and five achieve record results
- Mainland China sees the largest growth, adding 13 universities while Peking University leads nationally and 26 institutions achieve record-highs.
- Hong Kong SAR is Asia’s most improved system, with seven out of 10 climbing; HKU and CUHK both place among global top 20.
- Australia strengthens global standing, with UNSW becoming national leader as institutional reputation metrics continue improving.
- Italy ranks among Europe’s fastest-improving systems, with Politecnico di Milano consolidating its position inside the global top 100.
- Germany and Spain expand representation significantly, while Technical University of Munich and Université PSL are the EU’s top-ranked institutions.
- Gulf universities achieve record performances, led by King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals reaching a historic high.
- Latin America’s downward trend continues, with Universidad de Buenos Aires remaining the region’s only global top-100 university.
- Canada faces growing competitive pressure while McGill University retains its position as the country’s leading institution.
- South Africa leads in Africa, with University of Cape Town remaining the region’s top-ranked university despite dropping year-on-year

QS Senior Vice President Ben Sowter said: *“The QS World University Rankings continue to serve as an important benchmark for evaluating higher education performance, informing the decisions of students, academics, institutions and policy makers worldwide.”*

“Higher education remains a critical driver of innovation, international collaboration, and social and economic development. As some established study destinations reconsider policies related to international student mobility and funding, emerging higher education hubs may find new opportunities to attract global talent and strengthen their positions in research, knowledge creation, and academic leadership.”

“The rankings show that the US is still the world leader in global higher education, with institutions such as MIT, Harvard and Caltech setting the benchmark for research influence and reputation. At the same time, the global map of higher education is becoming more distributed as institutions across Asia and the Middle East translate sustained investment in research and internationalisation into measurable gains.”

“The picture in Europe remains mixed, with some systems steadily strengthening their global standing through long-term funding and innovation policies, while others show signs of stagnation.”

This year’s rankings feature more than 1500 universities across 106 higher education systems. The United States is the most represented higher education system, with 184 ranked universities, followed by the UK with 93 and Mainland China with 85. Mainland China sees the most new institutions ranked, adding 13, followed by Germany which adds 11 and Spain with 10.

HE System	Total ranked	Up	Same	Down	New	Top university		Top 50	Top 100	Top 200	Top 500
						Name	Rank				
US	184	23	38	121	3	MIT	1	14	26	38	68
UK	93	31	20	38	4	Imperial College London	2	7	16	28	48
Mainland China	85	52	10	10	13	Peking University	13	5	6	10	38
Germany	60	8	3	38	11	Technical University of Munich	25	1	4	9	28
India	52	26	9	15	2	Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD)	118			3	11
Spain	48	2	12	24	10	Universitat de Barcelona	165			2	15
Italy	47	23	9	9	6	Politecnico di Milano	87		1	3	15
South Korea	43	21	12	7	3	Seoul National University	38	2	4	7	17
Japan	41	3	13	24	1	The University of Tokyo	39	1	3	8	12
France	38	5	7	19	7	Université PSL	34	2	4	4	13

The QS World University Rankings are determined by an institution’s scores across nine key indicators. The below table shows world’s top performing university in each of QS’ indicators. Detailed methodological information can be found [here](#).

Table 3: Global leader by indicator
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Indicator	Weight	Global leader	HE system	Indicator rank	Overall rank
Academic Reputation	30%	Harvard University	US	1	5
Employer Reputation	15%	Harvard University	US	1	5
Faculty Student Ratio	10%	University of Maryland, Baltimore	US	1	801-850
Citations per Faculty	20%	Harvard University	US	1	5
International Faculty Ratio	5%	American University of Ras Al Khaimah; Al Ain University	United Arab Emirates	1	608; 559
International Student Ratio	5%	Central European University	Austria	1	239
International Research Network	5%	University of Oxford	UK	1	4
Employment Outcomes	5%	Harvard University	US	1	5
Sustainability	5%	Lund University	Sweden	1	71

Global Highlights

- In the US, California Institute of Technology rises to seventh in the world, its best ranking since 2023, when it placed joint sixth. Yale University and Johns Hopkins University have both re-entered the global top 20. Harvard University ranks first globally in four indicators, more than any other university: Academic Reputation, Citations per Faculty, Employer Reputation, and Employment Outcomes. Meanwhile, University of Maryland, Baltimore ranks first in the world for Faculty Student Ratio. Arizona State University has achieved its highest ranking to date, placing 172nd globally in 2027, up from 222nd a decade ago.
- Some 66% of Canada’s universities drop this year, with McGill University retaining the top spot nationally for a second consecutive year, placing 30th. Four Canadian institutions achieve their best ranking in more than a decade. However, global peers are improving at a faster pace than Canadian counterparts, particularly in International Student Ratio, Employment Outcomes, International Faculty, and Citations per Faculty.
- In Australia, University of New South Wales claims the national top spot for the first time. Overall, 58% of the country’s 37 ranked institutions have improved, with particularly strong performances in indicators measuring reputation among academics and employers. With University of the Sunshine Coast re-entering the rankings for the first time since 2025, Australia now has the highest number of entries it has ever achieved in the QS World University Rankings.
- Six institutions from Ireland rise in the 2027 rankings, with University College Dublin entering the global top 100 for the first time. Ranked second globally for both Employer Reputation and Sustainability, Ireland’s higher education system continues the upward trajectory it has sustained in recent years.

- With 13 debutants among its 85 ranked universities, Mainland China records the highest number of new entries this year, while 26 institutions achieve historic highs. Improvements in areas such as Citations per Faculty, Employer Reputation, and Academic Reputation have strengthened the region's performance in the latest rankings.
- Hong Kong SAR emerges as Asia's most improved higher education system for the second consecutive year, and the second most improved globally among systems with three or more ranked universities. Seven of its previously ranked institutions climb the table. Its leading institution, The University of Hong Kong, retains its record-high position of 11th, first achieved in last year's edition. Meanwhile, The Chinese University of Hong Kong rises to 18th, its highest-ever rank, marking the first time that two Hong Kong universities have placed in the global top 20.
- Five UK institutions achieve their highest ranking to date in 2027: University of Bath (125th), University of Exeter (136th), Loughborough University (203rd), University of Strathclyde (230th), and Northumbria University (528th).
- Italy is among Europe's most improved higher education systems in this year's rankings, behind only Austria among systems with 10 or more ranked universities. Politecnico di Milano climbs further into the global top 100, placing 87th, after entering this tier for the first time in last year's edition.
- Germany, Spain and France all grow their representation in the rankings, adding 11, 10 and seven universities respectively, the most in the world after Mainland China. Technical University of Munich is the highest-ranked university in the EU, placing 25th, followed by Université PSL in 34th.
- The Arab region records significant gains, with all four of its highest-ranked universities climbing the table and achieving record ranks. The highest-ranked institution, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, builds on last year's momentum to achieve its highest-ever position at 63rd. It is followed by compatriot King Saud University, which also achieves a record ranking of 107th. Qatar University and Khalifa University in the UAE also achieve record placements, ranking 109th and 147th respectively.
- Latin America's downward trajectory continues, with 52% of the region's universities declining and 8% improving. However, the region's leading institution, Universidad de Buenos Aires, retains its position at 84th and remains the region's only top 100 university for

the second consecutive year. It is followed by Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile in 119th and Universidade de São Paulo in 133rd.

- South Africa remains Africa's leading higher education powerhouse, holding the continent's top five positions. University of Cape Town remains the highest-ranked institution despite dropping 34 places to 184th. Fellow South African institutions University of Johannesburg and Stellenbosch University both break into the global top 300.

This year's QS World University Rankings feature 1,500 universities across 106 higher education systems. The analysis accounted for:

- 21 million research papers
- 222 million citations
- 1.6 million academic survey responses
- Data from 8,808 institutions
- Insights from 121,024 academic and 69,432 employers

-Ends-

Detailed methodological information can be found at <https://www.topuniversities.com/world-university-rankings/methodology>.

The full **QS World University Rankings** will be published when the embargo lifts and will be available at <https://www.topuniversities.com/world-university-rankings>

For further information or to request interviews with QS' analysts, please contact:

Simona Bizzozero

Director of Communications, QS

simona@qs.com | +44 (0) 7880 620856 | [LinkedIn](#)

Will Barbieri

Communications Manager

William.barbieri@qs.com

Notes for Editors

QS Quacquarelli Symonds is the world's leading provider of services, analytics, and insight to the global higher education sector, whose mission is to empower motivated people anywhere in the world to fulfil their potential through educational achievement, international mobility, and career development.

The QS World University Rankings portfolio, inaugurated in 2004, is the world's most popular source of comparative data about university performance. Their flagship website www.TopUniversities.com – the home of their rankings – was viewed more than 120 million times in 2024, and over 135,000 media clippings pertaining to, or mentioning, QS were published by media outlets across the world in 2025.