



Communication and Marketing Department
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso
Kommunikasie en Bemerkingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

www.uct.ac.za

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UCT climbs 15 places to remain top African institution in the THE rankings

The University of Cape Town (UCT) remains Africa's top institution after climbing 15 places in the 2019 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings.

UCT moved from being placed 171st last year to 156th position this year.

The THE rankings use five main categories (made up of 13 metrics) in the following proportions: teaching 30%, research 30%, citations 30%, international outlook 7.5% and industry income 2.5%.

UCT has improved its scores in four of the five areas, compared with last year's results:

- Teaching: 31.7, up from 30.5
- Research: 41.5, up from 36.2
- Citation: 87.2, up from 87.0
- International outlook: 82.4, up from 81.1
- Industry income: 87.6, down from 88.5

UCT Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng is currently in Singapore for the THE World Academic Summit.

The university's Executive Director: Communication and Marketing, Gerda Kruger, said: "We are pleased to note that UCT has made such a significant leap on the latest THE rankings. The notable improved score in the research area confirms UCT as a research-intensive institution whose cutting-edge research makes a distinctive contribution to both the local and global knowledge pools and produces solutions to challenges facing our continent and our world.

"The university also has improved the score in teaching, which is in line with our goal to broaden students' academic perspective and cultivate more critical citizens through the renewal of our approach to teaching and learning and the pioneering of new methods.

The improved score on international outlook underscores UCT as a destination of choice for international students.”

Significantly, UCT’s scores in all five categories are above the median scores for all universities.

UCT’s strongest performance remains in the industry income category (reflecting the impact of the university’s research and contribution to industry) and even though the score has dropped slightly, the institution’s ranking has increased by two places to 60th position, out of all universities worldwide.

Although the international outlook category score improved, UCT was ranked 138th worldwide (down 12 places from the previous position). International staff and student numbers continue to grow at UCT (as shown by the increase in scores) and collaboration with international partners continues to flourish (the score remained steady).

The citation category score (which measures the number of times a piece of research is cited or referred to) has improved slightly. UCT is now ranked 156th for this category worldwide (previously 133rd).

UCT’s overall scores in both the teaching and research categories have increased. Teaching and research reputation survey scores have both increased, which indicates the university’s good international reputation among leading academics.

The significant increase in the research category has led to a ranking jump of 51 places to 173rd position worldwide. The biggest score increase of 13.6 within the research category comes from the papers to academic staff ratio metric.

Despite the improved teaching category score, UCT’s ranking dropped 20 places. This drop is a reminder that rankings are relative – a drop in ranking is not always a reflection of a drop in performance, but may simply mean that other institutions have improved relative to UCT’s score.

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Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

Elijah Moholola

Manager: Media Liaison and Social Media
Communication and Marketing Department
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch
Tel: (021) 650 5674
Cell: (083) 981 7770
Email: elijah.moholola@uct.ac.za
Website: www.uct.ac.za