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28 June 2023

UCT leaps up 64 places in QS rankings to remain best university in Africa

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has been ranked 173rd in the world by the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2024 released on Wednesday, 28 June 2023. This is an impressive rise of 64 places compared to the previous year.

UCT remains the best university in Africa, according to QS, moving up to within the top 12% internationally. UCT's improved performance of 64 places can be largely attributed to the change in methodology introduced in this edition of the rankings, which now takes into consideration the university's extensive international collaborations, and excellent graduate employment rates and highly successful alumni, and evaluates UCT's contribution to social and environmental impact.

"UCT is delighted to record such an impressive jump in the rankings," said Vice-Chancellor Emeritus Professor Daya Reddy. "We are particularly pleased to see this new recognition of our international collaborations [for which UCT ranked in the top 50 institutions globally], together with recognition in the new category of social and environmental impact.

"Both are critical to our mission to create and teach the best of knowledge and in so doing to contribute towards addressing complex and critical challenges facing our country, our continent, and the world at large. The introduction of employment outcomes is also especially welcome in a country like South Africa, where higher education institutions have a critical role to play in addressing the vital need to increase employment opportunities."

Introducing new methodology

In addition to the traditional six performance indicators, QS included three new indicators to evaluate universities in this 20th edition of their world rankings. Together, the nine performance indicators (with weightings) are: academic reputation (30%), citations per faculty member (20%), employer reputation (15%), employment outcomes (5%), faculty-to-student ratio (10%), international faculty ratio (5%), international student ratio (5%), international research networks (5%) and sustainability (5%).

Professor Reddy remarked: "Rankings provide a way for us to benchmark our performance against other institutions and measure the quality and impact of our endeavours against competitive global standards, while pursuing these endeavours in line with the university's strategic objectives. This allows us to remain grounded in our pursuit of extraordinary and impactful research."

A total of 1 500 institutions from around the world were ranked, including 11 from South Africa. UCT was placed 38th of all ranked institutions in the new employment outcomes indicator, which reflects the ability of institutions to ensure a high level of employability for their graduates and nurture future leaders to go on and make an impact in their respective fields.

UCT ranked 49th in the new international research network indicator, which assesses the richness and diversity of an institution's international research partnerships. The new sustainability indicator evaluates the social and environmental impact of universities as centres of education and research. In this indicator UCT tied in 175th place.

UCT's performance in the reputation indicators remained steady and within the top 200. The employer reputation indicator was in 164th position and the academic reputation indicator at 190th position. Both these reputation indicators are based on global surveys: the employer reputation indicator is based on responses from employers asked to identify the institutions from which they source the most competent and innovative graduates, and the academic reputation indicator is a collation of expert opinions in higher education regarding universities' teaching and research quality.

QS subject rankings

[Earlier this year](#), UCT performed well in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2023, with four subjects featuring in the global top 100. UCT's development studies – ranked 12th in the world – was the best performing. The three other subject areas were anthropology, geography and medicine.

- [View the complete QS World University Rankings 2024.](#)
- [Read more about the methodology used by the QS World University Rankings 2024.](#)

In May, UCT remained the best university in Africa and was ranked at 267th position, up three places from last year, by the Center for World University Rankings (CWUR) in their 2023 Global 2000 list. CWUR releases the largest academic ranking of global universities. Out of the 20 531 institutions assessed, only the top 2 000 received a ranking, which placed UCT in the top 1.4% of universities globally.

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