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UCT remains Africa's top university in latest rankings

The University of Cape Town (UCT) remains the top university on the continent according to the 2024–2025 US News Best Global Universities rankings. UCT is also ranked in the top 100 for seven subjects and in the top 200 for a further 10.

This comes only a few days after UCT broke into the top 100 for the first time in another set of rankings – the 2024 Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings – which placed UCT 77th in the world.

The US News Best Global Universities Rankings placed UCT at 116th position, up from 125th last year. This ranking differs from most other widely recognised world university rankings because it focuses solely on academic research and reputation.

The methodology measures a university's global and regional research reputation and academic research performance using indicators such as publications, citations (the number of times a publication is referred to), and international collaboration.

UCT's acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Internationalisation, Professor Jeff Murugan, said: "While rankings assess various aspects of university quality, such as academic reputation, research output, faculty expertise and student satisfaction, they often don't capture the full breadth of the impact of our work. These rankings typically focus on measurable criteria, but universities also play a vital role in shaping public policy, promoting informed public discourse, advancing science and strengthening democracy and human rights. These contributions, though harder to quantify, are essential to the holistic value that universities provide to society."

Top 100 subjects

UCT's strongest performance was in infectious disease, which is ranked 24th. A further eight subjects were in the top 100 globally: public, environmental and occupations health (44th), immunology (51st), marine and freshwater biology (69th), social sciences and public health

(78th), neuroscience and behaviour (86th), meteorology and atmospheric sciences (92nd), ecology (95th), and microbiology (97th).

“UCT’s leading research in health sciences showcases the strength and depth of our long history of research reputation and excellence,” said Professor Murugan. “We are also pleased to see our strong performance across various fields of study in these subject rankings, as it reflects UCT’s focus on knowledge grounded in the African context that contributes to the social, environmental and economic well-being of people across the continent.”

Professor Digby Warner, the director of UCT’s Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IDM), noted: “University ranking lists need to be viewed with caution. That said, the prominent position achieved in the infectious disease category is a pleasing acknowledgment of the global impact local researchers – many of whom are based in the IDM – are making in tackling important health problems of direct relevance in our setting. Rather than complacency, though, this accolade really serves as motivation for us to redouble our efforts in developing and applying world-leading indigenous clinical and scientific research capacity that can transform health interventions and outcomes.”

A further 10 subjects were ranked in the top 200: clinical medicine (102nd), psychiatry/psychology (102nd), environment/ecology (121st), molecular biology and genetics (128th), cardiac and cardiovascular systems (136th), space science (169th), plant and animal science (171st), surgery (183rd), geosciences (192nd), and arts and humanities (194th).

UCT top in Africa

UCT remains the top ranked university in Africa on all five major rankings. UCT was ranked 167th in the [Times Higher Education World University Rankings in 2024](#), and climbed from 173rd to 171st in the [Quacquarelli Symonds World Rankings \(2025\)](#). The university also leads in Africa in the latest [Shanghai Ranking’s Academic Ranking of World Universities](#) and the [Center for World University Rankings](#).

- [Read more about the US News methodology.](#)
- [View the Best Global Universities Rankings.](#)

ENDS

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