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# NUS, NTU among Asia's top universities in QS ranking

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The National University of Singapore (NUS) was named Asia's top university, while Nanyang Technological University (NTU) jumped three places to seventh, its highest ever position.

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A lecture hall in NUS.

CAPTION

SINGAPORE: Two of Singapore's universities have cemented their place among Asia's best, according to an annual survey.

The National University of Singapore (NUS) was named Asia's top university, while Nanyang Technological University (NTU) jumped three places to seventh, its highest ever position.

The 2014 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) University Rankings for Asia polled more than 50,000 academics and employers internationally.

NUS overtook University of Hong Kong (HKU) and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) to be named Asia's number one institution for the first time.

Last year, NUS tied with HKU in second place. NUS was placed 10th when the QS rankings were first compiled in 2009.

NUS scored high marks for both employer and academic reputation in the latest QS rankings. It also ranked in the top three universities for the disciplines measured by the survey.

The disciplines were Social Sciences and Management, Arts and Humanities, Engineering and Technology, Life Sciences and Medicine, and Natural Sciences.

NUS President Professor Tan Chorh Chuan said: "We are pleased and honoured to be recognised as Asia's top university. This is a strong affirmation of our distinctive education and excellent research, and a testament to the high quality work by our talented team of faculty, staff and students."

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While NUS acknowledged that rankings have their shortcomings in determining what makes for a holistic education, it is still an indicator.

NUS Deputy President & Provost, Professor Tan Eng Chye, said: "It is of course useless to try to just track rankings and perform according to how rankings are measured. But I think we must be mindful that there are certain components or parameters that are used in rankings that are useful to guide universities and other institutions on whether we are doing something right."

In its survey findings, QS said NUS had committed to cutting-edge education and research augmented by pragmatic and consistent leadership.

It also said the university has the necessary tools to stay at number one.

"NUS taking the top spot this year has also been the product of its undeniable evolution to world-class with cutting-edge education and research augmented by pragmatic and consistent leadership, strong institutional branding and exceptional financial management. NUS has not only taken the top spot this year but equipped itself with the tools it is likely to need to stay there."

NTU meanwhile, scored maximum points in four areas, including employer reputation.

Its seventh placing represents a jump of 10 places in the last two years.

QS said NTU has a robust international strategy, with a keen focus on developing the right strategic partnerships.

NTU's Associate Provost (Undergraduate Education), Professor Kam Chan Hin, said: "There's no doubt that students look at them (rankings), parents look at them, the industries look at them. So you can't really ignore it as well."

"But on our part we don't specifically aim to be number one, number two and so on. We believe that if we do the right thing, do the right research, and we also do the right thing by our students, not neglecting the education part, the ranking takes care of itself."

NTU President Professor Bertil Andersson said: "Singapore should be proud to have two universities among Asia's top seven."

"Despite being a young university, NTU has, in recent years, made a name for itself by ramping up research and partnering top academic and research institutions and industry leaders worldwide to provide our students with a high quality and industry-relevant education."

Human resource experts said that it is fairly accurate to say that employers look at the QS rankings. But an employer also looks at the performance of a university's relevant schools and how that complements its needs.

Human Capital Singapore's director for Capability & Business Development, David Ang, said: "The industry and the employer will be looking towards how graduates can apply the knowledge acquired in the working world. Certainly if they are taught to have a more diversified, all-round exposure in the education, then students will be better able to apply the knowledge to the work situation."

According to QS, NUS and NTU both operate in English and this allows them to better engage stakeholders.

They are also reaping the benefits of a \$16.1 billion investment by the government in the areas of research, innovation and enterprise, announced in 2011.

Earlier this month, NTU was ranked fifth in the Times Higher Education's



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ranking of the world's top 100 young universities, while in January, NTU retained its second position in a similar ranking of top 50 young universities by QS.

- CNA/xq/ir



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