Irish universities tumble down latest set of world rankings

**Call for Government to tackle funding crisis as TCD loses status as only top-100 Irish university**

about 3 hours ago

**Carl O’Brien**

Irish universities have tumbled down the latest set of influential world rankings, sparking alarm among senior academics over the funding “crisis” facing higher education.

**Trinity College Dublin** has lost its status as Ireland’s only top-100 university, while six out of eight Irish top-ranked colleges have fallen down the rankings. Senior academics say Government-imposed caps on staffing, growing student numbers and a decade of under-investment are to blame.
Universities such as UCD – which previously said it would consider capping the number of Irish students – are now considering new measures to tackle the rising student per lecturing staff ratio.

The QS World University Rankings show Trinity fell from 88th to 104th in the world, while UCD slid from 168th to 193rd place.

NUI Galway also fell (from 243rd place to 260th), as did UCC (from 228th to 383rd place).

In the capital, DCU was down (from 391st place to 422nd) along with DIT – which is categorised as a university by the rankings body – (down from the 651-700 category to the 751-800 category).

The only two Irish institutions which avoided dropping were the University of Limerick (which remained in the 501-550 category) and Maynooth University (which remained in the 701-750 category).

### QS World University Rankings 2019: Ireland

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<th>2019</th>
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<td>104</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Trinity College Dublin (TCD)</td>
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<td>193</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>University College Dublin (UCD)</td>
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<td>260</td>
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<td>National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)</td>
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<td>338</td>
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<td>422</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>Dublin City University (DCU)</td>
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<td>511-520</td>
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<td>University of Limerick (UL)</td>
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Ranking experts say the Irish sector is facing a range of challenges, with declines on key measures such as staff-student ratios, academic reputation and employer reputation. QS said that even though Irish universities have increased their research output, they have been outpaced by other universities across the globe. All Irish universities also received lower ranks for the relatively low proportions of international students.
Serious concerns

The Irish Universities Association said it had serious concerns that a continued failure to address the third-level funding crisis will directly damage the Irish economy in future years.

Director-general Jim Miley said: “It’s time to stop delaying a decision on a proper funding model for Irish third-level education. The Government know what needs to be done and should now bite the bullet.”

Irish parents continue to pay the highest up-front fees for undergraduate education in Europe

Prof Andrew Deeks, UCD president, said a continuing deterioration in the student-staff ratio – which now stands at about 20 students per single faculty member – can no longer be endured.

“At a time when countries like China are investing billions into their best universities to reduce their student-teacher ratio to 10:1 and to raise their world standing, the Irish Government perseveres with austerity-level funding of Irish higher education,” Prof Deeks said.

“As a direct result, Irish parents continue to pay the highest up-front fees for undergraduate education in Europe, and the standing of the Irish university system continues to decline relative to more ambitious systems.”

Globally, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) was named the world’s leading university for the seventh consecutive year.

It was followed by US universities Stanford, Harvard, and California Institute of Technology.

Rival’s rank usurped

University of Oxford (5th place) was the top-ranking UK institution, usurping its longtime rival, the University of Cambridge (6th).
Overall, both the US and UK have seen their performances stabilise, with slightly more improvements than drops.

In continental Europe, the best university remained ETH Zurich (7th place). Europe, in general, also stabilised its performance, with a fractionally higher number of rises than drops.

In Asia, Nanyang Technological University ranked highest (12th), while Tsinghua University is the first Chinese top-20 university in the QS rankings in more than a decade. Malaysia is home to a top-100 university for the first time, after Universiti Malaya rose to 87th.