

Latest global university rankings: MIT & Harvard share top spot, Russia and China record best-ever performances

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LONDON, March 4, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- QS Quacquarelli Symonds – international higher education think-tank – have today released the eleventh edition of the [QS World University Rankings by Subject](#): an extensive independent comparative analysis on the performance of **13,883 individual university programs**, taken by students at **1440 universities** in **85 locations across the world**, across 51 academic disciplines. They are part of the annual *QS World University Rankings* portfolio, which was consulted over 147 million times in 2020, and covered 98,000 times by media and institutions.

Global Highlights

- Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology are the strongest-performing institutions across the exercise, ranking number-one in twelve subjects.
- The United Kingdom's higher education sector remains resilient. 13 of the 51 subject tables are topped by a British university, with the University of Oxford leading five of those 13.
- Chinese higher education continues to reach new heights, with the sector attaining a record number of programs now achieving a top-50 rank.
- No university has a larger number of top-50 departments than Canada's University of Toronto (46).
- Switzerland's ETH Zurich is continental Europe's top university, achieving number-one spots for *Geology*, *Geophysics*, and *Earth & Marine Sciences*. Based on its share of top-10 ranks, Switzerland is the world's third-best higher education sector.
- Australia now possesses its lowest number of programs ranking among the top 10 in the world in the last three years. Its total of 13 top-10 departments is fewer than in 2020 (17), and 2019 (18). Two-thirds of Australian National University's programs have fallen year-on-year.
- Backed by strong endowments, two Singaporean universities hold number-one positions: Nanyang Technological University is #1 for *Materials Science*, while the National University of Singapore – Asia's best-performing university – is #1 for *Petroleum Engineering*.
- Conversely, Japanese higher education is in relative decline after decades of underfunding for research and PhD students.
- India's Institutes of Eminence program is struggling to yield results, with no increase in top-100 representation for India's public Institutes of Eminence.
- Russian higher education continues to move from strength to strength, with a record number of departments achieving top-20 places.
- Driven by world-class performances in *Dentistry*, *Petroleum Engineering*, and *Mining Engineering*, Universidade de São Paulo (USP) has retained its status as Latin America's best-performing university in this exercise.
- The University of Cape Town remains Africa's most competitive institution, with 24 of its programs placing among the top-200.

Jack Moran, QS Spokesperson, said: "Observing performance trends across nearly 14,000 university departments enables us to draw some conclusions about the commonalities between nations that are improving and nations that are not. Three factors stand out. First, an international outlook – both in terms of faculty body and research relationships – correlates strongly with improved performance. Second, rising universities have received strong targeted investment from governments over a decade or more – particularly

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in China, Russia, and Singapore. Third, improving relationships with industry is correlated with better employment, research, and innovation outcomes."

Methodology: <https://www.TopUniversities.com/subject-rankings/methodology>.

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