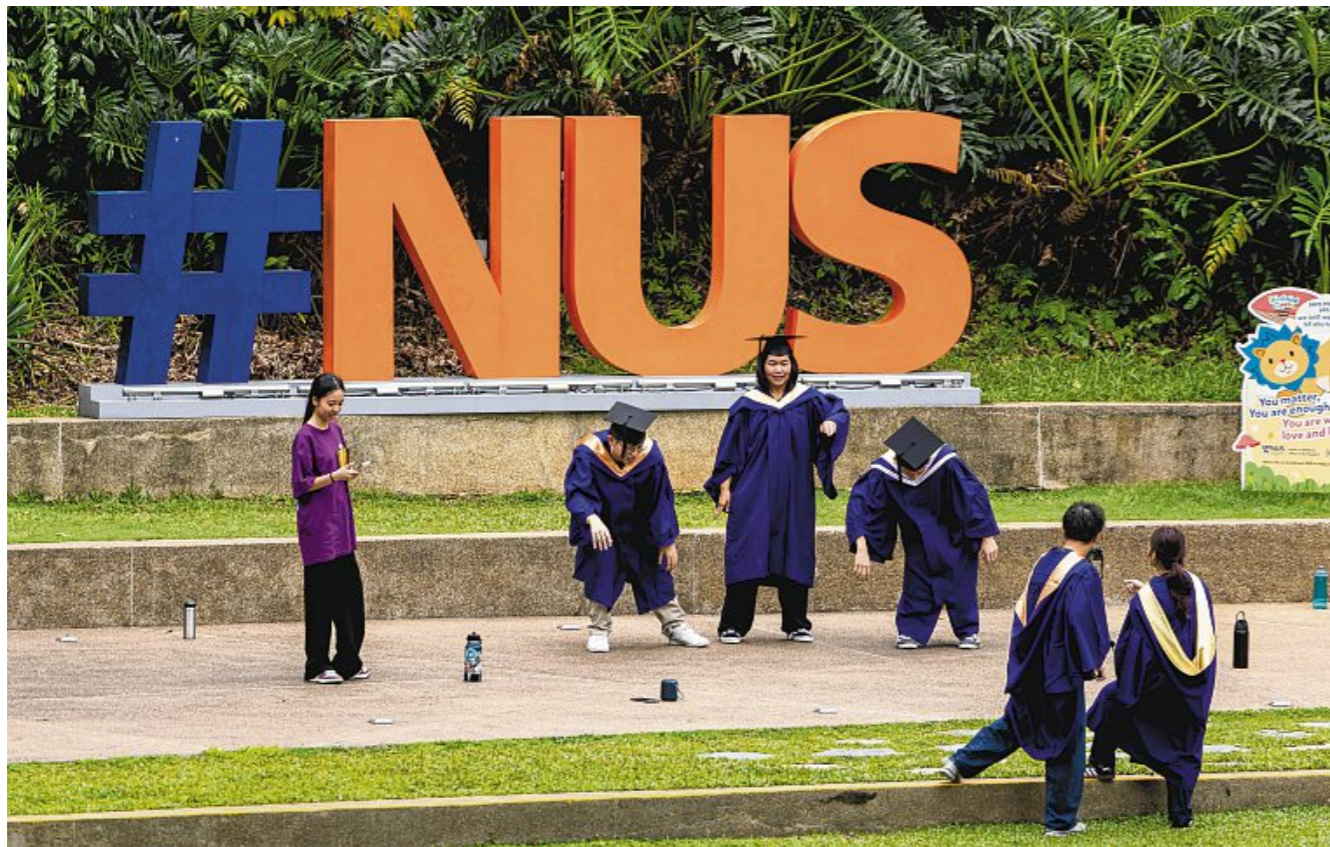


NUS tops Asian universities in subject rankings again



National University of Singapore students at a graduation photo shoot in UTown in 2025. The university is placed among the top three worldwide in seven subjects in this year's Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings. ST PHOTO: BRIAN TEO

Shermaine Ang

The National University of Singapore (NUS) has again emerged as the top university in Asia based on global rankings by subjects, and is placed among the top three worldwide in seven subjects.

Three Singapore courses also took second place in the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2026 released on March 25: NUS' civil and structural engineering, and materials science, and Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) communication and media studies.

NUS achieved Singapore's highest-ever rank in mechanical engineering (third), data science and AI (third) and electrical engineering (third), while NTU achieved Singapore's highest-ever result in communication and media studies (second).

The annual rankings by global higher education analyst QS covered some 1,900 institutions from 100 countries. It analysed more than 21,000 academic programmes in 55 academic disciplines and five broad faculty areas.

Academic reputation, one of the indicators used, was drawn from survey responses by academics. Employers worldwide were also asked to identify institutions they considered excellent for the recruitment of graduates.

Singapore saw 76 out of 117 subjects improve their rankings, making it the world's most improved higher education system.

Forty-two of Singapore's subjects were ranked in the global top 10, placing the country third in the world after the US and the UK.

Singapore achieved its highest-ever rank in 13 subjects.

Business, finance, and art and design were among Singapore's strongest subject areas.

NUS and NTU were placed eighth and 14th in business and management studies, respectively, the same as in 2025. In accounting and finance, they were ranked 10th and 14th respectively, both achieving their top performances ever in this subject, while Singapore Management University (SMU) was placed 50th, up from 64th.

For art and design, NUS was ranked 19th, up from 30th in 2025, while LASALLE College of the Arts Singapore climbed to 67th, up from the 101-150 band last year.

SMU was the world's most improved university among those with 10 or more ranked entries, with an 80 per cent improvement rate.

Law was its most improved subject, jumping from the 101-150 band to 56th owing to an improvement in academic reputation.

Minister for Education Desmond Lee said in a LinkedIn post on March 26 that these achievements

NUS, NTU subjects rank among top 10 globally in fields of study

National University of Singapore

Civil and structural engineering	Anatomy and physiology
Materials science	Architecture/built environment
Chemical engineering	Environmental sciences
Data science and artificial intelligence	Statistics and operational research
Electrical and electronic engineering	Business and management studies
Mechanical, aeronautical and manufacturing engineering	Engineering and technology
Social policy and administration	Mathematics
Computer science and information systems	Social sciences and management
Geography	Development studies
History of art	History
Chemistry	Pharmacy and pharmacology
Law	Politics and international studies
Linguistics	Accounting and finance
Marketing	Communication and media studies
Nursing	Sociology

Nanyang Technological University

Communication and media studies	Chemical engineering
Materials science	Civil and structural engineering
Data science and artificial intelligence	Chemistry
Electrical and electronic engineering	Education
Mechanical, aeronautical and manufacturing engineering	Computer science and information systems
Library and information management	

Source: QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS BY SUBJECT 2026 STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

reflect the dedication and hard work of Singapore's academic community.

"Our (institutes of higher learning) deliver quality, industry-aligned education that equips our graduates with competencies and life skills to thrive in the evolving workplace."

Singapore will continue to do more to nurture graduates who are "grounded in competencies and character, with a heart to serve and make a positive impact on Singapore and the world".

"This will also enable them to access good job opportunities in a dynamic economy," he added.

QS senior vice-president Ben Sowter said Singapore's strong performance in the subject rankings reflects the depth and strategic focus of its universities, with institutions such as NUS and NTU consistently being placed among the world's best in multiple disciplines, particularly engineering, materials

science and business.

"This momentum is underpinned by sustained national investment in research capability and talent development, including plans to invest more than \$1 billion in public AI (artificial intelligence) research by 2030."

Professor Aaron Thean, NUS' provost and deputy president of academic affairs, said the upward trajectory reflects NUS' continued focus on delivering world-class education and driving research that creates real-world impact.

"It is heartening to see both our established strengths in areas like engineering, computing and social science, as well as significant progress in disciplines such as history, environmental sciences and design, being recognised on the global stage," he said.

Professor Jack Qiu, who chairs NTU's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, said the rise of communication and

media studies reflects the school's strengthened leadership in scholarly research.

He said students benefit from both hands-on training and global experiential learning, as well as access to world-class facilities and industry partnerships.

"This achievement is the result of sustained efforts in research and academic leadership, as well as in teaching and industry engagement. The programme also continues to evolve, keeping pace with developments in AI, data, and interdisciplinary collaborations," he added.

SMU president Lily Kong said: "That eight out of 10 SMU subjects climbed globally reinforces the university's continued upward trajectory as a dynamic and fast-evolving institution."

She said these results reflect SMU's dedication to building a university that is academically rigorous and connected to real-world impact "while staying committed to the development of our students and the cultivation of capabilities that endure beyond graduation".

"They also signal a young university's growing global recognition," she added.

Professor Lee Pey Woan, dean of SMU's Yong Pung How School of Law, said the improvement in SMU law's rankings reflects growing international recognition of the quality of its educational programme, as well as the impact of its research in areas aligned with Singapore's strengths.

She said the school's work in dispute resolution has strengthened its global visibility and thought leadership.

She added that the school's international network, including its visiting faculty programme and student achievements at leading moot competitions, contributed to its growing academic reputation.

Dr Venka Purushothaman, president of LASALLE College of the Arts, said: "Our historic rise in the QS rankings is a significant achievement not just for LASALLE but (also) for Singapore."

"It is a testament to our growth as a global intellectual arts hub and a destination of choice for creative education, which is more important than ever in an era that calls for empathy, courage and audacious imagination."

shermaineang@sph.com.sg