

NUS falls to 10th place while NTU retains 12th spot in latest global university rankings

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Singapore is one of only four countries represented in the global top 10 of the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings 2026, alongside the United Kingdom, the United States and Switzerland. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG



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Summarise

SINGAPORE – The National University of Singapore (NUS) has fallen two places to 10th position in a global ranking of institutions, while Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has retained its 12th spot.

The latest Britain-based Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2026, released on June 18, measures institutions primarily on research and employability.

Despite [NUS' slip from its 8th ranking in the previous edition](#), it remains Asia's top-ranked university and the region's only representative in the global top 10. It was the first institution in Asia to break into this tier.

Singapore is one of four countries represented in the global top 10, alongside Britain, the United States and Switzerland. The 23rd edition of the global rankings evaluated 1,500 universities across 106 countries and territories.

Other local universities in the rankings include Singapore Management University (SMU) and Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), both of which climbed into the top 500.

SUTD climbed 253 places to 266th, making it the most improved university in this year's edition. SMU climbed 100 places to 411th, re-entering the top 500 for the first time since 2020.

On the global stage, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology took first place for the 15th consecutive year, with Stanford University and Imperial College London sharing second place.

University of Oxford and Harvard University held ground with their respective rankings of fourth and fifth.

The annual QS rankings rely heavily on three core indicators: academic reputation, citations per faculty and employer reputation, which carry weightings of 30 per cent, 20 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

Other factors taken into account are faculty-student ratio, international faculty and student ratios, employment outcomes and sustainability.

Academic reputation refers to perceptions of a university's excellence by academic experts, while employer reputation

measures employers' regard for the university.

Citations per faculty indicate how often, on average, an institution's academic staff are cited by other researchers. A higher score suggests that its academics are publishing in respected journals, collaborating extensively, and contributing to fields that attract interest.

NUS ranked 12th globally for academic reputation, 26th for employer reputation, and 83rd for citations per faculty.

It rose two spots for academic reputation and six spots for employer reputation, but dropped 19 spots for citations, compared with the previous QS rankings.

A spokesperson for NUS said its strong performance underscores its commitment to nurturing future-ready graduates, advancing research and forming partnerships that create value for society.

“Through close collaboration with industry, government and communities, we will continue to develop solutions to global challenges and create meaningful impact in Singapore and beyond.”

Meanwhile, NTU placed 36th for academic reputation and 48th for employer reputation. SMU recorded improvements in seven of the nine indicators.

SUTD's jump of more than 200 places was driven largely by gains in citations per faculty.

The university came in 56th for that indicator, compared with the previous year when it was ranked beyond the 700th mark. It also improved in employer reputation.

Responding to the results, SUTD provost Chee Yeow Meng said: “We are encouraged by the positive movement in both employer reputation and academic reputation.”

“Employer reputation is particularly meaningful because it reflects how our graduates are perceived by organisations that hire

them,” Chee told The Straits Times, adding that academic reputation matters because it reflects recognition from the academic community.

“What matters most to us is the quality of education we provide, the opportunities our students receive, and the impact our graduates go on to make.”

Senior vice president of QS Ben Sowter said SUTD has strong research output in computer science and engineering, with almost 53 per cent of all the institution’s research published in the top journals. This proportion is higher than Singapore’s average of 46.6 per cent.

All four local universities charted improvements in employer reputation. NUS, NTU and SMU also fared better in academic reputation, while SUTD retained its position beyond the 700th spot.

The results for employment outcomes were split. NUS retained its ninth-place global ranking, while SUTD stayed beyond the 800th spot. SMU rose 60 places to 395th, while NTU’s position dipped to 123rd.

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