

## NUS is fourth ‘most international university in the world’



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PUBLISHED: 8:00 AM, FEBRUARY 1, 2017

UPDATED: 8:03 AM, FEBRUARY 1, 2017

SINGAPORE — The National University of Singapore (NUS) has clinched the fourth spot as the most international university in the world, according to the latest Times Higher Education's (THE) ranking released on Wednesday (Feb 1).

Times Higher Education Most International University Ranking — which takes into account international reputation for the first time and spans 150 universities across 22 countries — has Swiss universities in the top two positions, with ETH Zurich in first place, followed by École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne.

The top 10 ranked universities include the University of Hong Kong (third) and Imperial College London (fifth), followed by University of Oxford, Australian National University, University of Cambridge, University College London, and in the tenth place, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Calling NUS a “true global knowledge hub”, Times Higher Education World University Rankings' editor Phil Baty said: “NUS... has become a powerful magnet for international talent — drawing in leading thinkers and scholars from right across the world, and forming the base for exciting and dynamic global partnerships.”

NUS had also previously emerged No 1 in Asia in the Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2016.

NUS president Professor Tan Chorh Chuan said that the latest THE ranking is a “strong recognition” of the university's “global approach to education and research with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise” and its “active role” it plays in the international academic and research network.

He added that about eight in 10 of NUS undergraduates have a study abroad experience, including participating in semester-long student exchange programmes in more than 300 partner universities in over 40 countries, on top of offering a programme where students do internships in places such as Silicon Valley, Beijing and Stockholm.

“As a result, NUS students enjoy both Asian and global educational experiences that broaden their outlook and increase their networks, while enabling them to access some of the best academic programmes around the world.”

Its “diverse” community on campus, comprising staff and students from about 100 countries, also add to the campus’ “vibrancy” and “energising environment” which promotes innovation, Prof Tan said.

Mr Baty, noting that a university’s global outlook is “key to its success on the world stage”, said top universities have the ability to attract undergraduates, postgraduates and faculty internationally, enjoy collaborations with leading scholars and departments from wherever they are based, and have a brand that is respected both locally and globally.

He added: “The best universities in the world live or die by their ability to attract the brightest talent from all across the world – students, academics, researchers, and managers. I believe that a university simply cannot be world class without a global outlook, a global network and a global pool of talent – and this new data released by Times Higher Education today recognises that.”

However, he added, the shifting attitudes and policies towards immigration across the world would have the potential to “profoundly change the flow of global talent and shift the world balance of power”.

For instance, the United States and United Kingdom are currently the world’s most attractive destinations for international students, but restrictions on the mobility of academic talent in these countries would “inevitably harm their position”, he said.

On the other hand, other countries which welcome talented immigrants “with open arms” would see their universities strengthen.

In fact, US universities, which dominate the top of most world university rankings, are absent from the top 20 in THE’s 2017 list.

The US only has one institution in the top 30, with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 22nd place.

Mr Baty attributed this to the fact that US universities, as the world’s leading centre for excellence in higher education and research, have been relatively less dependent on international partnerships and collaborations compared to other nations. Also, while the US thrives on global talent, many top academics in its institutions have become the country’s naturalised citizens.

The data in the Times Higher Education Most International University Ranking is drawn largely from the international outlook segment of THE World University Rankings 2016-17, such as indicators like a university’s proportion of international students, international staff and journal publications with at least one international co-author.