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NUS retains 8th spot, NTU climbs to 12th in latest global university rankings

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The National University of Singapore (NUS) has retained its spot in the top 10 in a global ranking of institutions, with Nanyang Technological University (NTU) hot on its heels.

NUS kept its eighth place in the latest Britain-based Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2026, released on June 19, while NTU rose three places to 12th, building on its 11-position jump the year before.

This year's ranking, the 22nd edition, covers 1,500 universities across 106 countries and territories. NUS stood out as the highest-ranked Asian university, having been the first in Asia to break into the global top 10.

The leaderboard was dominated by universities from the US and Britain, with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in first place for the 14th consecutive year, followed by Imperial College London retaining second place.

Stanford University climbed three positions to take third place, while the University of Oxford and Harvard University both dropped one place to rank fourth and fifth respectively.

The QS rankings are based on nine indicators: academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio, citations per faculty, international faculty ratio, international student ratio, international research network, employment outcomes and sustainability.

The three highest-weighted indicators in the QS rankings are academic reputation, citations per faculty and employer reputation, with weightages of 30 per cent, 20 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

Academic reputation refers to perceptions of a university's excellence by academic experts, while the employer reputation indicator measures employers' regard for the university.

NUS ranked 14th globally for academic reputation, 32nd for employer reputation, and 64th for citations per faculty.

It rose one spot for academic reputation and 16 spots for employer reputation, but dropped three places for citations, compared with the previous QS rankings.

NUS president Tan Eng Chye said the university's ranking affirms its unwavering commitment to excellence, and reflects the strength of its forward-looking approach to education, research and innovation.

"We are particularly heartened to be ranked amongst the best in Asia for academic reputation, and to have made notable advances in employer reputation and international research partnerships," he said.

These improvements signal growing confidence in NUS graduates and the expanding impact of its global research network, added Professor Tan.

NTU climbed three places to 12th, after its re-entry into the top 20 in the previous edition of the rankings. This was driven largely by an improved score in employer reputation, where it moved from 92nd place to 67th, and in its international student ratio.

"NTU's strong showing in this year's QS rankings reflects its constant efforts to reimagine itself amidst a rapidly changing world," said NTU president Ho Teck Hua.

He cited recent initiatives such as the launch of the College of Computing and Data Science and the Honours College, which prepare students to better harness technology.

Professor Ho added that NTU continues to grow its global academic talent by recruiting promising early-career researchers and drawing leading scholars from around the world.

Singapore Management University (SMU) climbed 74 places in the 2026 QS rankings to 511th, up from 585th in the 2025 edition. Meanwhile, the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) fell 79 places, dropping from 440th to 519th.

All four local universities included in the rankings – NUS, NTU, SMU and SUTD – saw their scores remain the same or drop in four indicators: faculty-student ratio, citations per faculty, employment outcomes and sustainability.

QS senior vice-president Ben Sowter said Singapore has firmly established itself as a global higher education powerhouse, and that its universities' rankings are a reflection of its exceptional research output and globally collaborative ethos.

The city-state's success is driven by a focus on skills development, innovation and adapting to workforce needs, he added.

"By broadening access to lifelong learning, strengthening partnerships and enhancing graduate support, Singapore is not only boosting graduate employability, but also advancing its ambition to lead the world in future-ready, skills-first higher education," he said.

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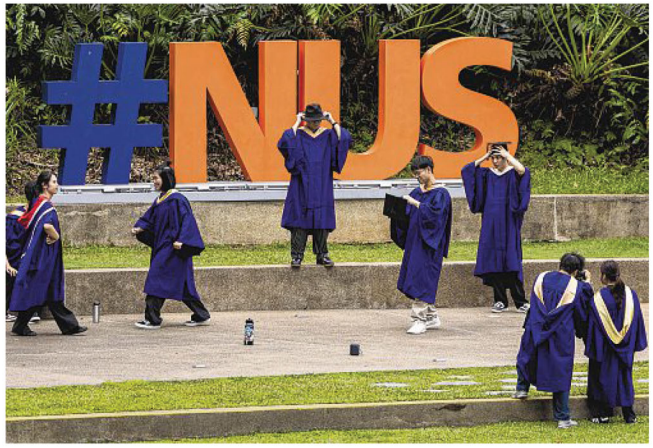
Global ranking of top 10 universities

2026 rank	2025 rank	University	Location
1	1	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	US
2	2	Imperial College London	Britain
3	6	Stanford University	US
4	3	University of Oxford	Britain
5	4	Harvard University	US
6	5	University of Cambridge	Britain
7	7	ETH Zurich	Switzerland
8	**8**	**National University of Singapore**	**Singapore**
9	9	University College London	Britain
10	10	California Institute of Technology	US

Source: QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2026 STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS



Graduating NUS students preparing for a photo shoot on June 10. NUS, the highest-ranked Asian university in the global rankings, improved on its academic reputation and employer reputation. ST PHOTO: BRIAN TEO

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