



Communication and Marketing Department  
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso  
Kommunikasie en Bemarkingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa  
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town  
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

[www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)

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## **UCT climbs 16 places on THE rankings to remain top in Africa**

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has again affirmed its status as Africa's top university, achieving a global rank of 164 in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2026. With 2 191 universities ranked this year, UCT now sits in the top 7.5% of universities worldwide – a meaningful upward shift from its 2025 placing.

In 2025, UCT was ranked 180 out of 2 092 institutions, placing in the top 8.6 %. In 2024, the university ranked 167 out of a slightly smaller set of 1 907 universities, putting it in the top 8.75 %. Thus, in each of the last three years, UCT has improved its percentile position in a progressively more competitive field of entrants.

The university maintains its position as the highest-ranked university in Africa.

The results were officially unveiled at the THE World Academic Summit (WAS) 2025, held from 7–9 October 2025 in Thuwal, Saudi Arabia.

UCT Vice-Chancellor Professor Mosa Moshabela said: "Our rise is a testament to the continuous pursuit of excellence by our staff and students. It is their dedication to rigorous scholarship, transformative teaching and meaningful engagement with society that drives UCT forward. This achievement belongs to every member of the university community who strives daily to make UCT not only a leading African institution, but a globally respected one."

### **Methodology: What THE measures and what it means**

While THE's methodology focuses on core missions – teaching, research, knowledge transfer/industry and international outlook, UCT acknowledges that such frameworks, while important, can underweight and in some instances even omit vital dimensions like local community engagement, transformational work and service to society – indicators which are especially central to institutions in the Global South.

In the 2026 ranking cycle, THE uses 18 performance indicators, organised into five pillars:

- Teaching (the learning environment) – weighted at 29.5%
- Research environment (volume, income, reputation) – weighted at 29%
- Research quality (citations, research strength, excellence, influence) – weighted at 30%
- International outlook (staff, students, research collaboration) – weighted at 7.5%
- Industry (income, patents) – weighted at 4%

Research Environment and Research Quality are key differentiators in the research-intensive domain.

To compute the ranking, THE converts each measure to a common scale – a statistical process that ensures universities of different sizes and contexts can be compared on equal terms before combining the results into overall scores. Inclusion in the rankings also requires meeting eligibility criteria such as minimum publication output, data submission and others.

Thus, UCT's ranking is not derived from a single metric, but reflects a balanced performance across teaching, research, international engagement and industry interface.

### **Key strengths: Research quality tops again**

UCT's strongest performance remains in the Research Quality pillar where it ranked 153rd in the world in 2026 – a strong improvement from 183rd in the previous year. The university also improved in the Research Environment pillar, rising from 188th to 166th.

"To rise in both absolute terms and percentile position in a more crowded global arena is particularly gratifying. Our continued leadership in the Research Quality pillar confirms that UCT is producing work that matters," said Professor Moshabela.

These results demonstrate that UCT's research continues to be widely cited and recognised internationally, reflecting both its productivity and influence within the global scholarly community.

***ENDS***

**Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department**

### **Elijah Moholola**

Spokesperson  
Communication and Marketing Department  
University of Cape Town  
Rondebosch  
Tel: 021 650 5674  
Cell: 083 981 7770  
Email: [elijah.moholola@uct.ac.za](mailto:elijah.moholola@uct.ac.za)  
Website: [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)