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UCT retains top spot in Africa in THE world rankings

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has retained its spot as the continent's top university, tying at 155th among more than 1 500 institutions in the 2021 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings published on Wednesday, 2 September 2020.

The THE World University Rankings, published once a year, assesses institutions worldwide across 13 performance indicators in five areas: teaching (30%), research (30%), citations (30%), international outlook (7.5%) and industry income (2.5%).

UCT's performance across these indicators was mixed, with drops in some areas offset by raised scores in others, compared to the previous year. It is worth noting that an increased score does not always lead to an increase in places, since rankings are relative and other universities whose scores increased more would push UCT's performance down. Similarly, a small drop in score can lead to a significant drop in places.

Improved scores in key categories

UCT's strongest performance remains in the industry income category (knowledge transfer), reflecting the substantial and continued contribution of the university's research to industry. The research category (volume, income and reputation) also saw an improvement in the research reputation survey score, indicating UCT's growing reputation among leading international academics, and in the ratio of papers to academic staff score.

The citations category (research influence) score, which measures the number of times a piece of research is cited, also improved.

Scores increased too in the teaching category (the learning environment): both in the ratio of students to academic staff and the ratio of international income to academic staff.

In the international outlook category (international staff, students and research collaborations) the co-authorship score improved, evidence that UCT's collaboration with international partners is flourishing.

Decreased scores

In the teaching category (the learning environment) UCT's score decreased slightly, which led to a significant drop in places. Scores dropped for the ratio of doctorates to bachelor degrees awarded, the ratio for doctorate degrees awarded to academic staff and for the teaching reputation survey indicator.

In the research category UCT dropped in the ratio of research income to academic staff score.

In the international outlook category (international staff, students and research collaborations), UCT dropped a few places due to the decline in the number of international students and staff. Given the significant impact of international students and staff on institutional life and campus diversity, as well as university income, UCT is working hard to find innovative ways to redress this.

UCT top in Africa in four of the five major rankings

Earlier this year, UCT also took the continent's top place in the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings and in the Centre for World University Rankings. UCT is also Africa's top university on the US News Best Global Universities rankings, the most recent of which were issued in 2019 and the next are expected in October.

- [Read more about the THE World University Rankings 2021 methodology.](#)
- [View the results of the THE World University Rankings 2021.](#)

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