

26 October 2022

MEDIA RELEASE

University of Pretoria excels in QS Sustainability Rankings

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of only three universities in Africa that has been ranked in the top 200 globally in the 2023 QS Sustainability Rankings, which were released today (26 October 2022). UP was ranked 2nd in South Africa and Africa and in the 171-180 band globally.

UP's good performance in the QS Sustainable Rankings follows the recently released (May 2022) Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings, which also named UP South Africa's second-best (joint second) and Africa's third-best (joint third) university. For more information [visit this page](#).

The QS Sustainability Rankings provide a framework to show how universities respond to the world's most significant environmental, social and governance challenges. There are two categories in the ranking: An Environmental Impact category and a Social Impact category. UP has been ranked first in Africa for Environmental Impact (139 globally) and third in Africa for Social impact (161 globally).

The following indicators are used for the purpose of this ranking: Environmental Impact (sustainable education with a weighting of 40%; sustainable institutions – 35%; and sustainable research – 25%); Social Impact (employment and opportunities – 20%; equality – 30%; life quality – 10%; impact of education – 20%; and knowledge exchange – 20%).

In relation to the performance lenses (sub-indicators) UP is ranked 59th globally for sustainable institutions, the only university in Africa ranked in the top 100 in this category. In addition, UP performed the best in Africa in the measure on sustainable education at position 136 globally.

The ranking aims to measure performance across various aspects relating to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The focus is more on the impact of universities (alumni outcomes, research impact) on the environment and society rather than operational measures and internal processes at universities. The best 700 universities are ranked globally and of these, 16 are in Africa (including nine in South Africa).

A summary of UP's results is as follows:

Environmental Impact – 139 in the world and 1st in Africa

- sustainable institutions – 59 in the world and 1st in SA
- sustainable education – 136 in the world and 1st SA and Africa
- sustainable research – 394 in the world and 6th in SA

Social Impact – 161 in the world and 3rd SA

- knowledge exchange – 136th in the world and 1st in SA
 - employment and opportunities – 173rd in the world and 2nd in SA and Africa
 - equality – 207th in the world and 2nd in SA
 - impact of education – 267th in the world and 4th in SA
 - life quality – 273rd in the world and 5th in SA.
-

UP's top rank in sustainable institutions shows how the University's strategy and operations are best positioned towards achieving an environmentally sustainable future. Sustainable education shows how the university educates students to understand and make a difference in the environment. It also shows the positive impact of the research the University is producing in areas aligned to specific SDGs.

UP's performance in the knowledge exchange (QS Impact Rankings) indicates its partnerships in research and industry to share knowledge and spur educational growth. UP's ability to propel graduates into strong careers, as well as the strength of connections the institutions have with employers, is reflected in its performance in employment and opportunities.

When it comes to equality that assesses the climate of equality at the institution, UP is tops in the country. Its provision and quality of specific subjects, which most closely align with society, are reflected in this ranking.

UP Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Tawana Kupe, said the University "does not chase after rankings for the sake of it, but undertakes research that yields positive results for the communities it serves, as well as for the continent as a whole. The achievement of excellence in all areas that UP is involved in, is never-ending, and we will continue to improve as the world grapples with the challenges of climate change, among others. We will continue to use knowledge of the highest quality and do research that leads to knowledge-based transformative and sustainable solutions."

He emphasised that: "Making a positive difference in the environment and in people's lives is one of UP's preoccupations."

Earlier this year, UP launched the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) South Africa. This is an international initiative that marshals global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development. The aim of the national network is to mobilise and support South African universities and other leading research institutions to promote the UN's SDGs in South Africa, as well as the country's contribution to the goals globally.

Jessica Turner, CEO at QS said, "QS aims to provide prospective students with independent insights into university records in improving sustainability and support universities in monitoring their progress as they strive to implement their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies and find solutions to unprecedented global challenges."

Media enquiries:

Please email Prim Gower at Primarashni.gower@up.ac.za or call 083 229 9011