



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

05 December 2023

## NEWS RELEASE

### UP's high rankings emphasise commitment to academic and research excellence



*UP students on the Hatfield campus*

PRETORIA - As a globally competitive university, rooted in Africa, the University of Pretoria (UP) has ranked impressively in 2023 across several global ranking measurements, all of which highlight the University's progress towards achieving its vision of becoming a leading research-intensive university, recognised internationally for its quality, relevance, and impact, and also for developing people, creating knowledge and making a difference locally and globally.

While university rankings hold significance as one of the measures of success and quality in higher education, it is important to acknowledge that they are not the sole indicator. A comprehensive assessment of an institution's performance and impact should consider a broader spectrum of factors, including but not limited to teaching quality, research contributions, student satisfaction and community engagement. These elements, along with rankings, collectively provide a more holistic view of an institution's overall effectiveness and relevance in the academic world.

---

While recognising the strengths and weaknesses inherent in each approach, and acknowledging the absence of a one-size-fits-all solution, we believe that evaluating our performance from different perspectives contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of our progress and impact.

- **THE Impact Rankings:** In the 2023 Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings, UP improved its position significantly, rising to position 69 (up from the 101-200 band in 2022) out of 1 705 universities (1 410 in 2022) in 115 countries. UP is ranked number 2 in South Africa and Africa. UP is notably ranked number 4 in the world for SDG 8 and number 14 in the world for SDG 5. UP is ranked in the Top 100 universities in the world for five SDGs: SDG 10 (number 76); SDG 15 (number 81); SDG 9 (number 91); SDG 17 (number 92), and SDG 16 (number 97). Overall, UP improved its global position in five SDGs (3, 4, 8, 10 and 16), and ranked for the first time in SDG 5 with outstanding performance. Out of nine submitted SDGs, UP is ranked in the Top 100 in the world for seven SDGs (four in 2022). UP is ranked number 1 in SA for five SDGs (5, 8, 9, 15 and 16), and UP is ranked number 2 in SA in four SDGs (3, 4, 10 and 17).
- **THE World University Rankings:** UP has also achieved a notable progress in the 2024 Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE WUR), moving up to the 501-600 range globally from its previous position in the 801-1000 range in 2023. This improvement is particularly remarkable when compared to other African and South African universities, with only two South African institutions (including UP) advancing their global rankings in the 2024 THE WUR. This accomplishment is significant, given that the total number of ranked universities worldwide has increased from 1 799 to 1 904, spanning 108 countries. In this competitive landscape, UP's performance in the THE WUR is its best to date, showing improvements in 10 out of 12 existing indicators. The University also excelled in the new research indicators, particularly in research productivity, research excellence, research impact and patents.
- **THE Subject Rankings:** UP's Law Faculty was again rated tops in South Africa and Africa, and amongst the top 100 globally (number 65). This is an unprecedented seventh time that the Faculty achieved this feat. The University improved its global ranking in six out of 11 subjects, and its performance remained stable in five of 11 subjects compared to the previous year. Specifically, UP's performance improved in the following subjects: Arts and Humanities; Clinical, Pre-Clinical, and Health; Education; Law; Life Sciences, and Social Sciences. Additionally, UP achieved its highest-ever ranking in the field of Social Sciences, placing it within the top 400 universities worldwide.
- **ARWU/Shanghai:** UP maintained its joint-third national ranking in South Africa in the 2023 Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), also known as the Shanghai Ranking, underscoring its status as a leading research-intensive institution in the country. Globally, UP secured a position in the 401-500 range, maintaining its 2022 standing and firmly placing itself among the top 500 universities worldwide. The ARWU assessment considers six indicators, including Nobel Prize and Fields Medal winners among alumni and staff, highly cited researchers, publications in esteemed journals, papers indexed in the Science Citation Index and overall academic performance per faculty member. Among the 18 African universities ranked in the 2023 ARWU, UP was ranked fourth on the continent. In the highly cited researchers' category, which measures the number of researchers recognised for producing significant and influential research, UP was ranked second in South Africa and Africa – this is UP's best performance across the six indicators. UP also performed well both in the number of papers indexed in the Science Citation Index, and the number of papers published in *Nature* and *Science*, ranking fourth in South Africa and Africa for its robust research activity. In the ARWU Subject Rankings, UP is the only ranked university in SA in Mechanical Engineering (Top 200 in the world), Energy Science & Engineering (Top 400 in the world) and Finance (Top 150).

- **QS World University Rankings:** UP has made progress in the 2024 QS World University Rankings, and is now ranked 323<sup>rd</sup> in the world (591-600 in 2022). UP is ranked number one in South Africa in Employer Reputation (155 in the world), International Research Network (26 in the world), and Sustainability (158 in the world). UP is ranked third in SA in Employment Outcomes, securing a place in the top 150 globally at position 104. UP achieved a significant milestone by securing the 26th position in the world for its International Research Network (IRN), which is in line with UP's strategy of increasing the extent and diversity of its international research collaborations.
- **QS Subject Rankings:** 21 subjects offered at UP have been ranked in the 2023 QS Subject Rankings. This is an increase from 20 in 2022 and 18 in 2021. Of the 21 disciplines in which UP was ranked this year, eight are rated first in South Africa, up from five top-rated disciplines in 2022. Two UP subjects – Mineral and Mining Engineering – are again among the top 60 worldwide, ranked 35th worldwide and second in South Africa. Additionally, three subjects included in the QS rankings for the first time in 2023 have moved straight into favourable domestic ranking positions. These are Materials Science, Natural Sciences, and Physics and Astronomy. In terms of global rank, UP also improved in Biological Sciences, Environmental Sciences, and Mathematics.
- **UP's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS)** has earned prestigious accreditation from AACSB International, placing it in the top 6% globally and underlining its dedication to excellence in business education. The AACSB was established in 1916 and is the longest-serving global accrediting body for business schools, and the largest business education network connecting learners, educators and businesses worldwide.
- **2023 World University Rankings for Innovation (WURI):** UP was the only South African university featured in the 2023 rankings, earning recognition as a highly innovative institution by ranking in the 101-200 range. Our advanced business incubator, TuksNovation, secured the 44th spot in the WURI Industrial Application ranking.
- UP's business school, the **Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS)**, has reaffirmed its position as a top global business school for executive education, as acknowledged by the esteemed *Financial Times*. This recognition underscores GIBS' dedication to delivering world-class executive education programmes, solidifying its standing as a leading African business school. The *Financial Times* ranking serves as a widely respected and influential global benchmark. GIBS' remarkable achievement as the top business school in Africa, and its placement among the world's top 50, underscores its unwavering commitment to excellence in executive education. The comprehensive ranking assesses business schools globally, based on their open and custom executive education programmes, resulting in GIBS achieving a combined ranking of number 32 worldwide.

Like other performance measurement systems, university rankings are constrained by certain limitations. These constraints are evident in the multitude of ranking organisations, the diverse array of products they offer, the varying sets of metrics employed, and the differing approaches to data collection. “Despite the inherent challenges and dilemmas, we persist in our pursuit of participation in university rankings, particularly those that emphasise sustainable development and societal impact,” said Interim UP Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Themba Mosia. “Our decision is underpinned by our belief in the significance of sustainable development to our identity and purpose, recognition of the worth of external reviews despite their limitations, and our commitment to being part of the solution in shaping new and improved methods for evaluating impact.

“UP's growing international reputation has led to strategic partnerships and collaborations that enhance research quality and drive transformative impact for sustainable futures in South Africa, Africa and

worldwide,” added Prof Mosia. “While not to be seen as comprehensive in their assessment of our unique offerings and positive impact on a greater societal level, the University is proud to have achieved an elevated standing in a number of prestigious University Rankings in 2023.”

--- End ---

---

**Media enquiries** can be directed to Mr Sashlin Girraj - Public Relations & Events Manager

Email: [sashlin.girraj@up.ac.za](mailto:sashlin.girraj@up.ac.za) | Cell: +27(0)72 447 3784

---

## **ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2023 QS World University Rankings by Subject ranked UP first in South Africa in Accounting and Finance, Law, Economics and Econometrics, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Mathematics, and Veterinary Science.

For more information, please go to [www.up.ac.za](http://www.up.ac.za)