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In first, Tel Aviv University named Israel's best

Influential international rankings put institution ahead of Jerusalem rival for first time — but Turkish universities beat both

BY ANDREW TOBIN | October 3, 2014, 1:51 am | 3



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Students on the Tel Aviv University campus. (photo credit: Andrew Tobin)

WRITERS

Tel Aviv University was rated the top Israeli university in influential international rankings released Thursday, surpassing the highly regarded Hebrew University of

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Jerusalem on the list for the first time.

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Tel Aviv University ranked 188th, while Hebrew University ranked 201st-225th in the [2014-2015 Times Higher Education World Rankings](#). Both universities slid down the rankings from last year, but Tel Aviv University slid less.

The Technion, or Israel Institute of Technology, held onto the same spot as last year, 201st-225th.

Tel Aviv University declined to comment, but American Friends of Tel Aviv University tweeted, "We're # 1! #TelAvivUniversity only Israeli university in the top 200, says the Times Higher Education world rankings."



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As in the past, the rankings' elite spots were dominated by American and British Universities. The California Institute of Technology, known as Caltech, came in first, with Harvard University, the University of Oxford University, Stanford University, and the University of Cambridge rounding out the top five, in descending order. East Asian universities continued their annual climb up the list at the expense of their American counterparts.

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A tale of two Israeli cities

Compiled and published by the British magazine Times Higher Education, the rankings are among the most influential rankings of the world's universities. After first partnering with the British higher education advice company Quacquarelli Symonds, or QS, to create rankings in 2004, the magazine began to compile its own list in 2010-2011 with data gleaned from the multinational media and information company Thomson Reuters.

Until this year, Hebrew University had been the highest ranked Israeli university every year, by Times Higher Education's calculations. Last year, Hebrew University ranked 191st and Tel Aviv University ranked 199th.

Noting that its overall score actually improved this year, Hebrew University said in a statement, "The Hebrew University is ranked first in Israel by the overwhelming majority of world rankings — most importantly the authoritative "Shanghai Rankings" — which are based on the most current data ... We look forward to resuming our #1 position in this ranking as well, consistent with the other international rankings."



Students on Hebrew University's Mount Scopus campus. (photo credit: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Tel Aviv University took the title this year by outscoring Hebrew University in three of the rankings' five major categories: research, industry income, and — unlike last year — teaching. Hebrew University scored higher in citations and in international outlook. Teaching, research, and citations each account for 30 percent of a university's overall score in the rankings, with the other two categories worth 10 percent together.

Asia on the rise

Looking across the Middle East, Israel no longer boasts the top university in the land. Not even close, in fact, thanks to a surge in the rankings by Turkish universities. Turkey's Middle East Technical University leaped to 88th, from 201st-225th last year, to replace

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Hebrew University as the regional leader. For the first time, three other Turkish universities ranked in the top 200, all above any Israeli university.

Two Iranian universities were included in the rankings, which top out at 400. No other Israeli universities were.

While Turkey's rise was sudden, Asia as a whole has been steadily climbing the rankings for years. Two East Asian universities cracked the top 25 this year, with the University of Tokyo coming in 23rd. Asia had 24 universities in the top 200 this year, compared with 20 last year.

“East Asia and Singapore have arrived as the third great region of higher education and research, alongside North America and Europe,” said Prof. Simon Marginson, an expert in higher education at the University of London. “In the countries shaped by the traditions of Confucian self-cultivation through education, there is an especially deep commitment to higher education and scholarship – and the investment to match that commitment.”

American unexceptionalism



Meanwhile, North American universities' dominance of the rankings continued to wane. While American universities took seven of the top 10 and 15 of the top 20 spots this year, they suffered lower down on the list.

American universities took just 35 of the top 100 spots this year, down from 46 last year. Forty-six of the 77 top US universities last year, or 60 percent, ranked lower this year — with an average fall of 5 spots. Three American universities fell off the list entirely. Similarly, six of Canada's eight top 200 universities lost ground.

Philip Altbach, director of the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College, blamed cuts in government funding of public universities in the US.

“The reasons are simple: Most US states cut back on funding for public higher education during the recession and by and large have not restored it,” he said.

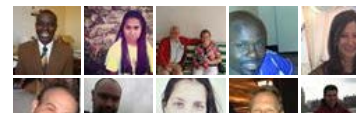
Times Higher Education also publishes rankings by subject. In arts and humanities, Hebrew University ranked 94th and Tel Aviv University ranked 96th. In engineering and technology, the Technion ranked 71st. In the separate Times Higher Education World Reputation rankings, the Technion ranked 91st-100th.

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1 USD =	3.670	1.000	0.797	0.626	1.123
1 EUR =	4.606	1.255	1.000	0.785	1.409
1 GBP =	5.865	1.598	1.273	1.000	1.794
1 CAD =	3.269	0.891	0.710	0.557	1.000

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If you believe and trust a British magazine (Times Higher Education) or, for that matter, any British institution giving an opinion on anything Israeli then you believe in Santa Claus and the fairies (and I don't mean the gays). The Brits are totally unreliable and untrustworthy. Their judgements are totally based on who they like or dislike and of course, what is British is for them the best in the world, including the Titanic. Not even the French compare in sciovinism and parochialism. Trust me on that, I lived more than twenty years in England.

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I don't rely on the Times Higher Education World Rankings methodology, it depends too much on opinions of peers, so it is not objective, especially for Israel. For being quite objective and based on factual data the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) on Center for World-Class Universities at Shanghai Jiao Tong University is much more reliable. see the URL <http://www.shanghairanking.com/>.

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