

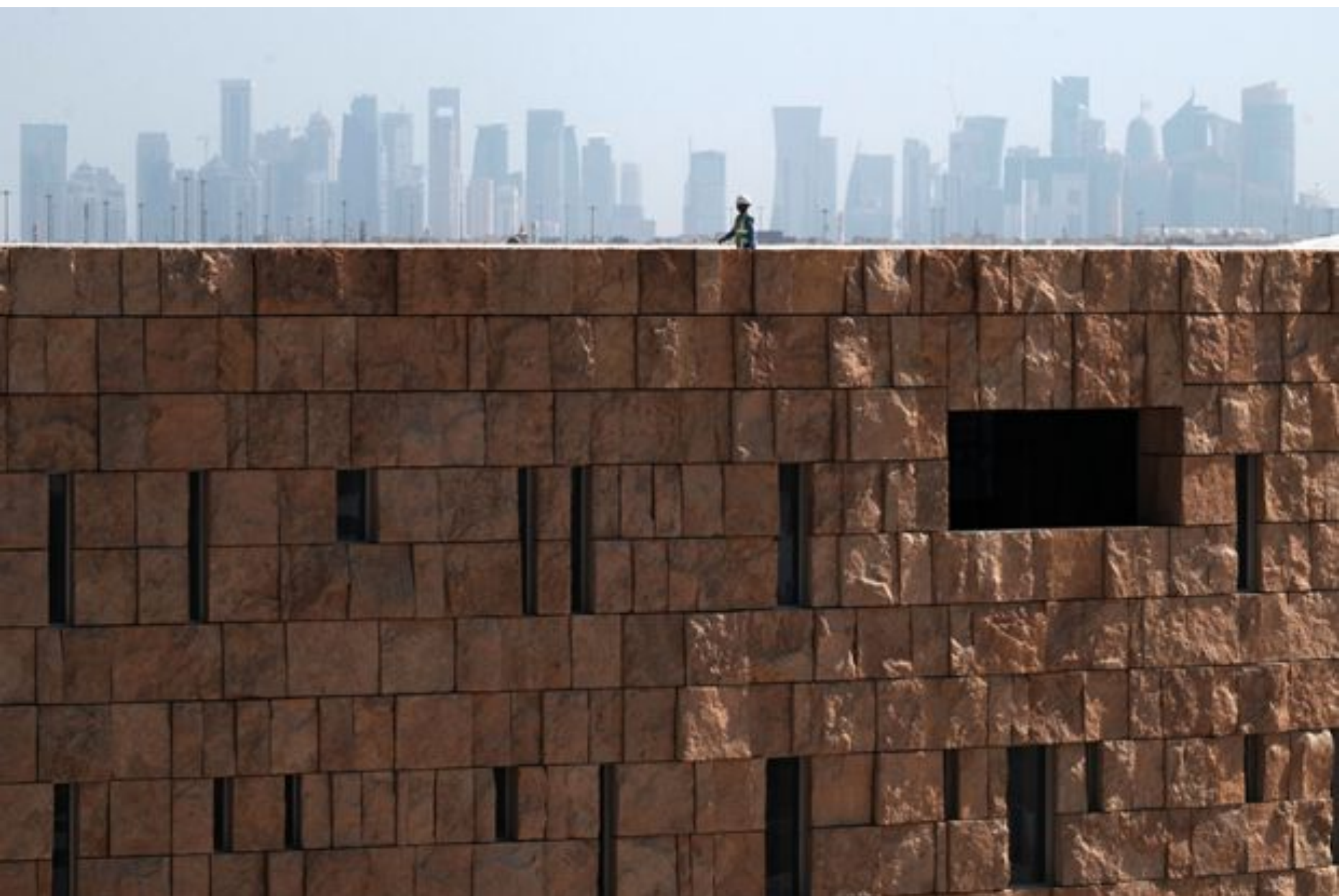
World University Rankings 2018: top performers in our internationalisation pillar

The most international universities benefit from location, but they still make great effort to attract students from abroad, says Christiaan van der Merwe

September 5, 2017



By [Christiaan van der Merwe \(/author/christiaan-van-der-merwe\)](/author/christiaan-van-der-merwe)

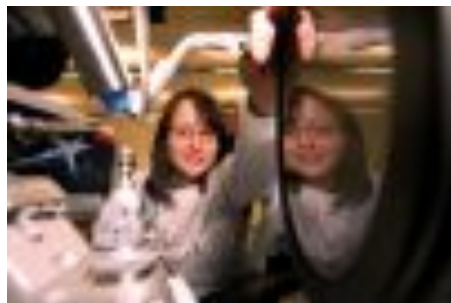


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The international outlook pillar of the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings 2018 lives up to its billing, with a cosmopolitan top 10.

The two top performers, located in the heart of Europe and in the arid Gulf region, perhaps exemplify this best.



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Although equal in their top billing in the international outlook pillar, the climatic extremes of the University of Luxembourg (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-luxembourg#ranking-dataset/629337>) and Qatar University (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/qatar-university#ranking-dataset/629337>) mirror the pair's different approaches to internationalisation.

The Doha-based university has used full scholarships to attract top performers. But this is not the only reason why students choose the institution.

"Applications come primarily from less developed countries due to many factors, not least the limited chances of a good education in the homeland," says Darwish Al-Emadi, Qatar University (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/qatar-university#ranking-dataset/629337>)'s chief strategy and development officer.

Al-Emadi says that most of the international students, who make up 40 per cent of the student body, are scholarship holders.

Kingdoms in the United Arab Emirates have also proved adept at attracting students and staff from outside their borders. Two universities from Sharjah and another from Abu Dhabi reached the top 15 in the international outlook pillar.

Luxembourg also uses financial incentives to attract students, in its case through low tuition fees, says Tonie van Dam, vice-president for doctoral education and training, gender and international relations at the institution. International students pay the same fees as local students.

According to van Dam, almost half the students at the university are from outside the country, while staff hail from 80 different nations. She says that internationalisation has always been a priority for the university: it subsidises language courses in its three teaching languages – English, French and German – for its students and staff.

Luxembourg's neighbours, Belgium, France and Germany, supply most of its international staff members.

The university has come to mirror Luxembourg itself, which van Dam says is "incredibly multicultural" despite being one of the world's smallest sovereign states.

"The multicultural flair of our campuses and classrooms attracts students who notably wish to improve their language skills and embrace multiculturalism," adds van Dam.

Similarly to Luxembourg, Maastricht University (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/maastricht-university#ranking-dataset/629337>) enjoys an "international atmosphere" courtesy of the Dutch town in which it is located. This, says university president Martin Paul, is a large drawcard for international staff and students.

Paul explains that Maastricht tries to foster an international outlook early on via a mandatory semester abroad for undergraduates facilitated by more than 300 partnerships with international universities. The majority of the international students – 90 per cent – come from Europe. This ensures that Maastricht's students are "geared towards global issues", Paul says.

The University of Geneva (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-geneva#ranking-dataset/629337>) is another European university with a large international presence, boasting 40 per cent overseas students and 45 per cent overseas staff. The university attributes this interest to its location in a "lively international city" and to key partnerships with organisations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organisation.

A continent away, two universities situated less than 100km apart benefit from their proximity to a global power that enjoys a significant presence in the World University Rankings: China. The Pearl River Delta sports two top 10 positions in the international outlook pillar in the shape of the University of Hong Kong (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-hong->

kong#ranking-dataset/629337) and the University of Macau (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-macau#ranking-dataset/629337>), both of which owe much of their strength on this measure to an influx from the mainland.

John Kao, vice-president and pro vice-chancellor (global) at Hong Kong, says that the institution is “strategically situated” close to the mainland, and that internationalisation is also a strong strategic focus for the university.

To the west of HKU, the University of Macau (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-macau#ranking-dataset/629337>) has used the former Portuguese protectorate’s affluence as a drawcard for international talent.

Da-Hsuan Feng, the director of global affairs at the university, says that the dramatic turnaround in research and teaching quality at the university is in itself a magnet.

“In the past 10 years, the university utterly reinvented itself by very carefully hiring world-class faculty members across the board,” he says.

Feng adds that one of the keys to success has been funding commitments from the Special Administrative Region of Macau, although he admits that this is a recent development.

“Drawing world-class talent from every corner of the globe is not a luxury but a must for an aspiring university like the University of Macau (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-macau#ranking-dataset/629337>),” he adds.

With regard to the usual suspects at the top end of the overall table in the World University Rankings, only one of the anglophone powers comes off well in the international outlook pillar.

While the UK dominates the pillar in total, with 20 of its universities appearing in the top 50, the other heavyweight, the US, does not crack the top 50 at all.

The star UK performer, Imperial College London (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/imperial-college-london#ranking-dataset/629337>), peaked at 13th position for international outlook.

Maggie Dallman, its associate provost for academic partnerships, says that 60 per cent of Imperial’s students and 40 per cent of its staff hail from outside the UK, mostly from China, Malaysia and Italy.

She says that the university draws strength from its community, which is made up of 130 nations; and more than half of its publications have international co-authors, mostly from the US, Germany and France, for instance.

“Internationalism and excellence are two sides of the same coin,” she says.

Internationalisation pillar

| Rank in pillar | Position in World University Rankings | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| =1 | =179 | |
| =1 | 401-500 | |
| 3 | 40 | |
| 4 | 801+ | |
| =5 | =38 | École Polytechnic |
| =5 | 351-400 | |
| 7 | =130 | |
| 8 | =10 | ETH Zurich – Swiss Federal Institute of Technology |
| 9 | 301-350 | |
| 10 | 501-600 | |
| =11 | 251-300 | |
| =11 | 103 | |
| 13 | 8 | |

| | | |
|-----|---------|--------|
| 14 | 601-800 | Ame |
| 15 | 401-500 | |
| 16 | 401-500 | |
| =17 | =95 | |
| =17 | 52 | I |
| =19 | 251-300 | |
| =19 | =22 | |
| =21 | 121 | |
| =21 | =143 | |
| 23 | 501-600 | Unitec |
| 24 | 1 | |
| =25 | 201-250 | |
| =25 | 16 | |
| 27 | 36 | |
| 28 | 351-400 | |
| 29 | 48 | Aus |
| 30 | 201-250 | |
| =31 | 115 | |

| | | |
|-----|---------|-----------------------|
| =31 | =165 | |
| 33 | 185 | |
| 34 | 351-400 | |
| =35 | 2 | |
| =35 | 351-400 | |
| =35 | 197 | |
| =38 | 32 | |
| =38 | 251-300 | |
| 40 | 401-500 | |
| 41 | 351-400 | |
| =42 | =34 | Un |
| =42 | =25 | London School of Econ |
| =44 | 351-400 | |
| =44 | =117 | |
| =46 | =27 | |
| =46 | 201-250 | |
| =46 | =126 | |
| =49 | 91 | |

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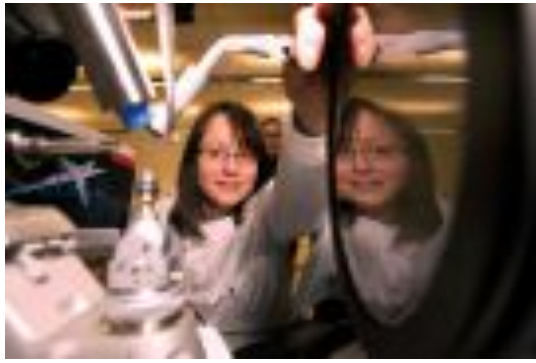
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