

SA universities drop in global ranking

South African universities dropped in a global ranking published by the Centre for World University Rankings on Tuesday, 12 July 2016, with the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) emerging as SA's best tertiary institution at 176 out of 1,000.

By [Karl Gemetzky](#) 13 Jul 2016



© Andrey Ikryannikov – [123RF.com](#)

The ranking, by a Saudi-based consultancy, is one of several global rankings conducted annually, which, although viewed with some scepticism by academics, have gained currency with the public.

SA's universities did not enjoy global prestige. The University of Cape Town (UCT) was 265th, Stellenbosch 329th, the University of KwaZulu-Natal 467th, and the University of Pretoria 697th in the world.

Wits, UCT, and Stellenbosch all dropped significantly on 2015's performance. Wits dropped from 149th in 2015 to 176 in 2016.

University rankings are often treated with a pinch of salt, varying widely in terms of methodology. The Saudi-based centre publishes an annual ranking of 1,000 universities. This ranking takes into account the number of alumni and staff who win international awards, and the number of alumni who hold CEO positions, relative to size of institution, as 25% of the weighting. Citations, academic publications, patents, influence, and broader impact make up the rest of the ranking.

US universities took all three top spots. Harvard was ranked first, Stanford second, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology third. Cambridge University and Oxford University came fourth and fifth, respectively.

Wits vice-chancellor Prof Adam Habib said on Tuesday the results should be treated with "measured circumspect".

"Our focus as a higher education institution should be on building a nationally responsive and globally competitive institution focusing on academic and research excellence that is both demographically diverse and cosmopolitan," Habib said. "Should we do this well, we will be responsive to our mandate of producing socially conscious and globally competitive professionals and citizens for the 21st century."

Stellenbosch spokesman Martin Viljoen said on Tuesday the position of the South African institutions on the list was still an achievement.

Source: *Business Day* via I-Net Bridge

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>