

Japan falls in global university rankings

LONDON (Kyodo) Japan has slipped in an annual evaluation of universities around the world, overtaken by China for the first time.

The number of Japanese institutions among the world's top 200 universities has fallen from 11 to five, according to rankings released Thursday by the Times Higher Education magazine.

The British magazine teamed up with Thomson Reuters to assess universities largely based on their teaching and research capacity. The teams also judged institutions' international mix of staff and students, and each university's ability to transfer research into commercial gains.

The only Japanese institution to make the top 50 was the University of Tokyo, which ranked 26th. The other four among the top 200 were Kyoto University at 57th, Tokyo Institute of Technology at 112th, Osaka University at 130th and Tohoku University at 132nd.

By contrast, China had six universities in the top 200 — more than any country in Asia — "in what many of Japan's institutions will see as very disappointing results," according to a statement from the magazine. Peking University was the highest-ranked Chinese institution at 37th.

"Recent cuts in higher education funding, and a new more detailed methodology for the rankings, have exposed serious weaknesses in the performance of Japan's leading institutions on a global stage," says the commentary.

In a change of methodology this year, assessors placed less importance on reputation and heritage and more emphasis on teaching, research and knowledge transfer.

U.S. universities dominated the top of the rankings, with Harvard in first place. Oxford and Cambridge universities took

joint sixth position.

Among countries, the United States was in first place, with China at eighth and Japan 10th.

Ann Mroz, editor of the Times Higher Education, said the rankings "clearly show that investment in higher education does produce world-class universities, and those institutions that have performed well should be congratulated."

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