



However, while some institutions make gains this year, the majority of India's universities remain static or decline, struggling amid increased global competition, the world university analysis concluded.

Phil Baty, Editorial Director of Global Rankings for 'Times Higher Education' said: "India's bursting with innovation and ambition – the nation has serious potential to grow into a leading player in global higher education. But while it increases its presence again in this year's table, the majority of its universities remain immobile or decline, struggling against increased global competition – particularly from east Asia.

"Sustained investment, a continued drive to attract leading global talent, and a strengthened international outlook will be key to boosting its global reputation and research influence. Its current higher education reforms could be key to helping institutions progress."

On the overall global charts, Oxford University claims first position for a third consecutive year. Cambridge University retains second spot, while Stanford in the US is holding steady at third.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) rises one place to number four but the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) drops from last year's joint third position, to number five. Yale is the highest riser in the global top 20, scaling four places to join the top 10, at eighth.

The city of London has four universities listed in the top 40, more than any other city in the world – Imperial College London, University College London, London School of Economics, and King's College London.

"This is another fantastic achievement for the world-leading institutions in our city. With more first-class universities and international students than any other city, these rankings clearly demonstrate that London remains open to talent and academic excellence," said Rajesh Agrawal, London's Deputy Mayor for Business.

Overall, the UK has 29 universities in the top 200, and is the most-represented European country in the top 200.

"Universities can't excel in isolation, they're purpose built for collaboration – and it's one of the qualities that has so defined our world-class UK institutions," said Ellie Bothwell, Editor of the global rankings.

The annual World University Rankings are drawn from the 'Times Higher Education' database of university performance metrics, with over 150 separate data points on each of the world's leading research universities and two global surveys of senior, published scholars from its annual reputation survey.