



Awards Asia 2026

Leadership and Management Team of the Year

Institution Name	Duke-NUS Medical School
Submission title or project name	Leading with vision – a decade of transforming medicine and improving lives at Duke-NUS
Nominee / key personnel	Thomas Coffman (dean, Duke-NUS Medical School)
URL	https://www.duke-nus.edu.sg/
Submission	Thomas Coffman has led Duke-NUS Medical School through a decade of exceptional growth and transformation since becoming dean in 2015. Under his leadership, the school strengthened its research enterprise, fostered innovation and entrepreneurship, and built an ecosystem that empowers scientists and students to translate discoveries into real-world impact. His leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated Duke-NUS' global influence, advancing diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics that reinforced Singapore's biomedical strength. During his tenure, he expanded academic offerings to nurture clinician-scientists and researchers, deepened the partnership with SingHealth and championed the establishment of the Centre for Clinician-Scientist Development. Through his vision and engagement, both within the academic community and beyond, Coffman has elevated Duke-NUS into a globally recognised force in academic medicine, advancing knowledge, innovation and the future of healthcare.



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Institution Name	Hiroshima University
Submission title or project name	From vision to implementation: how Hiroshima University institutionalised interdisciplinary education and research
Nominee / key personnel	Shinji Kaneko (executive vice-president, global initiatives)
URL	
Submission	Interdisciplinary education and research are essential for addressing complex global challenges. Despite general recognition of their importance, most universities face structural barriers such as rigid departments and discipline-based evaluations. Hiroshima University has achieved remarkable progress through strategic reforms and strong leadership. It introduced achievement-oriented key performance indicators to enhance transparency, flexibility and cross-disciplinary collaboration. The university also reorganised its faculty into an independent “academy”, allowing members to contribute to multiple programmes, and consolidated 11 graduate schools into four to strengthen integration. Undergraduate education was similarly transformed through the establishment of Japan’s first School of Informatics and Data Science and a full English-taught four-year programme. Backed by robust governance, these reforms have positioned Hiroshima University as a national leader in interdisciplinarity. Its consistent top-tier performance in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings and full engagement with all 17 SDGs are testament to its excellence and global influence.



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Institution Name	Hitit University
Submission title or project name	From intuition to resilience: institutionalising strategic excellence via digital innovation
Nominee / key personnel	Ali Osman Öztürk (rector)
URL	
Submission	Until 2021, Hitit University's governance relied on individual discretion and fragmented systems. Under the strategic leadership of rector Ali Osman Öztürk, a comprehensive structural and digital transformation established a modern, data-driven, performance-based governance model. Newly created offices in strategy, digital transformation, internationalisation, sustainability and innovation fostered interdisciplinary collaboration and accountability. Two digital platforms – Hitit Action Plan (HEP) and Performance Implication System (PI) – link objectives to actions, monitor outcomes and ensure evidence-based management. Research and innovation capacity expanded through MITAM, while the EU-funded IMAP4U Project, led by Öztürk, scaled this governance model internationally by aligning it with the UN's SDGs. Since 2021, Hitit has: • Expanded the number of accredited programmes from two to 13 (+550 per cent) • Entered the THE World University Rankings for the first time (2023) • Lodged 16 new patent, utility model, design and trademark registrations (+1,600 per cent) • Boosted the number of international students from 231 to 1,318 (+471 per cent) • Increased research budget ratio to total budget by 206 per cent.



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Leadership and Management Team of the Year

Institution Name	Holy Cross of Davao College
Submission title or project name	A seat at the table: co-creating the future as a synodal approach to strategic leadership
Nominee / key personnel	The president's council: Noelvic H. Deloria (school president); Teresa P. Fabiania (vice-president for academic affairs); Rommel F. Momo (vice-president for operations); Emmanuel G. Calumpong (vice-president for finance/corporate treasurer)
URL	https://docs.google.com/document/d/10oQncLoV_ylzk289CnTrZwc4YnTI-Mkx/edit
Submission	The senior leadership of Holy Cross of Davao College – comprising the president and vice-presidents for academics, operations and finance, and guided by the board's executive committee – led a strategic turnaround amid enrolment decline and financial losses from 2016 to 2021. Anchored on the ARISE pillars (Administration, Research, Instruction, Spirituality, Engagement) and annual themes such as ARISE, SOAR and INNOVATE, the team aligned the institution on clear, measurable priorities. By 2025, the college had the second-largest tertiary-level enrolment in Davao City. A “debt-free in three” plan erased legacy debt, and HR reforms under the VOTE+HIRED system boosted morale. Weekly foresight huddles, ISO 21001:2018 certification, and representation in the national Commission on Higher Education's ASEAN delegation exemplified innovative, anticipatory leadership. The ARISE logic, structured leadership rhythms and stakeholder engagement transformed strategy into daily practice. Now debt-free, growing and externally recognised, the college exemplifies data-driven, scalable and sector-leading leadership.



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Institution Name	IIMT University
Submission title or project name	Transforming higher education through visionary leadership and AI-driven NEP implementation
Nominee / key personnel	Deepa Sharma (vice-chancellor)
URL	https://iimtu.edu.in/
Submission	Under the leadership of vice-chancellor Deepa Sharma, IIMT University has emerged as a model institution for effective implementation of India's National Education Policy 2020 and digital transformation. The leadership team restructured curricula for multidisciplinary learning, enhanced outcome-based education and established robust industry partnerships, resulting in a 32 per cent rise in employability and 20 per cent growth in research collaborations. Through strategic alliances with Intel, AWS and IBM, the team created an AI-enabled smart campus featuring predictive learning analytics, IoT-driven sustainability systems, and virtual innovation labs. Anticipating policy changes, Sharma's governance model promoted agility, inclusion and institutional resilience. The leadership's digital-first approach led to a 12 per cent increase in student retention and Rs75,000,000 in funded projects, exemplifying excellence in management foresight and stakeholder collaboration. IIMT University stands as a benchmark in integrative leadership driving educational transformation in India.



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Institution Name	Nanjing Tech University
Submission title or project name	Nanjing Tech University: redefining higher education through systemic innovation – a “synergistic governance model” that bridges education, research and service for societal transformation
Nominee / key personnel	Jiang Juncheng (president)
URL	
Submission	Under the leadership of Jiang Juncheng, Nanjing Tech University has engineered a groundbreaking governance model that seamlessly integrates education, research and societal service. Our pioneering “rights confirmation before transformation” policy grants researchers full ownership of their innovations, triggering a remarkable surge in market-driven research and technology transfer. Guided by a “dual-driven” mechanism that bridges national strategies and industrial needs, our institutional breakthrough builds a synergistic ecosystem. This is manifested through deep industry-education integration in platforms such as the Membrane Industry College, where students tackle real-world challenges alongside partners. Our innovations, from globally leading membrane materials to sustainable bio-based polymers, drive transformation at a national strategic level. This replicable “Nanjing Tech Solution” establishes a new paradigm for global higher education, demonstrating how universities can become powerful engines for talent cultivation, technological innovation and sustainable societal advancement.



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Institution Name	Phenikaa University
Submission title or project name	Visionary leadership for national transformation: the Phenikaa model
Nominee / key personnel	Thu Ha (manager, international rankings team)
URL	https://vrtour.phenikaa-uni.edu.vn/
Submission	From rescuing a university on the brink of closure, Phenikaa University has undergone two strategic transformations to become a national model of innovation-led higher education. Operating under Vietnam’s first “university–hospital–enterprise” model, it aligns academic excellence with national priorities in innovation and sustainability. Within six years, the university expanded to nearly 35,000 students and, between 2021 and 2024, recorded an exceptional surge in research performance – along with a portfolio of thriving start-ups, spin-offs and sustainable technologies. Beyond academic growth, Phenikaa advances social progress through lifelong learning, smart city development and workforce training in semiconductors and healthcare. In 2025, the government recognised Phenikaa for making the fastest transition into a comprehensive university system and honoured it at the A80 National Exhibition as one of six universities acknowledged for outstanding achievements in innovation and education – reimagining the role of private universities in national development.



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Institution Name	Seoul National University
Submission title or project name	SNU's institutional innovation committee: driving participatory governance and transformative leadership
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	
Submission	Seoul National University's institutional innovation committee (IIC), established in 2023, represents a new model of participatory leadership. By formalising a cycle of idea generation, research institutionalisation, feedback and sharing results, the IIC has transformed governance into a collective process. An Administrative Innovation Competition received 396 proposals, of which 143 were implemented or scheduled, delivering improvements in education, research, administration and culture. Direct policy proposals, including a road map for administrative and personnel reform and research funding management reforms, led to tangible organisational restructuring. The IIC also established the Administrative Innovation Forum and the Innovation Practice Award, ensuring transparency, consensus and recognition for contributors. This process has enabled agile decision-making, inclusivity and accountability, offering a globally relevant leadership model that demonstrates how universities can embed innovation into governance while fostering community-wide engagement and sustainable change.