

# Top-Notch University? Not in 2011

March 15, 2012

**The  Moscow Times**

Russian universities have again failed to make the grade compared with their counterparts in other countries.

The annual [ranking](#) of the world's 100 most reputable universities was released Thursday, and the list does not include a single Russian university.

The exclusion was a huge setback for Moscow State University, which placed 33rd in last year's ranking. This year, though, Russian universities didn't even make it into the top 200.

The 2012 [World Reputation Rankings](#), prepared by the Times Higher Education magazine, highlights an elite group of American and British schools that retained their supremacy.

That group is headed by Harvard University, followed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The University of Cambridge is third.

Russian leaders have pledged that their country's institutions of higher learning would be renovated and developed to compete with the world's best. But despite their efforts, Russian schools still fail to get international recognition.

"Russia clearly has some great universities with proud histories, but it is well documented that there have been problems in Russia with a 'brain drain' of the best academic talent, as well as funding and infrastructural issues," Phil Baty, editor of Times Higher Education magazine, said in e-mailed comments.

He added, though, that it is "an extremely competitive list" and that only 19 countries and 0.5 percent of the world's schools are represented.

Moscow State University couldn't be reached for comment Wednesday.

In one of his pre-election articles, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Russia's population will expand by 300,000 annually with the help of expats and foreign students motivated to stay in Russia after graduation.

But experts noted that so far, Russian schools seem much less prestigious to students abroad than their Western competitors.

Russia would do well to follow the example of East Asian institutions. Many of them have seen "a significant rise in their reputational standing" thanks to heavy investment undertaken as a matter of national pride and as an economic necessity, Baty said.

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