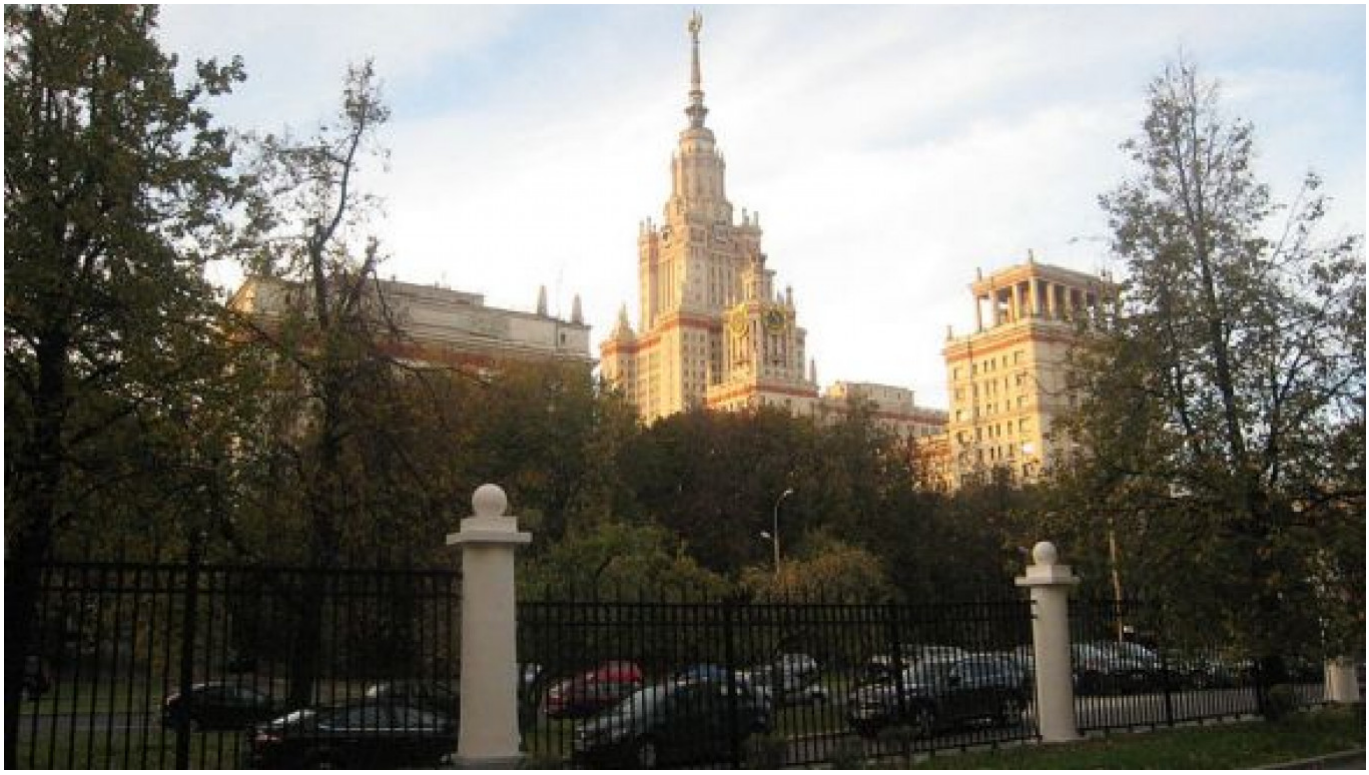
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Moscow State University's Reputation Back in Top 50

By Natalya Krainova

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Moscow State University

Moscow State University regained a spot among the world's 50 most reputable institutions of higher learning, according to Times Higher Education magazine's annual college ratings, released Monday.

But Moscow State's objective score, which takes into account learning environment, research influence and innovation, remains outside the top 200.

"The encouraging thing about the reputation ranking is that it's based on subjective perceptions, which means it's highly regarded," the list's editor, Phil Baty, said by phone from London. Moscow State "is gaining from a very famous history," which makes it "prestigious" and "well-known around the world."

But there's a "big depth" between the World Reputation Rankings, based on opinions, and the

World University Rankings, based on objective factors, Baty added.

Moscow State came in at No. 50 on this year's reputation list, based on the opinions of 16,639 published academics from around the world. The school came in 33rd in 2011, the first year the reputation ranking was published separately.

However, it didn't make last year's list, an absence Baty called a "very strange situation," noting that different academics were polled each year.

"It is great to see Russia break into the global top 100 — indeed, into the top 50," Times Higher Education said in an annotation e-mailed to The Moscow Times. "This means that Lomonosov Moscow State University is seen globally as a serious force in teaching, research and innovation, and this gives it a strong platform for consolidation.

"However, it should be noted that this strong showing in terms of subjective reputation is in stark contrast with the institution's relatively modest standing in the largely objective World University Rankings, where Moscow State sits outside the top 200. The university must use its strong global reputation to improve, as it cannot rely on reputation alone."

The reputation survey has given the top six places to the same schools for the past three years: Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Cambridge, the University of Oxford, the University of California at Berkeley and Stanford University. Those six have only been swapping places with one another.

St. Petersburg State University and Novosibirsk State University are the only other Russian schools to have appeared in the top 200 rankings. Baty attributed Russia's relatively poor showing to brain drain, insufficient funding and a lack of research publications in English.

Although perception can help Moscow State move forward and attract additional funding and talent, Russia has to invest more in a new-skilled workforce, innovations and technology to improve its position in the rankings, Baty said.

President Vladimir Putin last year ordered the government to ensure that at least five Russian universities got into the world's top rankings by 2020. Baty said that goal would be "very challenging" but "not impossible."

The fact that Moscow State is increasing communication with the international scholarly community and that its researchers have started publishing more work in English is also helping the university's standing, Baty said.

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