

Did You Make It to the Highly Cited Researchers List for 2019?

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Every year, the Web of Science Group, a Clarivate Analytics company, releases its Highly Cited Researchers list. Web of Science is the world's largest publisher-neutral citation index. It aims to organize the world's research information to help push research forwards. Clarivate Analytics also issues the annual Journal Citation Reports, which provide impact factors and rankings based on millions of citations.

This year, the prestigious and highly anticipated Highly Cited Researchers list was released on November 19. It is seen as a "Who's who" of influential and successful researchers – if you make it on to the list, your career is probably going well!

Highly Cited Researchers List for 2019

The Highly Cited Researchers list names scientists and social scientists who [produce multiple highly-cited papers](#). The articles must rank in the top 1% for field and year in Web of Science. Researchers are chosen for their exceptional performance in one or more of 21 fields, or across several fields.

The 2019 list includes more than 6,000 researchers from almost 60 countries. Of these, around 3,700 received citations for their work in one specific field, while 2,500 achieved citations across several fields. This is only the second year that researchers with expertise in different fields have been highlighted.

The Highly Cited Researchers list considers publications in the last decade (for the 2019 list, this is 2008-2018.) The list is well-respected because it is [compiled with great care](#). The publication records of all potential Highly Cited Researchers are reviewed. Problems such as misconduct or excessive self-citation can lead to a researcher being dropped from the list.

The Star Researchers of 2019

The 2019 Highly Cited Researchers list includes 23 Nobel Laureates (a rise from 17 in 2018). This includes three who were announced this year. They are Greg Semenza of Johns Hopkins University (in Physiology or Medicine), John Goodenough of the University of Texas (Chemistry) and Esther Duflo of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Economics).

This year's list also includes 57 Citation Laureates, 19 of whom are new for 2019. These are researchers who, according to the Web of Science, [are potential future Nobel prize winners](#). Citation Laureates normally rank in the top 0.01% of researchers by citations.

An incredible 11 researchers achieved Highly Cited status in three separate fields.

The University of California Santa Cruz celebrated having 18 researchers on the list this year, in fields including astronomy, chemistry and genomics.

Who's on the Top?

The US continues to top the list of Highly Cited Researchers, with a total of 2,737 names: nearly half the researchers on the list! Of these, 203 are from Harvard University, which [has the highest number of Highly Cited Researchers in the world](#).

However, China may soon be hot on the heels of the US. From 2018 to 2019, there was a huge rise in the number of researchers from mainland China on the list: from 482 to 636. Across the 21 fields, there has been a threefold increase in researchers from China since 2014.

This puts China in second place, jumping ahead of the UK. The number of UK researchers on the list fell to 516 in 2019, compared to 546 last year. Germany and the Netherlands also have fewer Highly Cited Researchers than last year.

Australia comes fifth on the list. Impressively, the number of Highly Cited Researchers in Australia has more than tripled in the last six years, from 80 in 2014 to 271 in 2019. Australian institutions have achieved this by recruiting Highly Cited Researchers from overseas, as well as developing their home-grown researchers.

Why would a country try to recruit more Highly Cited Researchers? According to David Pendlebury, Senior Citation Analyst at the Institute for Scientific Information, "Recognition and support of these exceptional researchers represents an important activity for ... efficient and accelerated advancement."

Pendlebury adds that the Highly Cited Researchers list contributes to the identification of that small fraction of the researcher population that significantly extends the frontiers of knowledge. He also thinks that these researchers have the potential to [improve the society, innovation and knowledge](#). This, in turn, would make the world healthier, richer, more sustainable and more secure.

What are the 2019 Trends?

Although the Highly Cited Researchers represent nearly 60 different countries, 85% are based at institutions in just ten countries. 72% come from just the top five countries (US, China, UK, Germany and Australia.) This is very similar to the situation last year. This shows that top scientific talent is still concentrated in just a few countries.

In fact, of the top twenty institutions ranked by number of Highly Cited Researchers, 14 are in the US. This includes the top two, Harvard and Stanford Universities. It is interesting, however, that a Chinese institution now holds third place: the Chinese Academy of Sciences, with 101 Highly Cited Researchers. Meanwhile, the UK's highest ranked institution, Cambridge University, is down in fourteenth place, with just 50 Highly Cited Researchers.

As mentioned, while the US remains on top, China continues the trend seen in previous years of rising up through the ranks. It seems likely that this will continue in the future, as China continues to invest in scientific research. Indeed, China has [declared its intention to become a global tech superpower](#). The country's leaders believe that science and technology will drive future economic growth. Although the US is still some way ahead, it should surely be looking over its shoulder.

Meanwhile, countries that have traditionally placed highly, such as the UK and Germany, may need to find new ways to attract Highly Cited Researchers if they hope to stop their slide down the rankings.

What do you think of the 2019 Highly Cited Researchers list? Do you see any specific pattern in the trends observed in this year's list? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

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