

# THE AWARDS ASIA 2021

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

London, UK – 14 December 2021

## WINNERS ANNOUNCED

**Saint Joseph University of Beirut** won the **Workplace of the Year** category at the third annual *THE Awards Asia* this evening.

Widely known as the ‘Oscars of higher education, the THE Awards were a fixture in the UK higher education calendar for 14 years before, in 2019, we took this prestigious event to Asia the first time.

THE Awards Asia offer a major international platform to recognise outstanding leadership and institutional performance, and celebrate the continent's higher education excellence in all of its diversity. And unlike our *THE World University Rankings*, which are based on solid data points, eight of our ten categories are judged by a panel of experts, recognising great work that the rankings cannot capture.

### Winner's profile

The public health crisis triggered by Covid-19 dominated every aspect of life in 2020. For Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ), however, it was not the only all-consuming crisis.

In August, a catastrophic explosion in Beirut's port caused devastation and demanded a response from a society already stretched to the limit by the pandemic.

Prioritising the well-being of all its staff, USJ launched three initiatives. The first was an extension of an existing Covid-response programme, through which the university had been providing food to Beirut's neediest families. This was expanded to focus on those left bereft by the blast.

With more than 200 university staff and student volunteers, the programme aimed, in the words of university chaplain Fr Jad Chebly, to “get in touch with those who have lost everything, go to their homes, clean up [and], provide comfort, provide food and medicine”.

A second initiative was established to provide psychological and spiritual support to the university staff and students affected by the tragedy, with free-to-access programmes including counselling and community projects to address the trauma of events.

The university's Faculty of Business Administration and Management led the third programme, a community outreach effort to address the “monetary crisis, economic collapse and socio-political unrest” that overlapped with the public health crisis and the aftermath of the explosion.

The judges said USJ's “response in the face of truly terrible circumstances demonstrated its commitment to both

internal support and broader outreach, of which the university and staff can be proud”.

“It is a response that was unique to those circumstances but also had the effect of contributing to the creation of a very positive workplace environment,” they said.

**THE’s chief knowledge officer, Phil Baty, said:**

“For decades, *Times Higher Education* has been focusing on universities, seeing up close the life-changing work they can do. Over the years, we have expanded the scope of our coverage and, of course, developed our internationally respected suite of university rankings. Yet even all those efforts cannot capture every aspect of institutions’ extraordinary accomplishments in education, research, outreach and more. To address that, we launched the THE Awards in the UK in 2019 to shine a spotlight on the overachieving but underappreciated work of universities, teams and individuals.

THE Awards Asia aim to do the same in one of the most diverse and dynamic regions on the planet. It goes without saying that highly ranked, internationally renowned institutions feature among our winners, but they have no monopoly on exceptional achievements. These awards also call attention to institutions working beneath the radar that have been performing near miracles in extremely challenging circumstances.

Of course, in 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic threw up a frightening new challenge. Many of the record number of submissions we received this year related how resourcefully universities rose to the task, and we at *THE* and our distinguished group of guest experts found it a genuine privilege to immerse ourselves in these first-hand reports from all corners of the continent, detailing how universities responded speedily and ingeniously, deploying their resources to support students, staff and local communities through a crisis and to help point the way out.”

**The full list of this year’s results is below, and profiles of the winning entries can be viewed in the attached winners brochure.**

**Excellence and Innovation in the Arts**

Winner: Hong Kong Baptist University

**International Strategy of the Year**

Winner: Hangzhou Dianzi University

Highly commended: Chinese University of Hong Kong

**Student Recruitment Campaign of the Year**

Winner: Hanoi University of Science and Technology

Highly commended: Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences

**Teaching and Learning Strategy of the Year**

Winner: National University of Singapore

Highly commended: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Centre for Applied Learning and Multimedia

**THE DataPoints Improved Performance Award**

Winner: Universiti Utara Malaysia

**THE DataPoints Social Impact Award**

Winner: Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember

**Technological Innovation of the Year**

Winner: O.P. Jindal Global University

**Workplace of the Year**

Winner: Saint Joseph University of Beirut

**Outstanding Support for Students**

Winner: Universiti Teknologi Petronas

**Leadership and Management Team of the Year**

Winner: Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT)

You can find out more at the [THE Awards Asia website](#), and further coverage at [Times Higher Education](#).

For additional information, please email [theawardsasia@timeshighereducation.com](mailto:theawardsasia@timeshighereducation.com)