



Announcement

Universitas 21 [U21] and PwC, two globally-focused organisations, are working closely together to create mutually beneficial links between U21's global student groups and PwC's top clients across its network of firms. This unique partnership will create worldwide talent networks through which U21 students can have exposure to new global work opportunities and where they can communicate their specialist knowledge, skills and talents to potential employers. Conversely, the CEOs of PwC's clients will have access to a pool of world-class, skilled, motivated students, providing exclusive employability opportunities. This is an important new international student/employer initiative that will enhance and complement existing national university, employer and industry associations.

The first regional round of an innovative online competition emerging from this collaboration will be launched in May 2018 at the U21 Presidential AGM at the University of Melbourne, Australia. This event will also mark the 21st anniversary of the founding of U21 in Melbourne in 1997.

PwC/U21 Innovation Challenge Competitions

The first initiative arising from the new collaboration between PwC and U21 will be an online competition platform provided by U21 where CEOs of PwC clients set contemporary, globally-important challenges to which U21 students 'pitch' online solutions to the companies. In this way PwC's clients benefit from the opportunity of an early introduction to the best emerging talent from top-class universities around the world. It also allows PwC's client CEOs to better identify where they may find students with the specific types of ideas and capacities needed by their industries.

For U21 students, the PwC/U21 competition gives them a platform to showcase their educational and research skills and to obtain earlier access to potential employers before the end of their studies, coupled with additional employability and training opportunities.

U21 already has considerable experience of running online competitions across the worldwide U21 student body, including the U21 Global Ingenuity Challenge for undergraduate students and the annual U21 Three Minute Thesis competition for doctoral students.

Background to the new collaboration

Founded in 1997, *Universitas 21* [U21] is a global network of twenty-five research-intensive universities (see Appendix A), committed to the development of internationally-focused higher education and research. 65% of members¹ are in the Top 100 Universities in the world and a further 15%² of members are in the world top 200 (QS Rankings 2017/2018, issued June 2017).

U21 member universities work together to build relationships and connections across the globe, forging closer collaborations with like-minded academics and professionals than would be possible without the shared membership of U21. Through membership of the network, universities' students and staff participate in a variety of research, educational and mobility initiatives and have unique opportunities to share best practice and leading higher educational resources.

In total U21 universities enroll over 1 million students and employ approximately 150,000 academic faculty and professional staff. Member universities share a common goal of creating strong international footprints in research and education and increasing global experiences for their students through enhanced mobility opportunities and by internationalising their home campuses. U21 is committed to supporting their members to deliver truly internationally-focused curricula and research agendas. A key network commitment is the support of researchers and the education of students who can work effectively and positively across borders as knowledge pioneers.

PwC and U21 – sharing a global vision

PwC is one of the Big Four global professional services networks with over 236,000 people in 158 countries, and revenues in excess of \$37.7bn. It has an extensive network of higher education clients, providing strategy, consulting, audit, legal and risk management services to over 250 universities, seven of which are currently ranked in the world's top ten.

PwC is one of the world's largest graduate recruiters and has been training and qualifying its people for over 100 years. PwC has extended its experience in developing and delivering graduate talent to its clients and is the only Big Four firm to have invested in providing professional education through its network of 35 PwC Academies around the world³.

It is of no surprise that many of the individual universities in the U21 network have already formed local links with their regional PwC offices, given that U21's constituent universities

¹ National University of Singapore, U. of Edinburgh, Hong Kong U., Fudan U., U. of Melbourne, UNSW, U. Queensland, UBC, U. Amsterdam, Shanghai Jiao Tong U., U. Glasgow, U. of Zurich, Lund University, U. Auckland, U. of Nottingham, U. of Birmingham, Korea U.,

² U. Maryland, Pontifical U. of Chile, U. College Dublin, Tec. De Monterrey (N.B. although not included in the calculations above, Waseda University, Tokyo, is 203 in these world rankings).

³ [Workforce of the Future - the competing forces shaping 2030](#)
[Investing in America's Data Science and Analytics Talent](#)

and PwC and its constituent client base⁴ share many of the same immediate global perspectives including:

1. An awareness of the current global environment of uncertainty and change, and a commitment to find effective operational approaches to survive and thrive in this milieu.
2. A commitment to educating and training outward-looking graduates with the right skills and talents for a world in rapid transformation.
3. The benefit of bringing human innovation and technology together to provide global solutions to national and international problems – “Harnessing the power of human skills in the machine age”⁵
4. The challenge of breaking down divides between professions, genders, disciplines and cultures to achieve the best results for industry and communities.

In PwC’s Global CEO Survey (2017), the participating 1,370 worldwide CEOs identified their need to find the right mix of creativity and soft skills in employees to match contemporary industry requirements⁶. Respectively, U21 students need ‘real-world’ situations to which they can apply their knowledge, to test the value of their technical skills, research ingenuity and talents in the world of work. They also seek ways to identify and address gaps in their skill-sets towards advancement of their own future employment needs and career opportunities.

Quotes

“U21 is delighted to be entering into this exciting new collaboration with PwC which will provide an important global platform for our talented students providing them with ‘real-world’ situations to which they can apply their knowledge and test the value of their technical skills, research, ingenuity and talents.” Professor Bairbre Redmond. Provost of U21

“PwC’s purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. We believe the skills the future workforce needs are indeed one of the world’s most pressing problems. We are very proud to collaborate with U21 and play a role in bringing together top graduates and our clients in a challenging and hopefully enjoyable problem-solving experience.” Sally Jeffery, PwC Partner, Global Education Network Leader

About PwC

⁴ [PWC's 20th CEO Survey](#)

⁵ [PWC - The Talent Challenge](#)

⁶ [PwC 2017 CEO study - talent recruitment](#)

At PwC, our purpose is to build trust in society and solve important problems. We are a network of firms in 158 countries with more than 236,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, advisory and tax services. Find out more and tell us what matters to you by visiting us at www.pwc.com.

PwC refers to the PwC network and/or one or more of its member firms, each of which is a separate legal entity. Please see www.pwc.com/structure for further details.

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Appendix A

Member Universities

Australia

University of Melbourne
University of Queensland
UNSW Australia

Canada

University of British Columbia

Chile

Pontificia Universidad
Católica de Chile

China & Hong Kong (SAR)

China

Fudan University
Shanghai Jiao Tong University
University of Hong Kong

India

University of Delhi

Ireland

University College Dublin

Japan

Waseda University

Mexico

Tecnológico de Monterrey

New Zealand

University of Auckland

Singapore

National University of
Singapore

South Africa

University of Johannesburg

South Korea

Korea University

Sweden

Lund University

Switzerland

University of Zürich

The Netherlands

University of Amsterdam

United Kingdom

University of Birmingham
University of Edinburgh
University of Glasgow
University of Nottingham

United States of America

University of Connecticut
University of Maryland