UNIVERSITY RANKINGS FACT SHEET

Forbes America's Top Colleges – National University Ranking

SUMMARY

The *Forbes* list of America's Top Colleges focuses on the direct benefits schools provide their graduates.

The scoring is based on six different measures, including:

1. Alumni Salary;
2. Debt;
3. Student Experience;
4. American Leaders List;
5. Academic Success; and
6. Graduation Rates.

Forbes began publishing America's Top Colleges in 2008. Rankings are typically released in August.

Most metric data is sourced from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard, and various databases.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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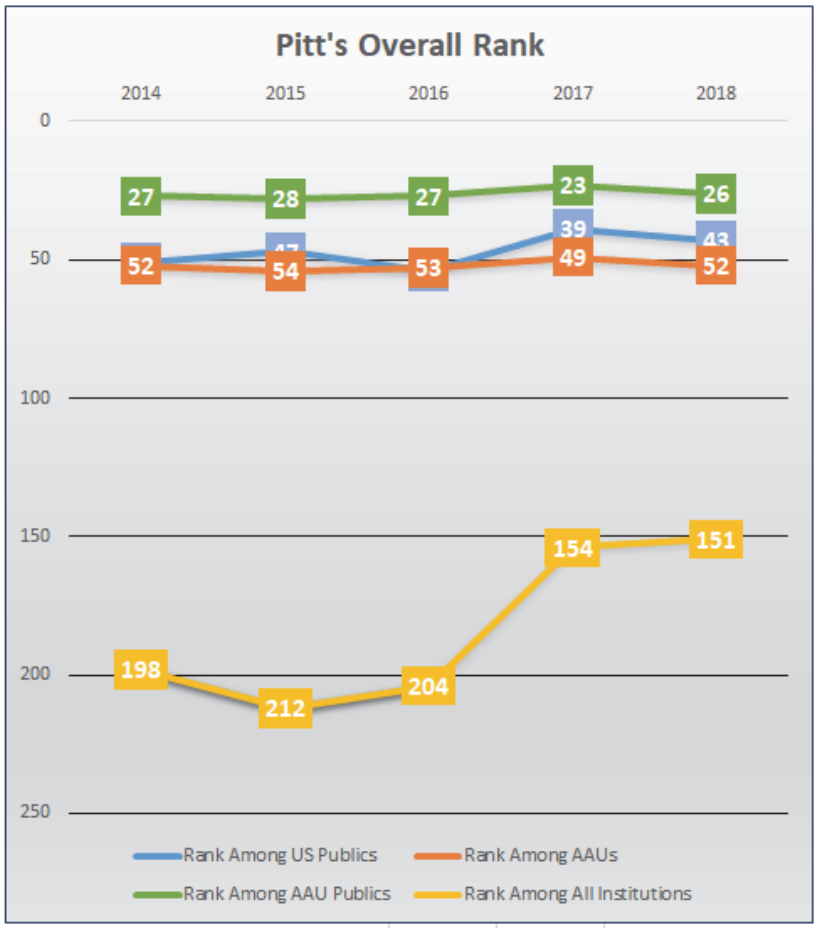
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH RESULTS

The following illustrates the 2018 rankings for the University of Pittsburgh.

University of Pittsburgh Rankings 2018	Rank Among All Institutions	Rank among AAUs	Rank among AAU Publics
Overall Rank	151	52	26

TRENDS: FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW



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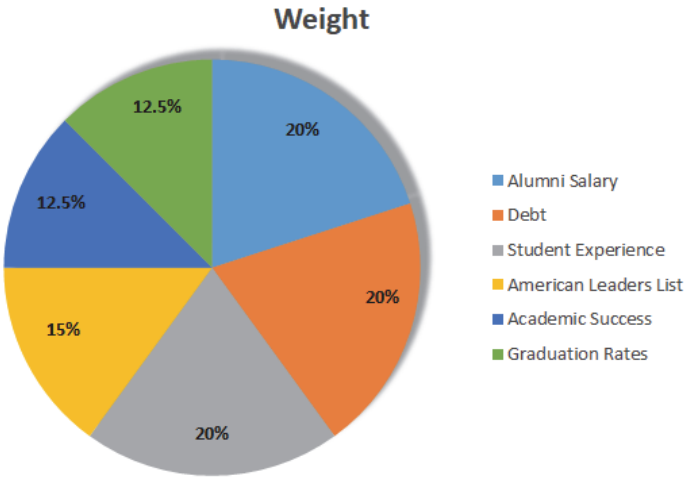
Methodology and Metrics

Forbes America's Top Colleges is based on the weighted scores of six areas.



Alumni Salary
Weight: 20%

Because paying for college is a long-term investment, it is important to consider both early career earnings and mid-career earnings. This category considers four data points across two areas:

Earnings *(17%)*
Looks at early career earnings one to four years after graduation, and mid-career earnings 10-plus years after graduation.

Financial Aid Recipient Earnings *(3%)*
Looks at the earnings of federal financial aid recipients six years and 10 years after starting college.

Debt
Weight: 20%

The financial benefits of a college degree cannot be evaluated without considering student debt. An education is most advantageous when it does not burden graduates with crippling debt—or at least when it empowers them to find good jobs that will help them pay that debt back. This category looks at two areas:

Student Debt *(10%)*
Takes the average federal student loan debt per borrower at each school multiplied by the percentage of students at the school who took out federal loans.

Federal Student Loan Default Rates *(10%)*
Two-year and three-year federal student loan default rates.

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Student Experience
Weight: 20%

College is not merely a means to an end; the ideal college experience pairs long-term value with a four-year opportunity to establish lifelong relationships and to grow intellectually. To reward schools that create worthwhile experiences for students as well as graduates, it is important to look at student experience.

First Year Retention *(15%)*
A school's average first-year-to-sophomore retention rate for the last three years.

Niche College Student Survey *(5%)*
Considers responses from the Niche College Student Survey that looks at both professor quality and student life.

American Leaders List
Weight: 15%

Along with alumni salary, *Forbes* measures graduates' success using a data set that they compile themselves that looks at the alma maters of thousands of successful people.

American Leaders List *(15%)*
Blends a school's raw number of alumni leaders and its number of leaders adjusted for the number of undergraduates. The roster includes:

1. **Forbes' Databases:** Forbes 400, Richest Self-Made Women list, Most Powerful Women list, and 30 Under 30.
2. **Current Leaders in Public Service:** U.S. Supreme Court justices, the president and his cabinet, members of U.S. Congress, and state governors.
3. **Award Winners:** MacArthur Fellowship, Nobel Prize, Breakthrough Prize, Lasker Award, Fields Medal, Academy Award/Oscar, Tony Award, NAACP Image Award, Guggenheim Fellowship, major sports all-star, Presidential Medal, and Pulitzer Prize.

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Academic Success
Weight: 12.5%

Salary is an excellent indicator of post-graduate success. But, for liberal arts fields that are not necessarily as high-paying or for STEM fields that require years of post-graduate education, success does not necessarily mean high pay shortly after graduation. Instead, success can be measured by pursuing further education or by being nationally recognized for academic accomplishments.

Academic Awards *(6.25%)*
Counts the number of academic awards won by alumni at each school over the last four years. The number of awards are weighted as a percentage of the undergraduate student body. The awards considered are:

1. Fulbright Scholarship
2. Truman Scholarship
3. Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship
4. Gates Scholarship
5. Cambridge Scholarship
6. Rhodes Scholarship

National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates *(6.25%)*
The three-year average number of Ph.D. recipients who spent their undergraduate careers at each institution. This value is adjusted for the number of undergraduates.

Graduation Rates
Weight: 12.5%

This category gives credit to schools that motivate, guide, and support students to graduate in a timely manner, which saves on tuition and gets students into the workforce as soon as possible. The graduation rate calculation is divided into three components:

Four-year graduation rate *(7.5%)*
The average four-year graduation rate for the most recent three years.

Six-year graduation rates *(2.5%)*
The average six-year graduation rate for the most recent three years.

Graduation rates for Pell Grant recipients *(2.5%)*
The average four-year and six-year graduation rates for the most recent three years for students who received a Pell Grant.

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Sources for Metric Data

Data comes from a variety of sources: the U.S. Government Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS), the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard, PayScale, Niche College Student Survey, Forbes Databases, Public Service Leaders Lists, Award Winners, Scholarship Recipients, and the National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates.

	U.S. Government Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS)	College Scorecard	PayScale	Niche College Student Survey	Forbes Databases, Public Service Leaders Lists, and Award Winners	Scholarship Recipients	National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates
Alumni Salary		✓	✓				
Debt		✓					
Student Experience	✓				✓		
American Leaders List					✓		
Academic Success						✓	✓
Graduation Rates	✓						