

# U.S. News & World Report 2025 Best Colleges Rankings

## Office of Institutional Research and Assessment Summary Report

U.S. News and World Report releases the Best Colleges Rankings each fall. These undergraduate rankings are used by students to help them decide where to apply to college. Rankings are based on the following criteria: outcomes, peer assessments, faculty and financial resources, student excellence, and faculty research. Rankings serve a purpose, but only measure a small portion of what we use as an institution to measure our success.

This report presents the 2025 U.S. News Best Colleges Rankings for the University of Tennessee - Knoxville and our peers.

The University of Tennessee - Knoxville	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Overall Rankings</b>				
<i>National Universities</i>	103	115	105	109
<i>Public School</i>	46	53	51	52
<b>Institutional Scores/Rankings</b>				
<i>Overall Score</i>	60	59	63	62
<i>Expert Opinion</i>	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
<i>Outcomes Rank</i>	157	171	202	200
<i>Six-year graduation rate</i>	71%	72%	73%	73%
<i>Freshmen retention rate</i>	89%	88%	89%	91%
<i>Over/Under Predicted graduation rate</i>	-5	-6	-6	-2
<i>Median Federal Indebtedness</i>	\$20,308	19810	\$20,500	\$20,500
<i>College grads earning more than high school grads</i>	-	-	80%	86%
<i>Social Mobility Rank</i>	192	250	312	300
<i>Pell grad rate</i>	61%	60%	61%	63%
<i>Faculty Resources Rank</i>	141	198	78	82
<i>Faculty Compensation Rank</i>	49	55	63	63
<i>Percentage of faculty that is full time</i>	96%	94%	94%	94%
<i>Student/Faculty Ratio</i>	17/1	17/1	18/1	18/1
<i>Student Excellence Rank</i>	81	79	-	-
<i>SAT/ACT 25<sup>th</sup>-75<sup>th</sup> percentile</i>	25-31	25-31	25-31	25-31
<i>Financial Resources Rank</i>	125	132	133	134
<i>Faculty Research</i>	-	-	41	52

## **The University of Tennessee - Knoxville**

In the 2025 rankings, the University of Tennessee – Knoxville (UTK) dropped to #109 in the national rankings and to #52 in the public school rankings. In the national rankings, UTK tied with eleven other institutions and with eight in the public ranking.

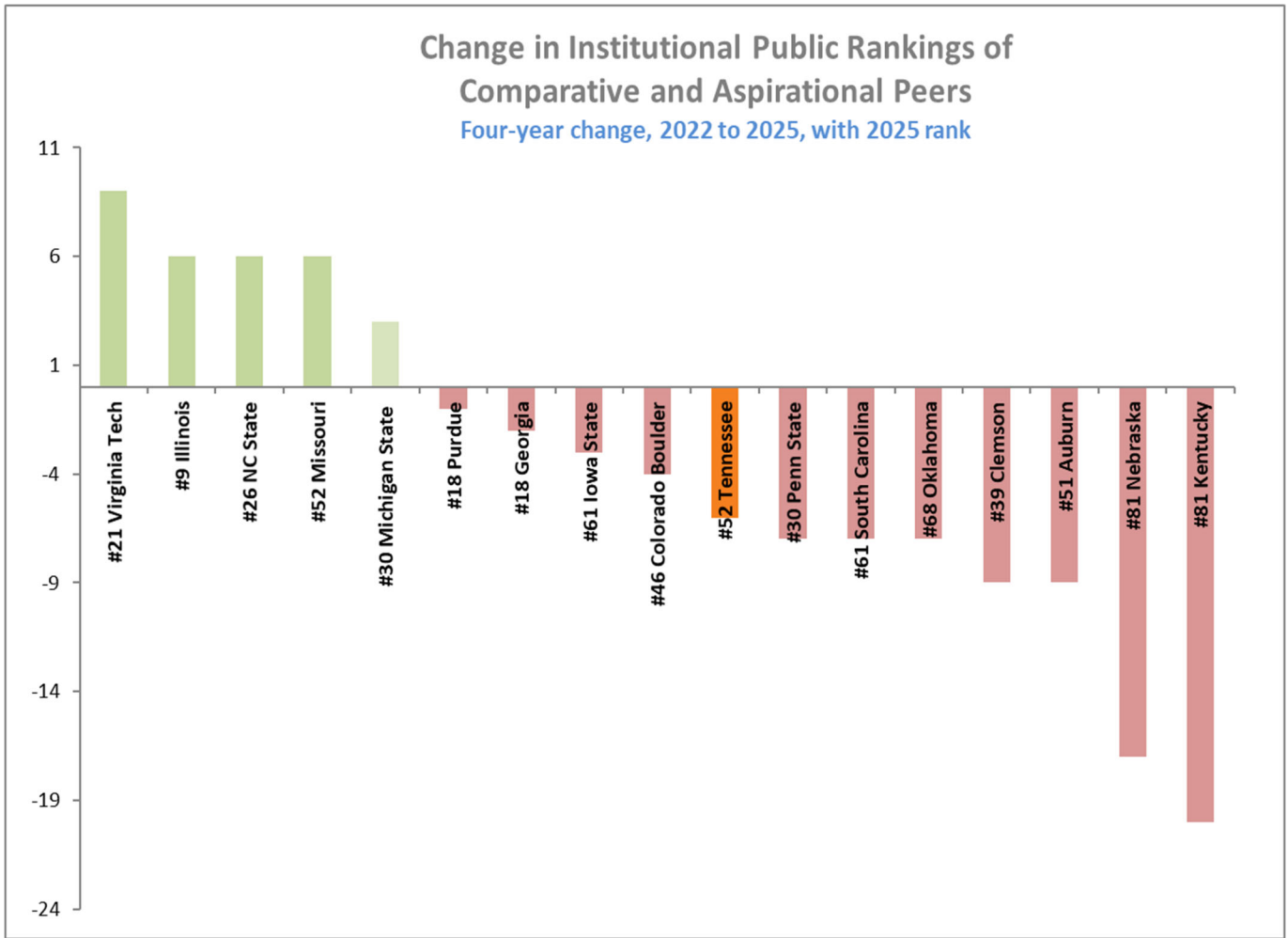
The university has once again been included in the Best Value Schools rankings at 95<sup>th</sup> nationally (up 22 places) and 24<sup>th</sup> among publics. We are also listed in the Most Innovative Schools rankings at 63<sup>rd</sup> nationally (down 5) and 33<sup>rd</sup> among public schools (down 4). UTK was also ranked in the Best Colleges for Veterans rankings at 70<sup>th</sup> (down 1) nationally and 51<sup>st</sup> among publics.

Our undergraduate business program ranked 40<sup>th</sup> nationally (down 2) and 25<sup>th</sup> among publics. The supply chain/logistics program is once again highly ranked at 4<sup>th</sup> nationally and is also again 3<sup>rd</sup> among public schools. Accounting came in 42<sup>nd</sup> nationally (up 4) and 18<sup>th</sup> among publics (up 5). Undergraduate engineering is ranked 66<sup>th</sup> (down 5) nationally and 37<sup>th</sup> among publics (down 3). Nursing made a big jump to 26<sup>th</sup> (up 41 spots) nationally and 19<sup>th</sup> among publics (up 32 places). Computer Science ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> nationally (up 18) and 29 among publics (up 9) while Economics (45<sup>th</sup> public) and Psychology (54<sup>th</sup> public) were also ranked. These discipline rankings are based solely on the peer surveys of deans and senior faculty members of the different programs.

U.S. News only made one changes in their methodology this year. First Generation student graduation rates were removed from their Social Mobility calculations (within the Outcomes section) and their scoring weights applied to the Pell student graduation rates.

UTK slightly increased in the Outcomes rank (which makes up over half of the rankings), moving up from 202 to 200. Our Social Mobility Rank also increased rising from 312 to 300. We had minor ranking decreases in Financial Resources (132 to 133), Faculty Compensation (55 to 63), and in Faculty Research (41 to 52).

The following chart shows the changes in Public Ranking of our comparative and aspirational peers over a four year period, from 2022 to 2025. Over this period, 5 peers increased in rank and 11 peers decreased.



## Peer Comparisons

The University of Tennessee – Knoxville has two sets of comparison peers: Comparative (10) and Aspirational (6). In the following section, we list the schools that exhibited the largest increases or decreases in the different categories. The movement in the rankings are in our opinion mostly caused by the movement of those ranked around us, including the number of ties in the rankings ahead of us and several institutions moving with or above us. Four of our comparable and three of our aspirational peers fell in the overall rankings.

UTK Peers	2025 National Universities	2024 National Universities	Change	2025 Public Schools	2024 Public Schools	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	109	105	-4	52	51	-1
<b>Comparable Peers</b>						
Auburn University	105	93	-12	51	47	-4
Clemson University	80	86	6	39	43	4
Iowa State University	121	115	-6	61	58	-3
University of Colorado Boulder	98	105	7	46	51	5
University of Kentucky	152	159	7	81	84	3
University of Missouri	109	124	15	52	64	12
University of Nebraska	152	159	7	81	84	3
University of Oklahoma	132	124	-8	68	64	-4
University of South Carolina	121	124	3	61	64	3
Virginia Tech	51	47	-4	21	20	-1
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>						
Michigan State University	63	60	-3	30	28	-2
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	58	60	2	26	28	2
Purdue University	46	43	-3	18	17	-1
University of Georgia	46	47	1	18	20	2
Penn State	63	60	-3	30	28	-2
University of Illinois	33	35	2	9	12	3

### Comparative Peers

- National Universities Ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (15), University of Colorado Boulder (7), University of Kentucky (7), University of Nebraska (7), and Clemson University (6)
  - Decreased in rank: Auburn University (-12), University of Oklahoma (-8), Iowa State (-6), Virginia Tech (-4) and UTK (-4)
- Public Universities Ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (12), University of Colorado Boulder (5), and Clemson University (4)
  - Decreased in rank: Auburn University (-4) and the University of Oklahoma (-4)
- Outcomes Rank
  - Increased in rank: University of Colorado Boulder (5) and UTK (2)
  - Decreased in rank: Auburn University (-42), University of Kentucky (-32), Iowa State (-26), University of Nebraska (-23), Virginia Tech (-15), University of South Carolina (-14), and Clemson University (-11)

- Social Mobility Rank
  - Increased in rank: University of Colorado Boulder (56), Clemson University (47), University of Missouri (12), and UTK (12)
  - Decreased in rank: Virginia Tech (-45), University of Kentucky (-29), and Auburn University (-23)
- Faculty Resources Rank
  - Increased in Rank: University of South Carolina (24), Virginia Tech (16), University of Missouri (16), University of Nebraska (6), and Iowa State (6)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Kentucky (-10), University of Colorado Boulder (-7), and UTK (-4)
- Faculty Compensation Rank
  - Increased in Rank: University of Oklahoma (31), University of South Carolina (29), Clemson University (18), Virginia Tech (16), and the University of Missouri (8)
  - Decreased in rank: Auburn University (-4) and the University of Nebraska (-4)
- Financial Resources Rank:
  - Increased in Rank: University of South Carolina (33), Iowa State (25), Virginia Tech (10), University of Colorado Boulder (8), University of Missouri (8), and the University of Kentucky (6)
  - Decreased in rank: Clemson University (-16), University of Oklahoma (-8), and Auburn University (-4)
- Faculty Research
  - Increased in rank: University of South Carolina (36), Virginia Tech (22), University of Missouri (7), and Clemson University (5)
  - Decreased in rank: UTK (-11), University of Kentucky (-6), University of Oklahoma (-5), and Auburn University (-5)

### Aspirational Peers

- National Universities Ranking
  - Increased in rank: NC State (2) and the University of Illinois (2)
  - Decreased in rank: UTK (-4), Michigan State University (-3), Penn State (-3), and Purdue University (-3)
- Public Universities Ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Illinois (3), University of Georgia (2) and NC State (2)
  - Decreased in rank: Michigan State University (-2), Penn State (-2), Purdue University (-1), and UTK (-1)

- Outcomes Rank
  - Increased in rank: NC State (6) and UTK (2)
  - Decreased in rank: Michigan State University (-9), Purdue University (-6), University of Illinois (-3), and the University of Georgia (-2)
- Social Mobility Rank
  - Increased in rank: University of Georgia (40), NC State (25) , and UTK (12)
  - Decreased in rank: Purdue University (-39), Michigan State University (-29), and the University of Illinois (-10)
- Faculty Resources Rank
  - Increased in Rank: University of Illinois (8) and NC State (6)
  - Decreased in rank: Michigan State University (-8), University of Georgia (-4), and UTK (-4)
- Faculty Compensation Rank
  - Increased in Rank: NC State (7) and the University of Illinois (4)
  - Decreased in rank: Penn State (-5), Michigan State University (-3), and Purdue University (-3)
- Financial Resources Rank
  - Increased in Rank: Michigan State University (9)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Illinois (-22), Penn State (-15), and Purdue University (-5)
- Faculty Research
  - Increased in rank: University of Georgia (5) and Penn State (4)
  - Decreased in rank: UTK (-11) and Michigan State University (-9)

## SEC

- National Universities ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (15) and the University of Kentucky (7)
  - Decreased in rank: Auburn University (-12), University of Arkansas (-11), University of Mississippi (-8), and the University of Oklahoma (-8)
- Public Universities ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (12) and LSU (4)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Arkansas (-7), Auburn University (-4), University of Mississippi (-4), and the University of Oklahoma (-4)
- Outcomes Rank
  - Increased in rank: UTK (2)
  - Decreased in rank: Auburn University (-42), University of Alabama (-32), University of Arkansas (-32), University of Kentucky (-32), Mississippi State (-27), University of Mississippi (-22), LSU (-18), University of South Carolina (-14), and Vanderbilt University (-11)

- Social Mobility
  - Increased in rank: University of Georgia (40), Vanderbilt University (32), UTK (12), University of Missouri (12), and Mississippi State (8)
  - Decreased in rank: Texas A&M (-76), LSU (-40), University of Kentucky (-29), Auburn University (-23), University of Alabama (-17), University of Arkansas (-15), and the University of Mississippi (-13)
- Faculty Resources Rank
  - Increased in Rank: University of Arkansas (33), University of South Carolina (24), Texas A&M (20), University of Missouri (16), and the University of Alabama (13)
  - Decreased in rank: Mississippi State (-28), University of Kentucky (-10), and the University of Mississippi (-10)
- Faculty Compensation Rank
  - Increased in Rank: University of South Carolina (29), LSU (19), Texas A&M (17), University of Arkansas (15), University of Alabama (10), and the University of Missouri (8)
  - Decreased in rank: Mississippi State (-32), Vanderbilt University (-5) and Auburn University (-4)
- Financial Resources Rank:
  - Increased in Rank: University of South Carolina (33), LSU (28), University of Alabama (14), and the University of Missouri (8)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Florida (-19), University of Arkansas (-11), Mississippi State (-10), and the University of Mississippi (-9)
- Faculty Research
  - Increased in rank: University of South Carolina (36), University of Arkansas (18), LSU (12), Mississippi State (12), University of Florida (11), and the University of Missouri (7)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Alabama (-12), UTK (-11), and the University of Kentucky (-6)

In the 2025 national rankings the University of Tennessee – Knoxville tied with eleven other universities. The public institutions that tied with UTK include California State University--Long Beach, George Mason University, San Diego State University, University of Texas—Dallas, University of Arizona, University of Missouri, University of New Hampshire, and the University of Oregon. The private institutions that tied with us are: Brigham Young University, University of San Diego, and the University of San Francisco.