

# U.S. News & World Report 2021 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 criteria such as retention and graduation rates and other outcomes, peer assessments, and faculty and financial resources. Rankings serve a purpose, but only measure a small portion of what we use as an institution to measure our success. The university is coming off a record year in undergraduate enrollment and has also seen sustained growth in our graduation rates.

This report presents the 2021 U.S. News Best Colleges Rankings for the University of Tennessee - Knoxville and our peers. Detailed peer rankings and rankings methodology are presented in the appendices.

<b>The University of Tennessee - Knoxville</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Overall Rankings</b>				
<i>National Universities</i>	103	115	104	112
<i>Public School</i>	46	52	44	52
<b>Institutional Scores/Rankings</b>				
<i>Overall Score</i>	49	48	51	59
<i>Expert Opinion</i>	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3
<i>Outcomes Rank</i>	-	-	170*	147
<i>Graduation and Retention Rank</i>	120	124	137	136
<i>Six-year graduation rate</i>	69%	70%	71%	72%
<i>Average freshmen retention rate</i>	86%	86%	86%	87%
<i>Over/Under Predicted graduation rate</i>	-2	-3	-3	0
<i>Graduate Indebtedness Rank</i>	*	*	*	103
<i>Graduating Students who Borrowed</i>	*	*	*	49%
<i>Average Federal Indebtedness</i>	*	*	*	\$20,584
<i>Social Mobility Rank</i>	-	-	138*	161
<i>Faculty Resources Rank</i>	124	123	169	166
<i>Faculty Compensation Rank</i>	-	-	55*	51
<i>Proportion of classes fewer than 20 students</i>	30.00%	30.00%	30%	31%
<i>Proportion of classes with 50+ students</i>	13.00%	14.00%	15%	15%
<i>Student Excellence Rank</i>	84	112	83	98
<i>SAT/ACT 25<sup>th</sup>-75<sup>th</sup> percentile</i>	24-30	24-30	25-31	24-30
<i>Financial Resources Rank</i>	84	97	110	116
<i>Alumni Giving Rank</i>	102	105	108	90
<i>Average alumni giving rate</i>	10.4%	10.5%	10.7%	11.1%

## The University of Tennessee - Knoxville

In the 2021 rankings, the University of Tennessee – Knoxville (UTK) dropped 8 spots to #112 in the national rankings. We also dropped 8 spots to #52 in the public school rankings. In the national rankings UTK is tied with five other institutions and with one in the public ranking.

Ties among institutions can have a significant impact on an institution's yearly rank. In 2018 we were ranked at #103 (tied with 6 other institutions), with 6 institutions tied in the rank above us. 2019's rankings had us dropping to #115 with 9 institutions tied in the rank above us. Once again in 2020 we improved to #104 (tied with 11 other institutions) with 6 institutions tied in the rank above us. This year the number of institutions tied in the rank above us increased (9 again) and we dropped to again in the rankings to #112. Methodological changes in recent years have also impacted rankings.

Our undergraduate business program ranked 44<sup>th</sup> nationally (up 6 places) and 28<sup>th</sup> among publics (up 3 places). The supply chain/logistics program is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> nationally (up 2 places) and is 4<sup>th</sup> among public schools (up 2 places). Undergraduate engineering is ranked 63<sup>rd</sup> nationally (up 3 places) and 34<sup>th</sup> among publics (also up 3).

U.S. News once again made changes in their methodology this year by adding two outcome measures pertaining to graduate indebtedness. These measures are:

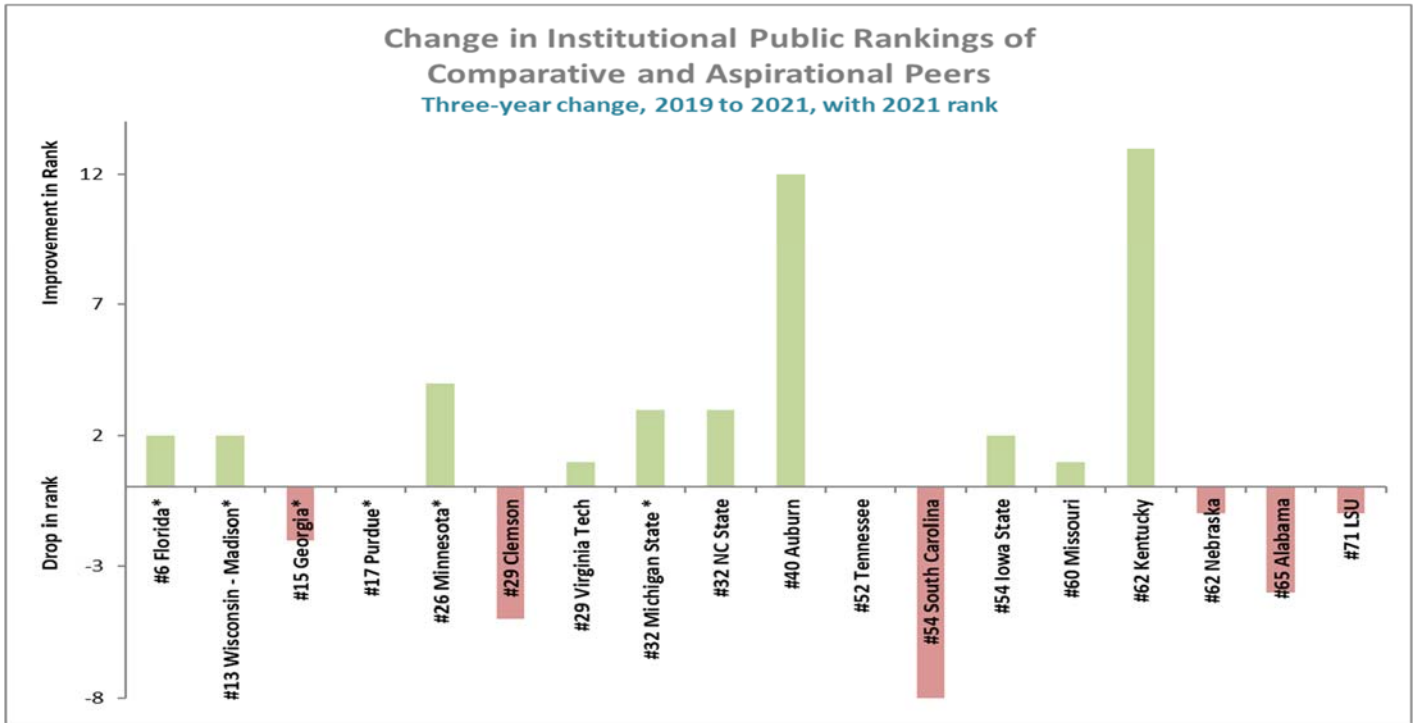
- Graduate indebtedness proportion: The percentage of graduates from the 2019 bachelor's degree graduating class who borrowed federal loans.
- Graduate indebtedness total: The average amount of federal loan debt among the 2019 bachelor's degree graduating class that took out federal loans.

UTK significantly improved in the Outcomes rank, moving up from 170 to 147. Our continued emphasis on undergraduate retention and graduation is key to our rise in this rank. In particular, our continued rise in 6-year graduation rates has made the 4-year average of these get better, and has led to no penalties for not meeting their calculated expected graduation rate (note: there was a change in that expected calculation this year – it's now based on 2 years of data). We are ranked higher than 5 of our comparable peers in the Outcomes rank. UTK also ranks better than all but three of our comparable peers in the newly added Indebtedness sub-ranking (federal loan debt).

UTK rose slightly in Faculty Resources ranking while 8 of 11 comparable and 2 of 6 aspirational peers dropped in the rank. For the faculty compensation subrank, we ranked better than or tied with all comparable peers, and better than 4 of 6 aspirational peers (now based on only 1 year of data instead of a 2-year average). Our percentage of classes with 20 or fewer students also rose to 31%, from 30% last year.

Our rank in Alumni Giving, which now only accounts for 3%, rose 18 points from #108 to #90.

The following chart shows the changes in institution rankings of our comparative and aspirational peers over a three year period, from 2019 to 2021. Over this period, 10 peers increased their public ranking, 6 peers decreased, and UTK saw no movement.



\* Aspirational Peer

## Peer Comparisons

The University of Tennessee – Knoxville has two sets of comparison peers: Comparative (11) and Aspirational (6). In the following section, we list the schools that exhibited a large increase or decrease in the different categories.

### Comparative Peers

- National Universities ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (15), University of Alabama (10), and Auburn University (7)
  - Decreased in rank: University of South Carolina (-14), and UTK (-8)
- Public Universities ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Alabama (7), Auburn University (4), and University of Missouri (4),
  - Decreased in rank: University of South Carolina (-10), and UTK (-8)
- Outcomes Rank
  - Increased in rank: UTK (23), Auburn University (22), Clemson University (22), Louisiana State (17), University of Alabama (17), University of Missouri (16), and University of Kentucky (13)
  - Decreased in rank: Iowa State (-5)

- Faculty Resources Rank
  - Increased in Rank: University of Missouri (61), University of Alabama (26), and University of Nebraska (14)
  - Decreased in rank: University of South Carolina (-52), Louisiana State (-39), Iowa State (-30), University of Kentucky (-29), Clemson University (-21), and Virginia Tech (-21)
- Student Excellence Rank:
  - Increased in Rank: University of Missouri (9), University of Alabama (7), and Virginia Tech (7)
  - Decreased in rank: UTK (-15) and University of South Carolina (-11)
- Financial Resources Rank:
  - Increased in Rank: Iowa State (10), Louisiana State (6), and University of Kentucky (6)
  - Decreased in rank: University of South Carolina (-18), Auburn University (-16), Virginia Tech (-12), and University of Nebraska (-8)

### Aspirational Peers

- National Universities ranking
  - Increased in rank: Michigan State University (4), Purdue University (4), University of Florida (4), University of Minnesota (4), and University of Wisconsin - Madison (4)
  - Decreased in rank: UTK (-8)
- Public Universities ranking
  - Increased in rank: Michigan State University (2)
  - Decreased in rank: UTK (-8)
- Outcomes Rank
  - Increased in rank: Purdue University (28), UTK (23), and University of Minnesota (19)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Georgia (-13) and Michigan State University (-11)
- Faculty Resources Rank
  - Increased in Rank: University of Wisconsin - Madison (24) and University of Florida (21)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Minnesota (-24) and Michigan State University (-13)
- Student Excellence Rank:
  - Increased in Rank: University of Florida (15), Purdue University (11), and University of Georgia (8)
  - Decreased in rank: UTK (-15)
- Financial Resources Rank:
  - Increased in Rank: Michigan State University (11)
  - Decreased in rank: UTK (-6)

## SEC

- National Universities ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (15), University of Alabama (10), and Auburn University (7)
  - Decreased in rank: University of South Carolina (-14), UTK (-8), and University of Arkansas (-7)
- Public Universities ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Alabama (7), Auburn University (4), and University of Missouri (4)
  - Decreased in rank: University of South Carolina (-10), UTK (-8), University of Arkansas (-5), and Mississippi State (-4)
- Outcomes Rank
  - Increased in rank: UTK (23), Vanderbilt (23), Auburn University (22), Texas A&M (19), Louisiana State (17), University of Alabama (17), University of Mississippi (17), and University of Missouri (16)
  - Decreased in rank: Mississippi State (-49) and University of Georgia (-13)
- Faculty Resources Rank
  - Increased in Rank: University of Missouri (61), Mississippi State (31), University of Alabama (26), and University of Florida (21)
  - Decreased in rank: University of South Carolina (-52), Louisiana State (-39), and University of Kentucky (-29)
- Student Excellence Rank:
  - Increased in Rank: Texas A&M (16), University of Florida (15), University of Missouri (9), and University of Georgia (8)
  - Decreased in rank: UTK (-15), University of South Carolina (-11), and University of Arkansas (-7)
- Financial Resources Rank:
  - Increased in Rank: Louisiana State (6) and University of Kentucky (6)
  - Decreased in rank: University of South Carolina (-18), Auburn University (-16), and UTK (-6)

In the 2021 national rankings the University of Tennessee – Knoxville tied with five other universities. The University of Illinois – Chicago is the only public institutions tied with UTK. The private institutions that are tied with us are: Creighton University, Loyola University Chicago, Rochester Institute of Technology, and the University of La Verne (CA).

# **U.S. News & World Report 2021 Best College Rankings**

## **Appendix A: UTK and Peer Comparison Tables**

The University of Tennessee - Knoxville										
Overall Rankings	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
National Universities	101	101	106	103	103	103	103	104	112	
Public School	46	47	50	47	46	46	46	52	52	
<b>Institutional Scores/Rankings</b>										
Overall Score	47	48	44	42	47	49	48	51	59	
Expert Opinion	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	
Outcomes Rank	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	170*	147	
Graduation and Retention Rank	139	142	135	127	122	120	124	137	136	
Six-year graduation rate	63%	66%	68%	69%	70%	69%	70%	71%	72%	
Average freshmen retention rate	85%	85%	86%	86%	86%	86%	86%	86%	87%	
Over/Under Predicted graduation rate	-4	-6	-4	-5	-2	-2	-3	-3	0	
Graduate Indebtedness Rank	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	103*	
Social Mobility Rank	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	138*	161	
Faculty Resources Rank	115	85	144	135	137	124	123	169	166	
Faculty Compensation Rank	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	55*	51	
Proportion of classes fewer than 20 students	33%	39%	29%	28%	28%	30%	30%	30%	31%	
Proportion of classes with 50+ students	8%	7%	15%	14%	14%	13%	14%	15%	15%	
Student Excellence Rank	78	70	76	82	79	84	112	83	98	
SAT/ACT 25 <sup>th</sup> -75 <sup>th</sup> percentile	24-29	24-29	24-29	24-29	24-30	24-30	24-30	25-31	24-30	
Financial Resources Rank	53	55	55	56	72	84	97	110	116	
Alumni Giving Rank	132	129	132	127	115	102	105	108	90	
Average alumni giving rate	10.4%	9.6%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	10.4%	10.5%	10.7%	11.1%	

\* New categories

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2018-2019 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 National Universities	2020 National Universities	Change	2021 Public Schools	2020 Public Schools	Change	2021 Expert Opinion	2020 Expert Opinion	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	112	104	-8	52	44	-8	3.3	3.3	0.0
<b>Comparable Peers</b>									
Auburn University	97	104	7	40	44	4	3.3	3.3	0
Clemson University	74	70	-4	29	27	-2	3.4	3.4	0
Iowa State University	118	121	3	54	55	1	3.3	3.3	0
Louisiana State University	153	153	0	71	72	1	3.0	2.9	0.1
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	80	84	4	32	34	2	3.2	3.2	0
University of Alabama	143	153	10	65	72	7	3.2	3.1	0.1
University of Kentucky	133	132	-1	62	60	-2	3.2	3.2	0
University of Missouri	124	139	15	60	64	4	3.3	3.2	0.1
University of Nebraska	133	139	6	62	64	2	3.3	3.2	0.1
University of South Carolina	118	104	-14	54	44	-10	3.2	3.2	0
Virginia Tech	74	74	0	29	30	1	3.7	3.7	0
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>									
Michigan State University	80	84	4	32	34	2	3.6	3.5	0.1
Purdue University	53	57	4	17	18	1	3.8	3.8	0
University of Georgia	47	50	3	15	16	1	3.7	3.6	0.1
University of Florida	30	34	4	6	7	1	3.8	3.8	0
University of Minnesota	66	70	4	26	27	1	3.7	3.7	0
University of Wisconsin - Madison	42	46	4	13	13	0		4.1	-4.1



USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2018-2019 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Social Mobility Rank (New)	2020 Social Mobility Rank (New)	Change	2021 Graduation & Retention Rank	2020 Graduation & Retention Rank	Change	2021 Outcome Rank	2020 Outcome Rank	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	161	138	-23.0	136	137	1	147	170	23
<b>Comparable Peers</b>									
Auburn University	381	380	-1	93	98	5	122	144	22
Clemson University	361	348	-13	64	64	0	92	114	22
Iowa State University	291	270	-21	115	112	-3	141	136	-5
Louisiana State University	328	345	17	172	167	-5	191	208	17
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	237	224	-13	73	78	5	81	89	8
University of Alabama	377	377	0	136	141	5	197	214	17
University of Kentucky	318	345	27	172	182	10	221	234	13
University of Missouri	353	354	1	143	145	2	185	201	16
University of Nebraska	303	303	0	161	154	-7	191	201	10
University of South Carolina	318	322	4	104	107	3	122	133	11
Virginia Tech	291	322	31	52	52	0	62	72	10
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>									
Michigan State University	265	241	-24	81	82	1	72	61	-11
Purdue University	284	270	-14	81	88	7	72	100	28
University of Georgia	191	159	-32	43	46	3	39	26	-13
University of Florida	48	34	-14	34	33	-1	7	4	-3
University of Minnesota	237	251	14	73	82	9	81	100	19
University of Wisconsin - Madison	340	297	-43	41	40	-1	52	61	9

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2018-2019 Comparison

UTK Peers		2021 Student Excellence Rank	2020 Student Excellence Rank	Change	2021 Financial Resources Rank	2020 Financial Resources Rank	Change	2021 Overall Score	2020 Overall Score	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>		98	83	-15	116	110	-6	59	51	8
<b>Comparable Peers</b>										
Auburn University		91	90	-1	156	140	-16	61	51	10
Clemson University		65	65	0	142	140	-2	65	58	7
Iowa State University		147	152	5	173	183	10	58	49	9
Louisiana State University		134	134	0	142	148	6	54	43	11
North Carolina State University - Raleigh		65	70	5	108	103	-5	63	54	9
University of Alabama		106	113	7	232	231	-1	55	43	12
University of Kentucky		126	125	-1	59	65	6	56	46	10
University of Missouri		116	125	9	173	174	1	57	45	12
University of Nebraska		147	143	-4	156	148	-8	56	45	11
University of South Carolina		106	95	-11	218	200	-18	58	51	7
Virginia Tech		94	101	7	135	123	-12	65	57	8
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>										
Michigan State University		147	152	5	82	93	11	63	54	9
Purdue University		72	83	11	95	93	-2	69	61	8
University of Georgia		54	62	8	119	123	4	71	63	8
University of Florida		32	47	15	46	47	1	77	71	6
University of Minnesota		69	65	-4	44	45	1	66	58	8
University of Wisconsin - Madison		54	59	5	59	61	2	72	65	7

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2018-2019 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Faculty Resources Rank	2020 Faculty Resources Rank	Change	2021 Alumni Giving Rank	2020 Alumni Giving Rank	Change	2021 Indebtedness Rank	2020 Indebtedness Rank	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	166	169	3	90	108	18	103	-	-
<b>Comparable Peers</b>									
Auburn University	184	182	-2	65	71	6	73	-	-
Clemson University	116	95	-21	25	26	1	103	-	-
Iowa State University	257	227	-30	90	108	18	164	-	-
Louisiana State University	221	182	-39	72	71	-1	78	-	-
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	207	194	-13	102	115	13	120	-	-
University of Alabama	269	295	26	30	28	-2	110	-	-
University of Kentucky	198	169	-29	102	96	-6	198	-	-
University of Missouri	166	227	61	79	76	-3	120	-	-
University of Nebraska	257	271	14	45	43	-2	78	-	-
University of South Carolina	221	169	-52	102	63	-39	120	-	-
Virginia Tech	248	227	-21	72	87	15	120	-	-
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>									
Michigan State University	269	256	-13	204	173	-31	182	-	-
Purdue University	93	95	2	45	38	-7	48	-	-
University of Georgia	67	69	2	68	71	3	73	-	-
University of Florida	56	77	21	54	63	9	36	-	-
University of Minnesota	280	256	-24	160	158	-2	87	-	-
University of Wisconsin - Madison	123	147	24	72	87	15	87	-	-

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Graduation and Retention Rank	2020 Graduation and Retention Rank	Change	2021 Predicted 6-Year Graduation Rate	2020 Predicted 6-Year Graduation Rate	Change	2021 Actual 6-Year Graduation Rate	2020 Actual 6-Year Graduation Rate	Change	Predicted minus Actual
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	136	137	1	72.0%	76.0%	-4%	72.0%	73.0%	-1%	0%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>										
Auburn University	93	98	5	73.0%	74.0%	-1%	79.0%	78.0%	1%	6%
Clemson University	64	64	0	81.0%	82.0%	-1%	84.0%	83.0%	1%	3%
Iowa State University	115	112	-3	69.0%	70.0%	-1%	74.0%	75.0%	-1%	5%
Louisiana State University	172	167	-5	66.0%	67.0%	-1%	68.0%	67.0%	1%	2%
North Carolina State University	73	78	5	76.0%	79.0%	-3%	83.0%	81.0%	2%	7%
University of Alabama	136	141	5	73.0%	75.0%	-2%	71.0%	72.0%	-1%	-2%
University of Kentucky	172	182	10	67.0%	70.0%	-3%	66.0%	66.0%	0%	-1%
University of Missouri	143	145	2	70.0%	71.0%	-1%	71.0%	69.0%	2%	1%
University of Nebraska	161	154	-7	67.0%	70.0%	-3%	65.0%	69.0%	-4%	-2%
University of South Carolina	104	107	3	71.0%	71.0%	0%	77.0%	77.0%	0%	6%
Virginia Tech	52	52	0	77.0%	78.0%	-1%	86.0%	84.0%	2%	9%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>										
Michigan State University	81	82	1	69.0%	70.0%	-1%	81.0%	80.0%	1%	12%
Purdue University	81	88	7	74.0%	76.0%	-2%	82.0%	81.0%	1%	8%
University of Georgia	43	46	3	77.0%	78.0%	-1%	87.0%	86.0%	1%	10%
University of Florida	34	33	-1	81.0%	82.0%	-1%	88.0%	90.0%	-2%	7%
University of Minnesota	73	82	9	76.0%	78.0%	-2%	83.0%	80.0%	3%	7%
University of Wisconsin	41	40	-1	80.0%	84.0%	-4%	88.0%	87.0%	1%	8%

Grad/Ret = 22% (4-yr avg grad rate 17.6%, 4-yr avg ret rate 4.4%)

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Average Freshmen Retention Rate	2020 Average Freshmen Retention Rate	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	87%	86%	1%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>			
Auburn University	91%	91%	0%
Clemson University	93%	93%	0%
Iowa State University	88%	88%	0%
Louisiana State University	83%	84%	-1%
North Carolina State University	94%	94%	0%
University of Alabama	87%	87%	0%
University of Kentucky	84%	83%	1%
University of Missouri	87%	87%	0%
University of Nebraska	83%	83%	0%
University of South Carolina	88%	88%	0%
Virginia Tech	93%	93%	0%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>			
Michigan State University	92%	92%	0%
Purdue University	92%	92%	0%
University of Georgia	96%	95%	1%
University of Florida	97%	97%	0%
University of Minnesota	93%	93%	0%
University of Wisconsin	95%	95%	0%

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Social Mobility Rank	2020 Social Mobility Rank	Change	2021 6-Year Graduation Rate for Pell	2020 6-Year Graduation Rate for Pell	Change	2021 6-Year Graduation Rate for Non-Pell	2020 6-Year Graduation Rate for Non-Pell	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	161	138	-23	62.0%	64.0%	-2%	76.0%	76.0%	0%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>									
Auburn University	381	380	-1	68.0%	64.0%	4%	80.0%	80.0%	0%
Clemson University	361	348	-13	72.0%	71.0%	1%	86.0%	85.0%	1%
Iowa State University	291	270	-21	65.0%	67.0%	-2%	76.0%	77.0%	-1%
Louisiana State University	328	345	17	57.0%	55.0%	2%	71.0%	70.0%	1%
North Carolina State University	237	224	-13	78.0%	76.0%	2%	84.0%	83.0%	1%
University of Alabama	377	377	0	56.0%	58.0%	-2%	74.0%	75.0%	-1%
University of Kentucky	318	345	27	54.0%	53.0%	1%	70.0%	70.0%	0%
University of Missouri	353	354	1	59.0%	55.0%	4%	75.0%	73.0%	2%
University of Nebraska	303	303	0	54.0%	59.0%	-5%	69.0%	72.0%	-3%
University of South Carolina	318	322	4	67.0%	69.0%	-2%	79.0%	79.0%	0%
Virginia Tech	291	322	31	83.0%	77.0%	6%	86.0%	85.0%	1%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>									
Michigan State University	265	241	-24	71.0%	71.0%	0%	84.0%	83.0%	1%
Purdue University	284	270	-14	73.0%	74.0%	-1%	84.0%	83.0%	1%
University of Georgia	191	159	-32	81.0%	80.0%	1%	89.0%	87.0%	2%
University of Florida	48	34	-14	86.0%	87.0%	-1%	90.0%	91.0%	-1%
University of Minnesota	237	251	14	77.0%	72.0%	5%	85.0%	82.0%	3%
University of Wisconsin	340	297	-43	79.0%	84.0%	-5%	89.0%	88.0%	1%

Social Mobility = 5% (Pell grad rate 2.5%, Pell grad rate performance 2.5%)

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Pell / Non-Pell Diff.	2020 Pell / Non-Pell Diff.	2020 vs 2019 Difference
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	14%	12%	2%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>			
Auburn University	12%	16%	-4%
Clemson University	14%	14%	0%
Iowa State University	11%	10%	1%
Louisiana State University	14%	15%	-1%
North Carolina State University	6%	7%	-1%
University of Alabama	18%	17%	1%
University of Kentucky	16%	17%	-1%
University of Missouri	16%	18%	-2%
University of Nebraska	15%	13%	2%
University of South Carolina	12%	10%	2%
Virginia Tech	3%	8%	-5%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>			
Michigan State University	13%	12%	1%
Purdue University	11%	9%	2%
University of Georgia	8%	7%	1%
University of Florida	4%	4%	0%
University of Minnesota	8%	10%	-2%
University of Wisconsin	10%	4%	6%

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Graduate Indebtedness Rank	2020 Graduate Indebtedness Rank	Change	2021 Graduating Students who Borrowed	2020 Graduating Students who Borrowed	Change	2021 Average Federal Indebtedness	2020 Average Federal Indebtedness	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	103	-	-	49.0%	-	-	\$20,584	-	-
<b>Comparable Peers</b>									
Auburn University	73	-	-	37.0%	-	-	\$21,300	-	-
Clemson University	103	-	-	44.0%	-	-	\$21,714	-	-
Iowa State University	164	-	-	55.0%	-	-	\$22,697	-	-
Louisiana State University	78	-	-	42.0%	-	-	\$21,042	-	-
North Carolina State University	120	-	-	49.0%	-	-	\$21,748	-	-
University of Alabama	110	-	-	45.0%	-	-	\$22,153	-	-
University of Kentucky	198	-	-	50.0%	-	-	\$24,961	-	-
University of Missouri	120	-	-	50.0%	-	-	\$21,760	-	-
University of Nebraska	78	-	-	50.0%	-	-	\$19,383	-	-
University of South Carolina	120	-	-	50.0%	-	-	\$21,497	-	-
Virginia Tech	120	-	-	46.0%	-	-	\$22,366	-	-
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>									
Michigan State University	182	-	-	50.0%	-	-	\$24,023	-	-
Purdue University	48	-	-	39.0%	-	-	\$18,915	-	-
University of Georgia	73	-	-	40.0%	-	-	\$20,748	-	-
University of Florida	36	-	-	34.0%	-	-	\$18,402	-	-
University of Minnesota	87	-	-	53.0%	-	-	\$19,507	-	-
University of Wisconsin	87	-	-	41.0%	-	-	\$21,918	-	-

Graduate Indebtedness = 5% (Graduate indebtedness total 3%, Graduate indebtedness proportion with debt 2%)



USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Faculty Resources Rank	2020 Faculty Resources Rank	Change	2021 Classes Under 20	2020 Classes Under 20	Change	2021 Classes of 50 or More	2020 Classes of 50 or More	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	166	169	3	31.0%	30.0%	1%	15.0%	15.0%	0%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>									
Auburn University	184	182	-2	36.0%	35.0%	1%	16.0%	17.0%	-1%
Clemson University	116	95	-21	53.0%	55.0%	-2%	14.0%	14.0%	0%
Iowa State University	257	227	-30	32.0%	29.0%	3%	20.0%	20.0%	0%
Louisiana State University	221	182	-39	41.0%	41.0%	0%	17.0%	17.0%	0%
North Carolina State University	207	194	-13	35.0%	35.0%	0%	16.0%	16.0%	0%
University of Alabama	269	295	26	34.0%	34.0%	0%	21.0%	23.0%	-2%
University of Kentucky	198	169	-29	34.0%	37.0%	-3%	16.0%	15.0%	1%
University of Missouri	166	227	61	41.0%	39.0%	2%	15.0%	17.0%	-2%
University of Nebraska	257	271	14	36.0%	35.0%	1%	18.0%	18.0%	0%
University of South Carolina	221	169	-52	38.0%	37.0%	1%	16.0%	17.0%	-1%
Virginia Tech	248	227	-21	29.0%	27.0%	2%	23.0%	22.0%	1%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>									
Michigan State University	269	256	-13	24.0%	24.0%	0%	24.0%	23.0%	1%
Purdue University	93	95	2	39.0%	38.0%	1%	19.0%	20.0%	-1%
University of Georgia	67	69	2	48.0%	45.0%	3%	11.0%	11.0%	0%
University of Florida	56	77	21	53.0%	50.0%	3%	10.0%	14.0%	-4%
University of Minnesota	280	256	-24	38.0%	38.0%	0%	19.0%	20.0%	-1%
University of Wisconsin	123	147	24	44.0%	45.0%	-1%	22.0%	22.0%	0%

Faculty Resources = 20% (class size 8%, fac compensation 7%, percent Ph.D or terminal degree 3%, percent full-time 1%, student-faculty ratio 1%)

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Faculty Compensation Rank	2020 Faculty Compensation Rank	Change	2021 % Full-Time Faculty	2020 % Full-Time Faculty	Change	2021 % Faculty with Ph.D or Terminal Degree	2020 % Faculty with Ph.D or Terminal Degree	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	51	55	4	96.0%	95.9%	0.1%	86.0%	86.0%	0.0%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>									
Auburn University	64	70	6	95.2%	94.7%	0.5%	89.0%	90.0%	-1.0%
Clemson University	72	70	-2	90.8%	90.8%	0.0%	86.0%	87.0%	-1.0%
Iowa State University	106	83	-23	93.9%	93.9%	0.0%	93.0%	94.0%	-1.0%
Louisiana State University	113	83	-30	95.7%	95.8%	-0.1%	86.0%	87.0%	-1.0%
North Carolina State University	120	121	1	94.9%	95.0%	-0.1%	93.0%	92.0%	1.0%
University of Alabama	72	51	-21	90.0%	89.2%	0.8%	86.0%	74.0%	12.0%
University of Kentucky	90	109	19	86.0%	86.0%	0.0%	93.0%	92.0%	1.0%
University of Missouri	120	157	37	97.0%	98.2%	-1.2%	90.0%	91.0%	-1.0%
University of Nebraska	77	96	19	98.2%	97.6%	0.6%	77.0%	80.0%	-3.0%
University of South Carolina	113	73	-40	87.3%	87.0%	0.3%	90.0%	89.0%	1.0%
Virginia Tech	51	48	-3	96.4%	96.1%	0.3%	89.0%	90.0%	-1.0%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>									
Michigan State University	57	55	-2	95.6%	95.3%	0.3%	90.0%	90.0%	0.0%
Purdue University	46	55	9	95.5%	95.3%	0.2%	98.0%	98.0%	0.0%
University of Georgia	64	73	9	95.5%	95.8%	-0.3%	95.0%	94.0%	1.0%
University of Florida	59	64	5	94.8%	94.2%	0.6%	90.0%	90.0%	0.0%
University of Minnesota	90	83	-7	87.4%	87.2%	0.2%	78.0%	80.0%	-2.0%
University of Wisconsin	48	67	19	93.8%	93.9%	-0.1%	91.0%	91.0%	0.0%

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Student/Faculty Ratio	2020 Student/Faculty Ratio
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	17:1	17:1
<b>Comparable Peers</b>		
Auburn University	20:1	19:1
Clemson University	16:1	16:1
Iowa State University	18:1	19:1
Louisiana State University	20:1	20:1
North Carolina State University	14:1	14:1
University of Alabama	20:1	22:1
University of Kentucky	16:1	16:1
University of Missouri	17:1	17:1
University of Nebraska	17:1	18:1
University of South Carolina	17:1	17:1
Virginia Tech	14:1	14:1
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>		
Michigan State University	16:1	16:1
Purdue University	13:1	13:1
University of Georgia	17:1	17:1
University of Florida	17:1	18:1
University of Minnesota	17:1	17:1
University of Wisconsin	17:1	17:1

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Student Excellence Rank	2020 Student Excellence Rank	Change	2021 ACT 25th-75th Percentile	2020 ACT 25th-75th Percentile	2021 Freshmen in Top 10% of Class	2020 Freshmen in Top 10% of Class	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	98	83	-15	24-30	25-31	35%	36%	-
<b>Comparable Peers</b>								
Auburn University	91	90	-1	25-31	25-30	33%	32%	1%
Clemson University	65	65	0	26-31*	27-32*	56%	56%	0%
Iowa State University	147	152	5	22-28	22-28	28%	27%	1%
Louisiana State University	134	134	0	23-29	23-29	24%	23%	1%
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	65	70	5	26-32*	26-31*	50%	48%	2%
University of Alabama	106	113	7	23-31	23-31	40%	36%	4%
University of Kentucky	126	125	-1	22-29	23-29	33%	31%	2%
University of Missouri	116	125	9	23-29	23-29	33%	30%	3%
University of Nebraska	147	143	-4	22-28	22-29	28%	26%	2%
University of South Carolina	106	95	-11	24-30*	24-30*	28%	29%	-1%
Virginia Tech	94	101	7	24-31*	24-31*	29%	38%	-9%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>								
Michigan State University	147	152	5	22-28*	22-28*	28%	29%	-1%
Purdue University	72	83	11	24-32*	24-31*	49%	46%	3%
University of Georgia	54	62	8	26-32*	26-31*	60%	60%	0%
University of Florida	32	47	15	28-33*	27-32*	81%	77%	4%
University of Minnesota	69	65	-4	26-31	26-31	50%	50%	0%
University of Wisconsin - Madison	54	59	5	27-32	27-32	57%	54%	3%

Student Excellence (selectivity) = 7% (SAT/ACT 5%, high school class standing 2%)

\* Converted from SAT scores

USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2020-2021 Comparison

UTK Peers	2021 Alumni Giving Rank	2020 Alumni Giving Rank	Change	2021 Average Alumni Giving Rate	2020 Average Alumni Giving Rate	Change
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	90	108	18	11.1%	10.7%	0.4%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>						
Auburn University	65	71	6	14.0%	13.1%	0.9%
Clemson University	25	26	1	23.0%	23.5%	-0.5%
Iowa State University	90	108	18	11.4%	11.0%	0.4%
Louisiana State University	72	71	-1	12.9%	13.3%	-0.4%
North Carolina State University	102	115	13	10.7%	10.3%	0.4%
University of Alabama	30	28	-2	21.2%	23.4%	-2.2%
University of Kentucky	102	96	-6	10.6%	11.3%	-0.7%
University of Missouri	79	76	-3	11.8%	12.3%	-0.5%
University of Nebraska	45	43	-2	16.7%	18.1%	-1.4%
University of South Carolina	102	63	-39	10.6%	14.3%	-3.7%
Virginia Tech	72	87	15	12.9%	12.3%	0.6%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>						
Michigan State University	204	173	-31	6.0%	7.6%	-1.6%
Purdue University	45	38	-7	16.7%	18.3%	-1.6%
University of Georgia	68	71	3	13.3%	13.4%	-0.1%
University of Florida	54	63	9	15.7%	14.4%	1.3%
University of Minnesota	160	158	-2	7.3%	7.7%	-0.4%
University of Wisconsin	72	87	15	12.8%	11.9%	0.9%

Alumni Giving 3%

## USNWR Best Colleges Rankings 2021 Peer Rankings Comparison

UTK Peers	National Universities	Public Schools	Overall Score	Outcomes Rank	Faculty Resources Rank	Student Excellence Rank	Financial Resources Rank	Alumni Giving Rank
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	112	52	59	147	166	98	116	90
<b>Comparable Peers</b>								
Auburn University	97	40	61	122	184	91	156	65
Clemson University	74	29	65	92	116	65	142	25
Iowa State University	118	54	58	141	257	147	173	90
Louisiana State University	153	71	54	191	221	134	142	72
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	80	32	63	81	207	65	108	102
University of Alabama	143	65	55	197	269	106	232	30
University of Kentucky	133	62	56	221	198	126	59	102
University of Missouri	124	60	57	185	166	116	173	79
University of Nebraska	133	62	56	191	257	147	156	45
University of South Carolina	118	54	58	122	221	106	218	102
Virginia Tech	74	29	65	62	248	94	135	72
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>								
Michigan State University	80	32	63	72	269	147	82	204
Purdue University	53	17	69	72	93	72	95	45
University of Georgia	47	15	71	39	67	54	119	68
University of Florida	30	6	77	7	56	32	46	54
University of Minnesota	66	26	66	81	280	69	44	160
University of Wisconsin - Madison	42	13	72	52	123	54	59	72

## USNWR Best Colleges Rankings 2021 Peer Categories Comparison

UTK Peers	Public Schools	Overall Score	Expert Opinion	Graduation and Retention Rank	Predicted 6-Year Graduation Rate	Actual 6-Year Graduation Rate	Over(+)/Under(-) Performance
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>							
	52	59	3.3	136	72%	72%	0%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>							
Auburn University	40	61	3.3	93	73%	79%	6%
Clemson University	29	65	3.4	64	81%	84%	3%
Iowa State University	54	58	3.3	115	69%	74%	5%
Louisiana State University	71	54	3.0	172	66%	68%	2%
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	32	63	3.2	73	76%	83%	7%
University of Alabama	65	55	3.2	136	73%	71%	-2%
University of Kentucky	62	56	3.2	172	67%	66%	-1%
University of Missouri	60	57	3.3	143	70%	71%	1%
University of Nebraska	62	56	3.3	161	67%	65%	-2%
University of South Carolina	54	58	3.2	104	71%	77%	6%
Virginia Tech	29	65	3.7	52	77%	86%	9%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>							
Michigan State University	32	63	3.6	81	69%	81%	12%
Purdue University	17	69	3.8	81	74%	82%	8%
University of Georgia	15	71	3.7	43	77%	87%	10%
University of Florida	6	77	3.8	34	81%	88%	7%
University of Minnesota	26	66	3.7	73	76%	83%	7%
University of Wisconsin - Madison	13	72	4.1	41	80%	88%	8%

## USNWR Best Colleges Rankings 2021 Peer Categories Comparison

UTK Peers	Average Freshmen Retention Rate	Graduate Indebtedness Rank	Graduating Students who Borrowed	Average Federal Indebtedness	Social Mobility Rank	2021 6-Year Graduation Rate for Pell	2021 6-Year Graduation Rate for Non-Pell
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	87%	103	49%	\$20,584	161	62%	76%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>							
Auburn University	91%	73	37%	\$21,300	381	68%	80%
Clemson University	93%	103	44%	\$21,714	361	72%	86%
Iowa State University	88%	164	55%	\$22,697	291	65%	76%
Louisiana State University	83%	78	42%	\$21,042	328	57%	71%
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	94%	120	49%	\$21,748	237	78%	84%
University of Alabama	87%	110	45%	\$22,153	377	56%	74%
University of Kentucky	84%	198	50%	\$24,961	318	54%	70%
University of Missouri	87%	120	50%	\$21,760	353	59%	75%
University of Nebraska	83%	78	50%	\$19,383	303	54%	69%
University of South Carolina	88%	120	50%	\$21,497	318	67%	79%
Virginia Tech	93%	120	46%	\$22,366	291	83%	86%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>							
Michigan State University	92%	182	50%	\$24,023	265	71%	84%
Purdue University	92%	48	39%	\$18,915	284	73%	84%
University of Georgia	96%	73	40%	\$20,748	191	81%	89%
University of Florida	97%	36	34%	\$18,402	48	86%	90%
University of Minnesota	93%	87	53%	\$19,507	237	77%	85%
University of Wisconsin - Madison	95%	87	41%	\$21,918	340	79%	89%



## USNWR Best Colleges Rankings 2021 Peer Categories Comparison

UTK Peers	Classes Under 20	Classes of 50 or More	Student/Faculty Ratio	2021 Faculty Compensation Rank	% Full-Time Faculty	% Faculty with Ph.D or Terminal Degree	ACT 25th-75th Percentile
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>							
	31.0%	15.0%	17:1	51	96.0%	86.0%	24-30
<b>Comparable Peers</b>							
Auburn University	36.0%	16.0%	20:1	64	95.2%	89.0%	25-31
Clemson University	53.0%	14.0%	16:1	72	90.8%	86.0%	26-31*
Iowa State University	32.0%	20.0%	18:1	106	93.9%	93.0%	22-28
Louisiana State University	41.0%	17.0%	20:1	113	95.7%	86.0%	23-29
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	35.0%	16.0%	14:1	120	94.9%	93.0%	26-32*
University of Alabama	34.0%	21.0%	20:1	72	90.0%	86.0%	23-31
University of Kentucky	34.0%	16.0%	16:1	90	86.0%	93.0%	22-29
University of Missouri	41.0%	15.0%	17:1	120	97.0%	90.0%	23-29
University of Nebraska	36.0%	18.0%	17:1	77	98.2%	77.0%	22-28
University of South Carolina	38.0%	16.0%	17:1	113	87.3%	90.0%	24-30*
Virginia Tech	29.0%	23.0%	14:1	51	96.4%	89.0%	24-31*
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>							
Michigan State University	24.0%	24.0%	16:1	57	95.6%	90.0%	22-28*
Purdue University	39.0%	19.0%	13:1	46	95.5%	98.0%	24-32*
University of Georgia	48.0%	11.0%	17:1	64	95.5%	95.0%	26-32*
University of Florida	53.0%	10.0%	17:1	59	94.8%	90.0%	28-33*
University of Minnesota	38.0%	19.0%	17:1	90	87.4%	78.0%	26-31
University of Wisconsin - Madison	44.0%	22.0%	17:1	48	93.8%	91.0%	27-32

\* Converted from SAT scores

## USNWR Best Colleges Rankings 2021 Peer Categories Comparison

UTK Peers	Freshmen in Top 10% of Class	Average Alumni Giving Rate
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	35%	11.1%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>		
Auburn University	33%	14.0%
Clemson University	56%	23.0%
Iowa State University	28%	11.4%
Louisiana State University	24%	12.9%
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	50%	10.7%
University of Alabama	40%	21.2%
University of Kentucky	33%	10.6%
University of Missouri	33%	11.8%
University of Nebraska	28%	16.7%
University of South Carolina	28%	10.6%
Virginia Tech	29%	12.9%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>		
Michigan State University	28%	6.0%
Purdue University	49%	16.7%
University of Georgia	60%	13.3%
University of Florida	81%	15.7%
University of Minnesota	50%	7.3%
University of Wisconsin - Madison	57%	12.8%

## USNWR Best Colleges Rankings 2020 Peer Categories Comparison

UTK Peers	Public Schools	Overall Score	Expert Opinion	Graduation and Retention Rank	Predicted 6-Year Graduation Rate	Actual 6-Year Graduation Rate	Over(+)/Under(-) Performance
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	44	51	3.3	137	76%	73%	-3%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>							
Auburn University	44	51	3.3	98	74%	78%	4%
Clemson University	27	58	3.4	64	82%	83%	1%
Iowa State University	55	49	3.3	112	70%	75%	5%
Louisiana State University	72	43	2.9	167	67%	67%	0%
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	34	54	3.2	78	79%	81%	2%
University of Alabama	72	43	3.1	141	75%	72%	-3%
University of Kentucky	60	46	3.2	182	70%	66%	-4%
University of Missouri	64	45	3.2	145	71%	69%	-2%
University of Nebraska	64	45	3.2	154	70%	69%	-1%
University of South Carolina	44	51	3.2	107	71%	77%	6%
Virginia Tech	30	57	3.7	52	78%	84%	6%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>							
Michigan State University	34	54	3.5	82	70%	80%	10%
Purdue University	18	61	3.8	88	76%	81%	5%
University of Georgia	16	63	3.6	46	78%	86%	8%
University of Florida	7	71	3.8	33	82%	90%	8%
University of Minnesota	27	58	3.7	82	78%	80%	2%
University of Wisconsin - Madison	13	65	4.1	40	84%	87%	3%

\* Converted from SAT scores

## USNWR Best Colleges Rankings 2020 Peer Categories Comparison

UTK Peers	Average Freshmen Retention Rate	Social Mobility Rank	2020 6-Year Graduation Rate for Pell	2020 6-Year Graduation Rate for Non-Pell	Classes Under 20	Classes of 50 or More	Student/Faculty Ratio
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>							
<b>Comparable Peers</b>							
Auburn University	91%	380	64%	80%	35.0%	17.0%	19:1
Clemson University	93%	348	71%	85%	55.0%	14.0%	16:1
Iowa State University	88%	270	67%	77%	29.0%	20.0%	19:1
Louisiana State University	84%	345	55%	70%	41.0%	17.0%	20:1
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	94%	224	76%	83%	35.0%	16.0%	14:1
University of Alabama	87%	377	58%	75%	34.0%	23.0%	22:1
University of Kentucky	83%	345	53%	70%	37.0%	15.0%	16:1
University of Missouri	87%	354	55%	73%	39.0%	17.0%	17:1
University of Nebraska	83%	303	59%	72%	35.0%	18.0%	18:1
University of South Carolina	88%	322	69%	79%	37.0%	17.0%	17:1
Virginia Tech	93%	322	77%	85%	27.0%	22.0%	14:1
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>							
Michigan State University	92%	241	71%	83%	24.0%	23.0%	16:1
Purdue University	92%	270	74%	83%	38.0%	20.0%	13:1
University of Georgia	95%	159	80%	87%	45.0%	11.0%	17:1
University of Florida	97%	34	87%	91%	50.0%	14.0%	18:1
University of Minnesota	93%	251	72%	82%	38.0%	20.0%	17:1
University of Wisconsin - Madison	95%	297	84%	88%	45.0%	22.0%	17:1

\* Converted from SAT scores

## USNWR Best Colleges Rankings 2020 Peer Categories Comparison

UTK Peers	2020 Faculty Compensation Rank	% Full-Time Faculty	% Faculty with Ph.D or Terminal Degree	ACT 25th-75th Percentile	Freshmen in Top 10% of Class	Average Alumni Giving Rate
<i>University of Tennessee - Knoxville</i>	55	95.9%	86.0%	25-31	36%	10.7%
<b>Comparable Peers</b>						
Auburn University	70	94.7%	90.0%	25-30	32%	13.1%
Clemson University	70	90.8%	87.0%	27-32	56%	23.5%
Iowa State University	83	93.9%	94.0%	22-28	27%	11.0%
Louisiana State University	83	95.8%	87.0%	23-29	23%	13.3%
North Carolina State University - Raleigh	121	95.0%	92.0%	26-31*	48%	10.3%
University of Alabama	51	89.2%	74.0%	23-31	36%	23.4%
University of Kentucky	109	86.0%	92.0%	23-29	31%	11.3%
University of Missouri	157	98.2%	91.0%	23-29	30%	12.3%
University of Nebraska	96	97.6%	80.0%	22-29	26%	18.1%
University of South Carolina	73	87.0%	89.0%	24-30*	29%	14.3%
Virginia Tech	48	96.1%	90.0%	24-31*	38%	12.3%
<b>Aspirational Peers</b>						
Michigan State University	55	95.3%	90.0%	22-28*	29%	7.6%
Purdue University	55	95.3%	98.0%	24-31*	46%	18.3%
University of Georgia	73	95.8%	94.0%	26-31*	60%	13.4%
University of Florida	64	94.2%	90.0%	27-32*	77%	14.4%
University of Minnesota	83	87.2%	80.0%	26-31	50%	7.7%
University of Wisconsin - Madison	67	93.9%	91.0%	27-32	54%	11.9%

\* Converted from SAT scores

**USNWR Best Colleges Rankings  
2021 SEC Schools Comparison**

SEC Comparison	UTK	Ole Miss	Miss State	Arkansas	Kentucky	South Carolina	Missouri	Auburn	Alabama	Texas A&M	UGA	Florida	Vanderbilt	LSU
National Rank	112	160	206	160	133	118	124	97	143	66	47	30	14	153
Public School Rank	52	77	105	77	62	54	60	40	65	26	15	6	-	71
Overall Score	59	53	48	53	56	58	57	61	55	66	71	77	88	54
Outcomes Rank	147	211	277	221	221	122	185	122	197	42	39	7	24	191
Graduation and Retention Rank	136	187	222	181	172	104	143	93	136	73	71	77	18	172
Social Mobility Rank	161	361	340	373	318	318	353	381	377	80	191	48	291	328
Graduate Indebtedness Rank	103	120	228	120	198	120	120	73	110	60	73	36	14	78
Faculty Resource Rank	166	184	269	184	198	221	166	184	269	310	67	56	16	221
Faculty Compensation Rank	51	143	168	77	90	113	120	64	72	41	64	59	16	113
Student Excellence Rank	98	167	120	141	126	106	116	91	106	63	54	32	12	134
Financial Resources Rank	116	119	173	184	59	218	173	156	232	100	119	46	12	142
Alumni Giving Rank	90	145	45	37	102	102	79	65	30	53	68	54	15	72
Expert Opinion Score (Out of 5)	3.3	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.3	3.0
Predicted 6 year Graduation Rate	72%	66%	62%	67%	67%	71%	70%	73%	73%	75%	77%	81%	94%	66%
Actual 6 Year Graduation Rate	72%	66%	59%	66%	66%	77%	71%	79%	71%	82%	87%	88%	93%	68%
Over/Under Performance	0%	0%	-1%	-1%	-1%	6%	1%	6%	-2%	7%	10%	7%	-1%	2%
Average Freshman Retention Rate	87%	86%	80%	83%	84%	88%	87%	91%	87%	92%	96%	97%	97%	83%
% of Classes Under 20	31.0%	53.9%	39.9%	48.0%	34.0%	38.0%	41.0%	36.0%	34.0%	24.8%	48.0%	53.0%	61.1%	41.0%
% of Classes of 50 or More	15.0%	12.0%	15.0%	17.0%	16.0%	16.0%	15.0%	16.0%	21.0%	28.0%	11.0%	10.0%	8.0%	17.0%
Student-Faculty Ratio	17:1	16:1	17:1	18:1	16:1	17:1	17:1	20:1	20:1	19:1	17:1	17:1	7:1	20:1
ACT Low/High	24-30	21-29	22-30	23-30	22-29	24-30*	23-29	25-31	23-31	24-31*	26-32*	28-33*	33-35	23-29
Freshman in Top 10% of HS Class	35%	25%	30%	25%	33%	28%	33%	33%	40%	70%	60%	81%	90%	24%
Average Alumni Giving Rate	11.1%	8.6%	16.8%	17.6%	10.6%	10.6%	11.8%	14.0%	21.2%	16.1%	13.3%	15.7%	29.1%	12.9%

\*Converted from SAT Scores

**USNWR Best Colleges Rankings**  
**Institutions Tied with UTK at National Ranking = 112**

	Outcomes Rank	Graduation Over(+) / Under(-) Performance	Average Freshmen Retention Rate	Actual 6-Year Graduation Rate	Faculty Resources Rank	Student Excellence Rank	Financial Resources Rank	Alumni Giving Rank
<b>2021 Rankings</b>								
Creighton University	141	1%	89%	78%	139	98	100	68
Loyola University Chicago	100	4%	84%	75%	136	113	140	220
Rochester Inst. of Technology	158	-1%	89%	70%	147	83	123	220
University of Illinois - Chicago	122	10%	80%	59%	207	203	41	330
University of La Verne (CA)	24	24%	83%	69%	48	273	116	254
University of Tennessee	147	0%	87%	71%	166	98	116	90
<b>2020 Rankings</b>								
Auburn University	144	4%	91%	78%	182	90	140	71
Creighton University	136	1%	89%	77%	110	101	103	76
Howard University	127	1%	89%	62%	227	152	49	108
Loyola University Chicago	100	4%	84%	75%	136	113	140	220
Rochester Inst. of Technology	158	-1%	89%	70%	147	83	123	220
Temple University	55	14%	90%	72%	182	152	148	220
University of California--Merced	1	23%	83%	66%	246	351	93	76
University of Colorado--Boulder	185	0%	87%	70%	210	107	81	205
University of Oregon	121	8%	87%	72%	136	177	148	158
Univ. of South Carolina	133	6%	88%	77%	169	95	200	63
University of South Florida	38	12%	90%	70%	256	111	211	87
University of Tennessee	170	-3%	86%	73%	169	83	110	108
<b>2019 Rankings</b>								
Arizona State University	142	4%	86%	63%	117	117	166	96
Auburn University	130	-1%	91%	77%	144	94	166	67
Rutgers University	85	14%	85%	68%	131	259	104	209
University of Tennessee	124	-3%	86%	70%	123	112	97	105

# **U.S. News & World Report 2021 Best Colleges Rankings**

## **Appendix B: Methodology**



## U.S. News 2021 Best Colleges Rankings Methodology

<b>Expert Opinion (academic reputation)</b>	20%	Peer assessment survey	20%
<b>Outcomes (graduation/retention)</b>	40%	Average six-year graduation rate	17.6%
		Average freshman retention rate	4.4%
		Graduation Rate Performance	8%
		Social Mobility (Pell)	5%
		Graduate Indebtedness	5%
<b>Faculty resources (AY 2019-20)</b>	20%	Faculty compensation	7%
		Percent faculty with terminal degree in their field	3%
		Percent faculty that is full time	1%
		Student/faculty ratio	1%
		Class size	8%
<b>Student Excellence (Selectivity) (Fall 2019 entering class)</b>	7%	Math and evidence-based reading and writing portions of the SAT and the composite ACT scores	5%
		High school class standing in top 10%	2%
<b>Financial Resources</b>	10%	Financial resources per student	10%
<b>Alumni Giving</b>	3%	Average alumni giving rate	3%

## **Outcomes (40%)**

Forty percent of a school's rank comes from its success at retaining and graduating students within 150 percent of normal time (six years), graduate indebtedness, and social mobility factors. Graduation rates receive the highest weight in our rankings because degree completion is necessary to receive the full benefits of undergraduate study from employers and graduate schools. We approach outcomes from angles of graduation and retention (22%), graduation rate performance (8%), social mobility (5%), and, new this year, graduate indebtedness (5%).

**Graduation and retention rates:** This has two components.

- A four-year rolling average of the proportion of each entering class (fall 2010-fall 2013) earning a degree in six years or less (17.6%).
- A four-year rolling average of the proportion of first-year entering students (fall 2015-fall 2018) who returned the following fall (4.4%).

**Graduation rate performance:** We compared each college's actual six-year graduation rate with what we predicted for its fall 2013 entering class. This year we averaged two years of graduate rate performance data, to reduce the volatility of this indicator. The predicted rates were modeled from admissions data, proportion of undergraduates awarded Pell Grants, school financial resources, proportion of federal financial aid recipients who are first generation, and National Universities' math and science orientations.

**Social mobility:** Measures how well schools graduated students who received federal Pell Grants (those typically coming from households whose family incomes are less than \$50,000 annually, though most Pell Grant money goes to students with a total family income below \$20,000). The below factors (weighted 2.5% each) were computed using two-year averages of fall 2012 and fall 2013 entering cohorts.

- **Pell Grant graduation rates** are the six-year graduation rates of Pell Grant students adjusted to give much more credit to schools with larger Pell student proportions.
- **Pell Grant graduation rate performance** is the factor that compares each school's six-year graduation rate among Pell recipients with its six-year graduation rate among non-Pell recipients by dividing the former into the latter, then adjusting to give much more credit to schools with larger Pell student proportions. The higher a school's Pell graduation rate relative to its non-Pell graduation rate up to the rates being equal, the better it scores.

**Graduate indebtedness:** New this year, U.S. News calculated a *graduate indebtedness rank*, which is the combination of the two indebtedness indicators for ranked schools. They indicate how schools compare in terms of total graduate indebtedness among those with debt and the proportion of graduates with debt. Schools that ranked the highest had the lowest average amount of debt accrued by their the most recent graduates and a relatively small proportion of students graduating with debt compared with other schools in their U.S. News ranking category. The data is based on federal loans made to students who borrowed while enrolled and co-signed loans (as collected on the Financial Aid survey). It excludes students who transferred in, money borrowed at other institutions, parent loans, and students who did not graduate.

- **Graduate indebtedness total:** Average amount of accumulated federal loan debt among the 2019 bachelor's degree graduating class that took out federal loans (weighted 3%). For nonresponders to U.S. News' financial aid survey, the College

Scorecard's most recent cohort of institutional median graduate indebtedness was adjusted and used in its place.

- **Graduate indebtedness proportion:** Percentage of graduates from the 2019 bachelor's degree graduating class who borrowed federal loans (2%). For nonresponders to U.S. News' financial aid survey, the College Scorecard's most recent institutional cohort of the proportion of undergraduates borrowing was adjusted and used in its place.

### **Faculty Resources (20 percent)**

Research shows the greater access students have to quality instructors, the more engaged they will be in class and the more they will learn and likely graduate. U.S. News uses five factors from the 2019-2020 academic year to assess a school's commitment to instruction: class size, faculty salary, faculty with the highest degree in their fields, student-faculty ratio and proportion of faculty who are full time.

- **Class size** is the most highly weighted faculty resource measure, at 8%. Schools score better the greater their proportions of smaller classes for fall 2019.
- **Faculty salary** is weighted at 7% and is the average full-time faculty salaries for assistant, associate and full professors for 2019-2020, based on definitions from the American Association of University Professors. This is a change from previous rankings, which used a two-year average of both salaries and nonsalary compensation, i.e., benefits in the calculations. The salary data was once again adjusted for regional differences in the cost of living using the Bureau of Economic Analysis regional price parities indexes, published in May 2020.
- U.S. News also factors the **proportion of full-time faculty with the highest degree in their fields** (3 percent), **student-faculty ratio** (1 percent) and the **proportion of faculty who are full time** (1 percent).

### **Expert Opinion (20 percent)**

Academic reputation matters because it factors things that cannot easily be captured elsewhere. For example, an institution known for having innovative approaches to teaching may perform especially well on this indicator, whereas a school struggling to keep its accreditation will likely perform poorly.

We take a two-year weighted average of ratings from top academics – presidents, provosts and deans of admissions – who rate the academic quality of peer institutions with which they are familiar on a scale of 1 (marginal) to 5 (distinguished). U.S. News collected the data by administering peer assessment surveys in spring 2019 and 2020 directly to schools. Of the 4,816 academics who were sent questionnaires, 36% responded, a decrease from 43% the previous year.

### **Financial Resources (10 percent)**

Generous per-student spending indicates that a college can offer a wide variety of programs and services. U.S. News measures financial resources by using the average spending per student on instruction, research, student services and related educational expenditures in the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years. Spending on sports, dorms and hospitals does not count.

### **Student Excellence (7 percent)**

A school's academic atmosphere is influenced by the selectivity of its admissions. Simply put, students who achieved strong grades and test scores during high school have the highest probability of succeeding at challenging college-level coursework; enabling instructors to design classes that have great rigor. This weighting has been reduced from 10% previously.

- **Standardized tests:** U.S. News factors admissions test scores for all enrollees who took the mathematics and evidence-based reading and writing portions of the SAT and the composite ACT in fall 2019. We weighted standardized tests at 5%. U.S. News now ranks schools that report they don't use the SAT or ACT at all in admissions decisions (test-blind).
- **High school class standing:** U.S. News incorporates the proportion of enrolled first-year students at National Universities and National Liberal Arts Colleges who graduated in the top 10% of their high school classes. It contributes 2% toward schools' overall scores.

### **Alumni Giving (3 percent)**

This is the average percentage of living alumni with bachelor's degrees who gave to their school during 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. Giving measures student satisfaction and post-graduate engagement. This weighting has been reduced from 5% previously.