U.S. News & World Report 2027 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 2027 U.S. News Best Colleges Rankings for the University of Tennessee - Knoxville and our peers.

The University of Tennessee - Knoxville	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**
Overall Rankings				
National Universities	105	109	102	109
Public School	51	52	49	50
Institutional Scores/Rankings				
Overall Score	63	62	64	61
Expert Opinion	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4
Outcomes Rank	202	200	188	195
Six-year graduation rate	73%	73%	74%	74%
Freshmen retention rate	89%	91%	92%	92%
Over/Under Predicted graduation rate	-6	-2	-1	0
Median Federal Indebtedness	$20,500	$20,500	$20,500	-
College grads earning more than high school grads	80%	86%	86%	86%
Earnings by major rank	-	-	-	205
Social Mobility Rank	312	300	294	290
Pell grad rate	61%	63%	64%	63%
Faculty Resources Rank	78	82	91	101
Faculty Compensation Rank	63	63	71	90
Percentage of faculty that is full time	94%	94%	94%	95%
Student/Faculty Ratio	18/1	18/1	18/1	18/1
SAT/ACT 25th-75th percentile	25-31	25-31	25-31	26-31
Financial Resources Rank	133	134	155	154
Faculty Research	41	52	69	87

The University of Tennessee - Knoxville

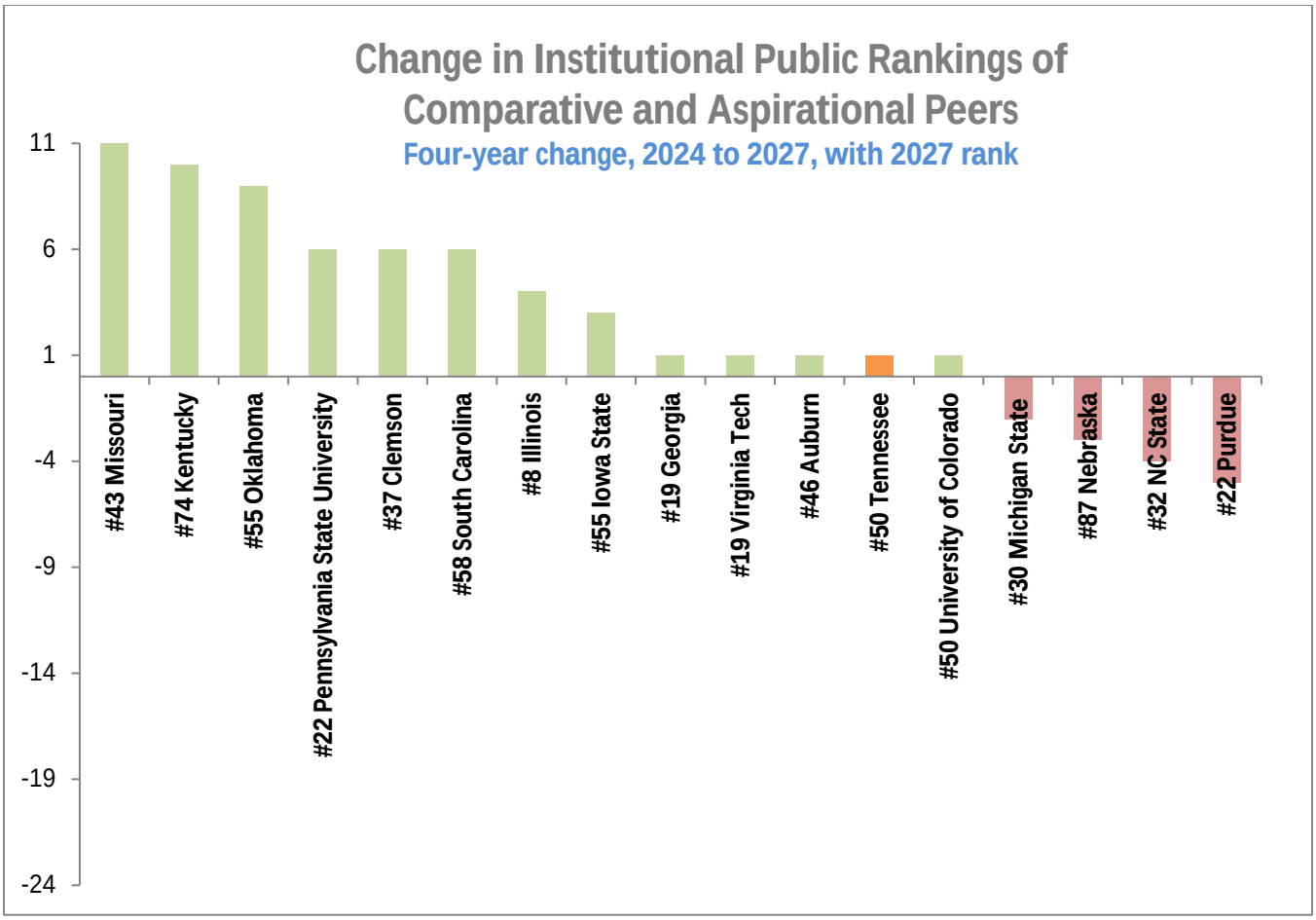
In the 2027 rankings, the University of Tennessee – Knoxville (UTK) dropped seven spots to #107 in the national rankings and dropped one spot to #50 in the public school rankings. In the national rankings, UTK tied with six other institutions and with four in the public ranking.

The university has once again been included in the Best Value Schools rankings at 77th nationally (up 12 places) and 14th among publics and 61st in the Best Value In-state Schools which is a new ranking. We are also listed in the Most Innovative Schools rankings dropping to 42nd nationally (down 14) and 18th among public schools (down 4). UTK was also ranked in the Best Colleges for Veterans rankings at 72nd (down 5) nationally (50th among publics) and 290 (up 4) nationally (152nd among publics) in the Top Performers on Social Mobility.

Our undergraduate business program ranked 39th nationally (down 2) and again at 25th among publics. The supply chain/logistics program is once again highly ranked at 3rd (same) nationally and 3rd among public schools. Accounting dropped to 43rd nationally (down 13) and 18th among publics (down 3). Undergraduate engineering is ranked 67th (down 3) nationally and 37th among publics. Nursing decreased to 36th (down 8) nationally and dropped to 27h among publics (down 9). Computer Science ranked 75th nationally (down 4) and 40th among publics (down 1). Economics rose to 88th nationally (up 11) and 36th (up 7) among publics. Psychology (143rd nationally and 77th public) is also ranked. These discipline rankings are based solely on the peer surveys of deans and senior faculty members of the different programs.

UTK decreased in the Outcomes rank (which makes up over half of the rankings), dropping from 188 to 195 while our Social Mobility Rank increased slightly, rising from 294 to 290. We had a slight increase in Financial Resources (155 to 154). Faculty Resources decreased (91 to 101) mostly due to a change in reporting for Faculty Compensation. Faculty Research also decreased (69 to 87).

The following chart shows the changes in Public Ranking of our comparative and aspirational peers over a four-year period, from 2024 to 2027. Over this period, 12 peers increased in rank and 4 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. UTK's movement in the rankings are in our opinion mostly caused by the effect of ties along with decreases in Outcomes rank and the Faculty Resources rank. Six of our comparable and four of our aspirational peers also fell in the overall rankings.

UTK Peers	2027 National Universities	2026 National Universities	Change	2027 Public Schools	2026 Public Schools	Change
University of Tennessee - Knoxville	109	102	**-7**	50	49	**-1**
Comparable Peers						
Auburn University	100	102	**2**	46	49	**3**
Clemson University	80	75	**-5**	37	36	**-1**
Iowa State University	116	117	**1**	55	57	**2**
University of Colorado	109	97	**-12**	50	46	**-4**
University of Kentucky	148	143	**-5**	74	74	**0**
University of Missouri	95	102	**7**	43	49	**6**
University of Nebraska	169	158	**-11**	87	84	**-3**
University of Oklahoma	116	110	**-6**	55	54	**-1**
University of South Carolina	121	127	**6**	58	63	**5**
Virginia Tech	52	51	**-1**	19	21	**2**
Aspirational Peers						
Michigan State University	69	64	**-5**	30	29	**-1**
North Carolina State University	73	64	**-9**	32	29	**-3**
Pennsylvania State University	55	59	**4**	22	26	**4**
Purdue University	55	46	**-9**	22	19	**-3**
University of Georgia	52	46	**-6**	19	19	**0**
University of Illinois	34	36	**2**	8	12	**4**

Comparative Peers

- National Universities Ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (7), University of South Carolina (6), and Auburn University (2)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Colorado (-12), University of Nebraska (-11), UTK (-7), University of Oklahoma (-6), University of Kentucky (-5), and Clemson University (-5)
- Public Universities Ranking
  - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (6), University of South Carolina (5), Auburn University (3), Virginia Tech (2), and Iowa State (2)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Colorado (-4) and the University of Nebraska (-3)
- Outcomes Rank
  - Increased in rank: the University of Kentucky (34), University of Nebraska (28), University of Missouri (25), Iowa State (22), Virginia Tech (17), and the University of Colorado (13)

Decreased in rank: Auburn University (-8), University of Oklahoma (-8), UTK (-7), and the University of South Carolina (-5)

- Social Mobility Rank
  - Increased in rank: Iowa State (42), University of Missouri (37), University of Nebraska (30), University of Kentucky (28), University of Colorado (16), University of South Carolina (14), University of Oklahoma (13), Clemson University (11), and Auburn University (10)
  - Decreased in rank: None
- Faculty Resources Rank
  - Increased in Rank: Iowa State (17), Auburn University (7), and the University of Colorado (3)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Oklahoma (-39), University of Kentucky (-31), University of Nebraska (-21), UTK (-10), and Virginia Tech (-7)
- Faculty Compensation Rank
  - Increased in Rank: Iowa State (15) and Auburn University (13)
  - Decreased in rank: University of Oklahoma (-30), University of South Carolina (-22), University of Nebraska (-19), UTK (-19), University of Colorado (-14), and the University of Kentucky (-11)
- Financial Resources Rank:
  - Increased in Rank: Clemson University (10), University of South Carolina (7), and Virginia Tech (5)
  - Decreased in rank: Auburn University (-18), University of Oklahoma (-15), Iowa State (-8), and the University of Colorado (-7)
- Faculty Research
  - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (6)
  - Decreased in rank: Virginia Tech (-33), University of Nebraska (-30), Auburn University (-24), University of Oklahoma (-18), University of South Carolina (-18), UTK (-18), University of Kentucky (-14), Iowa State (-13), and Clemson University (-11)

<u>Aspirational Peers</u>

- National Universities Ranking
  - Increased in rank: Pennsylvania State University (4) and the University of Illinois (2)
  - Decreased in rank: NC State (-9), Purdue University (-9), UTK (-7), University of Georgia (-6), and Michigan State University (-5)
- Public Universities Ranking
  - Increased in rank: Pennsylvania State University (4) and the University of Illinois (4)

    - Decreased in rank: NC State (-3), Purdue University (-3), Michigan State University (-1) and UTK (-1)
- Outcomes Rank
    - Increased in rank: Pennsylvania State University (16) and Michigan State University (9)
    - Decreased in rank: University of Georgia (-22), and NC State (-15)
- Social Mobility Rank
    - Increased in rank: University of Illinois (21), Michigan State University (11), University of Georgia (8), Pennsylvania State University (7), NC State (4) and UTK (4)
    - Decreased in rank: Purdue University (-8)
- Faculty Resources Rank
    - Increased in Rank: None
    - Decreased in rank: NC State (-24), Pennsylvania State University (-10), UTK (-10), Michigan State University (-8), and the University of Georgia (-7)
- Faculty Compensation Rank
    - Increased in Rank: None
    - Decreased in rank: UTK (-19), Pennsylvania State University (-16), NC State (-15), and the University of Georgia (-6)
- Financial Resources Rank
    - Increased in Rank: University of Illinois (20), and the University of Georgia (10)
    - Decreased in rank: NC State (-5) and Pennsylvania State University (-3)
- Faculty Research
    - Increased in rank: None
    - Decreased in rank: NC State (-24), University of Georgia (-21), UTK (-18), Purdue University (-17), University of Illinois (-12), and Michigan State University (-10)

<u>SEC</u>

- National Universities ranking
    - Increased in rank: University of Alabama (13), University of Missouri (7), and University of South Carolina (6)
    - Decreased in rank: LSU (-33), University of Mississippi (-10), Texas A&M (-8), University of Arkansas (-7), UTK (-7), University of Georgia (-6), and the University of Oklahoma (-6)
- Public Universities ranking
    - Increased in rank: University of Alabama (13), University of Missouri (6), Mississippi State (5), and the University of South Carolina (5)
    - Decreased in rank: LSU (-14) and Texas A&M (-3)

- Outcomes Rank
    - Increased in rank: University of Alabama (35), University of Kentucky (34), University of Missouri (25), LSU (15), Mississippi State (14), and Vanderbilt University (14)
    - Decreased in rank: University of Florida (-26), University of Georgia (-22), and Texas A&M (-15)
- Social Mobility
    - Increased in rank: Vanderbilt University (43), University of Missouri (37), LSU (32), University of Kentucky (28), Mississippi State (24), University of Alabama (20), University of Mississippi (17), and the University of Arkansas (15)
    - Decreased in rank: None
- Faculty Resources Rank
    - Increased in Rank: University of Alabama (21), Auburn University (7), and Texas A&M (4)
    - Decreased in rank: University of Texas (-67), University of Oklahoma (-39), University of Kentucky (-31), University of Arkansas (-22), Mississippi State (-13), and UTK (-10)
- Faculty Compensation Rank
    - Increased in Rank: University of Alabama (26), Auburn University (13), LSU (12), and the University of Mississippi (9)
    - Decreased in rank: University of Oklahoma (-30), University of South Carolina (-22), UTK (-19), Mississippi State (-14), and the University of Kentucky (-11)
- Financial Resources Rank:
    - Increased in Rank: University of Alabama (20), Mississippi State (11), University of Georgia (10), and the University of South Carolina (7)
    - Decreased in rank: LSU (-36), Auburn University (-18), and the University of Oklahoma (-15)
- Faculty Research
    - Increased in rank: University of Missouri (6)
    - Decreased in rank: Auburn University (-24), University of Alabama (-24), University of Georgia (-21), University of Oklahoma (-18), University of South Carolina (-18), UTK (-18), Mississippi State (-16), LSU (-14), and the University of Kentucky (-14)

In the 2027 national rankings the University of Tennessee – Knoxville tied with six other universities. The public institutions that are tied with UTK include Temple University, University of California - Santa Cruz, University of Colorado Boulder, and the University of New Hampshire. The private institutions that tied with us are Fairfield University and Loyola Marymount University.