

U.S. News & World Report 2019 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, peer assessments, student selectivity, as well as 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, with the largest and most academically qualified incoming class in more than three decades. UTK has also seen sustained growth in our retention and graduation rates.

This report presents the 2019 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.

The University of Tennessee - Knoxville	2017	2018	2019
Overall Rankings			
<i>National Universities</i>	103	103	115
<i>Public School</i>	46	46	52
Institutional Scores/Rankings			
<i>Overall Score</i>	47	49	48
<i>Peer Assessment</i>	3.1	3.2	3.2
<i>High School Counselor Score</i>	3.7	3.6	3.7
<i>Outcomes Rank</i>	122	120	124
<i>Six-year graduation rate</i>	70%	69%	70%
<i>Average freshmen retention rate</i>	86%	86%	86%
<i>Over/Under Predicted graduation rate</i>	-2	-2	-3
<i>Faculty Resources Rank</i>	137	124	123
<i>Proportion of classes fewer than 20 students</i>	27.8%	30.0%	30.0%
<i>Proportion of classes with 50+ students</i>	14%	13.0%	14.0%
<i>Student Excellence Rank</i>	79	84	112
<i>SAT/ACT 25th-75th percentile</i>	24-30	24-30	24-30
<i>Freshmen in top 10% HS Class</i>	54%	54%	n/a
<i>Financial Resources Rank</i>	72	84	97
<i>Alumni Giving Rank</i>	115	102	105
<i>Average alumni giving rate</i>	9.5%	10.4%	10.5%

The University of Tennessee - Knoxville

In the 2019 rankings, the University of Tennessee – Knoxville (UTK) dropped 12 spots to 115 in the national rankings. We also fell 6 spots to #52 in the public school rankings. In the national and public rankings, UTK is tied with three other institutions.

Undergraduate engineering is ranked 59st nationally (up 2 places) and 33th among publics (up 1). Our undergraduate business program ranked 62nd nationally (down 17 places) and 39^h among publics (down 12 places) due to the unusually large number of programs tying at 44th (the group ahead of us). The supply chain/logistics program is ranked 6th nationally and 5th publically.

U.S. News made several changes in their methodology this year. The biggest change was to increase the percentage of weight for Outcomes (formerly “Graduation and Retention”) to 35% from 30%. This includes adding an indicator of social mobility (the additional 5%) based on the overall graduation rate of Pell Grant recipients as well as the graduation rate of Pell Grant recipients vs all other students. This change has greatly affected many schools’ rankings.

This year U.S. News also removed acceptance rates as a piece of the Student Excellence (formerly “Selectivity”) rank, which only left high school standing and standardized tests. Because many high schools are no longer providing rankings of their students, some institutions, including UTK, are choosing to no longer report this data.

Another factor, besides the methodology changes, in the movement of programs within the ranks is the proliferation of ties. In the 2019 US News rankings, there were over 30 ties (usually involving multiple schools) between the 1st and the 115th school.

UTK slightly improved in the Faculty Resources rank, moving up from 124 to 123. Even though UTK saw an increase, the majority of our peers saw a decrease in their Faculty Resources rank. We also improved our ranking by high school counselors and continue to improve our six year graduation rate.

Among our comparable peers, 9 saw a decrease in the national rankings and 9 decreased in the public school rankings from 2018 to 2019. Most of our peers (including UTK) saw decreases in their graduation and retention rank. For the 2011 cohort, UTK had a higher percentage of Pell recipients (31%) than all of our comparative peers and all but one aspirational peer. Our differential six year grad rate between Pell recipients and non-recipients was smaller than all but two of our comparable peers. While UTK only saw a 4 point drop in this measure, 10 of 11 peers experienced drops ranging from -14 to -39 points.

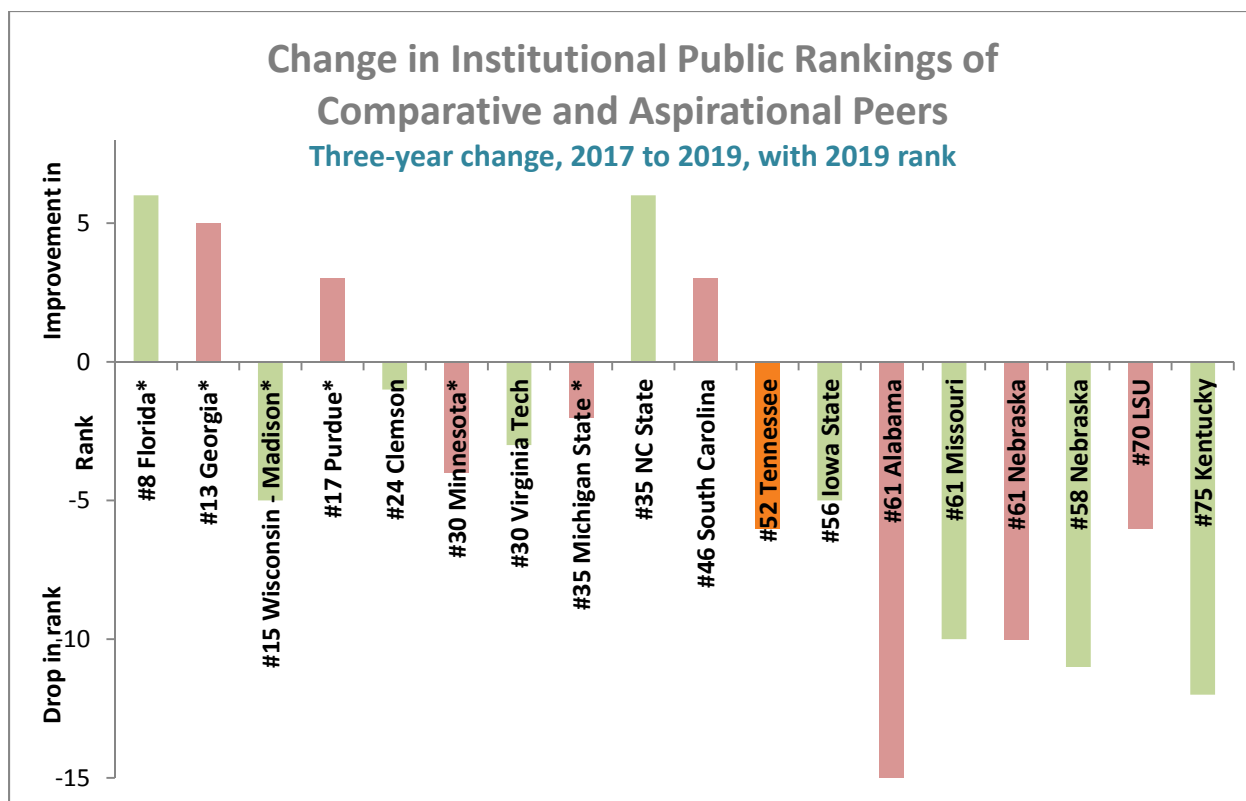
UTK also experienced a drop in the Financial Resources rank. The fluctuations in this rank over the past few years are due to the change of no longer being accredited with UTHSC and the movement of the institutions ranked near us. The Alumni Giving rank also decreased slightly even though the actual Alumni Giving Rate slightly increased.

The Student Excellence rank was the largest drop the university experienced with a decrease of 28. The decrease in this rank is mostly due to changes in the US News methodology and decreasing availability of data related to high school standing.

The University of Tennessee – Knoxville

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Overall Rankings					
<i>National Universities</i>	106	103	103	103	115
<i>Public School</i>	50	47	46	46	52
Institutional Scores/Rankings					
<i>Overall Score</i>	44	42	47	49	48
<i>Peer Assessment</i>	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2
<i>High School Counselor Score</i>	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.7
<i>Outcomes Rank</i>	135	127	122	120	124
<i>Faculty Resources Rank</i>	144	135	137	124	123
<i>Student Excellence Rank</i>	76	82	79	84	112
<i>Financial Resources Rank</i>	55	56	72	84	97
<i>Alumni Giving Rank</i>	132	127	115	102	105

The following chart shows the changes in institution rankings of our comparative and aspirational peers over a three year period, from 2017 to 2019. Over this period, 5 peers have increased their public ranking and 12 peers (as well as UTK) have decreased.



* Aspirational Peer

Peer Comparisons

The University of Tennessee – Knoxville has two sets of comparison peers: Comparative (11) and Aspirational (6). From 2018 to 2019, we dropped 6 places in the public rankings to 52nd, while one of our comparative peers over the same 2 year period dropped 10 places and another dropped 12. One comparative and three aspirational peers rose in the public rankings during this time period with one comparative peer maintaining their previous rank. 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: No large increases
 - Decreased in rank: University of Alabama (-19), University of Kentucky (-14), Auburn University (-12), UTK (-12), University of Missouri (-9), Louisiana State (-7), and Virginia Tech (-7)
- Public Universities ranking
 - Increased in rank: No large increases
 - Decreased in rank: University of Kentucky (-12), University of Alabama (-10), and Louisiana State (-7)

- Outcomes Rank
 - Increased in rank: North Carolina State (7)
 - Decreased in rank: University of Alabama (-39), Auburn University (-33), Louisiana State (-32), University of Missouri (-30), University of Kentucky (-28), University of South Carolina (-27), University of Nebraska (-26), and Iowa State (-20)
- Faculty Resources Rank
 - Increased in Rank: LSU (50), University of South Carolina (28), and University of Kentucky (23)
 - Decreased in rank: University of Nebraska (-33), Virginia Tech (-26), University of Alabama (-20), and University of Missouri (-16)
- Student Excellence Rank:
 - Increased in Rank: Virginia Tech (30), Auburn University (7), and Clemson University (7)
 - Decreased in rank: UTK (-28), University of Alabama (-11), University of Missouri (-8), and Louisiana State (-6)
- Financial Resources Rank:
 - Increased in Rank: North Carolina State (9), Auburn University (8), and University of Kentucky (7)
 - Decreased in rank: UTK (-13), Iowa State (-11), and Virginia Tech (-9)

Aspirational Peers

- National Universities ranking
 - Increased in rank: University of Georgia (8) and University of Florida (7)
 - Decreased in rank: UTK (-12), University of Minnesota (-7), and Michigan State University (-4)
- Public Universities ranking
 - Increased in rank: University of Georgia (3)
 - Decreased in rank: UTK (-12) and University of Minnesota (-7)
- Outcomes Rank
 - Increased in rank: University of Florida (27) and University of Minnesota (7)
 - Decreased in rank: University of Wisconsin - Madison (-14)
- Faculty Resources Rank
 - Increased in Rank: University of Florida (24) and University of Minnesota (13)
 - Decreased in rank: University of Wisconsin - Madison (-7) and Purdue University (-5)
- Student Excellence Rank:
 - Increased in Rank: University of Florida (8)
 - Decreased in rank: UTK (-28) and Michigan State University (-4)

- Financial Resources Rank:
 - Increased in Rank: University of Florida (5)
 - Decreased in rank: UTK (-13) and Michigan State University (-6)

SEC

- National Universities ranking
 - Increased in rank: University of Georgia (8) and University of Florida (7)
 - Decreased in rank: University of Alabama (-19), University of Arkansas (-19), University of Kentucky (-14), Auburn University (-12), and UTK (-12)
- Public Universities ranking
 - Increased in rank: No large increases
 - Decreased in rank: University of Arkansas (-15), University of Kentucky (-12), and University of Alabama (-10)
- Outcomes Rank
 - Increased in rank University of Florida (27) and Texas A&M (11)
 - Decreased in rank University of Arkansas (-35), Auburn University (-33), Louisiana State (-32), University of Missouri (-30), University of Kentucky (-28), University of South Carolina (-27), and University of Mississippi (-25)
- Faculty Resources Rank
 - Increased in Rank: LSU (50), University of South Carolina (28), University of Mississippi (27), University of Florida (24), and University of Kentucky (23)
 - Decreased in rank: University of Alabama (-20) and University of Missouri (-16)
- Student Excellence Rank:
 - Increased in Rank: University of Florida (8)
 - Decreased in rank: UTK (-28), University of Alabama (-11), and University of Arkansas (-10)
- Financial Resources Rank:
 - Increased in Rank: Auburn University (8)
 - Decreased in rank: UTK (-13)

In the 2019 national rankings the University of Tennessee – Knoxville tied with three other universities. The following public institutions tied with UTK: Arizona State University, Auburn University (again), and Rutgers University. Of the six schools that we were tied with last year, three rose (Loyola University, University of Oregon, and Illinois Institute of Technology) and three (Auburn University, University of New Hampshire, and University of South Carolina) fell in the rankings.