

SmartMoney College Rankings

In the last two decades, the cost of college tuition has nearly tripled after accounting for inflation. To see how that investment is paying off at 50 of the country's most expensive schools, SmartMoney looked at two groups of alumni: recent grads, out for three years, and midcareer alums, out 15 years. The Payback Score is an average of those groups' current income, expressed as a percentage of their sticker-price tuition and fees.

Rank	College	Final Score	Starting Tuition & Fees (4 Yrs., Class of 2009)	Median Salary (Recent Graduate)	Starting Tuition & Fees (4 Yrs., Class of 1997)	Median Salary (Midcareer Graduate)	School Type
1	Georgia Institute of Technology	202	\$87,810	\$59,000	\$30,249	\$102,000	Public
2	University of Florida	182	\$73,476	\$46,200	\$26,850	\$80,800	Public
3	University of Texas, Austin	180	\$91,596	\$48,800	\$29,531	\$90,800	Public
4	University of Georgia	168	\$77,957	\$41,100	\$27,865	\$79,200	Public
5	University of Illinois	167	\$91,382	\$51,400	\$34,432	\$95,900	Public
6	University of Washington, Seattle	161	\$86,540	\$47,600	\$33,722	\$90,300	Public
7	Clemson University	160	\$85,362	\$45,300	\$32,644	\$86,900	Public
8	Purdue University	141	\$86,538	\$51,800	\$39,168	\$87,200	Public
9	Colorado School of Mines	136	\$90,334	\$64,200	\$52,087	\$105,000	Public
10	University of California, Berkeley	135	\$104,717	\$52,100	\$46,973	\$103,000	Public
11	Miami University (Ohio)	132	\$94,784	\$46,600	\$39,906	\$85,500	Public
12	Indiana University	122	\$87,065	\$42,400	\$41,116	\$80,000	Public
13	Pennsylvania State University	120	\$93,108	\$48,600	\$44,168	\$83,000	Public
14	University of Oregon	116	\$74,481	\$39,500	\$42,912	\$76,600	Public
15	Michigan State University	112	\$90,372	\$44,300	\$44,711	\$78,000	Public
16	College of William & Mary	109	\$103,799	\$44,000	\$55,416	\$97,100	Public
17	University of Virginia	107	\$107,395	\$50,200	\$53,748	\$89,400	Public
18	Princeton University	106	\$131,740	\$58,300	\$81,800	\$137,000	Ivy League
19	University of Colorado, Boulder	104	\$97,918	\$45,000	\$53,613	\$87,100	Public
20	University of New Hampshire	100	\$93,615	\$42,600	\$49,120	\$75,600	Public
21	Carnegie-Mellon University	92	\$143,540	\$59,800	\$73,260	\$104,000	Private
22	Williams College	89	\$138,770	\$53,600	\$81,265	\$113,000	Private
23	Dartmouth College	88	\$137,364	\$54,100	\$80,781	\$111,000	Ivy League
24	Harvard University	88	\$136,977	\$50,700	\$79,854	\$111,000	Ivy League
25	Colgate University	86	\$145,340	\$49,700	\$80,600	\$111,000	Private
26	University of Pennsylvania	86	\$139,962	\$56,100	\$77,722	\$102,000	Ivy League
27	University of Richmond	86	\$147,860	\$47,800	\$60,110	\$83,400	Private
28	Columbia University	85	\$144,961	\$54,700	\$78,794	\$105,000	Ivy League
29	Cornell University	85	\$135,733	\$54,800	\$78,332	\$102,000	Ivy League
30	Brown University	85	\$141,654	\$52,400	\$82,282	\$109,000	Ivy League
31	Bucknell University	84	\$146,576	\$49,300	\$76,110	\$102,000	Private
32	University of Michigan	83	\$121,010	\$51,300	\$67,738	\$84,200	Public
33	Yale University	82	\$134,320	\$48,900	\$81,670	\$105,000	Ivy League
34	Amherst College	81	\$143,483	\$53,000	\$82,601	\$104,000	Private
35	Occidental College	80	\$136,807	\$42,000	\$70,277	\$90,500	Private
36	Tufts University	79	\$142,891	\$49,100	\$82,040	\$102,000	Private
37	Dickinson College	79	\$139,942	\$44,500	\$77,100	\$97,800	Private
38	George Washington University	79	\$145,600	\$47,300	\$74,170	\$93,100	Private
39	University of Vermont	76	\$108,862	\$41,600	\$65,228	\$74,800	Public
40	Wesleyan University (Conn.)	76	\$143,474	\$45,200	\$80,010	\$97,000	Private
41	Carleton College	76	\$141,109	\$45,300	\$79,114	\$94,800	Private
42	Trinity College	73	\$144,354	\$48,400	\$77,860	\$87,000	Private
43	Hobart and William Smith Colleges	71	\$143,003	\$43,600	\$79,543	\$88,700	Private
44	Vassar College	69	\$148,155	\$44,800	\$79,591	\$85,500	Private
45	Tulane University	66	\$143,516	\$43,800	\$80,204	\$81,800	Private
46	Oberlin College	66	\$141,712	\$40,800	\$81,067	\$83,100	Private
47	Bryn Mawr College	62	\$134,530	\$41,000	\$76,965	\$71,300	Private
48	Hampshire College	61	\$142,218	\$36,000	\$84,690	\$82,700	Private
49	Sarah Lawrence College	58	\$148,570	\$39,800	\$80,822	\$72,800	Private
50	Bard College (New York)	55	\$142,698	\$41,700	\$80,854	\$65,900	Private

Note: Tuition figures exclude room and board and do not account for financial aid. Public school figures reflect costs for out-of-state students.

Sources: The College Board; U.S. Department of Education; Payscale.com