



50-50 Highlights: Doctoral/Research Universities Ranked by Graduates' Salaries

This fall's college rankings have made [earnings](#) and [return on investment](#) a more prominent consideration when selecting a college. And with the ever increasing cost of college, this is a very reasonable reaction. However, ranking colleges by some form of graduates' salaries has its own set of problems. Teachers simply don't make as much as engineers or investment bankers but we need teachers. Incomes are higher in areas with higher costs of living. And these are just some of the obvious issues of ranking universities by graduates' salaries. But this shouldn't stop you from using the available information--just understand its limitations.

The newest income data source is from the [College Scorecard](#). It provides median 10 year earnings of graduates who received federal student aid including student loans. According to [Inside HigherEd](#), there are quite a few people in higher education who argue that because of the limitations, the data "may or may not provide meaningful information to students and families it was designed to help." These tend to be the same people who have the ability to provide better information but haven't done so which makes it hard to take their concerns for families seriously.

They are correct that there are limitations to university rankings by graduates' salaries. Too many of such rankings are simply the reflection of majors. At the very least, the rankings should compare similar types of schools. It's not really fair to compare liberal arts colleges with engineering schools or health profession colleges.

Yes, students need to understand that graduates with certain degrees will make more than those with others. But assuming students understand that they are likely to earn less with a liberal arts degree, it's not unreasonable for them to want to be able to compare otherwise similar liberal arts colleges.

Therefore, I've decided to list the median 10 year earnings for 50-50 colleges by college type. I realize I just used a liberal arts college example but I'm going to start with research universities. There are actually three [Carnegie Classifications](#) for this type of school, Doctoral/Research, Research with high research activity, and Research with very high research activity. These categories combine for 270 institutions with 500 or more full-time undergraduates.

The average median 10 year earnings for graduates of research universities that qualify as 50-50 colleges is \$48,536. For those research universities that have a 50% or better graduate rate but accept less than 50% of students, the average is \$62,971. For those that have less than a 50% graduation rate, the average is \$43,392.

While it's tempting to just assume that the more exclusive colleges are providing a better return on investment, they also take wealthier students to begin with. Those that accept less than 50% of students average only 18.7% of freshman receiving Pell Grants. Institutions that have less than a 50% graduation rate have 42.4% of their freshman receiving Pell Grants. The 50-50 schools average 24.8% of freshman receiving Pell Grants.

When you compare colleges, you really should take such differences into consideration.

The following table lists all [50-50 schools](#) classified as Doctoral/Research and the median 10 year earnings of students. Remember, these earnings are only for those who received federal aid and doesn't account for the concentration of majors at each school. As usual, the 4 year rate is used for private schools and the 5 year for public.

50-50 Doctoral/Research Universities Ranked by Graduates' Salaries

Name	Type	State	Full-time Under-grad	4/5 yr Grad Rate	% Freshman Receiving Pell Grants	Median Earnings of Students Working After 10 Years
Worcester Polytechnic Institute	Private	MA	3,959	70	14	\$77,600
Clarkson University	Private	NY	3,084	61	29	\$68,400
Missouri University of Science and Technology	Public	MO	5,472	56	24	\$65,500
University of San Francisco	Private	CA	6,111	57	24	\$61,000
Michigan Technological University	Public	MI	5,198	58	28	\$60,100
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University	Public	VA	23,512	80	15	\$57,900
George Mason University	Public	VA	17,261	61	24	\$57,000
Syracuse University	Private	NY	14,422	69	26	\$56,600
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Public	IL	31,516	82	21	\$56,600
University of San Diego	Private	CA	5,486	65	17	\$56,300
Marquette University	Private	WI	8,046	57	17	\$55,600
Yeshiva University	Private	NY	2,782	60	17	\$55,600
Saint Louis University	Private	MO	7,210	61	19	\$55,200
Rutgers University-New Brunswick	Public	NJ	31,759	76	29	\$54,800

Name	Type	State	Full-time Under-grad	4/5 yr Grad Rate	% Freshman Receiving Pell Grants	Median Earnings of Students Working After 10 Years
Rutgers University-Newark	Public	NJ	5,827	60	49	\$54,800
Catholic University of America	Private	DC	3,456	62	11	\$54,500
Duquesne University	Private	PA	5,740	66	20	\$54,300
University of Delaware	Public	DE	16,852	79	14	\$54,300
University of St Thomas	Private	MN	6,065	63	19	\$54,300
University of Connecticut	Public	CT	17,219	81	18	\$53,900
University of Maryland-Baltimore County	Public	MD	9,508	59	21	\$53,500
Seton Hall University	Private	NJ	5,380	50	26	\$53,300
Hofstra University	Private	NY	6,378	50	23	\$53,200
Texas A & M University-College Station	Public	TX	39,641	75	26	\$52,900
Purdue University-Main Campus	Public	IN	28,659	64	19	\$52,600
University of Dayton	Private	OH	7,455	60	12	\$52,300
Southern Methodist University	Private	TX	6,119	67	13	\$52,200
University of Washington-Seattle Campus	Public	WA	27,050	78	22	\$52,100
University of Illinois at Chicago	Public	IL	15,402	51	54	\$51,600
University of Denver	Private	CO	5,129	67	17	\$51,400
University of Wisconsin-Madison	Public	WI	28,568	79	13	\$51,000
DePaul University	Private	IL	13,594	54	28	\$50,900
SUNY at Albany	Public	NY	12,055	64	36	\$50,900
Adelphi University	Private	NY	4,531	53	32	\$50,600
Loyola University Chicago	Private	IL	9,339	60	28	\$50,600
Michigan State University	Public	MI	34,838	74	21	\$49,800
University at Buffalo	Public	NY	18,091	68	31	\$49,700
University of Massachusetts-Amherst	Public	MA	20,505	71	22	\$49,600
The University of Texas at Dallas	Public	TX	10,635	59	26	\$49,500
Clemson University	Public	SC	16,050	79	16	\$49,400
Baylor University	Private	TX	13,059	57	18	\$49,100
University of California-Riverside	Public	CA	18,205	62	56	\$48,700
University of Iowa	Public	IA	19,522	67	20	\$48,700
University of Pittsburgh-Pittsburgh Campus	Public	PA	17,483	79	16	\$48,200
University of Rhode Island	Public	RI	11,829	56	26	\$48,200
University of Colorado Boulder	Public	CO	23,948	66	17	\$48,000
North Carolina State University at Raleigh	Public	NC	21,469	68	21	\$47,500

Name	Type	State	Full-time Under-grad	4/5 yr Grad Rate	% Freshman Receiving Pell Grants	Median Earnings of Students Working After 10 Years
Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus	Public	PA	38,826	83	14	\$47,500
University of New Hampshire-Main Campus	Public	NH	12,063	78	23	\$47,300
Iowa State University	Public	IA	26,177	63	21	\$47,200
University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus	Public	OK	17,559	59	23	\$46,600
Temple University	Public	PA	24,743	61	27	\$46,500
University of Georgia	Public	GA	24,746	80	21	\$46,500
Oregon State University	Public	OR	18,484	55	31	\$46,400
Washington State University	Public	WA	20,312	62	32	\$46,400
Texas Tech University	Public	TX	24,338	54	24	\$46,100
University of Missouri-Columbia	Public	MO	25,258	67	23	\$46,000
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College	Public	LA	22,811	62	23	\$45,900
Miami University-Oxford	Public	OH	15,001	79	13	\$45,800
Auburn University	Public	AL	18,011	63	13	\$45,400
Indiana University-Bloomington	Public	IN	31,050	74	19	\$45,300
Arizona State University-Tempe	Public	AZ	34,989	55	29	\$45,200
Illinois State University	Public	IL	16,683	68	27	\$45,100
Saint John Fisher College	Private	NY	2,738	65	29	\$44,800
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry	Public	NY	1,647	69	23	\$44,600
University of California-Santa Cruz	Public	CA	15,323	69	51	\$44,600
University of Kansas	Public	KS	17,193	56	22	\$44,600
Maryville University of Saint Louis	Private	MO	1,786	51	27	\$44,500
University of Arizona	Public	AZ	28,401	58	30	\$44,400
Colorado State University-Fort Collins	Public	CO	20,400	59	24	\$44,300
Clark University	Private	MA	2,270	76	24	\$44,100
Florida State University	Public	FL	28,910	74	27	\$44,000
University of Vermont	Public	VT	9,764	75	20	\$44,000
West Virginia University	Public	WV	21,027	53	26	\$43,900
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Public	NE	18,102	61	24	\$43,800
University of Arkansas	Public	AR	18,565	55	22	\$43,600
Oklahoma State University-Main Campus	Public	OK	17,793	55	27	\$43,400
Kansas State University	Public	KS	18,110	53	24	\$43,300

Name	Type	State	Full-time Under-grad	4/5 yr Grad Rate	% Freshman Receiving Pell Grants	Median Earnings of Students Working After 10 Years
University of Central Florida	Public	FL	36,229	61	31	\$43,000
Ohio State University-Main Campus	Public	OH	40,020	81	19	\$42,600
The University of Alabama	Public	AL	26,548	62	18	\$42,400
The University of Tennessee-Knoxville	Public	TN	19,799	62	30	\$42,300
University of South Carolina-Columbia	Public	SC	22,533	70	19	\$42,100
Virginia Commonwealth University	Public	VA	19,746	51	29	\$41,800
University of Oregon	Public	OR	18,892	62	23	\$41,600
University of Kentucky	Public	KY	19,884	55	25	\$41,500
South Dakota State University	Public	SD	8,646	52	30	\$40,600
University of Mississippi	Public	MS	15,628	54	26	\$40,600
Central Michigan University	Public	MI	17,880	51	35	\$40,000
Mississippi State University	Public	MS	15,048	55	32	\$39,600
Ohio University-Main Campus	Public	OH	16,756	64	25	\$39,500
University of South Dakota	Public	SD	4,732	51	29	\$39,500
The New School	Private	NY	5,878	50	26	\$39,400
University of Cincinnati-Main Campus	Public	OH	20,332	58	23	\$39,400
East Carolina University	Public	NC	18,500	52	32	\$39,200
Ball State University	Public	IN	15,128	56	35	\$39,000
Bowling Green State University-Main Campus	Public	OH	13,387	51	36	\$39,000
University of Maine	Public	ME	7,922	51	42	\$38,700
University of North Carolina at Greensboro	Public	NC	12,469	50	48	\$37,000

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Don't have any idea of where to go to college?



Here's how to start making your list of colleges. If you're willing to step away from the rankings spotlight, you can find some impressive programs at great values. All it takes is a little time and a visit to one of the most ignored resources in creating a college list: the college website. [Find out more.](#)