

CANADIAN UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

Analyzing the QS World University
Rankings 2026

PRESENTED BY



Canada has always been regarded as a top education destination for international students due to its reputation for academic performance and high graduate employability rate. With world-class universities and colleges offering a large variety of subjects, Canada has competed well with similar universities in the United States and United Kingdom. The low tuition costs are also a major reason why international students choose Canada. Almost 70% of international students apply for the Post Graduate Work Permit.

Most of the top universities in Canada are publicly funded institutions which are also known for their research facilities. It is, therefore, not surprising that these find mention in every global university ranking like QS and Times Higher Education Rankings. In the 2025 rankings, nearly 30 Canadian Universities find a mention in the rankings.

For students who are looking to apply to a Canadian University, it is important to understand which universities are ranked in the top. It helps to compare and understand where your preferred institution stands in the global rankings. The final decision on where you apply will be decided by various factors like cost, preferred location and availability of your preferred subject specialization amongst others. The recent cap on study permits has also resulted in universities being given an allocation of study permits each year.

5 of the top 10 Universities are based in Ontario which attracts the majority of international students. In 2023, 56% of international students were enrolled in postsecondary institutions in Ontario. In comparison, British Columbia had just 20% of all international student enrollments. Most Universities in Ontario are maintaining their 2023 enrollment levels for international students.

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) is a global leader in providing insights and analytics into higher education. Since 2004, they have been publishing a ranking system of over 1300 higher education institutes worldwide. Today, it has become a popular source of comparative data about a university's performance.

The latest QS World University Rankings 2025 has 29 Canadian Universities in their list of the best universities across various academic subjects.

QS WORLD RANKINGS 2025

S.NO	RANK	UNIVERSITY	LOCATION
1	27	McGill University	Montreal
2	29	University of Toronto	Toronto
3	40	University of British Columbia	Vancouver
4	94	University of Alberta	Edmonton
5	119	University of Waterloo	Waterloo
6	151	Western University	London
7	168	Universite de Montreal	Montreal
8	173	McMaster University	Hamilton
9	191	Queen's University at Kingston	Kingston
10	211	University of Calgary	Calgary

Now let us take a look at each of the Canadian Universities one by one. However, kindly note that all the information is from the official website of the respective University. Facts and figures are subject to change. After the complete reading about each university, candidates can refer to the given links of the official website.

McGill University

Founded in 1821, McGill University is an English language university located in the heart of Montreal, one of the largest French speaking cities in the world. Montreal is a modern city with a European flair. The University was founded by James McGill, a fur trader who left an endowment to construct McGill College.

McGill is one of Canada's largest universities with close to 30,000 students enrolled every year. A leading research institution, McGill has 11 faculties and 10 professional schools offering undergraduate and graduate programs in 300 disciplines. McGill University also has one of the most internationally diverse student bodies. It is recognized globally for its excellent teaching and research programs.

Some of the popular courses offered at McGill University include:

- Business
- Marketing, Media & Communication
- Political & Social Sciences
- Economics
- Computing & IT
- Teaching & Education
- Finance
- Engineering
- Agriculture Sciences
- Art & Design

<https://www.mcgill.ca/about/>

The Quebec Government has implemented a cap on international student permit applications for 2025-26. This cap limits the number of study permit approvals to 124,760. This is a 20% reduction in comparison to last year. The study permit allocations have been spread across the universities and colleges in Quebec with universities getting more study permits while vocational and college level applications have been reduced significantly. The cap for Universities is 63,299 while for vocational institutes it is 32,361 and 29,200 for colleges.



University of Toronto

The University of Toronto has been consistently ranked as the top Canadian University not just in global rankings but in local rankings like Maclean's. In the QS World Rankings for 2025, the University of Toronto was ranked at #29. The University of Toronto has evolved into one of the leading institutions of learning, discovery and knowledge creation. This university was one of the first universities to be founded in the colony of Upper Canada and is structured similar to the British University system with a cluster of colleges forming the university.

The University of Toronto attracts international students from over 159 countries.

The University of Toronto has a number of achievements like housing Canada's first publishing house, the first forest science faculty in the country and being the first university in the country to receive more than C\$1 billion in endowments.

The University of Toronto is spread over 3 campuses: St George, Mississauga and Scarborough. Over 980 programs are offered every year to students. Some of these programs are:

- Humanities & Social Science
- Life Sciences
- Physical & Mathematical Sciences
- Commerce & Management
- Computer Science
- Engineering
- Kinesiology & Physical Education
- Music
- Architecture

In addition to the undergraduate programs, the University of Toronto also offers second entry professional programs in Education, Nursing, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Law and Medicine. It is regarded as being one of the best institutions for Medicine.

In a press release in May 2024, the Government of Ontario had announced that its study permit allocation will focus on prioritizing postsecondary educational programs at public institutions to “help prepare graduates for in-demand jobs that support Ontario’s labour market needs”. The study permits will be allocated by prioritizing programs in several “high-demand” areas such as:

- Skilled Trades
- Health Human Resources
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
- Hospitality
- Child Care
- French-language enrollment will be prioritized as well.



University of British Columbia

The University of British Columbia is the oldest university in the province. It is spread over two campuses-the main campus is in Vancouver and the second campus is in Kelowna. A global center for teaching, learning and research, the University of British Columbia has been consistently ranked amongst the top public universities in the world.

The university offers students a number of scholarships and collaborates with the community, government, industry and university partners to provide an enriched educational experience to its students.

Some of the programs that are offered to undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students include:

- Business & Economics
- Earth, Environment and Sustainability
- Education
- Engineering & Technology
- Health & Life Sciences
- History, Law & Politics
- Languages & Linguistics
- Math, Chemistry & Physics
- Media & Fine Arts
- People, Culture & Society



<https://ok.ubc.ca/about/facts-and-figures/>

British Columbia and Vancouver, in particular, are attractive study destinations for international students. The British Columbia government has capped the study permit allocation for universities to 30% of their total enrollment. This has not impacted the University of British Columbia since they do not exceed the 30% cap but it will impact private universities more who depend a lot more on international students.

University of Alberta

The University of Alberta (UAlberta) is one of the leading universities in Canada, known for its world-class research and innovative discoveries. Athabasca Hall was the first building to be constructed in 1911 on the Northern Campus of the university. The North Campus is the hub of the university's academic and research activities with over 35,000 students enrolled. Apart from the North Campus, the University of Alberta also has a South Campus as well as Campus Saint-Jean, Augustana Campus and Enterprise Square. The University of Alberta also has a Calgary campus. The University also houses the National Institute of Nanotechnology.

The University of Alberta offers more than \$25 million in undergraduate scholarships with many scholarships being offered to international students.

A leader in innovation, the University of Alberta offers excellent research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. With dozens of research centers and institutes, University of Alberta offers 18 faculties for the following programs:

- Agricultural Life and Environmental Sciences
- Alberta School of Business
- Arts
- Fine Arts
- Faculty of French Language
- Education
- Engineering
- Extension
- Graduate Studies and Research
- Kinesiology, Sport and Recreation
- Law
- Medicine & Dentistry
- Native Studies
- Nursing
- Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences
- School of Public Health
- Rehabilitation Medicine
- Science

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/about/index.html>

The Government of Alberta has been allocated 32,660 study permits for 2025-26. The break-up of the allocation in terms of universities and colleges has not been provided.



University of Waterloo

The University of Waterloo was started in 1957 as an Engineering College with 74 students. The cornerstone of its philosophy was co-operative education. Today, the university is the top-ranked institution for experiential learning and employer-student connections. It is a global research-intensive university recognized for entrepreneurship and innovation, providing co-op and work-integrated learning. With over 41,000 students enrolled at the university, international students make up 21% of undergraduates and 40% of graduates. The university has satellite campuses in Cambridge, Kitchener and Stratford.

The University of Waterloo is ranked in the top 1% of universities in the world and is also the top ranked university for Computer Science and Entrepreneurship in 2024. Students graduate with up to 2 years of paid work experience and 96% of the co-op graduates get employed within 6 months of graduation in positions related to their skills.

The students and faculty of University of Waterloo have founded more than 1000 startups. Supporting entrepreneurship, the university has over 45 programs on entrepreneurship including Velocity and Conrad School of Entrepreneurship and Business.

The University of Waterloo has 6 Faculties and 13 Faculty-based schools:

- Applied Health Sciences
- Arts
- Engineering
- Environment
- Mathematics
- Science

<https://uwaterloo.ca/about/facts>



Western University

Western University is also known as the University of Western Ontario. The Western University was founded in 1878 as the Western University of London Ontario with just four faculties—Arts, Divinity, Law and Medicine. In 1923, the university was renamed as the University of Western Ontario. Today, the university has become a vibrant center for learning with 12 faculties offering more than 400 specializations.

Western University is ranked amongst the top 1% of institutions globally. It is a founding member of U15, a group of Canada's most distinguished research universities. The university welcomes over 5,000 international students from 126 countries, sharing classroom experiences that broaden the personal perspectives and understanding. The university also offers international study-abroad research and volunteer opportunities.

Some of the programs offered by Western University include:

- Arts & Humanities
- Don Wright Faculty of Music
- Education
- Engineering
- Health Sciences
- Information and Media Studies
- Law

University of Montreal

One of the world's leading research universities, the University of Montreal is ranked 3rd in Canada in terms of the volume of research activities. It is the top ranked university in Quebec. It was founded with the goal of offering higher education. Over the course of over 135 year, it has become an institution serving society as a whole. Set up in 1878, the university was started with three faculties—theology, law and medicine. Today, the University offers the following programs:

- Arts & Sciences
- Dentistry
- Education
- Environmental Design
- Kinesiology
- Law
- Medicine
- Music
- Optometry
- Nursing
- School of Public Health

- Pharmacy
- Veterinary Medicine

The University of Montreal also has affiliated schools like HEC Montreal that offers Management programs; Polytechnique Montreal that is an Engineering School offering all fields of Engineering and Faculty of Continuing Education that is the only faculty devoted to Adult Education in Quebec.

The University of Montreal has over 67,000 students enrolled at the institution with 73% enrolled in undergraduate programs and 27% in graduate programs. It has over 10,000 international students studying in various programs at the university

University of Calgary

The University of Calgary began operations in 1955 as a branch of the University of Alberta. It was only in 1966 that it gained autonomy and became the University of Calgary. Today, the university hosts 14 faculties offering more than 250 programs as well as more than 50 research institutes and centres. Some of the faculties include:

- Faculty of Arts
- School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape
- Haskayne School of Business
- Cumming School of Medicine
- Faculty of Graduate Studies
- Faculty of Kinesiology
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Nursing
- Faculty of Science

- Schulich School of Engineering
- Faculty of Social Work
- Werklund School of Education
- Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

The University of Calgary is one of Canada's top comprehensive research universities, combining the best of university tradition with the city of Calgary's vibrant energy and diversity. The University of Calgary has 5 campuses around the city and one in Doha, Qatar for Nursing.

The student body at University of Calgary is 33,000 strong with 26,000 enrolled in undergraduate programs and more than 6000 students in graduate programs. One can find international students from over 112 countries studying here.

McMaster University

Consistently ranked amongst the top 100 universities in the world, McMaster University is a medical-doctoral research-intensive university dedicated to teaching, learning and service. In the 1960's, McMaster University pioneered the problem-based approach to learning that came to be known as "The McMaster model". With over 70 research centers and institutes, McMaster offers 6 Faculties:

- DeGroote School of Business
- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Health Sciences
- Faculty of Humanities
- Faculty of Science
- Faculty of Social Science

- McMaster University has 31,000 full-time enrolled students as well as international students from 120 countries.



Click here to know more about McMaster University -
https://www.mcmaster.ca/opr/html/opr/fast_facts/main/about.html

Queen's University

Queen's University is internationally recognized for its research, innovation and academic excellence. Established in 1841, Queen's University is a public research university spread over 1,400 hectares of land throughout Ontario.

Queen's University is highly-ranked in Canada for student experience, taking an inclusive approach and offering learning beyond the classroom; this experience includes the most clubs per capita of any Canadian University as well as a robust international exchange program with more than 220 partners. It's research-intensive environment and interdisciplinary program offerings provide students with the comprehensive and nimble skills required in today's competitive and evolving workforce with 91% of Queen's grads employed within six months after graduation. With particular academic strengths in physics, cancer research, geo engineering, data analytics, and social sciences like surveillance studies and mental health, the university sets graduates up for excellence across disciplines. The University has a number of undergraduate programs out of which some of the top subject areas are as follows –

- Commerce
- Computing
- Concurrent Education
- Creative Arts
- Engineering and Applied Science
- Humanities
- Languages and Cultures
- Life and Physical Sciences
- Nursing • Social Sciences

A home to more than 24,000 students, Queen's boasts an undergraduate graduation rate of 93%, diverse learning opportunities, a broad range of student services and support, unmistakable school spirit, and a tight-knit global network of 159,000 alumni in 153 countries. Ultimately, to graduate from Queen's University is to join an international community of lifelong learners and accomplished leaders. The campus has a fully integrated network of six libraries and is home to several outstanding museums and arts facilities, including the Agnes Etherington Art Centre and The Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts.

Click here to know more about Queen's University - <https://www.queensu.ca/about>

