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SUNY-University at Buffalo

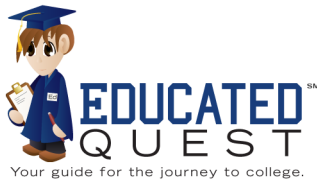
Founded in 1846 in downtown Buffalo, New York as a private medical school, the State University of New York's (SUNY) flagship campus has just under 20,000 undergraduates. Today SUNY-University at Buffalo (UB) has three campuses, North and South in Amherst, a Buffalo suburb as well as the soon-to-be expanded medical complex downtown. The North Campus, with nearly 1,100 acres, is the academic and residential center of the university.

With the possible exception of programs in Agriculture—Cornell is New York's Land Grant University— and Education, where the university only offers advanced degrees, UB offers practically any major a college student might want. UB is also the second-youngest member of the research-oriented Association of American Universities (after the University of California-Irvine). Only 62 schools, public and private National Research Universities, belong to this prestigious association. But in terms of student body size, selectivity, location and academic options, the school most similar to UB are is probably Temple University (PA), another city-based schools that is trying to build a stronger campus community.

Interestingly, both UB and Temple offer programs where entering freshmen have the option to sign a commitment to complete their degrees in four years. But while Temple's program, 'Fly in Four; is too new to have graduated a senior class, UB's '[Finish in 4](#)' has had enough time to produce positive results. [According to the university, 63 percent of the 930 students who took the pledge in 2012, the first year for Finish in 4, graduated in 2016.](#) However, those students represented just under a third of that year's freshman class.

UB retained 86 percent of the freshmen who entered in 2015, very good for a school of this size. But other flagships in neighboring states such as The Ohio State University, Rutgers-New Brunswick, Penn State-University Park, Temple University, the University of Connecticut and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst have done better. Each retained over 90 percent of their freshmen despite having larger undergraduate enrollments. UB also graduated 58 percent of the freshmen who entered in 2010, excellent for a flagship state school. However, with the exception of Temple, the larger schools previously mentioned did better at graduating their classes on time.

UB offered admission to 59 percent of those who applied to join its 2016 freshman class. The SAT range for the middle 50 percent of the accepted students who took that test was between 1070 and 1270. The ACT Composite for the middle 50 percent who chose to submit scores from that test was between 24 and 29. UB will offer second-choice admissions to students who are denied admission to the more selective programs including Architecture, Engineering, Nursing and Pharmacy. If UB is on your list, apply November 15th for Early Action *and* scholarship consideration.



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Costs

New Yorkers are quite fortunate to have an opportunity to apply to one of the more affordable flagship state universities in the US. Tuition *and* fees were just under \$9,800 during the previous academic year for residents. The university charged, on average, approximately \$13,600 for room and board, although students have the option to reside in less expensive triple and quad rooms in the residence halls. The [merit scholarship programs](#), specially the Presidential Scholarship, make UB an even better value.

Students who do not come from New York also get a very good deal from UB. Non-resident tuition and fees were approximately \$26,300, lower than non-resident than any flagship university in New York's neighboring states. They would pay less for tuition and fees, room and board to attend UB than they would likely *pay for tuition and fees alone* to attend Indiana University-Bloomington, Michigan State or the University of Vermont, among other schools.

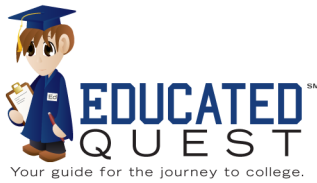
New York State has also launched the [Excelsior Scholarship](#). This program will help the state's neediest students attend any SUNY school tuition free. The downside is that the program requires a separate application form from the FAFSA and that recipients are obligated to remain in the state of New York for a period of four years after they graduate from college. UB also reports that approximately half of the students who graduated in 2016 had *no student loan debt at all*.

Curriculum

UB not only offers more than 110 [majors](#); the majority are more accessible than they would be at other flagship state schools. Only the programs in Architecture, Nursing and Pharmacy require students to enter as freshmen. Aside from these majors, UB asks that prospective students to check off an "intended major" when they apply. But the university does not obligate a student to that major after s/he is offered admission.

An added plus: UB does not have "restricted access" or "limited access" to any major where students would be ready to declare in their sophomore year. This, plus the Finish in 4 program, gives UB students a fair chance to earn a degree in the major that they want. This year the university will open "Capen 1," a one-stop customer service center in the main administration building to better assist students to register for classes and monitor progress towards their degrees, among other services. UB's Web site is also very well organized when it comes to explaining degree programs to current and prospective students.

UB offers [combined programs](#) that you are less likely to find at other flagship state schools. For example, Bachelors degrees in several of the Engineering programs can be combined with the MBA. The BS in Exercise Science can be combined with a Masters



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degree in either Nutrition or Public Health. Several majors can also be combined with a Masters degree in Education. There is also an Early Assurance program for admission into UB's dental school.

UB students will have large classes, at least during their first two years. Over a fifth of the university's undergraduate courses offered during 2015-16 had more than 50 students. But its admissions office advertised a student/faculty ratio of 13 to 1, low for a flagship state school. This is likely a result of the smaller enrollments in the upper-level courses in majors such as Architecture, Pharmacy and Nursing.

UB students gave their faculty a rating of 3.72 (out of a possible 5) on RateMyProfessors.com, about the same as students at Cincinnati (3.71), Penn State (3.71), Pitt (3.74), Rutgers-New Brunswick (3.74) and Temple (3.7) gave theirs. UB students also held their faculty in higher regard than Syracuse University students (3.68) did.

Community

If your image of college starts with a tree-lined campus and ivy covered buildings then UB is not for you. The North Campus, where most of the residences are located and most of the academic activity happens, was first completed in that early 1970s. While new buildings were added over the next four decades, the academic center of North Campus appears to be one brown concrete "super-block." The landscape of the campus, including the Baird Point lakefront and Lake LaSalle is manmade. The entire North Campus is very easy to navigate with academic buildings at the center, then parking, then athletic facilities, residence halls and apartments at the outer ring. Some academic buildings are connected by walkways, useful in the colder months. [The most recent Clery Report does show some concerns within the crime statistics.](#) Prospective students and their parents should inquire about safety when they visit.

All resident students may have cars—and pay no fee to have a parking permit, something that you are not likely to see at most other colleges. Depending on their choice of residence hall, they may even park close to home. However, anyone who lives on campus either walks or rides the free campus shuttle bus to their classes. All of the parking close to the academic buildings is either metered or restricted to commuting students and university employees.

UB has more than 300 clubs and organizations, but it is not a "spirit and sports" school. Only two percent of the undergraduate student body belongs to a social fraternity or sorority, and these organizations do not have their own houses. UB's athletic program is small for a flagship state university, playing only 16 varsity sports at the NCAA Division I (scholarship) level, [recently down from 20 due to \\$2 million in budget cuts.](#) A member of the Middle America Conference (MAC), UB competes against schools of similar size,



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mainly in Ohio and Michigan that are neither long-standing nor natural sports rivals. The football program, the most important source of revenue for a major college athletic department, [averages less than 19,000 fans per home game](#). Worse, UB's conference rivals also play in small football stadiums. The major source of revenue from football has to come from a "guarantee game" against a nationally recognized opponent that has a much better team as well as a much larger stadium. Ironically, the university dropped one of its more successful programs, men's soccer, [partly because only four conference rivals played the sport](#).

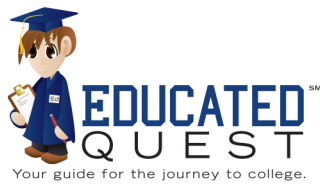
But one of the best reasons, aside from an academic program and costs, to consider UB might be the City of Buffalo. [Travel and Leisure magazine readers voted Buffalo into first place as America's Favorite City in 2016](#). The second most populous city in New York, with nearly 260,000 residents, Buffalo has many amenities found in larger cities. These include, but are not limited to, professional football and hockey, minor league baseball, music, theatre, over 50 art galleries (including the Albright-Knox Gallery, the first modern art museum in the United States), America's third-oldest city zoo and [many eating and drinking options downtown](#). Hiking and skiing opportunities are less than an hour from campus. And, unlike cities with more colleges such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia or Pittsburgh, students can explore Buffalo and the surrounding area either by car or mass transit from campus.

Comforts

UB houses nearly 40 percent of its student body on campus, a higher percentage than most flagship state schools. UB does an excellent job at providing a mix of affordable [housing opportunities](#) for its students. Nine single, double, triple and quad living options are available in the residence halls, with prices starting at just over \$5,700 for a Value Quad. The most common option, however, is a double room in either a corridor-style (several rooms sharing a common bathroom) or suite-style (two or four rooms sharing a common bathroom) hall, which costs just over \$8,000. Prices include cable and Internet access as well as laundry services. These halls have 5,000 beds total, enough to accommodate all freshmen who wish to live on campus as well as any upper-class student who requests to live in a hall versus an apartment.

There are ten living-learning communities in the [residence halls](#). Five support academic programs (Management, Engineering, Pre-Pharmacy, Health Professions and Architecture), two are for high achievers (Acker Scholars and the Honors College). The last two are multi-cultural (Global 360) and leadership based (Leadership House).

The university also operates five [on-campus apartment complexes](#), four of which are open to juniors and seniors. As it does with the residence halls, UB has "all inclusive rates" which cover all services including laundry. Each complex also has an on-site



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business center for quiet study, computing and printing. The lowest cost per student is approximately the same as it would be for a double room in a residence hall.

UB has more dining facilities and more flexibility with meal plans than most flagship state schools. You can use the meal card in the dining halls as well as to purchase sandwiches or snacks in the student union or at stores on campus. Unless you are walking through a parking lot, you are never far from a place to eat at UB. The university also operates two food trucks, “Big Blue” and “Little Blue,” to satisfy student cravings.

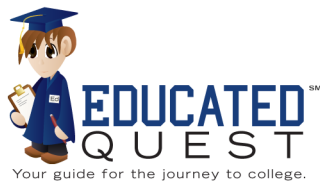
The university’s Office of Off-Campus Student Services maintains a [database of available houses and apartments](#) that have passed New York State fire and safety codes, a plus rarely found at similar schools. While it is possible to live within a short commute of campus and pay less in rent than the university charges for on-campus housing, local landlords are more likely to obligate students to sign 12-month leases. This works fine for students who plan to work in the Buffalo area during the summer or after graduation, but not for those who would prefer to live elsewhere. Subletting an apartment is difficult, given that there are many so apartments for rent in the community.

Connections

UB is the most comprehensive and most selective university within a metro area that has growth sectors in financial services, food products, health care as well as state government and non-profit management. Students will face less competition from students at other colleges for internships, part-time career related positions and summer jobs in the Buffalo area than they would in cities with more schools such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia or Pittsburgh.

In addition to on-campus recruiting, advising and [career events](#), UB’s Career Development Center runs the [Road Trip Career Experience](#), where students get to travel to cities and meet with professionals in their fields of interest. There are three Experiences: Computer Science, Entrepreneurship and General Management.

UB has nearly 250,000 living alumni, a very large base for a school that is less than 50 years old. Among the nearly 138,000 registered in [LinkedIn.com](#), just under 43,000 remained in the Buffalo area while more than 23,000 are based in an around New York City. Outside of New York State, there are at least 1,000 UB alumni in and around Washington DC, San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Chicago and Denver.



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Conclusions

UB does everything that a flagship state university should do for the citizens of its state —offer achievable admissions, an affordable education and access to numerous career and social opportunities—and it's a good value for non-residents, too! Unless you're looking for a state school with more history, spirit and sports, UB has a lot to offer.

Report Card: SUNY-University at Buffalo

Four-Year/Six-Year Graduation Rates B+/B+

Freshman Retention: B+

Costs: A

Curriculum: A

Community: B+

Comforts: A

Connections: A