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Rutgers University—New Brunswick

Rutgers University—New Brunswick is the eighth oldest college in the United States. It was chartered as a colonial college (1766), a Federal Land Grant University (1862) and a state university (1945). It is the second-oldest college to remain public, after the College of William and Mary (VA).

Rutgers has more than 33,000 full-time undergraduates, and over 36,000 total. Eighty percent come from New Jersey; the remainder are split almost evenly between international students and students from other US states. Rutgers also has one of the more ethnically diverse student bodies that you will find at a large state university. Forty-six percent of the undergraduate population is African American, Asian or Hispanic. Rutgers also has the largest number of Jewish students at any US college, according to hillel.org.

Rutgers is becoming a more selective university. The average SAT scores for the classes that entered in 2015 and 2016 were 1230, up 40 points from the class that entered in 2007. Admits into the Honors College scored, on average, 250 points higher. During the admissions cycle that is near conclusion, applications rose between seven and eight percent. The university expects to welcome nearly 6,600 freshmen this fall, over 300 more than it did in the fall of 2017. The university openly publishes the [admissions profile by school](#) for the most recent freshman class, something few peer institutions do.

Rutgers allows applicants to choose more than one school. Apply by November 1st, a month before the Regular Decision Deadline, and you might receive a decision by mid-December for at least one of your chosen schools. This helps Rutgers acceptance rate as much as the student's options. The applicant pool is also evaluated holistically to consider students for the honors programs in which they might qualify.

Rutgers students must first be enrolled in the School of Arts and Sciences to be able to transfer to the School of Communication and Information, the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy or the School of Management and Labor Relations. Students interested in business may apply for direct admission into Rutgers Business School, or apply to transfer from the School of Arts and Sciences after their sophomore year. The other undergraduate schools: the School of Biological and Environmental Sciences (SEBS), the School of Engineering, the School of Nursing, the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy and the Mason Gross School of the Arts are open only to freshmen. In recent years the applicant pool has shifted more towards business and engineering.

Rutgers is one of the better flagship state schools when it comes to freshman retention and graduation rates. The retention rate for the classes that entered in 2015 was an excellent 94 percent. The four-year graduation rate for the class that entered in 2010 was 59 percent. The six-year rate was 84 percent, excellent for a large state university.

Rutgers is considered most often against Penn State-University Park, the University of Maryland-College Park and the University of Delaware as well as other New Jersey public schools (Ramapo, Rowan, New Jersey Institute of Technology and The College of New Jersey) and extremely selective private schools such as NYU, George Washington University and the Ivies.

Costs

Rutgers is one of the more expensive state universities in terms of in-state tuition although the school has held its most recent increases below two percent, better than average for a state university. This year New Jersey residents have been asked to pay just over \$14,600. Students in the Rutgers Business School, the College of Engineering, the College of Pharmacy and the



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School of Biological and Environmental Sciences (SEBS) pay around \$1,000 more. Students who enter undecided and transfer over to the business school or SEBS as juniors will have a larger tuition increase than others. Non-resident tuition and fees have exceeded \$30,000. Room and board charges are approximately \$12,500, though on-campus apartments can get expensive for upper-class students.

Rutgers 2016 graduates who took out loans borrowed approximately \$26,000, below the maximum they could have borrowed from the Federal Government over four years. Over 40 percent of the senior class graduated with no debt at all. Only seven percent needed to borrow from a source other than the Federal Government. These numbers are quite good, considering that Rutgers is one of the more expensive state schools for resident students.

About a fifth of all undergraduates receive merit-based scholarships, the largest being the Presidential, a true full-ride (tuition and fees, room and board) for a resident or non-resident student. Merit-based awards go further down into a freshman class at Rutgers than they do at other state universities that most applicants considered.

Curriculum

The School of Arts and Sciences has a [core curriculum](#) much like similar universities; the major difference being an Information Technology requirement that is rarely found at a school this size. There is only one specific course required of all students: Expository Writing. Students have a vast selection of courses to fulfill the other distribution requirements; they represent a third of the requirements towards a Bachelor's degree.

There are more [majors](#) at Rutgers than can possibly be covered in a profile. There are also some interesting options including more than 120 minors and certificate programs as well as credit-bearing and funded research opportunities. Nearly 60 percent of the undergraduates participates in a research project with faculty, either student-developed or professor directed. It is relatively easy, given the university's requirements, for a diligent student to complete a major, one or two minors and a self-designed research project before graduation.

[Rutgers is quite aggressive at encouraging scholarship.](#) The university offers three large honors programs: the Honors College, for students in the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Business; the School of Biological and Environmental Sciences Honors Program, and the School of Engineering Honors Academy. The university also offers honors thesis or research opportunities in the School of Arts and Sciences, the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, the School of Biological and Environmental Sciences, and the School of Engineering. The [Aresty Research Center](#) assist students in preparing proposals for funded research and acts as a clearing house for undergraduate research assistantship opportunities on campus.

You'll see large classes at Rutgers, at least over the first two years, unless you gain admission into an honors program or one of the majors with small enrollments. Less than 40 percent of all undergraduate courses have fewer than 20 students. Over 20 percent will have more than 50.

Rutgers students have given their faculty a rating of 3.74 (out of a possible 5) on [RateMyProfessors.com](#), about the same as TCNJ (3.70), Delaware (3.73), NYU (3.75), Michigan (3.78) and Penn State (3.71) students rated theirs.



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Comforts

Rutgers is one of the few large public research universities that is capable of housing more than half (approximately 17,000) of its undergraduate students in on-campus residence halls and apartments. There are enough options to enable Rutgers students to live on campus for all four years.

Scarlet Knights can live within walking distance of a cow pasture on the Cook campus or hop a train ride to New York City if they're living on the College Avenue campus. The Douglass campus offers housing strictly for women that accommodates 1,800 students, 1,200 of whom live in a residential college setting. A new apartment complex, The Yard, on the College Avenue campus housed another 500 students when it opened in the fall of 2016. An extremely modern apartment complex opened on the Livingston campus in 2012.

Accepted students may choose up to five housing options. Advance preparation to learn the likely locations of their classes and ride the campus bus routes is strongly advised. Rutgers also hosts two-day orientation events where students may meet and choose roommates before they apply for housing. All residence halls are wired for cable television and set up for wireless Internet. Micro-fridges, a combination microwave oven and refrigerator, come standard. All students are allowed to have cars, a rare privilege at a state university, though they must use the campus bus system to retrieve them from designated parking lots.

First-year students, regardless of campus of residence, live in traditional corridor-style buildings, usually co-ed by wing or floor, though single-sex living options for women are offered on the Douglass and Busch campuses. Corridor-style living allows students to meet more people, though it means there are more students to share a bathroom. Suite-style arrangements, where bathrooms are shared among small groups, are available to sophomores and other continuing students. Rutgers also offers special interest living options, including living-learning communities, across all five campuses. These include the all-female Douglass Residential College, which has 11 living-learning communities of its own.

It's probably best to live on campus for all four years or become part of the Greek community. However it is common for students to share houses near the College Avenue campus, the Douglass campus as well as in nearby Piscataway and Highland Park. The newer, more modern apartment rentals near College Avenue start around \$650 per person per month. These require security deposits as well as 12-month leases. While Rutgers is a busier campus than most during the summer months, offering classes on campus nearly 11 months a year to students from colleges across the country, apartment renters must compete with the fraternities and sororities to sublet their units.

Community

As a result of having multiple campuses and student centers, Rutgers—New Brunswick has a vast selection of student events as well as programs open to the public. However, the College Avenue campus fills the role of social center. It is close to Easton Avenue, the most student-oriented street in downtown New Brunswick, and the fraternities which are scattered mainly between College Avenue and Union Street, a block away from the major campus buildings. College Avenue is the smallest of the five campuses, so it is also the most congested. Downtown parking is very scarce when Thursday night and weekend parties hit full steam. New amenities were completed as part of the apartment complex on the Livingston campus, including a movie theater and a 24-hour diner to direct more social activity there.



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The Rutgers community is heavily reliant on buses because the campuses are divided by a river (the Raritan), two state highways (Routes 18 and 27) and an urban downtown business center (George Street in New Brunswick). The divisions between campuses and the dependency on buses force Rutgers students into one of two mindsets: live close to classes and work and return home in between, or think like commuters to a big city: spend the entire day at classes and work and return home only at the end of the day to sleep and socialize. The university provides students access to a free downloadable app that enables to track the arrival and departure times of campus buses, a huge convenience. Rutgers has also tried to reduce the amount of time students spend on buses through better campus planning and coordination with class schedules.

With student centers on all five campus communities, all with their own programming, there is no shortage of activities at Rutgers. The university has over 500 recognized student clubs and organizations. It is large enough and so well located that it can attract any entertainer or speaker from the major markets in the Northeast and Mid Atlantic states, except for rock bands. The university's Louis Brown Athletic Center, located on the Livingston campus, is too small and too dedicated to sports to attract concerts. However, New York's Madison Square Garden and Newark's Prudential Center are less than a one-hour train ride from campus. Philadelphia is an hour and half away. Princeton is about 45 minutes away by either bus or train. The university's new book store, operated by Barnes and Noble, is adjacent to a walkway to New Jersey Transit's New Brunswick train station. Another transportation convenience: an arrival and departure board is located in the book store cafe.

Rutgers is not a "sports" school along the lines of those that have played regularly for national titles in basketball or football. But students and alumni will turn out in large numbers for winning teams. The university hosted the very first college football game ever played, besting Princeton by a score of 6-4 (scores counted for one point) in 1869. Rutgers is well represented in professional sports. The most notable former Scarlet Knights are USA Soccer star Carli Lloyd, WNBA and Olympian Cappy Poindexter, Major League Baseball All Star Todd Frazier, and NFL Pro Bowler and Super Bowl champion Devin McCourty.

Rutgers addressed campus crimes in part by opening its public safety building in downtown New Brunswick, close to the Douglass campus. The building's visibility, combined with a 24/7 Security Escort Program and a 100-student equestrian and bicycle Community Officer Program, have helped to improve the perception of safety. The department also runs late-night shuttle bus programs. The Public Safety Department posts three crime reports on its website: two mandated by the federal Clery Act of 1998; the other, an internal affairs report, is posted by the department. But although Rutgers is transparent in its [crime reporting, the numbers of reported incidents of crime, especially Rape, are serious, although the numbers did decline from 2015 to 2016. It is best to read the Clery Report and ask questions before choosing places to live on or off campus.](#)

As the university and community have worked to better coordinate public safety, the City of New Brunswick has continued on a revitalization plan that has brought more university facilities, as well as more businesses, downtown. Eating and drinking places along nearby George Street, the business center of downtown New Brunswick, cater more toward the daytime office workers—downtown New Brunswick is the headquarters for Johnson and Johnson as well as a county seat—until it meets up with Livingston Avenue where there is a Rutgers student apartment complex (Rockoff) close by as well as three off-Broadway theaters, two affiliated with the university. The theaters have successfully attracted evening crowds into the downtown as well as providing performance, employment and internship opportunities for Rutgers students. A new downtown performing arts center, the future home to the theaters, is under construction.



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Connections

Career-related programs and services at Rutgers are typical what students would find at universities that charge more than twice the tuition. It helps that the campus is within a 45-minute train ride from New York City, one of the largest job markets in the country, and is about an hour from Philadelphia. New Jersey is also known as the “medicine chest” of the nation. Pharmaceuticals and health care are two of the leading industries in the Garden State.

Rutgers hosts two-day “mega-fairs” in the fall and spring, each attracting approximately 300 employers, and the university has an aggressive on-campus recruitment program. Rutgers also joins with the other Big Ten schools to co-sponsor a career fair that runs in conjunction with the conference’s basketball championship tournament, as well as a virtual career fair. Eighty-five percent of the graduates in the Class of 2017 were either employed or in graduate/professional school full time within six months after graduation, excellent for any school of any size.

Rutgers has over 500,000 living alumni. All Rutgers graduates are life members of the Rutgers University Alumni Association (RUAA). They may join any of more than 100 charter groups by school, region or special interests. Interest groups range from former band and glee club members who gather regularly for their own concerts and reunions to dance and sports-oriented groups where students and alumni can row crew or play roller hockey. Similar to the alumni groups structured at prestigious schools such as Stanford, the charters provide a way for alumni to keep in touch with their alma mater through the activities they enjoyed as students. Association members have access to an extensive benefits program, including more than 50,000 discounts that may be obtained just by presenting a member card.

Among the more than 245,000 Rutgers alumni registered in [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com) who reported their home or work location, over 153,000 percent are based in or around New York City. Nearly 22,000 percent are based in or around Philadelphia. There are more than 3,000 Rutgers alumni based in or around Washington DC, San Francisco, Boston, and Los Angeles.

Conclusions

Rutgers does better than most flagship state universities when it comes to maintaining affordability and achievable admissions for very good and excellent students. When it come to managing diversity, housing the student body, and building an alumni base, Rutgers has been a national leader among flagship public universities. Some flagship state universities might “rank” higher than Rutgers in the education press. Some, especially Big Ten rivals Michigan and Penn State, have had more resources to work with over a longer period of time. Rutgers might not be as “spirit and sports” oriented as Michigan, nor as urban as NYU or Penn. But Rutgers graduates have attained similar success in life after college.

Report Card: Rutgers University-New Brunswick

- Four-Year/Six-Year Graduation Rates: A/A
- Freshman Retention: A
- Costs: B+



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- Curriculum: A
- Community: B+
- Comforts: A
- Connections: A