Graduate School Rankings Debate: 
U.S. News and World Report --and beyond

Every year, U.S. News and World Report publishes a ranking of different graduate programs and, every year, college and university administrators and faculty decry its flawed methodology and inherent biases. Even so, those institutions which are ranked highly in the publication use this inclusion to advance their admissions goals.

In the past several years, alternative graduate program rankings have been derived to counterweight the perceived sway of the U.S. News listings. Quite recently, a Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index was created by Academic Analytics. This index incorporates a number of indicators of a program’s scholarly output. Another ranking tool, found at http://www.phds.org, allows the student to create a customized weighting of different aspects of a graduate education. One problem with these two tools is that they are largely restricted to doctoral programs, and may not capture aspects of interest to a prospective Masters student. In some cases, professional organizations, niche publications or scholars within a given field have created rankings for graduate programs in a specific discipline or specialization.

The fact is that no ranking of graduate programs can capture all of the variables a given applicant may take into consideration when making his or her choice of programs at which to apply. Most attempts to devise a hierarchy of programs include at least some consideration of faculty research productivity, receipt of grant funding, and rigor of the training received by the enrolled students. Yet there is no agreement on the appropriate weights or priority of these elements and, often, an applicant is justifiably concerned about aspects entirely outside of the rankings’ considerations: the scale of the individual program, the quality of life, the presence or absence of faculty who share a student’s research passion—even the geographical location of a graduate program. For this reason, while students should probably have a look at program rankings, their wisest decisions will result from thoroughly researching each program and—ideally—visiting the different campuses of interest to the prospective applicant.

Listed below is a selection of graduate programs that achieved top ranking in the most recent (2007) issue of U.S. News and World Report: America’s Best Graduate Schools. Where possible, the listing focus is on disciplinary subfields or concentrations because any one department—Psychology, for example—or program, such as the MBA, rarely teaches all tracks equally well. For each graduate program, alternative rankings from a source or sources other than U.S. News are presented.

Master of Business Administration: Finance

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Master of Business Administration: Marketing

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. Northwestern University
2. University of Pennsylvania
3. Duke University
   - Harvard University (2-way tie)
4. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
5. Stanford University
6. Columbia University
   - University of Chicago (2-way tie)
7. University of California, Berkeley
   - University of Texas, Austin (2-way tie)

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. University of Pennsylvania
2. Northwestern University
3. Duke University
4. Michigan State University
5. Florida State University
6. New York University
7. Ohio State University
8. University of Washington
9. Arizona State University
10. Emory University

Public Affairs – Public Management/Administration

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. Syracuse University
2. University of Georgia
3. Indiana University, Bloomington
4. Harvard University
5. University of Southern California
6. State University of New York, Albany
7. University of Kansas
8. American University
9. New York University
10. University of Texas, Austin

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. Duke University
2. Northwestern University
3. University of Illinois, Chicago
4. University of California, Irvine
5. Cornell University
6. Harvard University
7. University of Pennsylvania
8. Columbia University
9. Brandeis University
10. University of Chicago

Psychology – Industrial / Organizational Psychology

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. Michigan State University
2. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
3. Bowling Green State University
4. Penn State University, University Park
5. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
6. George Mason University
   - Georgia Inst. Technology
   - University of Akron (3-way tie)
7. University of Maryland, College Park
8. University of Southern Florida

**Student Rankings of Program Quality***

**Top PhD programs**
1. George Washington U.
2. Florida Inst. Technology
3. Colorado State University
4. Georgia Inst. Technology
5. Illinois Inst. Technology
6. Teachers College, Columbia U.
7. University of North Texas
8. University of Maryland
9. George Mason University
10. Rice University

**Top MA / MS programs**
1. Minnesota State University
2. University of Tulsa
3. George Mason University
4. Elmhurst College
5. University of Nebraska, Omaha
6. Xavier University
7. East Carolina University
8. Teachers College, Columbia U.
10. U. Tennessee, Chattanooga

*Kurt Kraiger and Anthony Abalos, “Rankings of Graduate Programs in I-O Psychology Based on Student Rankings of Quality.” Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, July 2004. (Non-U.S. institutions excluded from above listings.)
**Education: Special Education**

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. Vanderbilt University  
2. University of Kansas  
3. University of Oregon  
4. University of Virginia  
5. University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign  
6. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities  
7. University of Maryland, College Park  
8. University of Texas, Austin  
9. University of Florida  
10. University of Wisconsin, Madison

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. Vanderbilt University  
2. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
3. University of Kansas  
4. University of Washington  
5. University of Texas, Austin  
6. University of California, Berkeley  
7. University of Utah  
8. University of North Carolina, Charlotte  
9. University of Cincinnati  
10. University of California, Los Angeles

**Education: Educational Leadership / Administration**

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. University of Wisconsin, Madison  
2. Vanderbilt University  
3. Harvard University  
4. Stanford University  
5. Pennsylvania State University  
6. Ohio State University  
7. University of Texas, Austin  
8. Columbia University Teachers College  
9. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
10. Michigan State University

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. Vanderbilt University  
2. Pennsylvania State University  
3. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
4. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
5. Columbia University Teachers College  
6. University of Iowa  
7. State University of New York, Albany  
8. Indiana University, Bloomington  
9. Temple University  
10. New York University

**Social Work**

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
2. Washington University in St. Louis  
3. Columbia University  
   - University of California, Berkeley  
   - University of Chicago  
   - University of Washington (4-way tie)  
4. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
   - University of Texas, Austin (2-way tie)  
5. University of Southern California  
6. University of Wisconsin, Madison

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. University of California, Berkeley  
2. University of Pennsylvania  
3. Washington University in St. Louis  
4. Florida State University  
5. State University of New York, Albany  
6. Columbia University  
7. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
8. Boston University  
9. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
10. University of Wisconsin, Madison
Criminology/Criminal Justice

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. University of Maryland, College Park
2. State University of New York, Albany
3. University of Cincinnati
4. Rutgers State University, New Brunswick
   - University of California, Irvine
   - University of Missouri, St. Louis (3-way tie)
5. Michigan State University
   - Penn. State University, College Park (2-way tie)
6. University of Nebraska, Omaha
7. University of Pennsylvania (2-way tie)
8. City University of New York: John Jay College
   - Florida State University
   - University of Florida (3-way tie)

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. University of Maryland, College Park
2. University of Florida
3. University of Pennsylvania
4. University of California, Berkeley
5. University of California, Irvine
6. University of Cincinnati
7. Temple University
8. City University of New York Graduate Center
9. University of Missouri, St. Louis
10. State University of New York, Albany

English

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. Harvard University
   - University of California, Berkeley
   - Yale University (3-way tie)
4. Princeton University
   - Stanford University (2-way tie)
6. Cornell University
   - University of Chicago (2-way tie)
8. Columbia University
   - Johns Hopkins University (2-way tie)
10. University of California, Los Angeles
   - University of Pennsylvania (2-way tie)

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. Princeton University
2. University of Georgia
3. Pennsylvania State University
4. Washington University in St. Louis
5. Stanford University
   - Johns Hopkins University (2-way tie)
7. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
8. University of California, Berkeley
   - University of Florida (2-way tie)
10. City University of New York, Graduate Center

History

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. Yale University
2. Princeton University
   - University of California, Berkeley (2-way tie)
4. Harvard University
   - Stanford University
   - University of Chicago (3-way tie)
7. Columbia University
   - University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (2-way tie)
9. Johns Hopkins University
   - University of California, Los Angeles

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. Princeton University
2. Johns Hopkins University
3. Harvard University
4. University of Maryland, College Park
5. Yale University
6. New York University
   - Loyola University, Chicago (2-way tie)
8. Ohio State University
9. Rice University
10. Northwestern University
**Political Science – International Politics**

**U.S. News & World Report**

1. Harvard University
2. Stanford University
3. Columbia University
   - Princeton University (2-way tie)
4. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
5. University of California, San Diego
6. Duke University
   - U. California, Berkeley (2-way tie)
7. University of Chicago
8. University of California, Berkeley
   - Washington University in St. Louis (3-way tie)
9. Johns Hopkins University
10. New York University

**Survey, College of William and Mary**

1. Harvard University
2. Columbia University
3. Stanford University
4. Princeton University
5. University of Chicago
6. Yale University
7. University of Michigan
8. U. California, Berkeley
9. U. California, San Diego
10. Cornell University

**--Academic Career Goal**

1. Harvard University
2. Columbia University
3. Stanford University
4. Princeton University
5. University of Chicago
6. Yale University
7. University of Michigan
8. U. California, Berkeley
9. U. California, San Diego
10. Cornell University

**--Policy Career Goal**

1. Johns Hopkins University
2. Georgetown University
3. Harvard University
4. Tufts University
5. Columbia University
6. Princeton University
7. George Washington University
8. American University
9. Syracuse University
10. U. California, San Diego


**Biology – Genetics**

**U.S. News & World Report**

1. Harvard University
2. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
3. Stanford University (2-way tie)
4. California Institute of Technology
5. University of California, San Francisco
6. University of California, Berkeley
   - University of California, San Diego
   - Washington University in St. Louis (3-way tie)
9. Johns Hopkins University
10. Yale University

**Faculty Productivity Index**

1. University of Washington
2. Harvard University
3. Vanderbilt University
4. Baylor College of Medicine
5. University of California, San Francisco
6. University of Pennsylvania
7. Johns Hopkins University
8. Mayo Graduate School
9. Yale University
10. Washington University in St. Louis

**Chemistry**

**U.S. News & World Report**

1. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
2. University of California, Berkeley
3. California Institute of Technology
   - Harvard University
   - Stanford University (3-way tie)
6. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
7. Columbia University
   - University of Wisconsin, Madison (2-way tie)
9. Cornell University
   - Northwestern University
   - University of Texas, Austin (3-way tie)

**Faculty Productivity Index**

1. Harvard University
2. Yale University
3. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
4. Northwestern University
   - University of California, San Francisco (2-way tie)
6. Columbia University
7. University of California, Berkeley
8. California Institute of Technology
9. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
10. Stanford University
### Biochemistry

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. Harvard University
2. University of California, Berkeley
3. University of California, San Francisco
4. California Institute of Technology
5. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
6. University of Wisconsin, Madison
7. Stanford University
   - University of California, San Diego (2-way tie)
8. Stanford University
9. University of California, Los Angeles
10. Johns Hopkins University
    - Yale University (2-way tie)

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. University of California, San Francisco
2. Harvard University
3. Johns Hopkins University
4. University of Pennsylvania
5. California Institute of Technology
6. Columbia University
7. Scripps Research Institute
8. Washington University in St. Louis
9. Yale University
10. University of Wisconsin, Madison

### Mathematics – Applied Math

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. New York University
2. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
3. California Institute of Technology
4. University of California, Los Angeles
5. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
6. Brown University
7. Princeton University
8. Stanford University
   - University of Texas, Austin (2-way tie)
9. University of California, Berkeley
10. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
2. Cornell University
3. University of Texas, Austin
4. Princeton University
   - Stanford University (2-way tie)
5. Brown University
6. University of Washington
7. Columbia University
8. Carnegie Mellon University
9. University of California, Los Angeles
10. Georgia Institute of Technology

### Computer Science

**U.S. News & World Report**
1. Carnegie Mellon University
   - Massachusetts Institute of Technology
   - Stanford University
   - University of California, Berkeley (4-way tie)
2. Cornell University
   - University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (2-way tie)
3. University of Washington
4. Princeton University
5. University of Texas, Austin
   - University of Wisconsin, Madison (2-way tie)

**Faculty Productivity Index**
1. Stanford University
2. Columbia University
3. Pennsylvania State University, University Park
4. University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
5. Cornell University
6. Carnegie Mellon University
7. Boston University
8. California Institute of Technology
9. University of Maryland, College Park
10. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill