



BY THE NUMBERS

FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT THE COLLEGES AND RANKING LISTS IN

THE BEST 391 COLLEGES: 2026 EDITION
(August 12, 2025, Penguin Random House, \$26.99)

- 15: Percent of U.S. four-year colleges in the book
264 are private colleges / 127 are public colleges
- 50: Categories of "Top 25 Colleges" ranking lists in the book
- 170,000: Student surveys [tallied](#) for the ranking lists (average: 435 per school)
- 98: Questions on the student [survey](#)

Acceptance Rates & Test Policies

- 56%: Average acceptance rate of the colleges in the book
Range: 3% (Caltech) to 99% (U-South Dakota)
- 241: Colleges in the book that accepted 50% or more of their applicants last year (62%)
- 332: Test optional colleges in the book (85%)
 - 30: Test blind colleges in the book (8%)
 - 23: Test requiring (SAT® or ACT®) colleges in the book (6%)
 - 9: Test flexible (will consider ACT, AP®, IB®, or SAT scores) colleges in the book (2%)

Cost and Scholarship Aid

- 9: Tuition-Free colleges in the book
- 39: Colleges in the book with tuition of \$9,999 or less (10%)
- 18: Colleges in the book with tuition of \$70,000 or more (5%)
- \$17,084: Lowest cost of attendance* among the private colleges in the book (Brigham Young U)
- \$18,899: Lowest cost of attendance (in-state) among the public colleges in the book (U-NC Asheville)
- \$32,488: Highest average need-based scholarship among the public colleges in the book (U-CA Berkeley)
- \$74,113: Highest average need-based scholarship among the private colleges in the book (Williams College)
 - 92: Percent of students at the colleges that received need-based scholarships and grants in 2024

*Cost of attendance = tuition, fees, room & board

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