

Top Public Research Universities in the USA

All 38 public universities in the USA that belong to the Association of American Universities (AAU), the invitation-only group of leading US research universities. Listed alphabetically; this is not a ranking. We recommend public universities first, always.

No.	Public University	City	State	Joined AAU
1	Arizona State University	Tempe	Arizona	2023
2	Georgia Institute of Technology	Atlanta	Georgia	2010
3	Indiana University Bloomington	Bloomington	Indiana	1909
4	Michigan State University	East Lansing	Michigan	1964
5	The Ohio State University	Columbus	Ohio	1916
6	Pennsylvania State University	University Park	Pennsylvania	1958
7	Purdue University	West Lafayette	Indiana	1958
8	Rutgers University–New Brunswick	New Brunswick	New Jersey	1989
9	Stony Brook University (SUNY)	Stony Brook	New York	2001
10	Texas A&M University	College Station	Texas	2001
11	University at Buffalo (SUNY)	Buffalo	New York	1989
12	University of Arizona	Tucson	Arizona	1985
13	University of California, Berkeley	Berkeley	California	1900
14	University of California, Davis	Davis	California	1966
15	University of California, Irvine	Irvine	California	1996
16	University of California, Los Angeles	Los Angeles	California	1974
17	University of California, Riverside	Riverside	California	2023
18	University of California San Diego	San Diego	California	1982
19	University of California, Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara	California	1995
20	University of California, Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz	California	2019
21	University of Colorado Boulder	Boulder	Colorado	1966
22	University of Florida	Gainesville	Florida	1985
23	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	Urbana-Champaign	Illinois	1908
24	University of Iowa	Iowa City	Iowa	1909
25	University of Kansas	Lawrence	Kansas	1909
26	University of Maryland, College Park	College Park	Maryland	1969
27	University of Michigan	Ann Arbor	Michigan	1900
28	University of Minnesota Twin Cities	Minneapolis	Minnesota	1908

No.	Public University	City	State	Joined AAU
29	University of Missouri	Columbia	Missouri	1908
30	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Chapel Hill	North Carolina	1922
31	University of Oregon	Eugene	Oregon	1969
32	University of Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	1974
33	University of South Florida	Tampa	Florida	2023
34	The University of Texas at Austin	Austin	Texas	1929
35	University of Utah	Salt Lake City	Utah	2019
36	University of Virginia	Charlottesville	Virginia	1904
37	University of Washington	Seattle	Washington	1950
38	University of Wisconsin–Madison	Madison	Wisconsin	1900

What Should I Check Before I Apply?

- **Tuition:** international students pay the out-of-state rate. The 2025–26 average for Bachelor's students was \$31,880 a year, before housing and food (College Board).
- **Official checks:** confirm accreditation on College Navigator and SEVP certification on the Study in the States school search (studyinthestates.dhs.gov) before you pay any fee.
- **STEM designation:** if you want OPT time after graduation, ask for the program's CIP code and check it against the DHS STEM Designated Degree Program List.
- **Deadlines and tests:** each university sets its own deadlines, English score and SAT, ACT or GRE policy. Always follow the program page.

Source: Association of American Universities member list ([aau.edu](https://www.aau.edu)), 69 US members, of which 38 are public.

Public First. Officially Verified. Profile Aligned. · Paid counselling. No university commissions. · amratpal.com · Ahmedabad · Dubai · Berlin
Eligibility, costs and policies change over time. Universities decide admission and the US embassy or consulate decides visas. Checked September 2026.