



Princeton University

BASIC FACTS

Princeton University, founded in 1746, is located in Princeton, New Jersey and is one of the oldest universities in the United States. A member of the Ivy League, it is ranked the #1 American university by U.S. News & World Report (2019). Princeton has 5,260 undergraduates and 2,845 graduate students. It is well-known amongst its peer institutions to have a distinctive focus on undergraduate education and unlike other top universities, only has one specialized graduate school: The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

HOUSING

Before the fall of your first year, matriculating students fill out a housing survey listing their preferences for roommates. A student can live alone or with up to eight other first-years. Incoming students are placed in one of six residential colleges: Butler, Forbes, Mathey, Rockefeller, Whitman, or Wilson Colleges. Students will live in residential colleges for their first two years; before their third year begins, they have the option of either staying in a residential college or moving to upperclassman housing on campus. Roughly 98% of undergraduates live on campus their entire four years.

ACADEMICS

Core Curriculum

The liberal arts education is the cornerstone of undergraduate academics at Princeton. As such, the university requires undergraduates to fulfil a series of general education requirements before graduation. Detailed information can be found [here](#).

AB Student

- Writing Requirement -- one writing seminar in your first year.
- Foreign Language Requirement -- there are many ways to fulfill this, but most students take two-three semesters of a language.
- Distribution Requirements -- there are seven broad areas students must take courses in, but there are hundreds of courses that fulfill these categories:

- Epistemology and Cognition (EC) - one course.
- Ethical Thought and Moral Values (EM) - one course.
- Historical Analysis (HA) - one course.
- Literature and the Arts (LA) - two courses.
- Social Analysis (SA) - two courses.
- Quantitative Reasoning (QR) - one course.
- Science and Technology (STL/STN) - two courses; at least one must be a science and technology course with laboratory (STL).

BSE Students

- School of Engineering and Applied Science Requirements — four terms of mathematics, two terms of physics and one term each of chemistry and computer science.
- Writing Requirement -- one writing seminar in your first year.
- A minimum of seven courses in the humanities and social sciences, which must include one course in four of the six areas listed below:
 - Foreign Language (at the 107/108 level or above).
 - Epistemology and Cognition (EC).
 - Ethical Thought and Moral Values (EM).
 - Historical Analysis (HA).
 - Literature and the Arts (LA).
 - Social Analysis (SA).

Grading

An overview of grading information can be found [here](#).

Popular Concentrations

Princeton offers 36 concentrations (majors) and 55 certificates (minors). Popular concentrations include Computer Science, Economics, English, History, Politics, and the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs (Public Policy). Favored certificates include American Studies, African American Studies, Finance, Latin American Studies, History and Practice of Diplomacy, Neuroscience, and Statistics & Machine Learning. AB students select their concentrations and certificate programs at the end of their second years, while BSE students select them at the end of their first.

Popular Classes

Princeton offers thousands of courses, which makes it difficult to select the most popular classes. However, popular departments to choose courses from include Economics, English, History, Computer Science, Sociology, African American Studies, Geosciences, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, and the Woodrow Wilson School (Public Policy).

How to Register for Classes

During your first year, students meet with their academic advisers the day before courses begin in mid-September to choose their classes for the upcoming semester. All students then have two weeks for “add/drop period” when they can attend different courses and decide which ones they want to officially take for the semester. After two weeks, there is a fee for dropping a course, but courses can no longer be added. During students’ first two years, academic advisers must approve their course selections. Once students are in their concentrations, the department representative must approve them. Each department has specific requirements for students to meet to graduate in that concentration. Students always select their courses for the upcoming semester during the final month of the previous semester (unless you are an incoming first year student, whose process has been outlined above).

Students normally take four classes per semester, but undergraduates must take 17 before the start of their third year, which means at least one semester, students must take five courses. Undergraduates need 31 courses to graduate. Seniors must only take six classes in their final year, and most students take either three per semester or four in one semester and two in their final one.

Honors/Thesis

All Princeton undergraduates must write a senior thesis to graduate. There are no exceptions. Princeton is unique amongst universities for this requirement, and it is the capstone of the Princeton undergraduate experience. To prepare for the thesis, students will undergo junior independent work the year before in the form of one or two massive papers to teach them about the rigors of a senior thesis project. Seniors write their theses under the supervision of a faculty supervisor over the course of their final year at Princeton, and each department has different requirements for the thesis. Honors are calculated depending on the individual departments.

FINANCIAL AID AND COST OF ATTENDANCE

Princeton’s financial aid system is entirely needs-based, and there are no longer any merit scholarships. Princeton admissions is also needs-blind, meaning a student’s ability to pay for Princeton’s costs is not taken into consideration when making admissions decisions.

A detailed breakdown of how Princeton’s financial aid program can be found [here](#) and a financial aid “by the numbers” can be found [here](#).

How to apply for financial aid can be found [here with tips on how to submit a financial aid application here](#).

STUDENT LIFE

Clubs

There are more than 300 clubs on campus, from cooking clubs and recreational sports teams to a cappella singing and improv comedy groups. More information can be found [here](#).

Greek Life/Sororities

Fraternities and sororities are officially banned at Princeton. However, there are some groups that operate independently of the university, which students will join. There are 12 fraternities and 3 sororities for students to choose from. Greek life is not a big part of Princeton's student life.

Sports

There are 37 varsity sports teams, 38 club teams, and 37 intramural/recreational for students to choose from to join. Each team has a different process for those interested, and many varsity teams mainly comprise recruited athletes who compete for Princeton on the Division 1 sports level.

Facilities on Campus

There are 12 libraries, several gyms, athletic and fitness centers, and a student union available for use throughout campus.

Dining/restaurants: Princeton is located in the small town of Princeton, New Jersey, but there is a diverse set of dining options both on and off campus. There are six dining halls in the residential colleges to choose from. Upperclassmen also have the ability to eat in eating clubs (more on eating clubs below), food coops, and there are numerous restaurants in town to choose from.

Nightlife

The town of Princeton does not offer much in the way of nightlife. The main source of nightlife can be found on campus in the eating clubs. There are 11 eating clubs on campus, and they provide a majority of the nightlife scene for the university. Eating clubs are independent dining institutions and clubhouses affiliated with the university which are open for membership to upperclassmen. Each club has a different membership process, but all of the clubs are open to the entire university for nightlife and socializing on the weekends.

APPLICATION PROCESS

An overview/checklist of application requirements [here](#):

- All applicants must submit their application online through either the Common Application, the Coalition Application or the Universal College Application. In addition, applicants must submit the Princeton Supplement (more information on the supplement can be found [here](#)) and it can be submitted online along with the Common Application, Coalition Application or the Universal College Application.
- Applicants have the ability to be interviewed by a Princeton alumnus. However, a lack of an interview does not hurt an application for admission.
- The application cost is \$65 USD. Fee waivers are available on request.

Requirements and Pre-Requisites

A list of *suggested* courses for academic preparation is [here](#).

Princeton requires either the submission of the SAT or ACT for admission. Either test is acceptable, and no preference is given to either test over the other. Two SAT II subject tests are also

recommended, but are not required. More information on Princeton's standardized testing requirements is [here](#).

If English is not your native language, you are required to take and submit scores from the TOEFL, IELTS Academic, or the PTE Academic tests in addition to the SAT with Essay or ACT with writing. If English is your native language or if you have spent at least three years at a secondary school where English was the primary language of instruction, none of these tests are required with your application.

Princeton has single-choice early action and regular decision for admissions. Single-choice early action stipulates that if you apply to Princeton for early admission, you can only apply to Princeton early. However, if you are accepted, you are not required to attend. Single-choice early action applications are due November 1 and decisions are released in mid-December. Regular decision applications are due January 1 and decisions are released in late March. More detailed information on application dates and deadlines can be found [here](#).

OTHER

Study Abroad

There are many different types of study abroad programs offered by Princeton or in partnership with the university. The study abroad website and information on the various programs offered can be found [here](#).

WORK

Credits for Internships

Princeton does not offer academic credit for internships.

Work Study/Working as a Student

Information on working as a student/work study can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Internships and Career

Princeton has a robust career services center that aids undergraduates obtain internships during college and jobs for when they graduate. They also advise students on applying to graduate school. More information can be found [here](#).

International Student Life

International student office and life (All information on being an international student at Princeton can be found [here](#)).

All information provided by Princeton University, Princeton University's Office of the Dean of the College, Princeton University's Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students, Princeton University's Office of Admissions, Princeton University Housing, Princeton University's Office of Financial Aid, the Office of Career Services at Princeton University, the Davis International Center at Princeton University, and the Office of International Programs at Princeton University.