

Top 10 Psychology Colleges in the USA

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With so many colleges in the USA, how can you find out which one will be best for your needs? As we said in a recent post entitled, Undergraduate Psychology: Picking a College, the college that you pick to get your psychology degree should fit right with your learning needs, but that doesn't mean that some schools don't rank higher than others for providing students with a better quality of overall educational experience.

When choosing the top colleges for a psychology education, there are a number of important factors to consider. Some factors such as research facilities, are fairly easy to quantify in lists like this. However, the field of psychology has many different concentrations and the school you choose for earning your psychology degree should be heavily influenced by the faculty's interests and type of research that gets done at that school.

Since psychology as a whole is moving more and more towards being practiced as an empirical science, we've skewed our rankings in favor of those schools which also have strong neuroscience approaches.

Here are our top ten choices for the best psychology colleges:

10. UCSD



A university well known for having excellence in the psychology curriculum is the University of California in San Diego. This school is actually one of the best schools when it comes to experimental psychology programs. UCSD is located in one of the most beautiful cities in the nation that is known for its mild, warm weather and has an amazing city transit system. This school was founded in 1960 and currently has over 25,000 students enrolled.

9. University of California in Berkeley



The University of California in Berkeley consistently stays in the top ten psychology schools in the United States. In addition to this, UC Berkeley has 35 different graduate programs that are ranked in the top 10 nationwide. UC Berkeley has a very rich history that dates back to 1869 when it opened with 40 students. This school is located in Berkley, which is around forty-five minutes from San Francisco, an area where housing can sometimes be very expensive. You may consider on-campus housing as a cheaper alternative to renting in the city. The city bus and trolley system in San Francisco is state of the art and can save you a lot of gas money if you don't live right near the school.

8. University of Pennsylvania



The psychology department of the University of Pennsylvania is actually the oldest in North America and first opened its doors in 1887 and since that date has produced some of the top psychological scientists in the world. The University of Pennsylvania itself is actually much older and has the honor of being the first true university in the United States. This school had its first building erected in 1740 and was the brainchild of Benjamin Franklin. Currently, Penn has over 20,000 full-time students and over 4500 professors.

7. U of M Twin Cities



The University of Minnesota's psychology department opened in 1919 and typically ranks as well as some of the larger, more well known universities. This department has a very wide range of psychology classes in applied fields and really stands out in this area. The psychology department at the U of M works closely with other departments because they realize psychology is changing and new discoveries are happening at an amazing rate in the 21st century. The University of Minnesota is an enormous school with over 51,000 students and 3,100 professors.

6. Harvard



The name of this university says it all. You will be hard pressed to find a school with a better reputation than Harvard. Surprisingly, this school is only number six on the list. Harvard first opened the doors to its psychology department in the 1800s and has been named the best school for graduate level psychology for decades. Harvard is the oldest "school" in the United States and was founded in 1636 but it wasn't technically considered a university until 1780. Harvard is located in Boston, Massachusetts and currently has almost 20,000 students enrolled.

5. The University Of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



This university boasts an impressive selection of psychology classes such as biological, clinical, developmental, quantitative, and industrial-organizational. The psychology department of UIUC was founded in 1893 by William O. Krohn and since then has built a reputation of excellence in the field of psychology. UIUC spares no expense so the facilities and programs are top of the line in every aspect. This is a very large school and currently has over 40,000 students enrolled.

4. UCLA



The University of California Los Angeles has long been known to be one of the best schools in the nation and their psychology department is top notch. Located in the Westwood area of Los Angeles, UCLA was founded in 1919 and has more applicants per year than any other school in the United States. The psychology program at UCLA specializes in the psychology, cognitive sciences, and psychobiology fields and as an undergraduate, these will be your three choices for major study but you can also minor in gerontology, applied developmental psychology, or cognitive science. UCLA currently has close to 40,000 students enrolled. Traffic can be a factor if you attend UCLA so the school highly encourages you to use public transportation as much as possible.

3. Yale



Yale University is one of the big three along with Stanford and Harvard and is extremely well known as top of the line school. Yale is located in Connecticut and was originally established in 1701 and has always been highly regarded around the world. Especially when it comes to their law program. The psychology program at Yale specializes in research of behavioral neuroscience, clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, and social/personality psychology.

Yale was also listed as second in College Crunch's Top 50 Colleges in 2009 list.

2. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor



The University of Michigan offers an amazing psychology program and is home to a tremendous amount of psychological research. This university started in Detroit in 1817 but was moved to Ann Arbor in 1837. The psychology department offers degrees in almost every area of psychology and many of the professors here have been honored for excellence and contributing to new knowledge in the psychology area. There are over 41,000 students currently enrolled in the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

1. Stanford



Just the name Stanford is associated with excellence in almost every way. This school consistently ranks number one in the area of psychology and with good reason. Stanford is the home to 17 different research labs for the psychological study and 5 professors in this department have won awards in 2009 already. The psychology department at Stanford was created in 1892 and since that date, has excelled in every area of psychological study. There are currently just under 15,000 students enrolled at Stanford University in 2009.