

Since 2001, tuition at U.S. college has nearly doubled. To see how that investment is paying off, SmartMoney looked at two groups of alumni: recent grads, out for an average of two years, and midcareer alums, out 15 years. The Payback Score is an average of those groups' current income, expressed as a percentage of their sticker-price tuition and fees.

Rank	School Type	School	Payback Ratio	Starting Tuition & Fees (4 yrs., class of 2009)	Median Pay (recent graduate)	Starting Tuition & Fees (4yrs., class of 1996)	Median Pay (mid-career graduate)
1	Public	Georgia Institute of Technology	221	\$87,810	\$57,300	\$27,867	\$105,000
2	Public	University of Texas, Austin	194	\$91,596	\$49,100	\$26,115	\$87,500
3	Public	University of Florida	191	\$73,476	\$45,200	\$26,221	\$84,300
4	Public	University of Georgia	186	\$77,957	\$42,100	\$24,676	\$78,400
5	Public	University of Illinois	184	\$91,382	\$51,500	\$33,808	\$96,500
6	Public	Clemson University	160	\$85,362	\$47,500	\$31,708	\$83,800
7	Public	Purdue University	152	\$86,538	\$50,700	\$36,730	\$88,000
8	Public	Colorado School of Mines	149	\$90,334	\$61,600	\$49,296	\$113,000
9	Public	Miami University (Ohio)	146	\$93,195	\$45,800	\$37,606	\$91,400
10	Public	University of California, Berkeley	146	\$104,815	\$53,100	\$45,304	\$109,000
11	Public	Indiana University	128	\$87,065	\$43,000	\$38,824	\$79,800
12	Public	Pennsylvania State University	126	\$93,108	\$48,600	\$41,848	\$83,900
13	Public	University of Rhode Island	123	\$89,164	\$45,200	\$44,244	\$86,200
14	Public	University Connecticut	121	\$88,824	\$49,500	\$47,128	\$87,700
15	Public	Michigan State University	119	\$90,372	\$44,200	\$42,639	\$81,000
16	Public	University of Virginia	117	\$107,395	\$50,500	\$50,140	\$93,900
17	Public	Univeristy of Colorado,	114	\$97,918	\$46,200	\$50,510	\$91,600
18	Public	College of William & Mary	111	\$103,799	\$46,900	\$51,926	\$91,700
19	Ivy League	Princeton University	102	\$131,740	\$58,900	\$77,550	\$123,000
20	Public	University of New Hampshire	101	\$93,615	\$44,900	\$49,601	\$76,200

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21	Ivy League	Dartmouth College	100	\$137,364	\$54,100	\$76,269	\$123,000
22	Ivy League	Harvard University	99	\$136,977	\$57,300	\$77,104	\$121,000
23	Private	Carnegie-Mellon University	99	\$143,540	\$62,400	\$69,860	\$108,000
24	Private	Bucknell University	99	\$146,576	\$55,800	\$72,420	\$115,000
25	Ivy League	University of Pennsylvania	97	\$139,962	\$59,600	\$73,430	\$111,000
26	Private	Colgate University	95	\$145,340	\$48,700	\$76,340	\$119,000
27	Private	University of Richmond	93	\$147,860	\$48,500	\$56,160	\$86,300
28	Ivy League	Cornell University	92	\$135,733	\$57,500	\$74,634	\$106,000
29	Public	University of Michigan	91	\$121,010	\$50,600	\$64,392	\$90,200
30	Ivy League	Yale University	91	\$134,320	\$52,600	\$76,970	\$110,000
31	Public	University of Vermont	88	\$108,862	\$44,700	\$62,673	\$83,800
32	Ivy League	Brown University	87	\$141,654	\$49,400	\$78,027	\$109,000
33	Private	Williams College	86	\$138,770	\$49,900	\$77,195	\$106,000
34	Ivy League	Columbia University	86	\$144,961	\$54,300	\$74,268	\$99,700
35	Private	Dickinson College	84	\$139,942	\$45,900	\$73,110	\$99,100
36	Private	Carleton College	84	\$141,109	\$42,300	\$75,357	\$105,000
37	Private	Bowdoin College	84	\$142,190	\$45,300	\$75,565	\$103,000
38	Private	George Washington University	83	\$145,600	\$48,500	\$70,270	\$93,500
39	Private	Hobart and William Smith Colleges	79	\$143,003	\$42,200	\$75,453	\$97,300
40	Private	Tufts University	78	\$142,891	\$49,900	\$78,903	\$96,400
41	Private	Wesleyan University (Conn.)	78	\$143,474	\$46,700	\$77,190	\$96,100
42	Private	Trinity College	77	\$144,354	\$46,500	\$74,070	\$90,600
43	Private	Tulane University	76	\$143,516	\$45,300	\$76,894	\$92,200
44	Private	Gettysburg College	73	\$140,060	\$43,200	\$77,408	\$90,100
45	Private	Vassar College	70	\$148,155	\$43,000	\$75,881	\$83,200

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46	Private	Reed College	69	\$141,730	\$38,400	\$78,310	\$86,100
47	Private	Oberlin College	67	\$141,712	\$40,500	\$77,202	\$80,800
48	Private	Hamilton College	65	\$143,790	\$45,600	\$76,700	\$75,500
49	Private	*Franklin & Marshall College	61	\$142,090	\$47,500	\$92,315	\$82,500
50	Private	Sarah Lawrence College	60	\$148,570	\$38,600	\$76,626	\$72,100

*Sources: The College Board; U.S. Department of Education; Payscale; the schools  
Notes: Tuition figures exclude room and board and do not account for financial aid.*

*\*Franklin & Marshall College's starting tuition and fees for the class of 1996 includes some additional charges.*

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