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Top Colleges by Size in the Northeast

Babson, Princeton and Penn head these lists from the WSJ/College Pulse ranking

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Babson College is ranked second among all colleges in the country. PHOTO: CODY O'LOUGHLIN FOR WSJ

Scroll down to see the list of top ten Midsize Colleges where Bentley is #5.

Babson College is the top small school in the Northeast, Princeton University is the region's highest-ranked midsize school and the University of Pennsylvania is its top large college in the [Wall Street Journal/College Pulse 2025 Best Colleges in the U.S.](#) ranking.

For these rankings, colleges are considered small if they have fewer than 3,000 undergraduate students, midsize if they have 3,000 to 9,999 and large if they have 10,000 or more.

[Babson is ranked No. 2 among all colleges nationwide](#), Princeton is No. 1 in the country and Penn is No. 13.

Our ranking measures how well each college sets graduates up for financial success. We look at how much a school improves students' chances of graduating and their future earnings, balancing these outcomes with feedback from students on college life. We don't measure reputation, nor the college's own finances.

Among small colleges in the Northeast, Babson is followed by Swarthmore College at No. 35 overall nationally and Lafayette at No. 58. For midsize Northeastern schools, Princeton is followed by Yale University at No. 4 among all schools nationally and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at No. 6. Penn is followed on the list of the region's top large schools by Cornell University at No. 27 nationally overall and Baruch College at No. 61.

Princeton is the top private college in the Northeast and Baruch is the region's top public college, and [several other schools in the region's top 10 by size](#) appear on those lists. Colgate University, No. 8 among midsize Northeastern colleges, heads the [list of the region's top liberal-arts schools](#).

Baruch is No. 1 nationwide among schools that offer [the best value](#) and also is among the 10 colleges nationally that do the most to help their students [climb the socioeconomic ladder](#).

Princeton is No. 3 for best value and also made the top 10 in the country for [best overall campus experience](#), along with Yale. (You can see a full overall ranking of [the Ivy League](#) schools here.)

Columbia University, sixth among midsize colleges in the Northeast, heads the top 10 colleges in [New York state](#), a list that also includes Colgate, Cornell and Baruch. Penn ranks highest among all schools in [its home state](#). Six more Pennsylvania colleges in the top 10 for their size in the Northeast also are in the state's top 10 overall.

Syracuse University, No. 10 among large colleges in the Northeast, also is No. 18 on our list of the [top 20 party scenes](#) in the country, based on a survey of students and recent graduates.

In the weeks ahead we'll look at the top colleges by size in the South, Midwest and West, as well as the highest-ranked public and private schools and the leading liberal-arts colleges in those regions.

- Gerard Yates

Top Small Colleges in the Northeast

	COLLEGE	LOCATION	OVERALL NATIONAL RANK
1	Babson College	Wellesley, Mass.	2
2	Swarthmore College	Swarthmore, Pa.	35
3	Lafayette College	Easton, Pa.	58
4	Colby College	Waterville, Maine	64
5	Wellesley College	Wellesley, Mass.	86
6	Haverford College	Haverford, Pa.	88
7	Franklin and Marshall College	Lancaster, Pa.	110
8	Muhlenberg College	Allentown, Pa.	111
9	Amherst College	Amherst, Mass.	120
10	Washington & Jefferson College	Washington, Pa.	123

Regions are as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau

Source: WSJ/College Pulse 2025 Best Colleges in the U.S. Ranking

Top Midsize Colleges in the Northeast

	COLLEGE	LOCATION	OVERALL NATIONAL RANK
1	Princeton University	Princeton, N.J.	1
2	Yale University	New Haven, Conn.	4
3	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Cambridge, Mass.	6
4	Harvard University	Cambridge, Mass.	7
5	Bentley University	Waltham, Mass.	11
6	Columbia University	New York, N.Y.	14
7	Lehigh University	Bethlehem, Pa.	15
8	Colgate University	Hamilton, N.Y.	25
9	Brown University	Providence, R.I.	36
10	St. Joseph's University	Philadelphia, Pa.	42

Regions are as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau

Source: WSJ/College Pulse 2025 Best Colleges in the U.S. Ranking

Top Large Colleges in the Northeast

	COLLEGE	LOCATION	OVERALL NATIONAL RANK
1	University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia, Pa.	13
2	Cornell University	Ithaca, N.Y.	27
3	Baruch College, CUNY	New York, N.Y.	61
4	University of Rhode Island	Kingston, R.I.	84
5	University of Connecticut	Storrs, Conn.	99
6	Montclair State University	Montclair, N.J.	106
7	Rutgers University	New Brunswick, N.J.	124
8	Binghamton University, SUNY	Vestal, N.Y.	152
9	University at Albany, SUNY	Albany, N.Y.	159
10	Syracuse University	Syracuse, N.Y.	164

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