

2024 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings (WUR)

SUMMARY

- In 2024, McMaster University decreased 37 positions from the previous year and ranked 189th globally.
- McMaster holds the 9th highest rank amongst the Canadian institutions and the 4th highest in Ontario.

BACKGROUND

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings

QS is a United Kingdom based agency that specializes in the analysis of higher education institutions around the world. The QS World University Rankings (WUR) is an annual ranking of the world’s top universities. The top 400 are ranked individually, whereas institutions 401 and over are ranked in groups.

To assess and rank each university’s quality of education, faculty and research output, QS uses a combination of institutionally supplied data, bibliometric data from Elsevier, and QS’s self-ran surveys to compute the following nine weighted measures:

1. Academic reputation survey (30%);
2. Employer reputation survey (15%);
3. Faculty student ratio (10%);
4. Citations per faculty (20%);
5. Proportion of international students (5%);
6. Proportion of international faculty (5%);
7. Employment Outcomes (5%);
8. International Research Network (5%);
9. Sustainability (5%).

Please note for each of the indicators, QS uses normalized z-scores to rank and compare universities. A university’s score is scaled between 1 and 100 and reflects the proportion of institutions that scored lower on the metric.

CURRENT STATUS

On June 27, 2023, QS released its annual ranking of the world’s top universities. In total, 9 Canadian universities were ranked among the world’s top 200 institutions. In 2024, QS made significant changes to their ranking methodology, including: increasing the number of weighted measures from 6 to 9 and adjusting the weights of 3 of the previous 6 measures. Thus, results from prior years are not directly comparable.

Overall, McMaster ranked 189th globally. This represents a decrease of 37 positions compared to the 2023 edition of the WUR. Additionally, the University fell to the 4th highest ranked university in Ontario and the 9th highest ranked university in Canada, behind the University of Toronto (21), McGill University (30), the University of British Columbia (34), the University of Alberta (111), the University of Waterloo (112), Western University (114), the University of Montreal (141) and the University of Calgary (182).

Table 1 shows the Canadian universities that were ranked among the world’s top 200 institutions in 2024, and for comparison their 2023 information. As evidenced in Table 1, there were both winners and losers from the drastic changes to QS’s methodology. Five Canadian institutions in the top 200 saw a double digit increase in global rank. The largest increases arose for Calgary, Western and Waterloo who saw their global rank increase by an astounding 60, 58 and 42 positions, respectively. On the other hand, McMaster and Montreal saw their global ranks plummet by 37 and 25 positions.

Table 1: QS WUR - Canadian Universities Ranked in the Top 200, 2023 vs. 2024

	2023			2024			Δ 2023-2024		
	Total Score	Rank		Total Score	Rank		Total Score	Rank	
		Can.	World		Can.	World		Can.	World
Toronto	81.5	2	34	86.3	1	21	4.8	1	13
McGill	81.9	1	31	83.7	2	30	1.8	-1	1
UBC	77.0	3	47	81.5	3	34	4.5	N/C	13
Alberta	56.9	4	110	58.3	4	111	1.4	N/C	-1
Waterloo	50.0	7	154	58.1	5	112	8.1	2	42
Western	46.7	8	172	57.4	6	114	10.7	2	58
Montreal	55.9	5	116	52.1	7	141	-3.8	-2	-25
Calgary	39.0	10	242	47.9	8	182	8.9	2	60
McMaster	50.4	6	152	46.8	9	189	-3.6	-3	-37

N/C = No Change

Table 2 illustrates the changes made to QS’s methodology in 2024. As previously noted, there are now 9 measures for which institutions are benchmarked against. In order to introduce new metrics, the weights for the Academic Reputation and Student/Faculty ratio were decreased by 10% each. Additionally, the weight for Employer Reputation was increased by 5% to a total of 15%.

Table 2: QS WUR – Methodology Changes

Metric	QS WUR 2023	QS WUR 2024
Academic Reputation	40%	30%
Employer Reputation	10%	15%
Student/Faculty Ratio	20%	10%
Citation/Faculty Ratio	20%	20%
% International Student	5%	5%
% International Faculty	5%	5%
Employment Outcomes	N/A	5% *New in 2024
International Research Network	N/A	5% *New in 2024
Sustainability	N/A	5% *New in 2024

Table 3 provides a breakdown of McMaster’s 2024 WUR scores compared to the previous year. In 2024, McMaster’s overall score decreased by 3.6 points, to 46.8. Since there are new metrics and weights applied, a year-by-year comparison of the adjusted score cannot be made. However, we can look at McMaster’s normalized score (out of 100) and see that McMaster fell most notably in Employer Reputation (from 50.2 to 38.2) and Student/Faculty Ratio (84.7 to 75.1). McMaster’s largest increase came in Citation/Faculty Ratio (from 21.3 to 29.0).

Table 3: McMaster Metric Scores 2023 vs. 2024

Metrics	2023 WUR		2024 WUR	
	Score	Adjusted Score	Score	Adjusted Score
Academic Reputation	39.9	15.96	40.5	12.15
Employer Reputation	50.2	5.02	38.2	5.73
Student/Faculty Ratio	84.7	16.94	75.1	7.51
Citation/Faculty Ratio	21.3	4.26	29.0	5.80
% International Student	59.2	2.96	59.5	2.98
% International Faculty	99.3	4.97	99.3	4.97
Employment Outcomes	N/A	N/A	37.2	1.86
International Research Network	N/A	N/A	40.2	2.01
Sustainability	N/A	N/A	70.1	3.51
Total Score*		50.4		46.8

Note* Sum of Adjusted Score will not necessarily add to Total Score due to QS scaling.