

2025 Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings (WUR)

SUMMARY

- In 2025, McMaster University increased 13 positions from the previous year and ranked 176th globally.
- McMaster holds the 8th 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 4, 2024, QS released its annual ranking of the world’s top universities. In total, 11 Canadian universities were ranked among the world’s top 200 institutions, an increase of 2 from 2024’s ranking. 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.

Overall, McMaster ranked 176th globally. This represents an increase of 13 positions compared to the 2024 edition of the WUR. Additionally, the University remained the 4th highest ranked university in Ontario and increased one position to the 8th highest ranked university in Canada, behind the University of Toronto (25), McGill University (29), the University of British Columbia (38), the University of Alberta (96), the University of Waterloo (115), Western University (120) and the University of Montreal (159).

Table 1 shows the Canadian universities that were ranked among the world’s top 200 institutions in 2025, and for comparison their 2024 information. McMaster improved its total score by 2.2 points (third largest among the 11 ranked in the top 200). 2025 marked another year of large shifts for the Canadian institutions. Four institutions improved their positions by double digits (Alberta, McMaster, Ottawa and Queen’s) while 2 institutions fell by double digits (Montreal and Calgary).

Table 1: QS WUR - Canadian Universities Ranked in the Top 200, 2024 vs. 2025

	2024			2025			Δ 2024-2025		
	Total Score	Rank		Total Score	Rank		Total Score	Rank	
		Can.	World		Can.	World		Can.	World
Toronto	86.3	1	21	84.1	1	25	-2.2	N/C	-4
McGill	83.7	2	30	83.0	2	29	-0.7	N/C	1
UBC	81.5	3	34	81.0	3	38	-0.5	N/C	-4
Alberta	58.3	4	111	61.2	4	96	2.9	N/C	15
Waterloo	58.1	5	112	57.2	5	115	-0.9	N/C	-3
Western	57.4	6	114	55.8	6	120	-1.6	N/C	-6
Montreal	52.1	7	141	51.3	7	159	-0.8	N/C	-18
McMaster	46.8	9	189	49.0	8	176	2.2	1	13
Ottawa	45.2	10	203	47.3	9	189	2.1	1	14
Queen’s	44.5	11	209	46.8	10	193	2.3	1	16
Calgary	47.9	8	182	46.3	11	198	-1.6	-3	-16

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. 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 and Onward
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 2025 WUR scores compared to the previous year. In 2025, McMaster’s overall score increased by 2.2 points, to 49.0. McMaster realized increases to the Sustainability metric, Citation to Faculty Ratio and Employment Outcomes while both Academic and Employer Reputation scores fell.

Table 3: McMaster Metric Scores 2024 vs. 2025

Metrics	2024 WUR		2025 WUR		Δ 2024-2025
	Score	Adjusted Score	Score	Adjusted Score	
Academic Reputation	40.5	12.15	39.5	11.9	-0.25
Employer Reputation	38.2	5.73	34.2	5.1	-0.63
Student/Faculty Ratio	75.1	7.51	63.8	6.4	-1.11
Citation/Faculty Ratio	29.0	5.80	35.6	7.1	1.3
% International Student	59.5	2.98	56.7	2.8	-0.18
% International Faculty	99.3	4.97	96.2	4.8	-0.17
Employment Outcomes	37.2	1.86	49.9	2.5	0.64
International Research Network	40.2	2.01	82.6	4.1	2.09
Sustainability	70.1	3.51	91.9	4.6	1.09
Total Score*		46.8		49.0	2.2

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