

UC San Diego's Doctoral Programs Win High Marks in Prestigious NRC Study

Of the 25 UC San Diego doctoral programs evaluated by the National Research Council, 60 percent are among the top 20 programs in their fields nationwide

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Results of the recently released National Research Council (NRC) Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs indicate that three doctoral programs offered at the University of California, San Diego are ranked first in the country, and 60 percent of UC San Diego's programs are among the top 20 programs in their fields nationwide. A highly regarded "gold standard" rating of doctoral programs and faculty scholarship, the NRC study provides a comprehensive assessment of the quality of more than 5,000 doctoral programs in 62 fields at 212 U.S. research institutions.

"The prestigious National Research Council study reaffirms what many other rankings have reported: that UC San Diego's award-winning scholars are leaders at the forefront of their academic fields," said UC San Diego Chancellor Marye Anne Fox.

"Given the rigorous, objective and comprehensive way that the NRC assessment was completed, these rankings show the fruition of academic excellence in our faculty and students since UC San Diego's founding just 50 years ago," added Kim Barrett, Dean of Graduate Studies at UC San Diego. "The overall performance of our Ph.D. programs was outstanding - almost two thirds of the doctorate programs ranked in the top 20 in their fields. The university has long been recognized as a research leader in science and engineering, but the NRC study also documents our excellence in all parts of the campus. We ranked highly in every academic division."

Of UC San Diego's 25 doctoral programs evaluated as part of the unparalleled NRC assessment, an analysis of the regression-based results indicate that the university ranked 11th in the nation overall compared to all comprehensive institutions (those having 15 or more programs rated) and 2nd in the country compared to all comprehensive public institutions. The top three public institutions are 1) University of California, Berkeley; 2) University of California, San Diego; and 3) University of California, Los Angeles.

UC San Diego's programs in the sciences were highly positioned, but other doctoral programs in fields such as political science and philosophy were recognized as well. The university's breadth of study is one of the key factors that contributed to UC San Diego's success as an academic institution in the overall NRC rankings.

The NRC collected data that resulted in two versions of rankings that represent two distinct approaches to measuring overall program quality: regression-based (R) and survey-based (S). Of UC San Diego's 25 doctoral programs evaluated as part of the NRC assessment, an analysis of the regression-based results indicate that these UC San Diego doctorate programs, along with their disciplinary areas, are ranked best in the U.S.:

Biological Sciences #1: Biology/Integrated Biology/Integrated Biomedical Sciences

Bioengineering #1: Biomedical Engineering/Bioengineering

Scripps Institution of Oceanography #1: Oceanography/Atmospheric Sciences/Meteorology

Biomedical Sciences #2: Biology/Integrated Biology/Integrated Biomedical Sciences
Neurosciences #4: Neuroscience/Neurobiology
Linguistics #9: Linguistics
Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering #11: Mechanical Engineering
Political Science #11: Political Science
Chemistry and Biochemistry #13: Chemistry
Literature #13: Comparative Literature
Mathematics #13: Mathematics
Electrical and Computer Engineering #14: Electrical and Computer Engineering
Materials Science #14: Materials Science/Engineering
Computer Science and Engineering #16: Computer Sciences
Philosophy #19: Philosophy

"This ranking speaks to the exciting research environment that we enjoy for biological sciences in San Diego," said Steve Kay, Dean of the UC San Diego Division of Biological Sciences. "We look to leverage this result to continue to improve our program by attracting the best students nationally and internationally."

Fox noted, "This vast resource of data from the National Research Council is not only valuable to us as an institution, it also offers prospective graduate students an opportunity to see how UC San Diego ranks among three broad categories: research activity, student support and outcomes, and the diversity of the academic environment."

The NRC collected data from the academic year 2005-06 covering 20 program characteristics which served as the basis for two illustrative ranges of rankings of overall program quality. Both approaches yielded similar results - UC San Diego has six programs ranked in the top 10 using the R-ranking, and seven programs in the top 10 using the S-ranking. The campus chose to focus on the R ranges of rankings, derived by using faculty valuations of program quality to determine the relative importance of each of the 20 program characteristics, as the best way to offer a snapshot of the university's position compared to other institutions. To generate specific program rankings, the midpoint of the R range of rankings was taken for each program and then these midpoints were ranked within each field.

Beyond the disciplines studied as part of the NRC assessment, UC San Diego also has a long history of emphasizing creative blending of interdisciplinary perspectives and exploring new paradigms. For example, UC San Diego's Biomedical Sciences Ph.D. program combines medical and biological approaches to find novel treatments for disease. Other exciting areas of scholarship are being pursued at UC San Diego at the intersection of the performing arts, robotics, computational science and cognitive science.

"U.S. graduate schools are a strategic national asset, and the results of this important study will help academic leaders and policy makers establish benchmarks for higher education both here and around the globe," said Debra W. Stewart, Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) President. "Doctoral education strengthens our country's research base and develops the talent we need to remain competitive in the knowledge-based, global economy of the 21st century," she added.

In 1995, UC San Diego was ranked 10th nationwide in the National Research Council study of research-doctorate programs in the U.S. In the study, UC San Diego was one of only two public institutions in the top 10, and it was the only institution established in the 20th century to achieve a top 10 rating.

"Although the NRC methodologies for the 1995 and 2010 assessments are vastly different, the latest data clearly indicate that UC San Diego has sustained a high national position in graduate education," continued Barrett.

"As the campus looks to the future of scholarship and education, these extremely positive NRC rankings offer a benchmark to help us continue to improve and enhance our doctoral programs."

Full results of the National Research Council's Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs can be accessed at <http://www.nap.edu/rdp>.

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Top 20 Comprehensive* Public Institutions in Overall Quality by Median Rank of All Programs			
Rank	Institution	Median Rank	Number of Programs
1	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY	5.50	50
2	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-SAN DIEGO	14.00	25
3	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-LOS ANGELES	16.00	59
3	UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-ANN ARBOR	16.00	65
5	GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	17.00	20
6	UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN	19.00	52
7	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL	20.00	51
8	UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON	22.50	78
9	UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON	24.00	59
10	UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COLLEGE PARK	25.00	55
	Derived from R-based ranking data from the National Research Council study		
	<i>A Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs in the United States (2010)</i>		
	*Comprehensive universities are those having 15 or more programs ranked.		

**Top 20 Comprehensive* Institutions in Overall Quality
by Median Rank of All Programs**

Rank	Institution	Median Rank	Number of Programs
1	MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	3.00	27
2	HARVARD UNIVERSITY	5.00	52
2	PRINCETON UNIVERSITY	5.00	35
4	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-BERKELEY	5.50	50
5	STANFORD UNIVERSITY	6.00	47
6	CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	9.50	24
7	UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO	11.00	37
7	UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA	11.00	41
9	YALE UNIVERSITY	12.00	49
10	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY	13.00	37
11	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-SAN DIEGO	14.00	25
12	COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK	16.00	47
12	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-LOS ANGELES	16.00	59
12	UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-ANN ARBOR	16.00	65
15	GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY	17.00	20
16	CORNELL UNIVERSITY	19.00	61
16	UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN	19.00	52
18	DUKE UNIVERSITY	20.00	39
18	UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL	20.00	51
20	NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY	21.00	31
Derived from R-based ranking data from the National Research Council study <i>A Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs in the United States (2010)</i>			
*Comprehensive universities are those having 15 or more programs ranked.			