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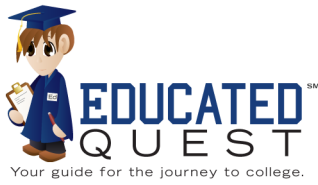
Fairfield University

Founded in 1942 in Fairfield, Connecticut, Fairfield University is one of the youngest Jesuit universities in the United States. With around 4,000 undergraduates and approximately 1,200 graduate students, Fairfield can be considered a mid-sized university.

Comparable schools would include Loyola University-Maryland and the University of Scranton (PA), both Jesuit schools. The academic mix also overlaps with Sacred Heart University, which is a larger school in the same town as well as nearby Quinnipiac University. Because of the school's location as well as its religious affiliation, Fairfield is also cross-shopped against Boston College, Marist College (NY), Providence College (RI), Saint Joseph's University (PA) and Villanova University (PA). Like all but Boston College, Fordham and Villanova, Fairfield admissions are mainly test-optional. Students who choose Fairfield are also considering the state universities in their home states as well as Bentley University, a test-mandatory, Boston-area school primarily for those interested in business.

Fairfield attracts a very good to excellent student. The SAT range for middle 50 percent of the class that enters this year and submitted scores was between 1240 and 1370 (out of a possible 1600). The range for the ACT was between 25 and 29. However, 39 percent of the class submitted no scores at all. There is really no need to submit them if the undergraduate transcript, outside activities and essays are strong. The university does not tie merit award decisions to the scores. About two thirds of the students who apply are offered admission. The student body is almost evenly divided between students from New England (48%) and the Mid-Atlantic states (46%). Just over 40 percent attended private or parochial schools; the remainder graduated from public schools.

Fairfield does a very good job at retaining and graduating a class. Freshmen retention ranges between 88 and 90 percent each year while just under 80 percent of a class (78 percent in 2016) finishes their degree on time. Fairfield might be considered a "fall back" versus schools such as Boston College, Fordham, Marist, Providence or Villanova that have more selective admissions. However, the university does an excellent job in working with the students that it entices to enroll. Among the test-optional schools (Bentley, Boston College, Fordham and Villanova are test mandatory) listed on the next page, only Providence College is a better performer than Fairfield.



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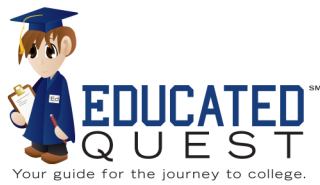
School	Average Freshman Retention reported to <i>US News</i>, 2016	Four-Year Graduation Rate reported to <i>US News</i>, 2016
Fairfield University	88%	78%
Bentley University	95%	83%
Boston College	95%	89%
Fordham University	90%	75%
Loyola University-Maryland	88%	76%
Marist College	90%	68%
Providence College	91%	81%
Quinnipiac University	87%	71%
Sacred Heart University	82%	58%
Saint Joseph's University	89%	72%
University of Scranton	89%	73%
Villanova University	95%	87%

Costs

Fairfield is a very expensive school. Direct charges (tuition and fees, room and board) easily exceed \$60,000 for the current academic year. Merit awards range from \$7,000 to \$25,000. A student who would fall in the middle of the admit pool at Boston College or Villanova would likely qualify for a merit award from Fairfield.

The average indebtedness of 2015 graduates who took out loans was just under \$28,000, according to the university's most recent Common Data Set; it was about the same the year before. Both the average borrower debt and the percentage that had to take out a private loan are fairly low for a private university, especially a Catholic school. For comparison in 2014, graduates of Bentley, Fordham, Loyola-Maryland, Marist, Quinnipiac, Providence, Sacred Heart, Scranton and Villanova Villanova who took out loans owed, on average, at least \$30,000. Only Boston College students who had to borrow owed less, just under \$22,000.

Fairfield met, on average, 87 percent of need, for freshmen it considered qualified for need-based financial aid during the 2015-16 school year. However, half of the class received no need based aid at all, according to the university's 2015-16 Common Data Set. The freshman retention rate and debt information suggest that Fairfield does try to



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help its needier students. However, this school, like others cross-shopped against it, also succeeds at attracting a population that can afford to come.

Curriculum

Fairfield is primarily a liberal arts school though it also has very strong programs in Business, Education, Engineering and Nursing. Within the College of Arts and Sciences the most popular majors are Biology, Psychology, Communications and English. All students carry a five or six-course load during the semester. The university offers more than 40 majors, 12 accelerated Bachelors/Masters programs and 16 interdisciplinary programs.

Prospective students choose their school when they apply; the Nursing program requires direct admission for freshmen. The university also offers a business minor for students who are enrolled outside of the business school as well as a cross-disciplinary Management of Technology program that combines engineering and business coursework. There is also a Health Studies minor for students majoring in subjects other than Nursing. Engineering students also earn minors in Math and Physics and still graduate within four years.

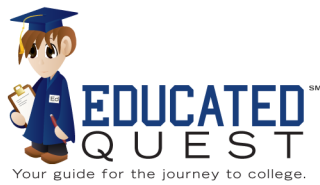
Fairfield requires all students to complete a liberal arts core; engineering students take the full core, excluding a foreign language. Being a Jesuit school, the university also requires six credits in Philosophy, six credits in Religion and three credits in Ethics from either of these two areas. Courses used to complete the core can also be applied towards completing a minor.

You are not likely to see large classes at Fairfield. Even the introductory Biology, Chemistry and Psychology courses have fewer than 40 students; these are required for several majors. This could be an advantage for students considering Fairfield versus larger schools including Boston College, Fordham or Villanova as well as state universities.

Fairfield students gave their faculty a rating of 3.68 (out of a possible 5) on RateMyProfessors.com. This was higher than students at Bentley (3.58), Marist (3.62), rated their faculty, about the same as students at Fordham (3.71), Loyola-Maryland (3.70), Providence (3.77), Quinnipiac (3.70), Sacred Heart (3.70), Saint Joseph's (3.70) regarded their professors but lower than Boston College (3.94), Scranton (3.87) and Villanova (3.83) students regarded theirs.

Community

Fairfield has a very well maintained 200-acre hilltop campus only one mile from Long Island Sound that can be walked end to end in 29 minutes. The Barone Student Center as well as the main library are very attractive modern buildings. The Bellarmine Mansion



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is the signature building as well as the offices of the senior administration. The Eagin Chapel is also an impressive structure. Wild turkeys roam the campus near the residence halls but community residents ride bikes and walk dogs on the grounds near the library and the Mansion.

While Fairfield is a Jesuit school, religious symbols do not dominate non-religious buildings or statues on campus. The most prominent statue, Lucas the Stag, is of the university's sports mascot. Crime on campus trended downward from 2013 to 2014, according to the university's [2015 Clery Report](#). Alcohol-related disciplinary referrals have been, by far the most-reported incidents of crime on campus. Between 2011 and 2013 there were more than 1,000 each year, high for a school that has had fewer than 3,000 students living on campus. In 2014, the number of reported incidents dropped to just over 600. Drug-related incidents are few and have started to trend downward.

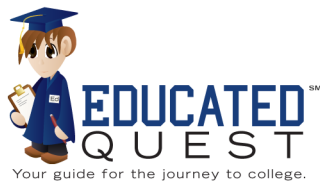
Fairfield has neither fraternities nor sororities, nor is it really a "spirit and sports" school like Boston College, Providence or Villanova. The university competes at the NCAA Division I (scholarship) level in 18 varsity sports, all played on campus, excluding men's basketball, which is played at the Webster Bank Arena in Bridgeport. During 2015 and 2016 Fairfield [won championships](#) in baseball, field hockey, men's and women's lacrosse, softball and volleyball.

Fairfield is located in a well-to-do community. With Fairfield and Sacred Heart in the same town, the area is home to more than 9,000 undergraduates as well as graduate and professional school students. Downtown Fairfield, population 59,000, has much of the dining and retail shopping options that students would find in a college town. The university even placed their bookstore in the central business district.

The university provides shuttle bus service to the downtown, including the Metro North commuter railroad station with trains to Grand Central Station in New York City. Commuting to an internship during the school year is feasible, unless the train ride needs to be extended to the subway. The ride by train to Grand Central Station will take about an hour and a half from campus. Driving into the city by car is far more difficult because of heavy traffic and continuous road construction on Interstate 95. The Merritt Parkway is another option but it too can become quite congested. However, New York is not the only employment destination for Fairfield students during a school year. Bridgeport, New Haven and Stamford are within a reasonable commuting distance of campus for those who have cars.

Comforts

Fairfield houses approximately 80 percent of its undergraduate student body on campus. The university has just under 1,100 beds in its freshman residence halls (traditional corridor-style with several rooms sharing a common bathroom) and sophomore



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residential colleges (suite-style living arrangements with a small number of rooms sharing a common bathroom).

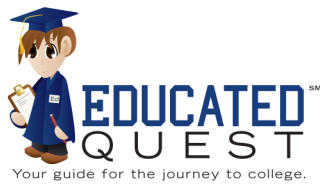
The residence halls have a very plain appearance on the outside though the rooms are fairly spacious. The university has had four first-year living-learning communities and added a fifth for the current school year. These included Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (WiSTEM), Health and Wellness, Leadership through Service, Man 2 Man and Sisters Inspiring Sisters. These communities attract a quarter of a freshman class. The sophomore residential colleges have three living-learning communities: Service and Justice, Creative Life and Ignatian. The university has plans to construct a new sophomore residential college that will house an additional 200 students.

Juniors and seniors have a unique opportunity to “Build a House” where they may organize their own communities around a common theme. Students who choose to Build a House may live in university-owned apartments or townhouses or even off campus. The Manresa House program, also for juniors and seniors, is a social justice community of nine students that lives in two university-owned residences off campus.

Fairfield can house all students who request housing because of the popularity of study abroad programs that take upper-class students away from campus for a semester and also because seniors have the opportunity to live in beachfront homes on Long Island Sound during the shoulder seasons (September/October and April/May) as well as the winter months. Approximately half of the senior class opts to live off campus.

Fairfield is unique in that incoming students are not allowed to choose their roommate for their first year. The university’s housing office directs the match process. The housing office reported that 93 percent of the first-year students were satisfied with their roommate match, although many likely chose another roommate for their sophomore year. [Fairfield is also unique in that students may rent university apartments for \\$325 a week if four-week blocks, including all utilities and shuttle bus service to the train, to take classes and/or commute to internships from the end of May through the beginning of September.](#) This is somewhat pricy for a suburban campus community, but less costly than actually living in New York during a summer.

Unlike most colleges where students are likely to move away from the campus after graduation, Fairfield appears to be a place where the upper-class housing decision is a toss-up. Those who expect to work in New York or the nearby Connecticut cities might want to continue to live in private housing, if it is affordable. Seniors who expect to go home or work in a city further from campus would be wise to look for a lease that ends in May or live in the university-owned housing.



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Connections

Fairfield [takes career development quite seriously](#) beginning with programming in the residence halls through leadership development courses and workshops. Fairfield encourages liberal arts, business and engineering students to do internships for credit as well as for pay and also to work in part-time jobs. The university's Career Planning Center reported that 281 credit-bearing internships were completed by Fairfield students. Business students are required to complete internships before they graduate.

It is relatively easy for alumni to return to campus. Most recently, the university hosted career alumni career panels in Communications, Public Relations, Finance, Accounting, the sciences and Nursing. The university hosts Fall and Spring Career and Internship Fairs, each attract between 90 and 110 employers to campus. It also hosts a Nursing Fair with 12 participating hospitals as well as events for students interested in graduate and professional schools as well as service opportunities. Over 900 jobs are posted annually through HireAStag, the university's jobs database in addition to those posted for on-campus interviewing and the job fairs.

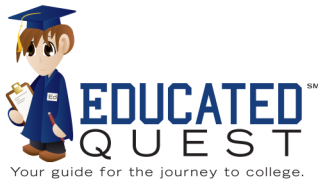
Outcomes data is impressive for 2015, given that the Career Planning Center got an 83 percent response rate to its six month-out survey. The center reported that 97 percent of the members of Class of 2015 who were surveyed had found full-time employment, started on an advanced degree or were participating in a volunteer service program. It also reported that 38 percent of the class who had found full-time jobs were aided through on-campus recruiting or other career development services while 28 percent were hired by the employer who had sponsored their internship.

Among the more than 36,000 Fairfield alumni registered in [LinkedIn.com](#), nearly 21,000 are based around New York City including New Jersey and Connecticut suburbs. More than 3,500 live and work around Boston, over 1,700 in or near Hartford. Approximately 140 Fortune 500 firms are located within an hour of campus.

Conclusions

Fairfield will be an attractive option for a student who might be targeting Boston College or Villanova but prefers a smaller school, needs scholarship aid or falls short in the admissions process. Aside from the social fit and campus setting, which applies to any school, the major consideration in choosing a Jesuit school is the additional 15 credits in religion and philosophy that supplement the rest of the liberal arts requirements.

With the exception of a high-profile athletic program, Fairfield has all of the attributes that make Boston College or Villanova popular with college-bound high school seniors with very good to excellent academic records: an attractive campus setting, a college-supportive community, easy access to internship opportunities, a well-organized regional



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alumni base and academic programs that have drawn respect from employers in a dynamic metropolitan area.

It's hard to fault Fairfield unless a student prefers a school that is located in or closer to a major city. The major downside is that the educational experience will be very expensive for those in the middle to the lower part of the admit pool.

Report Card: Fairfield University

4-Year/6-Year Graduation Rates: A/A

Freshman Retention: B+

Costs: C+

Curriculum: A

Community: A

Comforts: A

Connections: A