



Paris named world's best student city once again

Description

The City of Light is still the world's best place to be a student. Paris has won the [QS Best Student Cities](#) ranking for 2014 with 417 points from a possible 500, just two more than London.

The QS Best Student Cities ranking measures cities with at least two world ranked universities, on a range of criteria. It looks at how highly-ranked its universities are, how international its student body is, at its quality of life, at its affordability, and at how enthusiastic employers are about hiring the graduates from its institutions. We collect data on 98 cities and publish the top 50.

This is the second time we have analyzed student cities in this way, and Paris and London have been first and second both times. While London has the largest number of world-ranked universities and a more international student community, Paris is a lot more affordable as a place to study.

Employers, we find, are keen on both Paris and London, but their favorite destination is Singapore. The island state is third in this ranking, partly because of its high standard of living as well as its recruiter-friendliness. Next is Sydney, with a very high standard of living, and Melbourne, top worldwide for the size and diversity of its student body. The rest of the top 10 include one more Asian entry, from Hong Kong, two from continental Europe, Zurich and Munich, and two from North America. These are the Boston/Cambridge conurbation, home to Harvard, MIT, and other top institutions, and Montreal.

Of the five measures used to draw up this ranking, three come from the data used in the main QS World University Rankings. The institution rankings score comes from the number of ranked institutions in each city, their average position, and the standing of the top-rated university. The student mix measure is based on the percentage of students in the city's population and the share of them from overseas. And the employer activity measure makes use of the exclusive QS survey of national and global employers to discover the cities from which they most like to recruit.

Of the other two measures we use, quality of living comes from a world survey carried out by Mercer, the global business information specialists, and data from GaWC, a world city survey produced by Loughborough University in the UK. Vienna is the winner on this measure.

Finally, our affordability indicator combines two things a potential student needs to know. The first is

the average level of tuition fees, and this is weighted especially highly in the calculation. Then we add three lower-weighted elements to capture the essentials of student life: Mercer's city cost of living index; the Economist Intelligence Unit's celebrated Big Mac index, reflecting perhaps the reality of student consumption; and the price of an iPad, collected in cities around the world by Commsec, part of Commonwealth Bank in Australia. It turns out that Argentina has the world's priciest iPads, despite which Buenos Aires, 33 in our table, is by no means one of the dearest of our top 50 cities. Malaysia is the cheapest place to buy one, and partly as a result, Kuala Lumpur is indeed the lowest-cost student city in the table.

This ranking does contain some surprises, such as the absence of Cambridge (UK), which is home to only one ranked university. And while some of the top 10 succeed partly through having a large number of good universities (Paris, London, Boston and Hong Kong among them), Munich, Zurich and Singapore have only two each, both regarded very highly. The table also shows that while Munich and Zurich both enjoy high living standards, Munich is far more affordable.