

Summary

Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), a company that provides services, analytics, and insight to the global higher education sector, released their third edition of their Sustainability Rankings on December 10, 2024. This ranking was the outcome of consultation with world experts and their Advisory Board, development of a new methodology, and the gathering of pilot data in 2022. QS is hoping to provide an understanding of how environmentally and socially conscious a university is, and this third edition demonstrates the further evolution of that initial release. The ranking is another attempt to provide a global performance assessment of universities against the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, similar to what Times Higher Education has been doing with their Impact Rankings.

This third edition of these rankings included 1,744 universities from 107 countries. ***The University of Saskatchewan (USask) ranked 131 in the world in the overall ranking, a drop of 42 positions over last year’s ranking.*** Nationally, this was 15th within Canada and 13th within the U15. Three primary performance categories contribute to this overall ranking – Environmental Impact, Social Impact, and Governance. USask’s respective global placements within these three areas included being tied for 124, tied for 171, and tied for 137. The full results are as per the following:

Ranking	# Universities Ranked	Global Ranking	Canadian Ranking	U15 Ranking
Sustainability Ranking	1744	131	15	13
Environmental Impact	1744	124*	9*	9
Social Impact	1744	171*	16	13
Governance	1744	137*	15	12

*Tie with another university

Ranking Methodology

The QS Sustainability Ranking, its framework and methodology, are all still relatively new to the higher education sector. The ranking is built upon data from various sources including QS, universities, Elsevier, and global entities such as UNESCO and the World Bank.

The overall ranking is based on the performance of each university in three categories. Last year the category of Governance was added to the two existing categories of Environmental Impact and Social Impact. ***In terms of the overall Sustainability Ranking, the two original categories each carry an equal weight (45%), while the newer area of Governance carries a 10% weight.*** The two larger areas are each made up of various performance lenses. An institution receives rankings separately in each of these categories (and/or lenses), besides being ranked overall.

Institutional impact in terms of making positive change for people and the planet is measured and assessed across nine indicators or *lenses* in total. Environmental Impact is comprised of three lenses including Environmental Education, Environmental Research, and Environmental Sustainability, while Social Impact is built upon five lenses including Employability and Outcomes, Equality, Health and Wellbeing, Impact of Education, and Knowledge Exchange. Governance consists of a single lens titled Good Governance. Each lens carries its own weight and the full list of lenses, their definitions and their weights, are included in the following table.

Category	Performance Lens	Description	Lens Weight (%)
Environmental Impact		<i>This macro category is comprised of three performance lenses that provide a broad sense of whether an institution is strategizing, researching, and educating with the environment in mind.</i>	45
	Environmental Education	Assesses both the provision and the impact of an institution’s education in Environmental Sustainability. Aggregates reputation data, alumni data and institutional data on curricular provision.	17
	Environmental Research	Assesses the impact of the research environment at the institution in topics aligned to these specific UN SDGs: 7, 11, 12,13,14 & 15. Aggregates this data with and national spending on R&D.	13
	Environmental Sustainability	Assesses an institution’s strategy and operations towards an environmentally sustainable future. Aggregates institutional data, membership of climate-focused groups, alumni data, and survey data.	15
Social Impact		<i>This macro category is comprised of five performance lenses that represent different aspects of an institution’s work in ensuring social progress as well as quality education.</i>	45
	Employability & Opportunities	Assesses an institution’s efforts in providing employment opportunities, and its reputation and research partnerships with industry. Aggregates research data, survey data, reputation data and national-level statistics.	11
	Equality	Assesses both the effort and impact of an institution’s equality commitment. An aggregation of institutional data, survey data, research data and national-level statistics.	12
	Health & Wellbeing	Assesses an institution’s commitment to improving the health and wellbeing not only of its students, but society more widely. An aggregation of research data, alumni data, institutional data and national-level statistics.	5
	Impact of Education	Assesses the provision of quality education and research, and the impact of that provision. Aggregates research data, reputation data, alumni data and national-level statistics.	7
	Knowledge Exchange	Assesses how institutions partner in research between developed and developing regions to share knowledge and spur educational growth and the positive impact of a university on its local community and wider society. Aggregates research data and survey data.	10
Governance	Good Governance	<i>Assesses whether an institution has strong governance in place, through for example open decision-making, a holistic ethical organisational culture, student representation on university’s governing bodies and financial transparency. Aggregates institutional data, research data, survey data and national-level statistics.</i>	10

For more information on the QS Sustainability Ranking methodology, please go to: [QS Sustainability Rankings Methodology](#).

Scores for USask and Performance within Canada

The following table provides more detailed context of the USask performance in comparison to other Canadian schools, including the U15, whom all were ranked in the 2025 rankings:

	Category/Lens Description	Global Ranking		Canada Ranking		U15 Ranking	
		Position	# Ranked	Position	# Ranked	Position	# Ranked
OVERALL	Sustainability Ranking	131	1744	15	32	13	15
Category	Environmental Impact	124*	1744	9*	32	9*	15
Lens	Environmental Education	43*	1744	6	32	6	15
Lens	Environmental Research	66*	1744	6	32	6	15
Lens	Environmental Sustainability	571*	1744	22	32	14	15
Category	Social Impact	171*	1744	16	32	13	15
Lens	Employability & Opportunities	503*	1744	21	32	15	15
Lens	Equality	78*	1744	7	32	5	15
Lens	Health & Wellbeing	119*	1744	11*	32	11*	15
Lens	Impact of Education	75*	1744	10	32	10	15
Lens	Knowledge Exchange	271*	1744	17	32	13	15
Category	Governance – Good Governance	137*	1744	15	32	12	15

*Tie with another university

Further Information

For more information about this ranking or other university rankings, please contact [Assessment and Analytics](#) in the Office of the Provost and VP Academic.