



Focus on Johns Hopkins University

A foremost research institution (ranked number one in the nation for research funding) as well as a top tier college, Johns Hopkins University provides its 5,300 undergraduates with abundant opportunities for hands-on learning experiences across all disciplines. These include mentored research on both faculty projects and projects they design themselves. At the same time, because the undergraduates are the only students on the self-contained, grassy Homewood campus in a residential neighborhood of Baltimore, Maryland, they enjoy an education much like that at a liberal arts college with small classes and professors who really get to know them.

Hopkins students enjoy considerable academic freedom and a great many interdisciplinary courses that enable them to satisfy simultaneously more than one of the very broad distribution requirements. Consequently, it's easy and common for students to double major or have multiple minors, and they have nearly two years to choose them.

Even those planning to study Engineering need not enter the university knowing what type appeals to them most. Incoming students all receive an advisor they meet with prior to each semester to help them choose their courses. Then once they have declared their major(s) and minor(s), they are assigned advisors from each of those departments who work together to help them design a full program of study.

Johns Hopkins admissions officers say they seek students whose intellectual curiosity and passion enabled them to contribute meaningfully to the learning

environment in their high schools and make them most likely to do so in college as well. They favor those who are interested in making connections across disciplines and who ask the questions that elevate their classes' discussions.

The students on campus appear to be a highly enthusiastic group, extolling their classes, their professors, and all that Baltimore has to offer in cultural institutions and diverse neighborhoods.

Perhaps best known for its sciences and its program in Biomedical Engineering that has been ranked number one in the world, Johns Hopkins has strong programs with rigorous classes in the humanities, social sciences, and the arts too. The Peabody Institute is its music conservatory where qualified students can earn a Bachelor of Music simultaneously with a B.A. or B.S. from Johns Hopkins University. A new Film and Media Center built and operated in coordination with the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) enables students to pursue studies in all aspects of filmmaking.

The competitive climate Johns Hopkins was once known for has moderated considerably after more than a decade of efforts to create a more cooperative and supportive environment. In fact, the current Dean of Students has made it a priority to encourage cooperative learning and promote the utilization of academic support for all students, not just those with diagnosed learning differences.

The Center for Student Support is designed to house a close-knit network of services providing everything from counseling to career advising to academic support, and to be inviting to everyone. The new Brody Learning Commons was designed in response to student request for spaces where various size groups of students can work together.

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion is the other student hub. It serves to support an undergraduate population that is quite diverse in all respects, with 10% hailing from outside the U.S. and 23% of the domestic students identifying as minorities.

The university's prestigious graduate school for International Studies is located in Washington, D.C., but a new program offers direct matriculation into a Master's program there for JHU undergraduates who apply either from high school or after their first year of college.

Other new developments at Johns Hopkins are a major called Medicine, Science, and the Humanities that focuses on the public policy aspects of medicine, and numerous new minors, the fastest growing of which is called Social Policy. Other new minors are: Marketing and Communications, Engineering for Sustainable Development, Computational Medicine, Visual Arts (with the option to take classes at MICA), Robotics, and Space Science and Engineering.

Within six months of graduation, the class of 2015 reports that 48% of them are employed full time, 37% are in graduate or professional school, and 15% are volunteering, traveling, or doing something else. Of those pursuing higher study, 33% are doing so in Engineering or Information Science, 16% in Medicine, 14% in Public Health, 14% in Biological or Physical Sciences, 6% in Social Sciences or Education, and 17% in something else.

Over the past five years JHU has increased its financial aid awards considerably, most of it need-based as they have made a commitment to meet 100% of need for domestic students. Several highly competitive merit scholarships are available as well.

Applicants may use the Common Application, the Universal Application, or the Coalition Application. Whichever they use, they would be wise to check the school website for an explanation of what the admissions committee is looking for in their essays. Demonstrated interest does NOT figure into admissions decisions, and legacy plays only a very minor role. What does matter is a good understanding of the school and a convincing argument for why it is a good fit for them (which, one admissions officer cautions, has nothing to do with how many times they've visited along with their alumni parents). The 2015 admit rate was 13%, with average ACTs around 32 and SATs around 700.

