



Focus on Purchase College of the State University of New York

Purchase College, located in Westchester 35 miles from New York City, is an unusual hybrid, being a public liberal arts university with topnotch conservatory programs in Dance, Theater, Music, and Art and Design. Sixty-five percent of the 4,000 undergraduates are in the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, where the most popular majors include Environmental Studies, Environmental Economics, Creative Writing, Psychology, and Sociology with a focus on Race and Gender Studies.

Team teaching of interdisciplinary courses and interdisciplinary majors are hallmarks of Purchase, where the mission is to produce graduates who are informed, engaged, and globally responsible citizens. Although the school offers a number of Master's degrees in arts fields, the emphasis here is primarily on undergraduate education. Most classes have 20 to 25 students, and faculty are heavily involved in mentoring their undergraduates, engaging them in real world learning experiences through internships, service learning, and research. Furthermore, every student in every major does a full year, eight credit senior project with a single faculty mentor. These projects, which may involve independent study, research, and experimentation, culminate in major publishable papers and portfolios that facilitate opportunities upon graduation.

The conservatory programs offering a Bachelor of Fine Arts are the most selective programs at Purchase in terms of admissions. For instance, each year only 25 actors and 20 film students are admitted as freshmen. However, it is possible to earn a B.A. or B.S. in many of the arts fields without being in the conservatories and thus without having to submit a portfolio as part of the application to the college. One popular interdisciplinary major for which this is the case is called "New Media" and is offered in the School of Film and Media Studies.

For students interested in the arts, the proximity to New York City is a plus, both because they have easy access to performances and exhibitions there and also because the Westchester

location draws top artists of all sorts to perform at the four theaters in the Performing Arts Center on campus, give readings, and display their works at the large campus museum.

Purchase's science facilities are noteworthy as well, and the school proudly reports that their pre-Health students (pre-med, pre-dental, pre-optometry, etc.) have a 70% acceptance rate to the graduate programs of their choice, putting them well above the national average.

Twenty percent of the students come from out of state. For the class admitted in 2013, the average G.P.A. is 3.0, average combined reading and math SAT is 1100, and average ACT is 24. Seventy percent of students receive need-based financial aid, and there are a limited number of scholarships awarded for academic and artistic merit. Students wishing to be considered for the merit awards are advised to apply early.

Admissions are rolling, but some programs have their own deadlines to ensure adequate time for the talent reviews, so applicants are advised to check the deadlines for the particular programs to which they are applying. Students may apply to more than one program and be considered entirely independently for each one, but when doing so they must pay a separate application fee each time.