

Eastern Kentucky University Profile

Eastern Kentucky University, located at the nexus of the Bluegrass Region and the Appalachian foothills in Richmond, Kentucky, is a student-centered comprehensive regional university dedicated to high-quality instruction, service and scholarship.

From its establishment in 1906 as a normal school to prepare schoolteachers, the University has grown to offer nearly 100 degree programs at the associate, baccalaureate, master's and doctoral levels. Today, approximately 16,600 students (a near record for Eastern) come from almost every state and 43 countries, and more than 140,000 successful alumni worldwide have distinguished themselves in virtually every profession. Many students attend one of EKU's two regional campuses, located in Corbin and Manchester.

Underscoring the University's legacy as a "School of Opportunity," many of Eastern's successful alumni were the first in their families to attend college. Even today, approximately 30 percent of EKU freshmen are first-generation college students. At the same time, EKU is attracting more of the best and brightest students; the Fall 2017 class was the best academically prepared in the institution's history.

Just as the vast majority of EKU students come from Kentucky, approximately 75 percent of the University's graduates are employed in Kentucky one year after graduation, the state's highest percentage among all its public four-year institutions. Many are employed in service occupations vital to any community's quality of life: education, health care and public safety.

The Richmond campus has long been known as "The Campus Beautiful" for its attractive landscapes, but its skyline has changed dramatically in recent years with the addition of:

- a facility devoted wholly to student success and a new Student Success Center.
- the Noel Studio for Academic Creativity, a unique and colorful 10,000-square-foot space designed to integrate academic writing, research and communication services for students.
- the EKU Center for the Arts, Kentucky's second largest performing arts venue.
- a state-of-the-art new science building – the largest such facility on any college or university campus in Kentucky.
- two new residence halls and a Scholar House for single parents.
- a new dining hall.

As the most ambitious campus revitalization in the institution's history moves forward, even more dramatic changes are in the construction or planning stages, including a new recreation center and a renovated student union.

At the same time, ECU's four-year graduation rate has roughly doubled over the past eight years, and its freshman retention rate is the highest among all regional universities in Kentucky.

Donors are responding positively to the changes; Eastern recently concluded its best-ever year in private fund-raising.

Some of the University's best-known academic programs are housed in its College of Justice and Safety, ECU's Program of Distinction. The College includes renowned programs in Homeland Security, Criminal Justice, Fire and Safety, and Security Management. The University's other nationally known programs include:

- Occupational Therapy
- Nursing
- Environmental Health Science
- Aviation
- PGA Professional Golf Management
- Forensic Science
- American Sign Language-Interpreter Education
- Animal Studies

In addition, the University's cross-disciplinary Honors Program routinely leads the nation in the number of presenters at the National Collegiate Honors Council, and ECU fielded the only mock trial team from a regional comprehensive university at the 2016 American Mock Trial Association national championships.

The biggest area of enrollment growth in recent years has been online, extending the University's global reach. Since 2007, enrollment in online courses has grown from 165 to more than 3,200. Roughly one in five ECU students takes courses online.

Since 2008, Eastern has launched four doctoral degree programs: Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Nursing Practice, Occupational Therapy and Clinical Psychology.

ECU also has become increasingly popular with military veterans and has ranked 17th or higher nationally seven of the past eight years by Military Times EDGE magazine for its efforts to help veterans and their dependents achieve their educational dreams.

Other points of pride include:

- “America’s Best Colleges” for 10 consecutive years, according to Forbes
- Top tier, Regional Universities in the South, U.S. News & World Report “Best Colleges” survey, six consecutive years
- One of 80 institutions nationwide and the only regional university in Kentucky to receive the 2016 and 2017 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from Insight into Diversity magazine
- One of only three institutions nationally to receive the 2014 Award for Outstanding Institutional Practice in Student Learning Outcomes, bestowed by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation
- One of the Top 125 STEM Colleges and Universities in the U.S. for 2015, according to Victory Media

The University also has taken steps to raise its international profile and now enjoys partnerships with institutions in more than a dozen countries.

Closer to home, Eastern's growth has been accompanied by a steadfast commitment to service and outreach to a primary service region that includes some of the most economically disadvantaged counties in the nation. Committed to the belief that high-quality education at all levels is the surest path to a higher quality of life for the region's citizenry, the University established the Center for Appalachian Regional Engagement and Stewardship (CARES), which encompasses initiatives in community and economic development, environmental sustainability, public governance, service learning and more.