The University of Hawaii—Manoa, the flagship school of the University of Hawaii system, offers a solid education and university experience at a competitive price. Students appreciate the diversity of the school—"not only of the students and staff, but of what is offered"—and the "great feeling of collaboration and integration across all levels—amongst colleges, students, faculty, and the community." Even those who are not from Hawaii are treated with "the aloha spirit" in which the school goes out of its way to "include those who are not from Hawaii into the UH Ohana" (a Hawaiian term that refers to a family).

Professors are "knowledgeable in their field, share their knowledge easily, and seem to be enthusiastic in making sure that I understand the subject matter." The majority of the faculty gets top marks, and most "care more about the actual education of the students...others are just there to teach." "My professors are incredibly helpful and always willing to lend an ear if I need it," says a student. "A lot of them are laid-back, reflecting the Hawaiian lifestyle." While some admit that "the absolute academic standards are not high," the school is "always encouraging interested students to push themselves and think outside the box. There is just enough competition between students to maintain quality."

Notably, the Hawaiian program is strong here. "We have a lo'i, which is a taro patch where students plant and learn sustainability through the old Hawaiian irrigation system," says a student. As a large state school, UH "has a lot of research going on," but students admit, "The administrative organization leaves much to be desired." The school "is big on improvements for students," and it does "a very good job when it comes to presenting students with all types of internship and job opportunities."

As expected, the campus is located in a "paradise with an urban center," though some of the buildings are "rundown." Almost everyone, from students to staff, lead a "laid-back lifestyle," including—of course—surfing. For the most part, "Students think about going to the beach, surfing, and many of the activities you can do here in Hawaii." There are many other student organizations and extracurricular activities to choose from, and "the different clubs are always hosting events that everyone is invited to enjoy, which makes a great way to wind down for the weekend." The commuting students do tend to empty out the campus and school spirit a little, but the beach certainly helps to fill that void. Many of the out-of-state students "feel great living in an environment with so much beauty and cultural influences."

This large school represents an "amalgamation of many different cultures," and students fit in "by doing the usual college biz—joining clubs, mingling with classmates, and not being a wallflower." Everyone gets along just fine, as "there are too many students to form any sort of social hierarchy." There are a decent number of nontraditional aged students, and many students are from one of the islands of Hawaii, "so most go home on holidays or even for weekends." Though a lot of students like to go to the beach and have fun on their days off, "a lot of people here work really hard and have jobs in addition to being full-time students, because the cost of living out here is pretty high." All in all, "It's a very easygoing place. You can stop and talk to any random student and they will chat with you."
THE PRINCETON REVIEW SAYS

Admissions
Very important factors considered include: GPA, rigor of secondary school record, standardized test scores. Important factors considered include: Class rank, state residency. Other factors considered include: Application essay, extracurricular activities, geographical residence, interview, recommendation(s), talent/ability. SAT or ACT required; ACT with Writing component required. TOEFL required of all international applicants. Academic units required: 4 English; 3 mathematics; 3 science; 3 social studies; 5 academic electives.

Financial Aid

The Inside Word
All students must have a minimum GPA of 2.8 and must take either the SAT or the ACT. All applicants are encouraged to apply by the priority consideration deadline of January 5, as this deadline increases your chance of receiving financial aid and student housing. Certain programs (nursing, social work, education, and others) may have earlier admission deadlines.

THE SCHOOL SAYS “. . .”

From the Admissions Office
“Aloha and welcome to UH Manoa, the largest campus in the University of Hawaii System. We are located on the island of O’ahu, in Honolulu’s Lush Manoa valley. With almost 90 undergraduate majors, over 200 student organizations, and a variety of Division I and intramural sports to choose from, we think you’ll agree that UH Manoa is a great place for you to realize your academic, professional, and personal dreams.

“UH Manoa is one of only thirteen institutions to hold the distinction of being a land-, sea-, and space-grant research institution. Classified by the Carnegie Foundation as having ‘very high research activity,’ UH Manoa is known for its pioneering research in such fields as oceanography, astronomy, Pacific Islands and Asian area studies, linguistics, cancer research, and genetics.

“Applicants to UH Manoa are expected to have a minimum score of 510 on all three sections of the SAT (or a 22 on all four sections of the ACT), and have completed a college preparatory high school curriculum. All applicants are encouraged to apply for priority consideration. Applying by this deadline (January 5 for fall admission, September 1 for spring) increases your chance of receiving financial aid and student housing.”