

A Brief History of Toronto Metropolitan University

Toronto Metropolitan University's history is rooted in innovative, career-driven education with the goal of addressing contemporary societal needs. From day one, the mission has been unique – to serve societal need and to prepare students for careers. For more than 75 years, the university's commitment to groundbreaking thinking has grown steadily stronger.

Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) has pioneered experiential learning approaches, launched programs in innovation and entrepreneurship and enhanced our scholarly, research and creative (SRC) capacity, all while being a leader in equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Ryerson Institute of Technology, with some 250 students, was established in 1948 by the Government of Ontario as an experiment in post-secondary technical education. In 1963, the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute Act changed the school's name and established it as an independent institution with its own Board of Governors.

In 1968, Ryerson became the first post-secondary institution in Canada to invite students and faculty to serve on its Board. They continue to participate on both the Board and Academic Council, along with alumni and staff.

A 1971 amendment to the Act empowered the Institute to confer the degrees of Bachelor of Applied Arts and Bachelor of Technology, in addition to its traditional diplomas and certificates.

In 1977, a new Act extended degree designations to include Bachelor of Business Administration. It also formally established a bicameral system of governance under which the Board remained responsible for the financial management and conduct of the Institute, while Academic Council established educational policy, subject to spending restraints set by the Board.

In the spring of 1993, the Ryerson Polytechnic University Statute Law Amendment Act granted Ryerson full university status and established it as Canada's only polytechnic university. In the summer of 2002, an Act of the provincial legislature officially renamed Ryerson Polytechnic University to Ryerson University.

In the spring of 2007, an Act of the provincial legislature officially amended the Act in the following ways:

- Changed the name of Academic Council to "Senate"
- Increased the Senate's membership from 50 to 51 by adding the Chief Librarian as a member
- Extended Board members' terms to three consecutive terms
- Removed the requirement for citizenship and residency for Board Members

The university was originally named after Ontario's first Superintendent of Education and leading public school advocate, Egerton Ryerson. Over the past decade, the university has worked to address Egerton Ryerson's legacy, leading to a 2010 statement about his role and, in 2018, the installation of a plaque next to the Egerton Ryerson statue on campus. The statement and plaque contextualized his role in the creation of Canada's residential school system, which was devastating to Indigenous peoples in Canada.

In November 2020, following global conversations on the challenging legacies of many historical figures, President Lachemi struck a task force to examine the history and legacy of Egerton Ryerson, and to make recommendations for reconciliation and commemoration on our campus.

The Standing Strong Task Force delivered their final report to the university in August 2021, which was unanimously approved by the Board of Governors, resulting in the historic and bold decision to rename the university along with 21 other action-oriented recommendations including more support for Indigenous and Black scholarship and a commitment to establish learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff on Indigenous history and the Indian residential school system.

TMU is currently recognized as a leading institution for research and innovation, being ranked first for research income growth for the second consecutive year and third for research intensity dollars per graduate student, among comprehensive universities in Research Infosource's Canada's Top 50 Research Universities List 2021. Within the past decade, the university has launched various research centres and institutes, as well as the Zone Learning option for students and business professionals interested in entrepreneurship. In 2020, the university opened the Lincoln Alexander School of Law, and in 2021 the government approved the development of a new school of medicine, to be located in Brampton, Ontario.

In 2023, TMU celebrated three significant anniversaries - 75 years as a school, 30 years as a university and 1 year under our new name. This milestone year saw the inaugural convocation of our first cohort of graduates from the Lincoln Alexander School of Law, Toronto's first new law school in over 100 years. It also saw considerable advancements in our efforts to deliver a new kind of medical school in Brampton. In 2023, TMU, the City of Brampton and the Province of Ontario confirmed that the Bramalea Civic Centre had been selected as the future site of the school. TMU's Senate also approved the establishment of a new school of medicine and the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree, moving the university closer to welcoming its first cohort of medical students in fall 2025.

The University's location at the heart of downtown Toronto has motivated numerous strategic partnerships with surrounding businesses and spaces. The most significant recent development is the construction of four buildings: the Mattamy Athletic Centre at Toronto's historic Maple Leaf Gardens, the award-winning Student Learning Centre on Yonge Street, the Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Complex, and the Centre for Urban Innovation.