The University of Maine, founded in Orono in 1865, is the state's land grant and sea grant university. As Maine's flagship public university, UMaine has a statewide mission of teaching, research and economic development, and community service. UMaine is among the most comprehensive higher education institutions in the Northeast and attracts students from Maine and all 49 other states, as well as more than 70 countries. It currently enrolls 11,561 total undergraduate and graduate students who can directly participate in groundbreaking research working with world-class scholars. The University of Maine offers 35 doctoral programs and master's degrees in 85 fields; more than 90 undergraduate majors and academic programs; and one of the oldest and most prestigious honors programs in the U.S. The university promotes environmental stewardship, with substantial efforts campus-wide aimed at conserving energy, recycling and adhering to green building standards in new construction.

UMaine is consistently ranked among the top 20% of universities engaged in research (public or private) through the NSF Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Survey and is classified as a High Research Activity Institution (R2) by Carnegie. For FY 2021, total award dollars received were $133.6 million and total research expenditures reached $179.3 million.

Maine’s public research university is student-centered, with a focus on undergraduate and graduate research throughout Maine and around the world. The University hosts many innovative research laboratories, centers, and institutes that provide students with the tools necessary to facilitate professional development and become leaders in their fields. UMaine’s teaching, research, and public service are recognized for excellence statewide, regionally, nationally, and internationally.