Florida Atlantic University was established by the Florida State Legislature in 1961 as the fifth university in the state system.

When it originally opened in 1964, FAU was the first university in the country to offer only upper-division and graduate-level work, on the theory that freshmen and sophomores could be served by the community college system. Located in rapidly growing Southeast Florida, the University responded to the need to provide increased access to educational opportunities by opening its doors to freshmen in 1984. Today, with its developed system of distributed campuses, where the same high-quality education is offered at seven different locations, Florida Atlantic University serves as a model for urban, regional universities of the future. It offers a comprehensive array of undergraduate and graduate programs, and enrolls over 24,000 students who reflect the rich cultural diversity of the region.

Florida Atlantic University's colleges include the College of Architecture, Urban & Public Affairs, the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts & Letters, the College of Business, the College of Education, the College of Engineering, the College of Liberal Arts, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing, and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. These colleges offer one hundred and thirty-one different academic degree programs. In 1999, FAU opened a new residential honors college, now the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, which provides a unique and challenging four-year curriculum for the brightest students from Florida and beyond. In addition, the University is home to one of the largest lifelong learning and continuing education programs in the nation.

The University's campus locations along the Florida Gold and Treasure coasts, which boast a temperate climate and beautiful beaches, innovative industry, and unique cultural opportunities, provide a stimulating environment for its outstanding scholars and researchers. FAU has Eminent Scholar Chairs in multiple disciplines and is the home of nationally recognized research centers. The University's burgeoning Research Park is facilitating exciting new research and learning initiatives by bringing high-tech industries into close collaboration with FAU's faculty and students. In recognition of the University's research funding and doctoral programs, the Florida Board of Education, Division of Colleges and Universities, has designated FAU as one of the state's public research universities.

Florida Atlantic University is a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, and the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States.

Source: FAU History