

College Visit Notebook

Make the
Most of Your
College Visits

Choose Colleges to Visit

Knowing what you're looking for in a college will help you determine which college(s) might be a good fit for you—and which ones you want to visit. Here are some things to consider.

Location – Where do you want to go to college? Close to home? In your home state? Near a big city? Close to nature? _____

Size – Interested in a small, large, or medium-size college? _____

Large colleges have lots of majors, programs, and activities; small colleges have fewer students, a more personal atmosphere, and smaller classes.

Academic Programs/Other Criteria – Is there a specific subject you want to study? _____

Are there other things that are important to you, such as a study abroad program, campus diversity, or a specific sport? _____

Cost – How important is cost to you? _____

In order to save money, many students choose to go to a public college in their home state, or they start at a community college. Remember, financial aid often makes it possible for students to attend colleges that would otherwise be too expensive.

Admissions Requirements – How strong is your academic record? _____

It's generally best to look for colleges that accept students with academic records similar to yours (grades, test scores, etc.).

Once you've determined what you're looking for in a college, go to bigfuture.collegeboard.org and search for the colleges that meet your criteria.

Plan and Prepare

To ensure that you get the most out of your college visit, learn all you can and plan ahead.

▶ **Learn about the college**

Visit the college's website to learn as much as you can about the campus, majors, programs, facilities, etc.

▶ **Decide when to make your visit**

The spring of your junior year is an excellent time to make a college visit.

▶ **Check out all visitation options**

Many colleges have open houses and visitation days designed specifically for high school students and their parents.

▶ **Schedule your visit**

Contact the admissions office and let them know when you would like to visit, or schedule your visit online. If there's a specific major, program, or activity you're interested in, ask to make an appointment with someone who's knowledgeable about that program, major, etc. If you're interested in financial aid, make an appointment with the financial aid office.

▶ **Be prepared**

Make a list of the specific things you want to see and learn about.

Your Scheduled Visits

College _____

Date _____

Notes _____

College _____

Date _____

Notes _____

Things to Do on Your Visit

Take a walking tour

A group tour is a great way to see the campus and learn about the college.

Explore

Walk around the campus on your own. Note the cleanliness and atmosphere of the campus—and how the students look and act. Eat in the student union and talk to students. Ask what they like (and don't like) about the college, how much they study, and what they do on weekends.

Check out the surrounding area

Learn about the city or town the college is located in. Remember, you won't just go to school there, you will also be living in that community.

Visualize yourself as a student

As you walk around the college, imagine being a student there. Do you feel comfortable on campus? Does the college feel like a good fit?

Attend an information session

Many colleges have group information sessions for prospective students and their parents. These sessions are generally very helpful.

Take notes

Write down important information, and anything you want to remember. To help you remember the campus, take some pictures.

Talk to the appropriate people

- ▶ If you have questions about admissions, talk to an admissions counselor.
- ▶ If there's a specific major you're interested in, ask to speak to someone in that department.
- ▶ If you need help paying for college, meet with a financial aid counselor.

Things you want to do / People you want to talk to

Questions to Ask

A college admissions officer or tour guide should be able to answer the following questions, as well as any other questions you may have.

General Information

- ▶ What percentage of first-year students return?
- ▶ How safe is the campus?
- ▶ What makes this college unique?
- ▶ How much does it cost to attend?
- ▶ What is this school best known for?

Academics

- ▶ What are your strongest majors?
- ▶ How large are most of the classes?
- ▶ Is it difficult for students to get into the classes they need?
- ▶ Are there specific requirements for my major?

Admissions

- ▶ Which admissions criteria do you consider most important (GPA, ACT/SAT scores, class rank)?
- ▶ What is the average high school GPA of admitted freshmen?

Student Life

- ▶ Where do students live?
- ▶ How do students get around campus?
- ▶ What activities are available for students?
- ▶ Do most students stay or leave on weekends?

What other questions do you have?

College Visit Notes

College _____

Date _____

Location _____ Size _____

Admission Information _____

Academics _____

Costs and Financial Aid _____

Campus Impressions _____

Positives _____

Negatives _____

Notes _____

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