

Preparing for a College Campus Visit

Know Before You Go

Thinking of visiting the colleges on your list? It may be tempting to just yell "Road trip!" and go. But whether your travels take you far away or down the street, you'll get more out of your campus visits if you plan ahead.

You might be traveling with family or friends, but make sure you have a chance to explore the college on your own. After all, it's up to you to decide whether it's a good fit.

Deciding What's Important to You

Make a list of the college characteristics that are most important to you, so you know what to look at. Do you like large lecture halls or intimate classroom settings? Check out class sizes. Do you have your heart set on joining a sorority or fraternity? See what the Greek system is like. Is there a particular major you want to pursue? Talk to current students or professors in that department.

Put together a list of your preferences, take it to the colleges you decide to visit, and take notes about each category. That'll make it easier to compare the colleges when you get back home. You can use this [campus visit checklist](#) as a starting point.

Researching the College

It's important to know something about the college before you arrive on campus, especially if you have an interview scheduled. Use every source available to you:

- Review the admission packet, current course catalog and any other materials the college publishes.
- Surf the college website.
- Talk to currently enrolled students or alumni about the college; get their contact information online or from the admission office.
- Get a map of the college and the town it's in, so you can find your way around.

While you're doing research, find out the college's retention rate — how many freshmen return for sophomore year. You should also research how many students who enroll actually graduate, and how long it usually takes them. This is information that tells you a lot about a college.

Scheduling Your Trip

Pick a [time to visit](#) that's convenient and when classes are in session. That way, you can sit in on a lecture or stay in a residence hall overnight. The best way to get a good feel for the campus is to be there when classes are in full swing.

The following Information was taken from Collegeboard.com

Planning Your Time

You'll want to make the most of your time on campus. By planning ahead, you can make sure you have a chance to explore everything on your list. Arrange your schedule around your most important needs:

- Find out when college tours and information sessions take place, and whether you have to sign up in advance.
- Schedule an admission interview, if possible. And remember that it's not just a chance for them to ask you questions; go prepared with questions of your own.
- Make an appointment with a financial aid officer.
- If you're curious about a club, major or sport, arrange to attend a meeting, class or practice.

Taking Notes and Pictures

Was it X College or Y University that had that terrific science class? Who has the best sports facilities? Where did I talk to that cool psychology professor? You may think you'll remember everything, but you'll be surprised how easy it is to get confused after you've seen a few colleges.

Record your immediate impressions, and any crucial information, for future reference. Bring whatever tools help keep each college fresh and distinct in your mind — cameras, notebooks, laptops. Consider taking notes on the Campus Visit Score Card.