

HANDOUT 14. Identify Important Factors in Choosing a College

Identify Important Factors in Choosing a College

Location

- distance from home

Environment

- type of school (2-year or 4-year)
- school setting (urban, rural)
- location & size of nearest city
- co-ed, male, female
- religious affiliation

Size

- enrollment
- physical size of campus

Admission requirements

- deadline(s)
- tests required
- average test scores, GPA, rank
- special requirements

Academics

- majors offered
- special requirements
- accreditation—recognized by regional or national accrediting bodies as meeting its objectives
- student-faculty ratio
- typical class size

College expenses

- tuition, room & board
- estimated total budget
- application fee, deposits

Financial aid

- deadline(s)
- required forms
- % of student population receiving aid
- scholarships
- part-time employment opportunities

Housing

- residence hall requirements
- availability
- types and sizes
- food plans

Facilities

- academic
- recreational
- other

Activities

- clubs, organizations
- sororities/fraternities
- athletics, intramurals
- other

Campus visits

- when to visit
- special opportunities

SOURCE: ACT (www.act.org)

HANDOUT 17. Questions to Ask on a Campus Visit

Questions to Ask on a Campus Visit

Make a list of the questions you want to ask when you visit a campus. The following list includes many of the typical questions that students ask when visiting a campus:

1. Who goes to this campus? How are students at this campus different from students at other campuses? How many students go to this campus? How large are the classes?
2. What are the admission requirements for entry? Do different programs have different requirements?
3. Does the campus have _____? (Fill in the programs of study that interest you.)
4. Who teaches classes at this campus? Are most of the teachers full-time members of the faculty? Do graduate students teach classes?
5. What are the opportunities for students to interact with teachers outside of class?
6. What kinds of jobs do students get who graduate with a degree/ certificate/ diploma in _____? Does the campus help students to get jobs?
7. Is it possible to visit a class in _____? (Check out classes in areas that interest you.)
8. Where do students live? If there are on-campus living facilities and you are considering living on-campus, ask to visit the facilities.
9. In on-campus facilities, do men and women reside in the same areas, different floors, or different buildings? Are there any restrictions on students who live on-campus?
10. Are there special living situations for students with special interests? (Some campuses have communities of interest such as language, major program of study, or career interest.)
11. How much does it cost to attend the campus? What are the major expenses? Is it possible to live at home and attend the campus?
12. How much financial aid is available? What are the requirements for getting financial aid or scholarships? What about job opportunities on campus?
13. Where do students spend their time on campus when they aren't in class?
14. What computing services does the campus provide? Do students need their own computers? Are there enough work stations to meet student demand?
15. What is the parking situation on campus? Where do students park their cars?
16. How do students move from building to building?
17. What kinds of services are available to help students with their personal needs – counseling and health services? What kinds of health care facilities are there? How do students pay for health care, if it's needed? What kinds of counseling services are available? Academic? Personal? Career?
18. What do students do on the weekends?
19. What kinds of academic and learning support services are there?
20. If you plan to transfer to another campus, ask if all of your credits will transfer. (Be sure to confirm this with the receiving campus.)
21. Ask students what they like and don't like about the campus. Ask them if they could go somewhere else to school, where would they go and why?
22. What clubs, sports, and extracurricular activities are available? Is there support to start a new activity or club on campus?

HANDOUT 18. Campus Visit Checklist

Campus Visit Checklist

Here are things you shouldn't miss while visiting a college. Take a look at this list before planning campus trips to make sure that you allow enough time on each campus to get a sense of what the school -- and the life of its students -- is really like.

- Take a campus tour.
- Have an interview with admission officer.
- Get business cards and names of people you meet for future contacts.
- Pick up financial aid forms.
- Participate in a group information session at the admission office.
- Sit in on a class of a subject that interests you.
- Talk to a professor in your chosen major or in a subject that interests you.
- Talk to coaches of sports in which you might participate.
- Talk to a student or counselor in the career center.
- Spend the night in a dorm.
- Read the student newspaper.
- Try to find other student publications -- department newsletters, alternative newspapers, literary reviews.
- Scan bulletin boards to see what day-to-day student life is like.
- Eat in the cafeteria.
- Ask a student why he/she chose this college.
- Wander around the campus by yourself.
- Read for a little while in the library and see what it's like.
- Search for your favorite book in the library.
- Ask a student what he/she hates about the college.
- Ask a student what he/she loves about the college.
- Browse in the college bookstore.
- Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus.
- Ask a student what he/she does on weekends.
- Listen to the college's radio station.
- Try to see a dorm that you didn't see on the tour.
- Imagine yourself attending this college for four years.

SOURCE: *The College Board* (www.collegeboard.org)

HANDOUT 19. Questions to Ask Yourself during Your Campus Visit

Questions to Ask Yourself

When asking questions of postsecondary officials, remember that you are collecting critical information to help guide your future decisions about postsecondary education. The more information you collect, the better informed you will be.

But you also need to direct questions at yourself. In fact, the hardest questions are those directed to you by you, because, in the end, you have to be honest to yourself. For instance, consider the following:

- Would I be comfortable at this campus?
- Do the academic offerings fit my interests and needs?
- Are the job prospects for graduates what I want for myself?
- Are the living arrangements workable for me?
- What do I need to do to make myself as prepared as possible to succeed at this campus?

These are simple yet important questions. You need to be comfortable with your decision, because it is hard to go back once you've gone ahead. Sure, you can make changes in your program, area of study, and even school or city, but any major changes usually cost you time and money. Also, as with any purchase, there is a tendency to over compensate when there is one particular item or part that you really, really like. Don't over-value one particular item, such as the "party atmosphere" of the campus. Academics and what you can learn are far more important, so balance your perceptions.

What you are looking for in a campus is what is best for you and your particular situation. Sometimes students choose a campus because their friends are going there. This often leads to a poor match of campus and student. Finding the right match, the best fit of person and campus, is the goal of campus exploration. Visiting campuses is essential for finding the right campus for you, the campus where you'll say, "This is the campus where I belong."