



# CAMPUS VISIT TIPS

Campus visits provide insight into academic experience and student life. Here are suggestions to make the most of your visits. Be sure to ask lots of questions (we've included some suggestions below) and take notes and photos (otherwise, everything starts running together). Be curious, engaged, and have fun!

## **Starting point: Visit a variety of local/regional colleges**

Visiting a variety of close-to-home local or regional colleges and universities makes researching schools more tangible for both student and family. For example, visiting one large public research university and a small liberal arts college gives the student a frame of reference when investigating other large public universities or small colleges in other parts of the country. Comparing and contrasting the different types of colleges will be a great help in narrowing and focusing your college list.

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## **Register for a guided tour and attend the information session**

Plan ahead so you can make the most of your visit. College websites have schedules and signups online, so be sure the college is running tours and see what else is happening on campus that you can take advantage of while you are there. Colleges often do track demonstrated interest so be sure to complete the registration process at the welcome center or admissions office when you arrive on campus. Contact your admissions rep before you visit and ask if you might schedule a brief meeting – this gives your rep a personal connection with you and allows you to demonstrate strong interest.

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## Plan your visit for any special-interest days

Some colleges will host special information sessions or full-day events to showcase certain popular majors (business, engineering, computer science, nursing) or to offer special facilities tours (such as aviation programs). You can often avail yourself of the special info session and tours, as well as a more general campus tour (either on the same day or by staying over an extra night).

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## Special prospective student events/overnights

Some colleges offer day-long or overnight events for prospective students. If it's a college of particular interest, students would want to consider these types of opportunities to get an in-depth experience on campus. The Diversity Fly-In programs allow students from underrepresented populations to spend a night or two on campus and participate in programs that introduce them to the campus community. Check college websites for details.

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## Attend a class or lecture or meet with faculty

Plan ahead if you are interested in sitting in on a class or meeting with a specific professor or any available departmental faculty members. Sitting in on a class is a great way to experience academic life as a student at that school. You can ask your admissions rep or email or call the departmental office to ask about the possibility of attending a class or meeting with a professor during office hours.

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Tour guides are current students and hearing from them provides valuable first-hand impressions of the student experience. Here are some things to look for and ask about:

**Student Housing**

Where freshman live  
Who is required to live on campus  
Different types/themes  
Live and learn communities?

**Dining Halls/Restaurants**

Hours of operation  
Dietary restrictions  
Swipes at campus or off-campus restaurants, coffee shops?

**Classrooms, Libraries & Study Spaces**

Size  
Location  
Accessibility

**Clubs & Student Groups**

Most popular  
Related to your interests?  
Club and Intramural sports teams  
How to get involved

**Campus Safety**

What services are available to keep students safe?  
How do students learn of safety issues on campus?

**Gym & Sports Facilities**

What's offered  
Hours/access

**Culture**

Campus traditions  
What happens on weekends  
Competitive or Collaborative?

**Student Services**

Student health center  
Mental Health supports  
Disability support services  
Academic support services  
Financial aid

Don't forget to visit specific offices of interest, such as:

- Study Abroad
- Career Advising
- Disability Services
- Financial Aid

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## Questions to ask your tour guide

- How would you characterize the campus community?
- How would you describe the average student?
- What do students do for fun on weekends?

- How are you involved on campus?
  - What are your favorite things to do outside of the classroom?
  - What are some popular student hang-outs or activities?
  - What would you change about campus if you could?
  - What do you wish you had known before you arrived?
  - What surprised you about the school after you became a student?
  - What made you decide to attend this college?
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## Questions to ask other students

If you encounter other students on campus – in the campus dining hall or restaurants if you have lunch or a snack on campus for example – don't be afraid to stop and ask them if they have a few minutes to talk about the college with you. In addition to those above for student tour guides, you might also ask some of these questions.

- What are some popular majors?
- How large or small are some or most of your classes?
- How are the core freshman courses?
- Who is your favorite professor?
- Are certain classes hard to get into?
- How was the transition from high school to college academically?

Pick up and read the school-run newspaper – this will give you a great look at what's happening on campus and what students care about at that moment in time.

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## Meet with Admissions

You may get an opportunity to speak with someone on the staff directly – especially if you alerted your specific admissions rep when you would be on campus. This meeting, even if very brief, is a great chance for you to express interest in the college and further explore your fit with this specific school.

- What distinguishes this college from others like it?
  - How would you describe the typical student who does well here?
  - What are some recent changes that have been made at the college?
  - What is one of your favorite things about this college?
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## Explore the Area

Note what is around the college. Will you need a car, a bike, a bus, or just a sturdy pair of shoes to get around? Be sure to factor in seasons and weather as you evaluate the logistics of living on the campus and in its surrounding community.

What are your first impressions? Could you see yourself not just living, but belonging here?

What kind of relationship does the town or city have with the college?

Note how far campus is from everything. What else is nearby? What isn't?

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Airport / bus or train station</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Local bank / ATM</b>          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Parks and Green spaces</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Electronics / Apple Store</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Restaurants / coffee shops</b>     | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Campus shuttle stops</b>      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Shops: grocery, Target, IKEA</b>   |   |
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## More top questions for college visits

### Academic

On average, how many classes do first year students take?

What academic supports are in place to assist students with the academic transition to college? Is there a tutoring center? Are these services included in the tuition/fees or are there extra costs to use it? How often can a student use them (certain number of hours per week or per subject?)

When are students assigned an academic advisor? Will the student have more than one advisor? How often do advisors meet with students?

Do professors teach first year classes or TAs (grad students)? Do the professors hold office hours each week? Do the TAs teach a smaller group discussion class to supplement larger lecture hall classes?

Are undergraduates able to pursue research opportunities with faculty?

Is this college in a consortium with nearby colleges or does it have special enrollment partnerships or cross-registration options with other colleges?

Does the college have an honors college or program? What are the advantages to pursuing admission to the honors options?

How easy or hard is it to get the classes you want or need to progress with your major each semester?

Do you believe most students can progress in their major toward graduating in 4 years or does difficulty in getting into required courses hinder that objective?

Is the academic atmosphere best described as collegial or competitive?

How easy or difficult is it to change majors? What about changing colleges within a larger university – is this possible?

Are double majors or interdisciplinary studies encouraged?

## Campus Life and Culture

What words would you use to describe the campus culture?

What kind of student thrives on this campus?

What is the one piece of advice you would give an incoming freshman student at your college?

What is your favorite tradition at this college?

What percentage of students participate in Greek life?

What percentage of students participate in athletics (intramural, club or NCAA)?

Is it a popular activity for large numbers of students to turn up at the sports games to cheer on the team?

What do you think students here find surprising or unexpected when they start their first year here?

Do you guarantee housing for first-year students? If not, do you help freshman find off-campus housing options?

Can freshman students live off-campus if they choose, or are they required to live on campus for one or more years?

What kind of meal plan options are there for those living on-campus? Does the meal card work at campus or area restaurants or coffee shops?

Can students bring a car to campus in the first year? What kind of parking options are there?

What would you say is the biggest challenge on your campus?

## Career Services

What career services are offered to undergraduate students? How involved is the college in matching potential employers with students?

What career fairs and networking opportunities are held on campus each year?

What percentage of students find full-time employment or have enrolled in graduate or professional schools within 6 months after graduation?

Where have students interned in the past? Are there internship or co-op programs with local companies?

Does the college offer co-op opportunities to students? How many students participate in one or more co-op semesters?

How often do alumni come back and get involved in helping current students find internships and jobs?

