



FINDING THE RIGHT COLLEGE

What should you consider when choosing a college?

SELF-EXPLORATION

What are your interests, abilities, goals, and expectations? Students should review the course work, extra-curricular activities, or community service that they have found most interesting throughout their high school years. Academic records, standardized testing, special awards, and feedback from teachers, coaches, club advisors, and other adults can help students assess activities.

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN THE COLLEGE YOU CHOOSE?

Type of institution (two or four year, coed or non-coed)

Geographic location (region, state, distance from home)

Majors offered/curriculum (liberal arts, technical, business)

Setting (urban, rural, suburban)

Size of institution (small, medium, large, very large)

Selectivity (very difficult, moderately difficult, open)

Cost (tuition, room and board, books fees, travel, financial aid)

Diversity (race, religion, national, international, age)

Extracurricular activities (sports, entertainment, culture, religious, educational)

Housing (on/off campus, coed, single sex, special interest, size of room, food, meal plans, rules, roommates)

Facilities (building, architecture, libraries, student unions, classrooms, lecture halls, labs, recreational/athletic offerings, stores, laundry, handicapped access)

Specialized Programs (programs and services for students who are learning disabled, physically challenged, or who have English as a second language).

VISITS BY COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Beginning in late September, college representatives will be available to meet with students in pre-arranged small group interviews. This is an opportunity for the visiting representative to "sell" their school's programs. Meetings with college admissions personnel are not intended to replace a personal interview or campus visit, but afford students the opportunity to gain a general impression of a college, ask specific questions about programs, activities or admissions at that college, or gather written information about the institution. Students should review the following suggestions:

- Develop a few specific questions to ask the representative. Questions might include: special academic interests, particular sports, support services available or financial aid procedures.

- Sign a card provided by the college representative. This card will put your name on a mailing list to receive more information from the school.
- If you have already visited a college or had an interview, a quick hello to the representative visiting us provides a good way to be remembered.
- Ask about off-campus interview opportunities, if interested.
- Be open to schools that might not have been on your original investigating list but which seem interesting.

VISITING A COLLEGE CAMPUS

A personal visit to a post-secondary institution is often the most useful step in helping students and their parents decide whether or not to apply to a particular school. Students are encouraged to make use of group tours, open house events and group information sessions as a way of obtaining first-hand impressions of schools they have previously researched.

Visits during the regular academic year provide a more accurate view of the academic and social life of a campus, but families often make use of summer vacation to visit several schools that are at a distance. Where possible, it is a good idea to avoid the distortions of registration, final exams and special campus events such as homecomings or festivals. Several high school holidays such as Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Fall, Winter, and Spring breaks allow students who visit colleges to minimize the disruption to their own academic program. .

Students should begin planning college visits after they have given considerable thought to their abilities, interests, and career plans. Some students begin visiting colleges during the spring of their junior year. Others visit campuses during the summer between the junior and senior year. Others prefer to wait until the fall of their senior year. By starting early, the process will feel less stressful.

HOW DO YOU MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A CAMPUS VISIT?

Many schools offer on-line registration for their tours. Students can also write or call the admissions office of the college in which they are interested two or three weeks in advance and make arrangements for a personal interview and a tour of campus facilities. Some colleges, usually large universities will offer only group interviews. At a few colleges, typically the most competitive schools, you may need to schedule an interview several months in advance. Some schools will not be able to grant a personal interview; they rely on alumnae/alumni interviews which are arranged after an application is on file.

Sample Questions to Ask a College Admissions Representative?

- What constitutes a typical freshman program?
- Who teaches freshman courses - graduate assistants or permanent staff?
- What is the average class size for freshman and introductory courses?
- Which departments are the strongest?
- To what extent is there interaction between faculty and students?
- How good are the library facilities? What are the library hours?
- What cultural opportunities are available in the community?
- For what reasons did the students you see on campus choose that particular college? In their opinions, are these reasons being borne out?
- What is the makeup of the student body? Are there a number of foreign students and students from all over the U.S. and from all types of home environments?
- What types of financial aid are available?
- Is there a professional counseling service available for career planning and personal concerns? Faculty advisor?
- What are the opportunities for participating in intercollegiate or intramural sports?
- What type of housing is available to first year students?
- Can you pick your roommate?

- Is campus security an area of concern to students or faculty?

INFORMATION FOR THE STUDENT ATHLETE

Athletics is an area of special talent that can make a difference in the college admissions and financial aid process. At most colleges, athletics are regulated by the rules established by the **NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association)**.

We suggest that student athletes do the following:

- Let the guidance counselor know that you are interested in competing in athletics at the college level. We can introduce you to resources and can also help you to outline the athletic recruiting process and what the role of the student athlete should be in that process.
- Inform your high school coach that you are interested in playing that sport in college. Work with the coach and ask if he or she will contact college coaches on your behalf. Give them a copy of your athletic resume.
- When visiting colleges be sure that you have read the NCAA Guidelines which will inform you of the rules regarding contacting college coaches.
- Obtain a copy of the **NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete** in the Guidance office or go on-line to: <http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net>. This is the best place to start to familiarize oneself with the rules, philosophy, and organization of the NCAA.

To be eligible to participate at the Division I or II level, students must be certified as eligible by the NCAA Clearinghouse. Pick up a copy of the pamphlet **Making Sure You Are Eligible To Participate In College Sports** or learn more at the website:

<http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net>

INFORMATON FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES

Students with identified learning disabilities may want to investigate the programs and services that are specifically designed to meet their post-secondary educational needs. Within a four-year college there are often special support services necessary for the student to succeed in regular classes. These programs also frequently provide non-credit courses which help the student identify her or his learning style and develop appropriate compensatory skills. There is often a separate admissions process to enter a Learning Differences program.

Even in colleges with programs for those with learning differences, individuals without learning differences may take advantage of tutorial or other support services. Students with documented learning differences may request appropriate modifications such as extended time testing and taping of lectures.

As students explore post-secondary options, they should raise questions about the availability of support services, the presence of trained learning specialists, and the provision for classroom modification, if necessary. In most instances, students should indicate in the application process the nature of the learning services they have received in high school, and the nature of accommodations that will be necessary in college, if any. If the school has a special learning support program, the student should also be in contact with the director of that program during the admissions process. Colleges that have a program for students with learning differences frequently require professional assessments that document and identify the specific learning disability of the student who is applying.

Students with documented hearing, learning, physical or visual differences which might impact their performance on college entrance examinations such as the SAT can receive special accommodations for testing. These accommodations, for eligible students only, can include additional time to take the tests, large type test booklets and answers sheets, a sign-language interpreter or a reader. These accommodations are available during specific periods of the academic year and do not cover all regularly scheduled test dates.

To be eligible for these special accommodations a student needs to either have an Individualized Educational Plan that identifies the need for these testing conditions, a "504 Plan" in force, or documentation which provides independent verification of the existence and nature of the difference signed by an appropriate licensed or certified professional. In either case, to qualify for modifications, a student also needs to be currently receiving **in school** those modifications for instruction and assessment that they would receive on the SAT program tests. The SAT company will review all materials and determine which, if any, accommodations they will allow. Information about non-standard admissions testing is available from the Guidance Office. Registration deadlines apply to non-standardized testing.

ONLINE RESOURCES

COLLEGE SEARCH

<http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>
http://www.collegeconfidential.com/college_search/
<http://www.cappex.com/>
<http://collegeproowler.com/search/>
http://www.collegedata.com/cs/search/college/college_search_tpl.jhtml

COLLEGE RANKINGS

<http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges>
<http://www.princetonreview.com/college-rankings.aspx>
<http://www.forbes.com/top-colleges/list/>
http://www.collegeconfidential.com/college_rankings/

COMPARE COLLEGES

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/compare-colleges>
<http://collegeproowler.com/compare/default.aspx?&tab=tab-rankings>
http://www.collegeresults.org/search_group.aspx
<http://colleges.findthebest.com/>