



College Visits: What to Do & What to Ask

Visiting campus is critically important in deciding which college is the right fit for you. The school must “feel right” to you if you’re going to be successful and happy there – and that’s not something you can quantify. What looks like the perfect match on paper might not suit you at all, and vice versa.

When to Visit:

Anytime is a good time to visit a potential college. Summers are perfect for trips to tour campuses, although there will be fewer students around than usual. Weekends in the fall, winter, and spring work well, too.

Some students prefer to visit a college before sending in an application. Others will apply to several colleges, see which they are accepted to, and then take visits to decide which one fits best. Both approaches are appropriate.

Be sure to contact the college’s admissions office to see if they have special visitor days or events planned. Special events often offer more resources to potential students. If you don’t attend a formal event, the admissions office can offer you a personalized visit plan and help make your time worthwhile.

Visiting a campus and speaking with the staff may help your chances of admission, since you have demonstrated real interest in attending.

What to Do:

All college campuses have students and buildings. To see what makes each unique, and to see if you might belong there, you’ve got to mix it up on campus. Be sure to:

- Talk to professors
- Talk to students
- Visit the library
- Visit student housing
- Tour campus
- Tour the city around campus
- Read bulletin boards
- Sit in on a class
- Check out recreational facilities
- Check out student activities
- Eat at a cafeteria
- Talk to the admissions office
- Eat at an off-campus student hang-out
- Read the college newspaper
- Check out the computer labs
- Picture yourself living there

What to Ask:

Your trip isn't all about sightseeing. Here are six questions you should ask a current student at the college:

- What is the best part about this college?
- What is the worst part?
- What is a typical day like?
- What do students do on weekends?
- How are classes structured?
- Why did you choose this college?

Weather Note:

Be careful not to let the weather influence your decision too much. You may have just had a rainy day on an otherwise sunny campus. But be wise if rain (or snow or hail or whatever) is normal. Can you live happily in this climate?

Don't Forget Your Own Questions!

What are you particularly interested in? What's especially important to you? Not just to your parents or your mentors, but to you?