

## Visiting a College Campus

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Visiting college campuses can be a valuable when selecting the right school. Visits offer a first-hand look at a college's academic programs, facilities and atmosphere. It is best to start visiting campuses in the spring of your junior year. To make the most of a college visit, some pre-planning is necessary.

### Individual Visits versus Campus Visitation Days

Many college campuses have visitation days in the spring, summer and fall, offering information to you and your parents or guardian in a group setting. Visitation days are a perfect way to get to know a campus at the beginning of your college search. However, they may not allow the opportunity for one-on-one contacts that an individual visit can. You may need to schedule an individual visit to meet with an admissions counselor, a financial aid officer, coach or other college personnel. You may attend several visitation days in the spring and summer, and then as your list of colleges narrows, you will revisit some of them in the fall.

**Checklist for a College Campus Visit** - Here are some things to look for during a visit:

- **Attend a class** – Is the quality of teaching, the class size and atmosphere conducive to your learning style? Try to avoid breaks and vacations when visiting.
- **Investigate the campus environment** – Take a campus tour. Visit residence halls, student centers, dining facilities, the library, etc. Informally interview students and faculty. Does the campus provide comfortable living quarters? What kinds of students attend this school? Do you see yourself fitting in? Can you envision living, eating and studying at this school?
- **Check into academic programs and student activities** – Does the college offer the field of study or major that you want? Are there social activities, clubs, fraternities, sororities, intramural athletic programs, etc. on campus that interest you? Are there opportunities for volunteering, especially in your areas of interest? Are internship opportunities or co-op programs available that correspond to your major?
- **Meet with an admission counselor** – Learn more about what courses are required for your academic major. Discuss the chances for success for admission, graduation and career opportunities. Verify the admission requirements.
- **Ask about financial aid opportunities** – What percentages of students receive financial aid? What scholarships are available and how do you apply? Determine the actual costs of attending that college. Do they have institutional aid available?
- **Job or work-study opportunities** – If you plan to work while in college, inquire about job opportunities available both on and off campus.
- **Safety** – What is the crime rate on campus, and what types of security measures are available?

On your way out of town, jot down a few thoughts about campus life. Make a list of what you liked and what you didn't like. By the time you finish touring all the campuses, your notes will be invaluable to help you remember your impressions of each college tour. Students who can't visit a campus can always do the next best thing — take a virtual tour.