

College Visits

Before You Go

It's important to have everything ready when you're preparing for a college visit. It may be difficult to imagine what you'll want to do before you get there, but it's helpful to have a plan of attack to guide you through the college visit.

- **Set aside time to review the school's website and brochures before setting out.** Bring the brochures with you, complete with circles around anything that stands out or that you know you want to see while at campus.
- **Prepare a list of questions.** Your campus guide will be able to answer any questions you might have, so be sure to write down any important things that you have on your mind. Whether it's cafeteria meal plans or questions about class size, you won't want to miss this opportunity to get information straight from the source.
- **Bring a notebook.** List the questions you want to ask inside, but also have a pen handy to jot down anything that strikes you during the campus tour.
- **Create a schedule for your visit.** The main part of your college visit will likely be the campus tour. However, don't be afraid to show up early and wander around on your own. Take this chance to explore the area surrounding campus, ask questions of current students or set up an appointment with a professor in your prospective major.

During the Visit

There's a lot to see and do during your visit, but try not to get sidetracked from what you set out to do. Stick to your schedule unless something pressing pops up, like an opportunity to sit in on a class or hear a lecture about student organizations.

- **Don't be afraid to ask questions.** This is the most important thing to remember during your visit. Your campus tour guide will ask if anyone has questions multiple times during the tour. This is no time to be shy; if you don't want to ask in front of other people on the tour, pull your tour guide aside at the end. There's no end to the questions you could ask, including everything from the average ACT test scores for incoming students to the number of available student honor societies.
- **Take pictures.** Bring your camera and take a few shots of main areas on campus. You'll probably get the chance to check out a sample dorm room, so snap a shot of that as well. If you're preparing for college visits at several schools, it may be harder to remember the details of each one after a while, so photos will help.
- **Soak in the atmosphere.** Spend some time sitting in the student union or watching students walk to class. This is one of the best ways to get an idea of what it would feel like to be a student on campus. Plus, it's a great way to ask questions from students who aren't being paid to talk up the college to prospective students.

After You're Done

Students spend a lot of time preparing for college visits, but once it's over you may think the work is done. Don't miss this opportunity to retain your impressions and opinions about the college. This can really come in handy down the road when you have to decide between two schools and you want to remember all the details from your college visit.

- **Write down your thoughts.** Use your notebook to write about the visit once you're back home. Include anything you felt or saw that struck you, whether it was a friendly smile from a student you didn't know or the flaking paint and dented furniture in the dorm rooms. Write a list of "likes" and "dislikes" about the school based on your college visit.
- **Make a decision.** Eventually you are going to have to make a decision about which college to attend! Be sure to go back through your notes and compare your schools before making this very important decision! Remember—it's not so much WHERE you go to school, but WHAT you put into it that matters—if you're happy with your school, you're more likely to put in more effort and have more success!