

College Selection Checklist

Step 1: Identify Your Best Learning Environment

Check the situation in which you would learn more and earn better grades:

Situation A

- small classes (15-30 students)
- short answer tests where I can explain
- I like hands-on projects
- class discussion (listen & participate)
- I learn best when I'm involved
- where I know the professor and he or she will know if I'm absent

Situation B

- large lecture classes (50-500 students)
- multiple choice or computerized exams
- I prefer to just take tests
- lecture (listen and take notes)
- I can teach myself anything w/ the book
- I will always go to class 100% of the time even if they don't take roll

If you have more checks under "Situation A"—Consider small to medium schools (liberal arts colleges, mid sized universities). Look for low student to teacher ratios. Ask about teaching styles on campus tours.

If you have more checks under "Situation B" – You are naturally a good test taker. Additionally, your drive and independence means you can succeed at a large or small school.

Step 2: Identify the Physical Traits of Your Ideal Campus

Type of School

- Community College (2 year)
- 4 Year College / University

Location

- close to home
- in-state
- out-of-state

Campus Setting

- college town
- mid-size city
- large urban center / major city

Location of Students

- most commute
- half commuter / half on campus
- most live on campus

Student Housing

- housing is available on campus
- must have off-campus options

Look & Feel

- traditional campus with old buildings, trees, grass
- don't care
- modern, downtown, city blocks (no green rolling hills)

Step 3: Narrow Down By Academic Programs

Your major:

List all possible fields of study): _____

Things to research or ask on a campus visit:

- How difficult is it to change majors?
- Are there specific programs that are more competitive than others?
- Will you be admitted directly into your academic program or will you need to apply once you have completed basic requirements? (nursing often requires basics first.)
- Can you take classes in your major freshman year?

Study Abroad:

Do you want to study abroad?

Things to research or ask on a campus visit:

- What programs are offered by the university?
- What percent of students participate in study abroad?
- Will credit earned abroad count towards your major?
- How many students in your department are currently abroad?

Internships:

Things to research or ask on a campus visit:

- Are internships required for your major? How many?
- How many students participate in internships?
- How many students in your department currently have internships?
- What does the school or department do to help students find internships?

Research:

Things to research or ask on a campus visit:

- Is research required for your major?
- What type of research are undergraduates in your department doing?
- How many students in your department are doing research this year?
- How many students in your department have published or presented their research this year?

Tutoring / Academic Assistance

Do you have a learning issue or area of weakness that may require tutoring help?

If you need accommodations for a learning or physical disability, ask about the services offered.

Things to research or ask on a campus visit:

- What type of tutoring services are offered on campus?
- Are they free?
- Is there a writing center? Will they help with editing papers?
- How available and helpful are professors?
- Is the campus friendly towards students with learning issues?

Step 4: List Your “Must-Haves”

Check the items that are “must haves” for your ideal school.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> women’s only college | <input type="checkbox"/> religious services on campus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> all male college | <input type="checkbox"/> vegetarian dining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> online education | <input type="checkbox"/> organic dining options |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nights or weekend programs | <input type="checkbox"/> green / environmental housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> double majors | <input type="checkbox"/> local art museums / galleries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> honors program | <input type="checkbox"/> local business center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sororities | <input type="checkbox"/> LGBT friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fraternities | <input type="checkbox"/> campus television station |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ROTC | <input type="checkbox"/> campus radio station |
| <input type="checkbox"/> international student programs | <input type="checkbox"/> debate team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> special needs housing | <input type="checkbox"/> student paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> alcohol/smoke/drug free housing | <input type="checkbox"/> literary magazine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> single sex dorms | <input type="checkbox"/> dance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Division I or II sports | <input type="checkbox"/> musical theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Division III sports | <input type="checkbox"/> theater productions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> intercollegiate sports | <input type="checkbox"/> opera |
| <input type="checkbox"/> intramural sports | <input type="checkbox"/> marching band |
| <input type="checkbox"/> club sports | <input type="checkbox"/> jazz band |
| <input type="checkbox"/> swimming facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> orchestra |
| <input type="checkbox"/> proximity to outdoor recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> gospel choir |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newman Center (Catholic) | <input type="checkbox"/> performance choir |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hillel Society (Jewish) | <input type="checkbox"/> musical ensembles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baptist Student Union | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campus Crusade for Christ
(non-denominational Christian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Step 5: What “FEELS” Right

You need to feel comfortable on a campus to be most successful. Before you start visiting colleges, try to identify the “feel” you want on your campus.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> preppy | <input type="checkbox"/> political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> green | <input type="checkbox"/> highly social |
| <input type="checkbox"/> smart | <input type="checkbox"/> focused on academics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> laid back | <input type="checkbox"/> LGBT friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> intense | <input type="checkbox"/> racially diverse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> friendly | <input type="checkbox"/> international |
| <input type="checkbox"/> liberal | <input type="checkbox"/> competitive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conservative | <input type="checkbox"/> outgoing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> religious | |

Step 6: Prioritize

Use this list to rank the importance of the following factors (1 most important etc.). Make notes of any preferences you have.

Factor	Rank	Preference
Location <i>(In-state, South, West, Midwest, East Coast)</i>	_____	_____
Choice of major <i>(some majors are not offered at all schools)</i>	_____	_____
Religious Affiliation <i>(none, name only, moderate, highly involved)</i>	_____	_____
Academic Rigor (degree of difficulty) <i>(very high would be similar to all AP classes)</i>	_____	_____
Setting <i>(big city, suburban, college town)</i>	_____	_____
Political Climate <i>(liberal, conservative, balance of beliefs)</i>	_____	_____
Scholarship Possibilities <i>(often private schools offer more scholarships)</i>	_____	_____
Level of School Spirit <i>(often found in traditions & sports)</i>	_____	_____
Sports Programs <i>(varsity, club, intramural)</i>	_____	_____
Offers Specific Activity or Organization <i>(debate, ROTC, music, dance, film, etc)</i>	_____	_____
Reputation or Prestige <i>(ranking, national or regional recognition)</i>	_____	_____
Size <i>(school size, average class size)</i>	_____	_____
Other <i>(sororities / fraternities, study abroad, access to professors, proximity to employment or internships, social climate, weather, opportunity for undergraduate research, etc)</i>	_____	_____