



A Student's Guide to College Tours

Visiting a college - whether in-person or virtually - is an incredible way to learn more about the institution and whether it can be a good fit for you. Here are a few tips to ensure that you make most of these opportunities.

Before Visiting

- ❑ **Research the college** and write down key facts. Jot down:

- Number of undergraduates
- Location
- Majors, clubs, and programs of interest
- Nearby attractions



College Info Resources

[Niche](#)

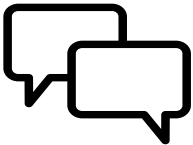
[Youvisit](#)

[Unigo](#)

College Board's Big Future

Fiske Books

- ❑ **Prepare questions** for that specific school (academic, cultural, and social). For example:

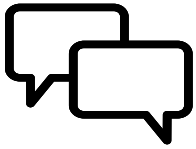


What/where are the major resources provided to students on campus (peer tutoring, writing center, mental health support, career services, advisory, etc.)?
What do students do on the weekends - do they stay around campus or leave?

- ❑ **Reach out to anyone you know at that school** - family, friends, or students from your high school or sports teams - as well as people you want to meet when there, such as coaches and professors. Let them know that you're excited to visit the school, and ask them if they have a few minutes to speak with you.
- ❑ **Read the college's newspaper(s)** to get a sense of what is going on on campus and what issues are important to students.
- ❑ **Peruse the course catalog** and read articles or books written by professors you're interested in learning from.

While Visiting

- ❑ **Take lots of notes!** Be sure to write down all your thoughts, observations, and answers to your questions immediately during your visit - especially if you're visiting multiple schools in a short period of time.
- ❑ **Take pictures too!** This will help you to remember which school is which.
- ❑ **Talk with current students!**



Ask them how their experiences have been at that school.
Ask them for directions and local restaurant recommendations.
Why did they choose that school?
How has the transition from high school been?
What do they like (or dislike) most about the school?
What do students do on the weekends?
Do students seem happy?
Are they helpful?

- ❑ Remember that the tour guide will likely show you the nicest buildings, the biggest dorms, and the prettiest parts of campus! Before or after the tour, **venture out on your own** and check out other parts of campus, too. Be sure to check out the places you'd be spending lots of your time - like the library, student center, cafeteria, and first-year dorms (if open to visitors).





- ❑ **Stop by the admissions office (if open) and introduce yourself!** Let them know why you like the college and then send a brief email thanking them for their time and insight. If they have a sign-in sheet, add your name (many colleges use this to track students' interest in the school). Make sure to sign up for newsletters if you haven't already.
- ❑ **If possible, sit in on a lecture!** This will give you a great sense of what being a college student is like.



- ❑ **Talk to coaches and professors** who are open to speaking with you.

After Your Visit

- Review and expand your notes**, and make sure you have written down all your impressions while your thoughts are still fresh! Rank each school on a scale of 0-10.
 - Most importantly, **remember to write down WHY!** 
 - Send a thank-you email** to your admissions representative (and if you're doing a live/in-person tour or info session, send your tour guide or presenter a thank-you email as well).
 - Contact anyone else you met on campus** who might be a good resource for you (e.g. the dean, a professor, coach, the leaders of activities you are interested in joining, etc.).
 - Many college applications will specifically ask, "Why do you want to attend this school?" **When it comes time to write your essays, the more detail you can provide, the better, so write down those reasons now!** 
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Demonstrate your interest in the schools before applying by:

- 1 Emailing your region's admissions representative
- 2 Taking a virtual tour (check the school's website)
- 3 Checking out their social media
- 4 Sign up for their newsletters
- 5 Look into opportunities for high school students like pre-college classes/ programs; summer volunteering, etc.)
- 6 Do your homework and learn about the school as much as you can!
- 7 Talk to students and alums

FAQ

What should I wear?

Be sure to wear comfy shoes, and be prepared for the elements - rain, snow, etc. - since you'll be walking around campus. If you're meeting with a professor or have an interview, it's a smart idea to dress it up a little bit. Dress clothes are unnecessary, but do dress a little nicer than you would for just a tour (while still ensuring that you feel comfortable and confident). Dress like you're going to a nice dinner with your family.

When should I visit?

If possible, we recommend scheduling in-person tours for when school is in session so that you can get a feel for what the school is like when students are there. However, especially given COVID restrictions, whenever you can visit campus is great - perhaps when you're already traveling for a tournament or family vacation, for example.

Can I visit after I've been accepted?

If you're planning to wait to visit colleges until after you've received acceptances, this is a good opportunity to make some in-depth comparisons between the colleges that have accepted you. However, keep in mind that you'll have a shorter amount of time to visit and make your decision.

On these tours, will I only learn the highlights?

Probably! After all, official tours are built to sell the school. To familiarize yourself with the entirety of the campus - the good and the bad - you should take a self-guided tour before or after the official one. Some schools will also more focused tours for students interested in specific majors. Visit niche.com and unigo.com to read college reviews by current students.

Do I need to send thank-you notes?

Technically, it's of course not required, but doing so can set you apart from other candidates! We recommend that, immediately after your visit, you send a thank-you email to whoever gave your tour.

Tip

If a school does not have a geographically-designated admissions representative, or you didn't meet anyone, go ahead and send a note to the general undergraduate admissions office.

Any final words of wisdom?

Have fun! Soak up every minute of it. Remember - the goal of these visits is to help you figure out where is the best place for you to spend your college career. So invest the time now in doing that research so you make a well-informed decision for you!