

Virtually choosing the right college

Guide and worksheet

Campus visits are an important part of the college selection process. How can you virtually visit and choose a school?

Worksheet instructions

Step 1

In the top row, make a preliminary list of colleges that interest you.

Step 2

Think about important factors you want your college to have. Then, prioritize each factor in the level of importance column.

Step 3

Cross off colleges that appear to not have what you're looking for. Rank the remaining colleges in order of preference.

Do your research

It is important to consider the types of colleges that might interest you. Think about why you want to go to college and then focus on what you want out of college. Take time to research majors of interest, extracurricular activities on campus and academic support. Consider location, size, demographics and resources available on campus.

The virtual tour

A virtual tour is a useful way for students to familiarize themselves with a campus. Hundreds of schools offer virtual tours to increase access to education, particularly when students cannot visit a campus. Well-produced virtual college tours should offer more than what a prospective student would see in other marketing materials. It is a great option for students who want an initial look at a school on their list. For many students, a virtual tour is the starting point and can help with the decision making process.

The tours highlight campus landmarks and features, academic buildings, student housing, dining and student activities. Virtual tours can vary, some examples are a stream of photos linked to a campus map, aerial footage to music, student-led videos including their commentary about the campus, or a 360-degree view of campus highlights with or without virtual reality goggles. It is best to review a few virtual tours to get the best overall sense of a campus from a virtual perspective.

Virtual tour websites

- Youniversity TV: www.youniversitytv.com
- YouVisit: www.youvisit.com
- Campus Reel: www.campusreel.org/colleges
- Campus Tours: <https://campustours.com>
- eCampusTours: www.ecampustours.com
- Campus YouTube Channel: Check your school's website for additional information

Virtual information sessions

Many colleges now offer virtual information sessions. They provide students an opportunity to learn more about the college admissions process from an admissions officer and a chance to ask questions. Attending also shows your interest in a specific college, which is frequently reviewed by admissions.

Need more information?

The College Place is here to help you with free college-planning resources and personal advice. Visit our website at www.ecmc.org.

(Worksheet on back)

Worksheet

Level of importance	Factors to consider	College (fill in name of colleges that interest you)			
		1.	2.	3.	4.
	Program of study: Which programs does the college offer to help you achieve your career goals?				
	School size: Would you prefer a large or small school? What is the student population?				
	Class size: How large do you like your classes to be? What is the student-to-teacher ratio?				
	Support programs: Which programs does the college offer to help you stay in school and graduate?				
	City and neighborhood: Do you prefer a city or a small town? What is the population of the city or town?				
	Campus culture: When visiting each college, get a feel for its "personality." How or why does it match yours?				
	Distance from home: How close do you want to live to your family?				
	Extracurricular activities: Do you have activities in your life that you can't live without?				
	Religious affiliation: Do you want to attend college affiliated with your religious beliefs?				
	Net price: While one college may appear to be less expensive, what will your final cost be after receiving grants and scholarships? Use https://collegecost.ed.gov/net-price to identify your likely estimated cost.				
	Financial aid options: Does the college have special financial aid options? These could include things such as a tuition payment plan to spread out your payments or a guaranteed cost of attendance as long as you are enrolled.				
	Outside learning options: Does the college offer internships, externships, study abroad or service learning opportunities?				
	Housing options near campus: How close or far is housing? Will you need a car, or are where you live, shop and work within walking or biking distance?				

Tour notes	↓	↓	↓	↓
Interesting facts				
Tour highlights				
Tour low lights				
Overall impression	<input type="checkbox"/> Ready to apply <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe <input type="checkbox"/> Not for me	<input type="checkbox"/> Ready to apply <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe <input type="checkbox"/> Not for me	<input type="checkbox"/> Ready to apply <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe <input type="checkbox"/> Not for me	<input type="checkbox"/> Ready to apply <input type="checkbox"/> Maybe <input type="checkbox"/> Not for me

Next steps

Review the admissions process and requirements for each school, determine if the schools you are interested in are a match, reach or safety school and then start the applications process for the colleges on your list.*

*A match school is when your transcript matches the average freshman (keep three or four on your list), a reach school is when your transcript is below the average freshman (keep two or three on your list) and a safety school is when your transcript is above the average freshman (keep two on your list).