



Virtual College Visit Guide

Of course, in a pre-pandemic world, it was best to visit a campus, but you will have to check with each college you want to visit to find out what the individual institution is recommending; and for those traveling from a distance, check each state's travel advisories before planning a trip. It may make the most sense to go on virtual tours, open house events, and information sessions right now and this guide will help you make the most out of those virtual visits.

When to attend

Spring of junior year and late summer (after college classes resume) or early September of your senior year are great times to schedule a visit.

TIP

Ask admissions for the name of a school representative in your area. These are often graduates of the college who volunteer to talk with prospective students and their families and answer questions.

Arranging the visit

Schedule your visit online or by phone ahead of time.

- Each college has its own web page dedicated to virtual tours, information sessions, open house times, as well as opportunities to virtually meet with students, admissions counselors, and financial aid office staff. While many colleges offer virtual tours without any need to schedule a time there are other events that you will want to check out that may happen on a specific date. Check each college's website on your list to stay up to date on events.
- Talking with the admissions office can show the college that you're interested in the school and can give you insight on campus life. If a school you're considering still holds admissions interviews, think of it as a conversation—an opportunity for you to get an inside look at the college and for the admissions folks to know more about you. Prepare questions ahead of time. Then relax and be yourself!
- NACAC offers virtual college visits—nacacfacts.org/virtual
- Vermont Applies event will be offering a Vermont college fair event on December 2.

Before your visit

Virtually visiting schools on your list as well as preparing beforehand are useful in narrowing your list to schools that you know you want to apply to. Here are some tips to help you prepare for your visit:

- Research: Check out the school's website. Look at the course catalog to find out about electives and required coursework for majors you may be interested in. Visit the academic department pages to learn more about professors and get a feel for course workload. Explore dining options, housing options, and student services as well. The newspaper is another great source of information.
- Social media: Check out the school's social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) and other accounts/groups based on extracurriculars, majors, and/or sports that relate to your interests.
- Student opinion: Find a way to connect with current students or alumni from the schools you are interested in to find out what they think about the school. Some colleges have opportunities for you to make appointments with students on their websites. You can also find YouTube videos of current and past students speaking about the school.
- Reflect: Think about your preferences, passions, and interests and how they align with the college you are visiting. Think about what you need in order to be successful socially, academically, and financially.

During your visit

These are questions you may consider asking admissions officers, tour guides, or students to learn more about the college. Write your own questions based on your interests and be sure to keep notes and even take screenshots to reflect back on later.

College/institution name:

What is your plan around COVID? Are students in-person, virtual/remote, or hybrid?

What makes this college unique?

What are the smallest and largest class sizes?

What clubs/student groups exist?

How competitive is the school academically? In sports?

How does academic advising work?

How are student housing decisions made?

What employment and work-study options are available?

What percentage of graduates get jobs within six months of graduation?

How effective is campus security?

Think about your interests and the research you've done and come up with some questions that you'd like to ask:

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After your visit

After your visit answer the questions below to gauge if the college is a good fit for you. Once you've visited the colleges on your list you can compare your answers to the questions below for each college in order to see the best fit and decide on where you want to apply.

What is my overall impression of this school after this visit?

Based on my personal preferences, what are the pros or the positive things that make this school a good fit for me? What do I find exciting about this college?

What aspects are not a fit for me? What do I feel nervous/unsure about in regard to this college?

Does this school offer the type of housing options that I prefer?

What is the tuition price of this school? Are there less expensive options that can provide me the same benefits as this school?

How does this college compare to other post-high school options that interest me?

What would I like to know more about? Who or where can I go to for more information about this college?

Sources: VSAC, GEAR UP Washington State, Ivywise, BigFuture

TIP

Bottom line: Ask yourself, "Can I see myself going here?" Go with your instinct. Better to find out now that a college isn't for you rather than when you're moving into the dorm. And don't let where your friends are going shape your decision. This is about you, not them.