



College Visits

Campus Tours, Information Sessions, and Interviews

Visiting college campuses in person can be one of the most helpful activities during your college search. Touring the campus, talking to current students, and meeting faculty add life and dimension to online descriptions. To schedule a college visit, simply call and inquire into the times for tours, information sessions, and interviews. Also, check the websites for tour and information session times. These visits do not typically require an appointment, but occasionally they do, so call ahead.

Students are expected to complete the majority of their visiting prior to returning to school in the fall of the senior year. Some families become frustrated by the fact that their first visits may be during times when current students are on vacation. However, there is only one day set aside just for seniors to visit colleges and the demands of the senior fall do not allow much additional time in which to travel to colleges.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE COLLEGE VISIT

1. Call or check online for tour times or to reserve a spot on the tour and information session.
2. Many colleges have a formal information session at a specific time of the day. We recommend you attend this as well as do the campus tour.
3. Call ahead to see if the college offers on-campus interviews and try to arrange one. We recommend interviewing during the summer since it is often difficult to return to campuses during the fall.
4. If possible, attend some classes and also try to spend some time walking around the campus alone, to taste the flavor of the place. Often, visiting the dining hall and the student center, and listening to students talk, are other good ways to get a sense of the school's atmosphere.
5. Explore the areas of campus (and the surrounding area) where you think you will spend the most time. Walk around the academic departments that interest you.
6. Take notes during your visit -- some colleges can begin to look and sound alike after several days of visiting, not to mention weeks later when you are constructing your list.

THE COLLEGE INTERVIEW

There are a number of variations in the interview policies at colleges. They often involve one of the following four options: no interview – group information sessions only; alumni interviews only – off-campus; interviews are optional and informational only; interviews are encouraged and do become part of the student’s application file. If the college does offer an on-campus or alumni interview, we recommend that you take advantage of the opportunity. Interviews are a crucial method at your disposal to demonstrate your interest in a particular college.

What can you do to prepare?

- Read all available material on the college beforehand.
- Do not ask questions that are answered in the material.
- Be prepared to comment on particular programs that combine your talents and interests.
- Be prepared for cryptic questions (e.g. “What would you like to talk about?”).

We have provided on the following page, the kinds of questions you might be asked. Think about each one and try to practice your answer aloud either at the dinner table or in the car with a parent. If you have thought these through, you should be well prepared for any question.

1. Please visit each college’s website and pay close attention to their interview policies, requirements, and deadlines.
2. Be prompt. Call if you are going to be late.
3. Try to be relaxed. Dress appropriately (at least neatly – no jeans).
4. Turn off cell phones and don’t chew gum.
5. Avoid asking questions already answered in the catalogue or viewbook (which you should have read) and be prepared to ask thoughtful questions.
6. Be prepared to engage in a conversation. You should talk about your strengths, what excites you intellectually and what your goals are. Without being arrogant, haughty or overbearing, you should be confident that you have a great deal to offer a college.
7. Finally, take time to send your interviewer a hand-written thank-you note after the visit (so make sure you have his/her name written down). This gesture is appreciated.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM COLLEGE ADMISSION INTERVIEWERS

1. How do you like BB&N? What has been the most positive experience you have had? The most negative? What would you like to change about BB&N?
2. What is your role in the school community? What would your teachers say about you?
3. What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?
4. What are you looking for in a school? How did you become interested in _____?
5. What are some of your goals – personal and career – for the future?
6. Tell me about a particular class or assignment in which you found yourself stimulated intellectually.
7. What do you like best about participating in extra-curricular activities?
8. Since you are interested in science or math (where appropriate), why are you interested in a liberal arts college rather than a more technical institution?
9. How and in what ways do you expect, plan or hope to transfer your secondary school contributions, achievements, and/or activities to the college level?
10. What has been your favorite subject in high school? Why?
11. What might you study in college?
12. What books or authors have made a lasting impression on your way of thinking?
13. What events, if any, would you deem critical in your life thus far? Who has most influenced you?
14. Describe ways in which you are different from others at your school.
15. How have you spent your summers?
16. What are your reactions to current events—for example, HIV or The War on Terror?
17. Describe something about which you have become outraged or inspired during the past year.
18. Have you ever thought of not going to college? What would you do?
19. How do you spend your free time?
20. Why do you think you are a good match for this college?
21. Many qualified students apply to our school. What characteristics single you out from others?
22. What other schools are you applying to?
23. Do you have any questions? (Have some in mind!)

THE MOCK INTERVIEW

Students who would like some practice interviewing prior to their appointment should set up a mock interview with one of the counselors with whom they are **not** working. This way, the experience more closely mimics that of a real interview where the interviewer does not know the student well.

ALUMNI/AE INTERVIEWS

Some colleges arrange local alumni/ae interviews. These alumni/ae interviews often can be arranged for colleges which are far away and hard for you to visit or who cannot accommodate your request for an on-campus interview. Typically, a member of the local alumni/ae interview team will call you after the college admission office has received your application. More and more colleges outside New England also send staff members to Boston in December and January to interview applicants. The suggestions above apply to these interviews, as well.

THE CAMPUS TOUR

Below are some sample questions you might want to consider when you visit a college and take a campus tour. Remember that the tour is an important opportunity for you to talk with a current student (the tour guide) and learn more about the student experience at the college.

1. How large are your classes? Do you meet regularly with an advisor?
2. Where do you study? Is the library a good place to work or study? What hours do students have access to libraries, computers, labs, etc.?
3. What academic experiences are available beyond the classroom?
4. What percent of students live in dorms? Is housing guaranteed for all four years?
5. Is this considered a safe campus? Are there regular patrols, escort vans, emergency phones?
6. Is this an openly competitive campus? How are tests and exams administered?
7. Do you meet with professors informally? Have you ever been invited to a professor's home?
8. How tolerant is this community of independence and diversity?
9. What are the most popular extracurricular activities here?
10. What do you like best and least about being a student here?
11. Are there single-sex dormitories? Substance-free dorms? "Quiet" dorms? Any thematic housing? Are there laundry facilities in each dorm?

12. Is there a career guidance service on campus? A placement service? Is the placement service available to alumni?
13. Does social life revolve around the campus, or do most students leave on the weekends? What are the major social activities?
14. What is the biggest campus issue currently?

At the end of your visit, ask yourself two very important questions:

“Do I see myself fitting in here?”

“Am I comfortable here?”