

Campus visits

There's no substitute for seeing a college yourself!

There are lots of ways to find out about a college, from brochures to videos to college fairs. But the bottom line is that

nothing beats the test of going to a college and seeing it for yourself. Here are some ideas to help you make the most of a campus visit.

Before you go

Just as there's no substitute for seeing a college firsthand, there's no substitute for advance planning. When you call the admissions office, tell them the date you'd like to visit and the time of day you expect to arrive.

If you want to stay overnight in a residence hall, ask if they can make arrangements. Also, find out about lining up an interview (if they offer them and you'd like one) or attending an information session, visiting classes and talking with faculty.

Call the admissions office in advance

Read up on the college and think about questions

Go back through the information you've collected about the college. Check the resources at your school's guidance office and browse the college's Web site, if possible. This research will help you

think of questions to ask and aspects of the college to explore while you're there. The other side of this page has lists of questions to help you get started. As you think of other questions, write them down.

Talk to as many students as you can

Once you're on campus, try to take advantage of a variety of ways to learn about the college: Meet with an admissions officer or attend an information session • Take a tour of the campus • Sit in on a class

• Have a meal in the cafeteria • Pick up copies of the student newspaper and alumni magazine. Throughout your visit, talk to as many students as you can and don't be bashful about asking questions!

While you're there

Prepare for the interview

If you have scheduled an interview, take along your list of questions, so you're sure to cover everything you wanted to find out. You'll probably be asked about your academic background, but you'll be delayed. As with any interview, be on time, or call ahead if you know you're interested in the college, interests, hobbies, goals and why you're interested in the college, so be ready to talk about that.

Take time to look around on your own

Take some time to explore the campus on your own and absorb the atmosphere. While organized activities can give you information you can't get on your own, the reverse is true, too.

Beloit • Carleton • Coe • Colorado • Cornell • Grinnell • Knox Lake Forest • Lawrence • Luther • Macalester • Monmouth • Ripon • St. Olaf



A campus visit is informative at any time, but it's best to see a college in action, when students are in classes.

Colleges encourage visits, but their schedules for tours, interviews and overnight stays might fill up early. Call ahead!

Have some extra time during your visits: stop by the campus coffee shop or grill, read bulletin boards, try to strike up conversations with students, or go to a play or lecture.

Nervous about the interview? That's natural. Try to look at it as a conversation in which you ask questions, too. You'll be more likely to relax, be yourself and enjoy it.