

There are many ways to research colleges, but a campus visit provides a unique opportunity to learn about the culture of the campus and surrounding area.

The guidelines below will help your family plan a successful campus visit:

**Plan well in advance.** Certain dates fill quickly, and some schools do not offer tours on weekends.

**Try to arrange an official tour.** Typically, you can register for tours on each college's website. Tours will sometimes include an admissions presentation, which can be helpful to attend.

**If tours are not available on your travel dates,** you can still drive through campus and the surrounding area, and in most cases, walk the campus. Some colleges have a welcome center where you can ask questions, pick up a map, etc.

**Decide which factors will be important to notice.** Priorities can include things such as the happiness/helpfulness of staff and students, campus aesthetics, weather, and ease of movement across campus. Most importantly – is the campus “vibe” a good fit for you? Your gut feeling is one of those intangibles that factor into the college decision-making process, but it's an important factor to consider.

**Think about potential topics for questions.** There are many potential questions, but some examples include housing styles and policies, dining plans, ease of changing/adding majors, and campus safety.

**Consider eating a meal on campus.** Some campus visit events include a meal voucher, but not always. Note: College students often mention that their schools serve the best food during big campus visit events. Try to find a place to eat a “typical meal.”

**Expand your visit beyond the school.** Check out the surrounding area. Try to find out where students spend their time off campus, eat at a local restaurant, stay the night, and get a feel for what students do to socialize in the evenings.

**Document your experience.** Encourage your student to take pictures and notes along the way, or at least take notes soon after your visit. They will be surprised how quickly the visits run together in their mind otherwise!