

A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College



Are you asking the right

Questions

on a college campus visit?

How to use this guide

Picking the right college is a big decision – one of the more important you'll ever make. You will need to ask many questions when making a college choice. In addition, consider taking a campus tour, attending a class or two, eating a meal on campus, and looking through recent issues of the student newspaper.

To get a sense of how much you are likely to learn, grow, and develop at a given institution, there are some key questions to ask the people you'll meet – the tour guide, admissions staff, and currently enrolled students. Some of the most important questions can be found in this guide.

Remember that...

...It's important to ask the right

Questions

when visiting a college campus.

Active Learning



Intense involvement in learning.

- How often do students discuss ideas in class?
- How often are topics from class discussed outside of the classroom?
- Do students work together on projects – inside and outside of class?
- How often do students make class presentations?
- How many students participate in community-based projects in regular courses?
- How many students apply their classroom learning to real life through internships or off-campus field experiences?
- Do students have opportunities to tutor or teach other students?

NOTES:

Student-Faculty Interaction



Meaningful contact with teachers.

- Are faculty members accessible and supportive?
- How many students work on research projects with faculty?
- Do students receive prompt feedback on academic performance?
- How often do students talk with their teachers about what they are learning in class?
- How often do students talk with advisors or faculty members about their career plans?
- Do students and faculty members work together on committees and projects outside of course work?

NOTES:

Enriching Educational Experiences



Additional opportunities to deepen learning.

- What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?
- In what ways do faculty use technology in their classes?
- How often do students interact with peers with different social, political, or religious views?
- How often do students interact with peers from different racial or ethnic backgrounds?
- How many students study in other countries?
- Do students participate in activities that enhance their spirituality?
- What percentage of students do community service?
- What kinds of activities are students involved in outside of the classroom?
- What kinds of events does the campus sponsor?
- Is a culminating senior year experience required?

NOTES:

Supportive Campus Environment



Positive relationships among students, faculty, and staff.

- How well do students get along with other students?
- Are students satisfied with their overall educational experience?
- How much time do students devote to co-curricular activities?
- How well do students get along with administrators and staff?
- To what extent does the school help students deal with their academic and social needs?

Additional sources for academic and personal development.

- What types of financial aid or scholarships are available to students?
- How accessible are library services?
- What safety services are available to students?
- What types of health and counseling services are available?
- What types of career planning and job placement services are available?



National Survey of Student Engagement

The questions in this guide are based on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Each year NSSE collects information directly from students at hundreds of colleges and universities. Responses to the survey provide valuable information about what is actually going on in the lives of students and the quality of their college experience.

Check to see if the college you are considering participates in NSSE. Detailed information on students' experiences may be available from the admissions or institutional research office. For a list of participating NSSE schools or for more information, please visit www.nsse.iub.edu.

**Center for Postsecondary Research
Indiana University
School of Education
Eigenmann Hall, Suite 419
1900 E. 10th Street
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512**

**Phone: (812) 856-5824
Fax: (812) 856-5150
E-mail: nsse@indiana.edu**

www.nsse.iub.edu