

Asking lots of questions is a great way to learn about schools beyond the glossy college brochures or glowing admission websites.

Try to limit asking questions like “Why did you choose to go here? What do you like about it here?” It’s similar to walking into an ice cream shop and asking what the employee’s favorite flavor. His/her favorite flavor might not be yours, and that’s OK!

Questions to Avoid on College Visits

I know, I know, they say there are ‘no dumb questions’—but there may be some worth keeping to yourself on your college visits. For instance, it would probably be **inappropriate to ask your tour guide to recite her high school resume** to see how your grades, scores, and involvements stack up. While she/he can talk about her experiences applying and attending, asking for specific info like that would probably cross the line from curious to prying. No two applicants are the same!

You should also avoid asking questions that are overly personal and not helpful to others in the group when you're on your tours. For example, I **wouldn't advise sharing your life story** and then asking your tour guide (or a professor, for that matter) to speculate about your admissions chances. She/he probably can't speak to highly specific concerns, and your fellow tour group members won't find it helpful either. If your question feels like TMI for a group setting, then cross it off your list.

A good rule of thumb to follow is to **avoid asking basic questions that can be easily answered via Google or a quick search of the school's website.**

Try to avoid opinionated questions or general questions like “Are the professors good teachers?” (Unless it is a transfer student from another college, how is the tour guide going to accurately answer that question with no comparison?) “How much reading and writing is required in courses?” (Each professor will treat the material and class structure differently).

Questions I recommend asking, in addition to the ones listed below:

- 1) Are new majors, minors, and or departments being created/added to your programs? How is the school growing?
- 2) What is the retention rate?
- 3) What is the graduation rate?
- 4) What is the placement rate for _____ (ask for your major area of interest: business, engineering, education, communication, etc.)?

****The questions listed below are compiled from several different lists from Princeton Review, US New Weekly, and Prepscholar. You do not need to ask all these questions. Ask what is important to you!****

COLLEGE TOUR POSSIBLE QUESTIONS:

Academics

- 1) What majors are popular?
- 2) Do your professors hold office hours, and will they meet with you outside of class?
- 3) Are most of your classes taught by professors or teaching assistants?
- 4) How satisfied are you with academic advising?
- 5) Are there any on-campus tutoring programs or writing centers?
- 6) How much time does a student spend studying per week?
- 7) Does your major require an independent study or capstone project?
- 8) Are professors available for research with students?
- 9) Is it popular to study abroad?
- 10) What is the average class general ed (101 courses) size?
- 11) How/when do incoming freshmen get course selection advising for their first-semester classes?
- 12) Who gets priority in the course registration process – is it by grade level, honors programs, etc.?
- 13) How many classes do students take a semester?
- 14) How easy is it to switch majors or schools within the university?
- 15) Are there any especially popular classes or must-have professors?
- 16) How much freedom do freshmen have in choosing courses?
- 17) Are students usually able to take their first-choice courses?
- 18) How are freshman advisors assigned?
- 19) How would you describe the freshman experience, in terms of advising or any classes that everyone has to take?
- 20) Can undergraduates work with professors on research?
- 21) Do the librarians help with research?
- 22) What tutoring services are available? Are tutoring services free?
- 23) How often do students meet with academic advisers?
- 24) How accessible are professors outside of the classroom?
- 25) What types of resources are available for students with disabilities?

Campus Life

- 1) What do you do when you're not in class?
- 2) What do you do on the weekends?
- 3) What is the social scene like?
- 4) What kinds of things are there to do in the surrounding town?
- 5) Do most students live on-campus?
- 6) What are the facilities like (science labs, libraries, theatres, gyms, etc.)?
- 7) Are there enough computer labs?
- 8) How is the WiFi on campus?
- 9) Is there a lot of school spirit?
- 10) Are students required to live on campus?
- 11) What percentage of students live on campus?
- 12) Are freshmen allowed to have cars on campus?
- 13) How do students choose a residence hall and a roommate?
- 14) Do most students choose to live off campus after freshman year?
- 15) What do the campus and community feel like from a safety perspective?
- 16) How would you describe the surrounding community and the relationship the college has with it?
- 17) How accessible and helpful is health services?
- 18) What are the dorms like? Are there lounges, laundry, and kitchens? Shared or private restrooms?
- 19) How are the resident counselors? Do they plan social events for freshmen to get to know one another?
- 20) What would I do in case of a conflict or need for a room switch? Is that possible?
- 21) What kind of food does the dining hall serve? Are there different options? How is it, really?
- 22) How would you describe the presence of Greek life? Do a lot of students belong to fraternities or sororities?
- 23) How ethnically diverse is the campus?
- 24) How many international students are there? What countries do they come from?
- 25) Do students stick around or go home on weekends?
- 26) What are some big campus events, like homecoming or alumni weekend?
- 27) Is it easy to get around campus or get off campus without a car?

- 28) What transportation options are there around campus?
- 29) Is it a safe area to walk around at night? What kind of safety measures are in place?
- 30) Do many students work on or off campus? How easy is it to find a part-time job?

Student Body

- 1) Are the students here friendly?
- 2) Is there diversity on campus?
- 3) Are there many students from other countries?
- 4) Do many students attend varsity athletic games?
- 5) How does the school build community and foster cultural understanding?
- 6) What are the hot-button issues on campus?
- 7) What are some of the school's main events or traditions?
- 8) Are there forums or activities for freshmen?

Career Services

- 1) Are internships available? How do you find them?
- 2) Is Career Services helpful?
- 3) Do you have a mentor?
- 4) Does your school have a co-op program?
- 5) Are there opportunities to build leadership skills on campus?
- 6) What options exist for service learning in the community?
- 7) Do employers recruit students on campus?

Questions About Work and Research Opportunities

- 1) What types of research opportunities do students have access to outside of the classroom?
- 2) What type of career guidance is offered by this school?
- 3) Are internship or co-op opportunities available through the college?
- 4) What percentage of undergraduates have had an internship or research experience by the time they graduate?
- 5) Is it common for freshmen and sophomores to get research or internship opportunities?
- 6) Do students of certain majors, like engineers, find it difficult to study abroad?
- 7) Are there internship opportunities abroad?
- 8) Are there opportunities through the school for summer internships or research?

Questions To Ask Admissions

- 1) Does demonstrated interest play a role in the admission process?
- 2) Are there any exceptions to your test-optional policy?
- 3) Does legacy play a part in admissions and, if so, who is considered legacy?
- 4) Do admissions interviews, if offered, play a role in the process?
 - a. Are interviews conducted by alumni, students or admissions officers?
- 5) Are there any majors for which enrollment is capped?
- 6) How large of a role do SAT scores play in admissions?
- 7) Do you have any advice for applicants? Does this differ for early versus regular decision applications?
- 8) What sort of student would succeed here?
- 9) What sort of student might *not* be happy here?
- 10) Can you tell me about career placements or grad school acceptances for graduates?
- 11) How do you help students prepare for post-grad employment?
- 12) Do you have an active alumni network?

10 Steps to Choosing the Right College.]

Questions To Ask Financial Aid

- 1) Do financial aid packages remain the same over time or are they adjusted to reflect tuition increases?
- 2) Are scholarship offers offered as an incoming freshmen fixed or subject to change past freshmen year?
- 3) How do outside scholarships affect a financial aid package?
- 4) Do accepted students receive their financial aid award letter at the same time as their offer of admission or later?
- 5) What kind of need-based financial aid do you offer?
- 6) Do you meet 100% of demonstrated financial need?
- 7) What information do you require besides the FAFSA?
- 8) How many students receive merit-based scholarships? How much is offered?
- 9) Are there other scholarships that students can apply for at the time of application?
- 10) Can I renegotiate my offer if it's lower than I expected?

Questions About Student Outcomes

- 1) What is the four-year graduation rate?
- 2) What is the retention rate from freshman to sophomore year?
- 3) What is the average level of student loan debt upon graduation?
- 4) Are career advising services available to alumni or only to enrolled students?

Questions to Ask a Professor

- 1) What are your expectations for students in your class?
- 2) What are typical requirements, like exams, papers, or presentations in a semester?
- 3) What kind of materials would I use in your class?
- 4) How often do you meet with or mentor students outside of class?
- 5) What's the community of students who major in this program like? Do they act as peer mentors, collaborate on projects, or form study groups?

Personal Questions

- 1) What's your favorite class and why?
- 2) What's it like to study in your major?
- 3) How helpful did you find your freshman year advisor?
- 4) What do you wish you had known going into freshman year?
- 5) What do you wish you had asked on a campus tour when you were in my place?
- 6) What's a typical weekday like for you?
- 7) What surprised you about campus life here?
- 8) Is there anything you wish you had done differently to improve your experience here?
- 9) What would be your most important advice for freshman?