

Choosing the Right College

Use the checklist below to identify the characteristics that matter most to you. Ask your parents to do the same. Then compare and discuss your answers. Search for colleges that match your key to criteria and fit you academically, socially and culturally.

My Top Criteria	My Parents' Top Criteria
<input type="checkbox"/> Athletic offerings	<input type="checkbox"/> Athletic offerings
<input type="checkbox"/> Campus safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Campus safety
<input type="checkbox"/> Campus setting(urban, suburban, small town or rural	<input type="checkbox"/> Campus setting (urban, suburban, small town or rural
<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity of student population	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity of student population
<input type="checkbox"/> Extracurricular organizations and events	<input type="checkbox"/> Extracurricular organizations and events
<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty experience and expertise	<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty experience and expertise
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial aid availability and deadlines	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial aid availability and deadlines
<input type="checkbox"/> Geographic location	<input type="checkbox"/> Geographic location
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing availability and cost	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing availability and cost
<input type="checkbox"/> Length, time and location of classes	<input type="checkbox"/> Length, time and location of classes
<input type="checkbox"/> Number of students enrolled	<input type="checkbox"/> Number of students enrolled
<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of graduates employed within one year	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of graduates employed within one year
<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of students who graduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of students who graduate
<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of students who return the following year	<input type="checkbox"/> Percentage of students who return the following year
<input type="checkbox"/> Programs of study (majors and minors)	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs of study (majors and minors)
<input type="checkbox"/> School facilities and equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> School facilities and equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> School or program reputation	<input type="checkbox"/> School or program reputation
<input type="checkbox"/> Student-to-faculty ratio (class size)	<input type="checkbox"/> Student-to-faculty (class size)
<input type="checkbox"/> Support services (meals, counseling, job placement	<input type="checkbox"/> Support services (meals, counseling, job placement
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation availability and cost	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation availability and cost
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuition and fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Tuition and fees

If you're still having trouble identifying what's important to you, ask yourself:

- Why do I want to go to college?
- What do I want to get out of college?
- How will colleges help me work toward my goals?
- Which college will best/least help me work toward my goals?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of going now rather than later?
- Does it matter how many students are enrolled with me?
- Do I want to be with students who have diverse ideas, viewpoints and backgrounds?

- In which type of campus setting am I most/least comfortable?