



STUDENT'S GUIDE TO PLANNING A VIRTUAL COLLEGE VISIT

COLLEGE TOUR CHECKLIST

It might seem impossible to envision yourself attending a college without getting to tour its campus. But taking a tour is just one way to help you decide where to go to college. When visiting campuses isn't a good option, use this checklist to virtually experience each campus and help make your decision.

■ TAKE AND EXPAND A VIRTUAL TOUR

Many colleges have technology that allows you to tour campus virtually. Others offer videos and interactive maps. Beyond the official tours, there are other ways to expand your perspective. Jump on Google Maps and check out the surrounding neighborhood. Treat it like you're planning a vacation. Are there restaurants, music venues, coffee shops and stores nearby? If you're an avid runner, are there trails and paths that you can explore?

■ CHAT WITH CURRENT STUDENTS

Talking with current students is a great way to get a sense of how you'll fit in on campus. Not only will they have perspectives to share on classes, they're the best group to ask your equally important questions about student life, athletics, organizations and other aspects of the college experience. Contact the admissions department at each college to connect with current students.

■ JOIN AN ONLINE CLASS

With all classes temporarily online, you can ask the admissions department to virtually sit in on a class so you can experience what it's like. This is your best chance to get a sneak peek at your major. And even if you're undecided, joining an online class will give you a first-hand idea of discussions, assignments and lecture styles at that school.



COLLEGE TOUR CHECKLIST (CONTINUED)

■ SPEAK WITH A PROFESSOR

Another important way to get a feel for academic life at a particular college is to virtually meet with a professor. They can talk to you about the program you're interested in, how to best support your goals and interests or even help you choose a direction if you're undecided.

Professors are not only good sources for academic information, you can also use the opportunity to ask them about their favorite things on campus, why they chose to teach at that particular college and more.

■ DO THOROUGH ONLINE RESEARCH

Now more than ever, it's important to carefully read through a college's website. Take your time researching programs offered, internship opportunities, extracurricular activities and organizations that align with your interests and goals.

Try to take in as much information as possible by going beyond the college's official site. Use Google to find out if there are student-run blogs, news articles or ranking websites that might broaden your perspective on the college.

■ CHECK OUT THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Social media offers yet another way to interact with your college of choice. Take a look at what they're posting, then go beyond their main Twitter, Instagram or Facebook pages. Do they have accounts dedicated to your interests and passions? Can you look at hashtags or location tags to see what their students are posting about?

■ TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OTHER ONLINE OFFERINGS

Be sure to also schedule virtual meetings with admissions counselors or financial aid officers. During those meetings, you can find out if they are offering any online panels, webinars or live discussions that you can join.

AFTER YOUR VIRTUAL VISIT

- Sit down with your parent(s) or support person and review notes.
- Reach out to the people you spoke with on the tour with any follow-up questions.
- Chat with your parent(s) about your financial plan.
- Decide which colleges you want to apply to.

