



Top 10 College Visit Tips for Prospective Students

In addition to taking a tour and attending an information session, students should:

1) **Agree beforehand on roles that parents and students will play during the visit.**

In Person: This dynamic will differ with each family. Some parents and students choose to take separate tours. Parents might go talk to financial aid representatives while their son or daughter checks out the student union. Whatever works for your family is fine, but this is something that should be discussed before you set foot on campus. Whatever you do, remember that students should be talking to admissions representatives more than parents. A question or two from parents is fine, but they really want to hear from students.

Virtual: Discuss different sections of a college website that each family member can explore. For example, parents can explore financial aid, the Career Center to learn about internships opportunities, job/graduate school placement, and more, while the student explores the Admission Office visit website to learn more about virtual tours and information sessions.

2) **Get the full names of the admissions representatives with whom you speak.**

In Person: This includes the name of the person giving your information session, something that many students overlook. This is helpful in case you want to follow up with questions, updates, or a thank you note later. Along with this, you can always feel free to ask to speak with the admissions representative for PDS. (This may not be possible; but, if it is, say hello and introduce yourself!)

Virtual: The admission representative will likely share their contact information with you at some point during the presentation; if not, you can ask them for it via the chat feature during the Q&A portion.

3) **Always sign in.**

In Person: Many schools track visits to gauge students' interest in them. Depending on the school, your contact with the admissions office can make a difference in your admissions decision later.

Virtual: It is likely that you will not have to take an additional step to "sign in" during a virtual visit. Colleges/universities will use your registration information to track your attendance.

4) **Talk to a variety of people while on campus (professors, students, admissions reps).**

In Person: Know whom to ask for what. An older admission representative probably will not know everything about the current social scene on campus and a tour guide will not be able to provide detailed admissions stats. Remember that your research into each college is best developed through interaction with a number of different sources.

Virtual: Every college website has a Search feature on their homepage; use this to explore different departments and organizations, as you will also find contact information for members of the campus community. To speak with students, you can reach out to the admission office to ask for a current student's contact information.

5) **Get information from a variety of sources.**

In Person: Rather than dismissing a school simply because a guidebook (or current student or a friend or a relative or friend of a friend, etc.) says something negative about a campus, use that piece of information to guide future research. Don't ignore such comments; rather, let them drive some of the questions you ask while on campus so you can research and find out the truth for yourself. Similarly, try to resist letting a bad tour guide make you take a school off of your list before conducting future research.

Virtual: Email the admission representative for PDS (your college counselor can help you with this) to clarify any misleading information you may have about the school. This is where speaking to a variety of people can help.

6) **Remember that classes and dorm rooms can vary a lot, even within the same school.**

In Person: Sit in on classes and explore residence halls – it can be a great way to learn more about the campus and the types of people who live there! Just be sure to get a sense of the range of housing and course options available at a school before you cast judgment (negative or favorable).

Virtual: While not always the case, many colleges and universities now have virtual ways to sit in on classes and explore residence halls. Again, your best resource will be the Admission Office website.

7) **If not all students live on campus, ask where they live and go see those areas.**

In Person: Check out the neighborhoods where most off-campus apartments are located and try to talk to some students there.

Virtual: Ask any current students you come into contact with about the off-campus housing scene. This is one item where you may have to wait until you can visit the campus to get a full sense of the lay of the land.

8) **Pick up a copy of student newspapers, read bulletin boards, and eat a meal in the dining hall.**

In Person: Find ways of getting a deeper understanding of the campus culture and student life there. Don't be shy to ask students in cafes about their experiences on campus, in and outside of the classroom.

Virtual: Follow colleges and universities that are of interest on social media! You will find that many student organizations have their own accounts that will highlight what they're doing and issues of importance to the community. Many admission offices also have helpful social media accounts, even teaming up with current students to highlight "a day in the life" on that campus.

9) **Take some time to visit places on campus of particular interest to you.**

In Person: Visit the academic departments in which you are interested and talk to professors, if possible. Student-musicians should visit the music department. Student-athletes should visit athletic facilities and try to talk to the coach of the sport they would like to play.

Virtual: Search for specific departments, programs, clubs, etc. on the schools website using the Search bar on the homepage. Social media can also be useful for this purpose.

10) **Check out nearby points of interest such as towns, shopping centers, and parks.**

In Person: The area around a college can be filled with bookstores, cafes, galleries, museums, and historical sites. These can be just as relevant to your college experience as those resources located on-campus.

Virtual: College and Admission Office "visit" pages often have suggestions of things to do in the area. A simple Internet search for "what to do in X Town" may also be useful.