

During your campus tour, you need to ask questions as well as look around. Here are some questions to consider asking. Add your own questions at the end of the list. Go over the questions with your parents before your first campus visit so they can be on the lookout for answers, too. After each visit, review the list to see if there are any other questions you might want to add.

NOTE: Read as much as you can about each college or university before you visit. Don't spend time asking questions that are answered in the school's catalog or brochures. You are visiting campuses to get a feeling for the atmosphere of each place—something you can't get from its Web site or catalog.

Questions for the Admissions Office

1. Are the dorms spread throughout the campus or clustered in one area? Is there any kind of shuttle service between classroom areas, the library, the student union, and dorms? How late does it run?
2. Is there any security system to bar outsiders from entering dorms?
3. How large is the campus security police force? Does it patrol the campus regularly?
4. What services are offered by the campus health center? How large is it?
5. Does the student health center refer students to the local hospital? Is there a nearby hospital? How large is it?

Questions for Students

6. How many of your courses are taught by a big-name professor and how many by a teaching assistant?
7. Is the teaching innovative and project-oriented, or is it mostly lecture-oriented?
8. Do most freshmen class lectures take place in an amphitheater?
9. What are the strong majors? The weak majors?
10. How hard do you have to work for your grades?
11. What's the reputation of the _____ department?
12. How adequate for your needs is the campus computer network?
13. Do fraternities and sororities dominate the social life of the college?
14. What do students do on weekends? Do most go home?
15. How is the advisement system? Do you feel that your professors really care?
16. There are a lot of organizations on campus. Are they dominated by a few groups or is anyone welcome?
17. How active is the _____ [fill in the activity in which you're interested]? Has _____ won any national awards?

Questions to Ask Yourself About the Campus Atmosphere

18. While you were waiting for your interview in the admissions office, how did the staff members interact with students? Were they friendly, or did the staff approach students—both potential freshmen like you and enrolled students—as if they were interfering with the staff members' jobs?
19. Was the Admissions Office a friendly and inviting place with a great deal of information about the school, or was it cold and sterile with little information to pick up?

20. What did your parents find out about the career planning services offered to graduating seniors and to graduates? What do the services include?

About the Student Body

21. Do most of the students seem to be like you, or are they completely different?

22. Either way, how would you feel being in a classroom full of these students? Sharing a dorm with them?

23. Do the students try to make you feel at home? Are they happy to answer your questions, or do they make you feel like you're intruding? How do they interact with one another?

About the Campus

24. Does the campus seem too big? Or too small?

25. Do freshmen live in their own dorms? How do I feel about living in a single-sex or coed dorm?

26. Are the dorms quiet or noisy? Do they seem crowded?

27. How large are the rooms? Is there adequate space and light to study?

28. Does each room have access to the Internet and the campus LAN?

29. What's advertised on dorm and classroom bulletin boards? What does this tell me about campus life?

30. How good is the lighting around each dorm and around classroom and lab buildings?

31. Do the buildings and grounds look well cared for? Or do they need painting and general repair work?

32. Is the grass cut, and are the grounds landscaped?

33. What's the condition of the playing fields and the sports equipment?

34. How is the quality of the food in the cafeteria or dining hall? How are the sizes of the portions? Is it healthy or fast food? Are there meal plans?

About the Nearby Area

35. Does it look like there is much to do outside of campus?

36. How easy is to get to places off campus? Are there places within walking distance?

37. Do you feel comfortable and safe?

38. Are there places to get extra furniture, like bookcases, for your dorm room?

39. Is there a supermarket nearby to stock up on snacks and soda?

40. If you move out of a dorm after freshman year, what are the options in apartment complexes or buildings?