

The College Search: Start with a Survey

Instructions for the Student

Though the college application process can feel overwhelming, the most important thing to keep in mind is that there are dozens of great options out there. Using this survey will help you figure out what is important to YOU; from there you can begin to research schools which might fit your most important criteria while being accountable to your financial means. Speak regularly with your parents or another trusted advisor about what you've put down and why. It usually helps to bounce ideas off someone, particularly someone who knows you well. In the months to come you will refine this list as you learn more about individual schools, your own preferences, and the feel you get, both positive and negative, from exploring schools of interest virtually and in-person.

There are just seven questions on the survey to get you started. Not all questions need to be answered-- it's ok to leave blank if you just don't know or care at this point. It's also ok to check more than one answer or add your own answers or comments, and highlight, circle, make notes, and scribble as much as you'd like.

Please note that there are no financial aid, graduation rate, or retention questions in this first step, which is intentional. Those areas will be tackled in depth in future steps towards finding a great college fit.

1. **Location:** Where would you like to attend college?

- close to home
- within a day's drive
- particular region/s: _____
- particular state/s: _____
- as far away as humanly possible
- other: _____

2. **Setting:** What type of setting would you like your college to be in or near?

- large city (NYC, LA, Minneapolis, etc.)
- small to medium size city (Omaha, Little Rock, Missoula, etc.)
- college town
- other: _____
- other: _____

3. **Type:** What type of college would you like to attend? There is overlap, so choose any/all that interests you.

- university-** usually large or very large, offers more majors; includes both undergraduate and graduate degree programs
- college-** usually smaller in size and may not offer as many majors; generally focused more on teaching undergraduates and less on research
- public-** funded by local and/or state government; initial sticker price normally lower than private
- private-** funded primarily by tuition, fees, and private sources; initial price may be quite high, but often can offer very generous financial aid packages
- research-** present at large universities, but also available at smaller liberal arts colleges; if you believe a research component will be important to your field of study, or if you are interested in research, check this box
- liberal arts-** usually offers a broad education in a variety of subject areas; can provide excellent preparation for careers or graduate school
- technical-** engineering, science, and/or math focused
- special focus-** such as art, music, religious, single-gender, military, etc.
- other-** _____

4. **Size** Undergraduate population, but if you'd rather include graduate students, please do. And note, the numbers listed are approximates. Different sources will have different definitions for these sizes, so feel free to define however you'd like.

- very large- >25,000
- large- 15,000 - 25,000
- medium- 4,000 - 15,000
- small- <4,000

5. **Major or minor areas of study:** List any academic areas of interest, or perhaps the subjects where you earned your best grades.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

6. **Extracurricular interests:** List any activity, sport, or club you are interested in participating in in college. Might be some you've previously done, or a new one! Examples include basketball, Ultimate (frisbee), choir, theater, Greek life (fraternity or sorority), Quidditch, etc.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

7. **Other important stuff:** Check any/all aspects of college life which are important to you, and add any others you can think of.

- diversity- racial, gender, religious, politics, sexual orientation, geographical (circle one or more)
- class size
- academic rigor- high, average, or low ACT or SAT scores (circle one or more)
- study abroad options or emphasis
- housing options- residential, commuter, etc.
- food options or quality
- healthcare availability, including mental health, allergies, etc.
- academic advisory services
- career counseling
- facilities that interest you- library, dining hall/s, stadium, clinic, physical education, etc.
- honors program
- ROTC
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

After you fill out the survey let it sit for a day or two, review, then go through it with a parent or trusted advisor. REALLY...they might think of something you missed this first go-around, or have some insight into some of the terms you might not be familiar with.

And remember, this is a living document, so plan on updating periodically as you learn more about available options and about yourself!

Continue below to list those areas you feel most strongly about.

The College Search: Start with a Survey (cont.)

1. After you've let the survey sit for a few days, or even weeks depending on your grade level, review the survey on your own, and with a parent. Perhaps you've even had a chance to visit or tour a college which has helped narrow (or broaden) your interests. On the survey, circle or highlight the characteristics of a college which are most important to you, especially any deal-breakers-- those things that **MUST** be present (or absent) to even consider that college.
2. Fill in the table below with your preferences from #1 above. If you have a strong order of preference, list in order under the category, or list in a different color font or cell. If you want to list more choices, or have none for a particular category that's just fine! There is no right or wrong way to fill this out. Let it work for YOU.

Topic from The Survey	List top answer/s to each topic- one or many, and/or list any must NOT have
1- Location	
2- Setting	
3- Type	
4- Size	
5- Areas of Study	
6- Extracurriculars	
7- Other important stuff	