

College Planner

With all the details and dates to remember, applying to college can be a major organizational challenge. This planner can help. You can copy this sheet (or print it out at www.usnews.com/planner) and then fill one out for each school you're considering. Your comments will allow you to compare characteristics of different schools—and remind yourself of interesting facts down the line.

SCHOOL: _____

LOCATION	COMMENTS
Region	
Setting (urban, suburban, rural)	
Distance from home	
ACADEMICS	
Rigor of coursework	
Choice of majors	
Class size and student/faculty ratio	
Academic facilities	
Quality of professors	
Access to professors	
CAMPUS LIFE	
Size of student body	
Diversity of student body	
Student attitudes about the school	
Social life	
Extracurricular activities	
Housing options	
Atmosphere	
COSTS	
Affordability	
Access to grants/aid	
CAREER PREPARATION	
Range of internships	
Quality of career services	
OTHER FACTORS	

CAMPUS VISITS: QUESTIONS TO ASK

Once you've decided on a shortlist, it's key to visit the campuses, if possible. You'll be overwhelmed with information, but don't forget to ask questions, too. Current students are one of the best candid sources of information. Talk to a few different ones, not just the tour guide. Consider these questions and add a few of your own. (You can print out this sheet at www.usnews.com/planner.)

SCHOOL: _____

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS: What do you like most about this college? What's the worst thing about it? _____

What do you wish you had known when you were making your own decision? _____

What are the students like here? _____

What are the classes like? Lots of small discussion groups? Mostly large lectures? _____

Do graduate students or professors teach introductory classes? _____

How often in the last semester have you participated in class or met with a professor outside of class? _____

Where do students study? Where do students hang out on campus? Off campus? On the weekend? _____

How central are fraternities and sororities to campus social life? What about sports? _____

QUESTIONS FOR ADMINISTRATORS: What percentage of students go on to graduate or professional schools? _____

What percentage of students graduate in four years? What percentage of first-year students return for sophomore year? _____

What was the average tuition increase over the past five years? _____

When must you declare a major? Can you design your own major? _____

(If applicable) Can you take classes at other schools in the area? _____

Who serves as a student's adviser? Do advisers change each year? _____

What are the living options on campus? Off campus? _____

What percentage of students study abroad at some point during their four years? _____

Additional questions: _____

Contact information (names, phone numbers, E-mail addresses) for students and administrators I met:

MY PERSONAL PROFILE

Filling out a personal profile will help you complete the application process more quickly and easily. You can use it as a cheat sheet as you complete your college applications, and give copies to the people who are writing your letters of recommendation. If you haven't thought of that perfect essay topic yet, a thoughtfully completed profile should give you some good ideas.

Name: _____ **Phone number:** _____

Address: _____ **E-mail address:** _____

High school counselor's name: _____ **Phone number:** _____

Colleges I'm applying to: _____

SCORES

ACT:

High school GPA:

SAT I (subject, score): _____ SAT II (subject, score): _____ AP (subject, score): _____

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HIGH SCHOOL COURSES (Attach a transcript.) List your favorite courses and a few words about why they interested you.

AWARDS List award, date received, and description.

ACTIVITIES Include jobs, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities. List the dates you participated and/or hours per week, and any leadership positions you held. On a separate sheet, you can summarize what you did and why it was meaningful.

PERSONAL INFO Are you the first member of your family to attend college? Did you have an extraordinary childhood? Do you breed show turtles for fun? Outside of individual awards, activities, and courses, what is most interesting about you? What makes you stand out as a college applicant? Using the space below, write down a few ideas and continue brainstorming on a separate sheet.

