



**Randolph-Macon
College**

Ashland, Virginia

Making the Most Out of Your College Visit

Seeing is believing. During your college search, nothing is more important than visiting the colleges you're considering. You not only want to get a sense of what the faculty, students, and the overall atmosphere is like, but you'll want to know if you can truly see yourself there. Once you visit each of the institutions you're interested in, you should have a better sense of which school is right for you.

Setting Up Your Visit

Before you set up your visit, you should try to narrow your list of colleges to institutions you're truly interested in. Once you've identified your top schools, your next step is to arrange a visit to each institution on your list. Absorbing the sights and sounds of the campus environment will allow you to judge if a school can become your home for the next four years.

See What You Want to See

Most schools will do everything possible to help you see as much of campus as you'd like – after all, each institution hopes that you'll fall in love with what they have to offer. Generally speaking, most admissions offices offer general information sessions and campus tours, and many will also offer the chance to meet with an admissions representative as well.

You also may be able to sit in on a class, eat in the dining hall, meet with a professor in your major or a coach, and even stay overnight in a residence hall. Before you arrange your visits, come up with a list of items you want to see at each institution (classrooms, meetings with faculty, athletic facilities, etc.) and work with the admissions office to ensure you'll see as much of what you want as possible. With proper planning, you'll find most admissions offices will be able to meet most of your visit needs.

Visit Again and Again and Again

It's April of your senior year, and you have been accepted by all of your top colleges! As great as this situation is, it can leave you with a difficult situation: how will you ultimately decide where to go? The best way to help make your decision is to visit these schools again. Once you're accepted to a college, your perspective changes drastically. You'll no longer be looking at the big picture and you'll be able to think about how your everyday life will be at the institution. In fact, many schools design an on-campus program for accepted students to show them a different side of campus than the standard tour or information session. And remember, if there's something specific you want to see or know more about, don't hesitate to ask!

Dos and Don'ts for Visiting Colleges

- DO call ahead and RSVP – Whether you're interested in a quick tour or an all-day program, you should let the admissions office know you're coming. Not only will this allow them to prepare for your visit, but there may be special events or opportunities that the admissions office can fill you in on. And, if you want to meet with a coach or a professor, you may not be able to do so unless you arrange it in advance.
- DO dress the part – You may not be the only one looking to learn more during your visit – college admissions officers will be there to answer questions, talk with you, and help you gain a better impression of the school, so be sure you give them the best possible impression! If you're going on a campus tour, meeting with a faculty member, interviewing for a scholarship, or coming for a special event, make sure you dress appropriately!
- DO talk with current students – The admissions staff may know all the facts and figures, but only a current student can truly tell you what student life is like on campus. Make sure you take the time to hear what current students have to say about the school.
- DO ask questions...DON'T be shy – Come well-equipped to find out everything you can during your visit. Make a list of your most important concerns before you arrive on campus and, if no one volunteers the information, don't be afraid to ask.
- DON'T be late! – Make sure you build plenty of travel time into your schedule – nothing makes a worse first impression than showing up late!
- And finally, DO have fun! – Campus visits should be exciting! You're coming to a new place where you're not sure what you'll see. Make sure you have fun deciding on what will be your home for the next four years.

Follow Your Instincts

Eventually a college should “feel right” to you – it could be the size, the location, or the atmosphere, but whatever it is, something clicks and makes you realize you've found your “fit.” Your college shouldn't just be where you go to school; it should be your home for the next four years. You need to feel comfortable at whichever school you choose. Otherwise, you won't enjoy the experience and that could hurt your motivation both inside and outside the classroom.

Of course, there's always a chance that more than one school “feels right.” If that happens, then you'll have a tough decision to make. But if you take your time to research the schools on your list and visit many of them often, you will be in a much better position to make the ultimate decision



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