

## Finding the Right Fit in your College Search

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Things to think about as you look for schools:

- **Cost.** What will your total annual costs be, including tuition and fees, room and board, books, travel and other expenses? Does the school participate in the federal student aid programs? The College Navigator listed in the Online Resources section below can help you find out.
- **Location.** This is a biggie. Do you move away or not? If you decide you might go to a school away from home, factor in the cost of traveling to and from school for holiday and semester breaks.
- **On campus or off.** If you go to a school nearby, do you want to live at home, in an on-campus dorm/residence hall or in private, off-campus housing? If you attend a school away from home, do you want to live in an on-campus dorm or in private housing? These decisions may require you to balance cost versus other factors, such as your independence and lifestyle.
- **Size.** Do you want a small, intimate setting? A school that's big enough to be a city by itself? Or something in between?
- **Majors and concentrations offered.** If you have an idea of what you want to study, does the school offer that major? Does their program have a good reputation? If you aren't sure what you want to study, does the school give you plenty of options?
- **Flexibility.** If you need to work full-time while you go, does the school have night courses or other options to accommodate you? Will they let you go part-time? Do they offer summer courses?
- **Admission requirements.** What academic standards (grade point average, required courses, etc.) do you have to meet in high school to get in? Which tests will you have to take?
- **Accreditation.** Is the school accredited? An accredited school meets certain educational standards set by an independent agency. Accreditation helps ensure the training and education you receive will meet the standards of employers in a specific field. You can use the [U.S. Department of Education's Institution Accreditation Search Page](#) to check a particular school's accreditation or to find an accredited school in a particular field or location.
- **Campus life.** Does the school offer activities and social opportunities you like?
- **Religious affiliation.** Do you want to attend a school affiliated with a particular church or religious denomination?
- **Diversity.** Will you feel comfortable with the makeup of the student body?