



College Exploration Checklist

1. DEFINE YOUR GOALS AND INTERESTS

- Identify career interests or potential majors.
- Reflect on personal values, strengths, and skills.
- Consider long-term goals: What do you hope to gain from college (e.g., skills, knowledge, job readiness, personal growth)?

2. RESEARCH TYPES OF COLLEGES

- Understand the difference between 2-year and 4-year colleges, vocational schools, trade programs, and universities.
- Compare public vs. private colleges and in-state vs. out-of-state options.
- Explore the benefits of large universities versus smaller liberal arts colleges.

3. IDENTIFY COLLEGE FIT FACTORS

- **Academic Fit:**
 - Check if colleges offer programs that align with your academic and career interests.
 - Look at the class sizes, student-to-faculty ratio, and teaching style.
- **Location:**
 - Decide if you prefer an urban, suburban, or rural setting.
 - Consider distance from home and potential travel costs.
- **Campus Culture:**
 - Explore student life: clubs, athletics, volunteer opportunities, and social scene.
 - Research diversity, inclusivity, and support services on campus.
- **Size of School:**
 - Consider whether you prefer a large, medium, or small campus community.
- **Housing and Amenities:**
 - Research housing options, dining plans, and available facilities.

4. PLAN CAMPUS VISITS

- Schedule campus visits (either in person or virtually).

- Prepare questions to ask during the visit about academics, campus life, and support services.
- Take notes and compare impressions after each visit.

5. UNDERSTAND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- **Application Components:**
 - Review GPA, test score (SAT/ACT) requirements, and prerequisite courses.
 - Check if letters of recommendation, essays, or interviews are needed.
- **Application Options:**
 - Decide between Early Decision, Early Action, and Regular Decision.
 - Note deadlines for each application type.

6. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- **Research Financial Aid:**
 - Learn about FAFSA and TASFA (if applicable), and create an application plan.
 - Research the financial aid packages offered by each college.
- **Look for Scholarships:**
 - Check school-based, local, and national scholarships.
 - Track scholarship deadlines and required materials.
- **Evaluate Costs:**
 - Compare tuition, fees, room & board, and transportation costs.
 - Make a financial plan with your family to consider loans, grants, and out-of-pocket costs.

7. APPLY TO COLLEGES

- Create a timeline for application tasks, including setting reminders for deadlines.
- Ensure each application is complete, including transcripts, essays, and recommendations.
- Proofread and review all application materials.

8. MAKE YOUR DECISION

- Compare acceptance letters, financial aid offers, and personal impressions.
- Consider your goals and the college that best aligns with them.
- Confirm your enrollment and complete any required steps for admitted students (e.g., deposit, housing application).