

## Finding The Right College Is Easier Than You Think

Most college bound students find the prospect of finding and applying to the right school a real challenge. Peer pressure from your friends and family can make the prospect of an objective search seem impossible. Even with a variety of opinions about your future being discussed, don't despair. Finding the right college for you is easier than you think. The first step in finding the right college is to consider key selection criteria. Here are a number of criteria to consider when making a college choice. Remember that even once you've narrowed down your options, nothing beats an actual campus visit.

**Location, Location, Location.** So where do you want to go? Obviously, academics play a huge role in determining the right school for you, but so does location. Are you looking for an exotic location or something close to home? What are your hobbies? Will you be in a location that allows you to continue doing what you most enjoy doing? Are you looking for a rural setting or an urban one? Start your college planning with the type of location that you will be most happy with. This can have a tremendous impact on your experience and can do a lot to help you narrow your choices. If you've always lived in the suburbs, an urban campus can result in culture shock. After a few weeks, you may be in need of grassy fields and open space. On the other hand, if you're used to malls and movie theaters and choose a college in a rural area, will you be racing into the student center at midnight, desperately seeking noise, lights, and people? Think about where you grew up and how much of a change you want.

**Campus Size** Are you thinking big? Or do you prefer something much more manageable? Colleges come in all shapes and sizes, from a school in New Hampshire that enrolls less than 100 students to a school like Penn State that can enroll 30,000 or more. Which is better? That depends on your preferences. Do you like being places where everybody knows you, or do you like the anonymity of a crowd? You might even want to think about how far you want to walk between classes. Large schools typically have large campuses, as well as a healthy selection of student services and things to do. On the other hand, a smaller college may offer individualized attention, as well as a more intimate and personalized experience for each student.

**College Type** Despite popular belief, all colleges are different. Some devote much of their time and resources to research. Others focus their attention on teaching and learning. Some have a specialty in one area, while others are known for providing students a broad and enriching education. Other differences to consider include whether schools are single sex or coed, if they have a religious affiliation. There are a variety of colleges that focus on a particular ethnicity. Your options are almost limitless and your personal learning style, preferences, and available resources will help you find the place where you will best succeed. There are many factors to consider when deciding where you want to go to college. Begin by considering location, campus size, and type. By knowing the kind of university you wish to attend, you can narrow your choices and focus on curriculum and affordable options.

### About the Author

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