

My Priority Factors: What Matters Most to Me?

Before you decide where to apply, it's important to consider what priority factors are most important to you. In other words, what do you need to have in a college?

You should never choose a college just based on its name, location, or reputation.

Below are some common factors students consider when they decide where they want to apply, with a list of questions to consider. As you read, think about what factors stand out to you as the most important.

FACTOR	QUESTIONS TO ANSWER
<i>Location</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How far away from home is this school? • How will you travel to and from this school? • What is around the school? Is it rural? In a city? A suburb? • Will you need a car to get around?
<i>Size</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How big is the student body? • What is the average class size? The student/faculty ratio? • How big is the campus? Can you walk from one end to the other?
<i>Financial Aid</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the average financial aid package? • What percent of students with need were awarded aid or need-based scholarships? What percent had their need fully met? • What is the average student loan debt on graduation?
<i>Diversity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the racial breakdown of the student body? • How diverse is the faculty the school? • What is the male/female ratio?
<i>Academics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What programs of study are offered that interest you? • What are the graduation requirements and required courses? • What is the first-to-second year retention rate? • What is the graduation rate? For underrepresented students?
<i>Supports for First-Gen College Students</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school offer specific supports (student centers, clubs, mentoring, etc.) for first-gen college students? • What percent of the student body is awarded Pell Grants? • What is the graduation rate for first-generation college students?
<i>Programs Offered</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the school offer study abroad programs? • What clubs/extracurricular activities are offered that you might want to be involved in? • Does the school offer career services for students and alumni?
<i>Campus Life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What percent of the student body lives on campus? • Is the social scene focused on the Greek system (fraternities and sororities)? • What varsity and club sports are offered? What division do varsity teams play in?