

Find the Best Colleges for You

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HERE'S HOW



SEARCH

Search for schools that seem to match your interests and needs. The guide highlights books that offer helpful indexes and websites with multiple filtering and searching options. A heads-up: Your list of schools will probably change as you learn more about each school. You might start with a list of 30 schools and then shrink it to 5. You should have 3 to 12 at the end of your search.



Researching colleges takes time. Organize the process by using three steps.



COMPARE

Compare the schools on your list. Start by evaluating how well each one's programs and services meet your needs for each of the 4 questions. Then do a side-by-side comparison. You should be able to see which schools best fit your needs and interests. You might find that the schools on your list still aren't quite what you're looking for—that's ok. Keep searching and exploring.



EXPLORE

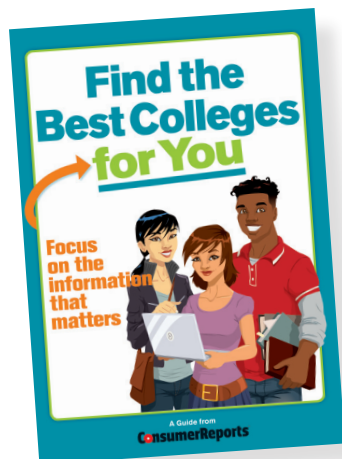
Explore each school on your list by answering 4 critical questions:

1. Does the college offer what I want to study?
2. How much will it cost and can I afford to go there?
3. What is the educational quality and experience offered by the school?
4. What type of environment does the college offer?

Also seek out information about your specific needs: Do you need a flexible schedule? Do you want to be able to participate in certain sports or other activities? The guide tells you where to find that information.



You'll end up with several great options on your final list. And applying might even be easier because you'll be able to express clearly in essays and interviews why you and the school are a good match.



So go on – Search, Explore, and Compare. Then start filling out those applications with confidence!

Get the free guide to help you figure out what information you need and where to find it. The guide also includes questions to ask campus advisers, and worksheets to help you keep track of the information you gather as you learn about and compare schools.

Consumer Reports produced *Find the Best Colleges for You: Focus on the information that matters* with funding from the Lumina Foundation and research conducted with the Education Conservancy. The guide is free and is available at ConsumerReports.org/college. Download the PDF or request a print copy. And you can e-mail us about your experiences researching colleges. We'd love to hear from you!

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