

How To: Build A College List

One of the first steps in the college application process is figuring out which schools you want to apply to. This infographic will help you to navigate the process of building your college list!

Step 1

Look inwards.



By asking yourself some key questions about your goals, your wants, and your needs when it comes to your higher education experience, you can direct yourself towards schools that will be a good fit.

Some questions to ask yourself...

- What do I want to do for my career?
- Do I like being far away from home?
- What is my preferred campus layout: rural, urban, suburban?
- What activities and campus services are important to me?

...and factors to consider about each school

What financial aid is available? What is the average class size? What housing options are available? Are there internship/research opportunities? Does it have my intended major? What are the graduation and job placement rates?

Step 2

Get organized.

Create a Google/Word Doc to take notes on various things about each school that you find during your research.



Create a Google/Excel Sheet to list each schools' past year's admissions statistics, application requirements, and deadlines to apply.

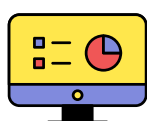
When getting organized, keep in mind...

Every school you find should be placed into 1 of 3 buckets (based on last year's admissions statistics/your academic credentials):

- **Safety school** – your credentials put you at/above the 75th %ile
- **Target school** – your credentials put you in the 25–75th %ile
- **Reach school** – your credentials put you at/below the 25th %ile

Step 3

Let the research begin!



Now that you've established the main criterion that you want out of a school and organizationally set yourself up for success, there are a few key places and resources you can turn to to learn more about the schools out there that meet your criteria.

Tools & resources to help you solidify if a school is a good match or not:

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| • College Board's College Search Tool | • Course catalogs and syllabi |
| • In person and virtual tours | • Informational interviews/coffee chats with current students and alumni |
| • School social media accounts | |

Finally...

Use your notes, spreadsheets, and knowledge from various resources to narrow down your list to 8–15 schools, and get ready to apply!