

# Questions to Ask When Choosing a College

Office of Higher Education

[www.ohe.ct.gov](http://www.ohe.ct.gov)

Finding the college right for you is an exciting and, at times, challenging experience. With so many choices, you may likely wonder where to begin. A good first step is to tailor your choices based on which colleges offer the academic programs that best match your interests. You can search programs offered by Connecticut colleges and universities by going to [www.ctohe.org/heweb/ProgramSearch.asp](http://www.ctohe.org/heweb/ProgramSearch.asp).

The college you select is the most significant investment you can make in yourself. Be sure to ask savvy consumer questions as you research colleges. The list below offers some suggestions you can use as you talk with campus recruiters and explore college websites.

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## Admissions Questions

- What are the college's criteria for admission?
  - ✓ SAT/ACT Scores
  - ✓ SAT II (how many, which subjects)
  - ✓ High School Courses
  - ✓ Essay
  - ✓ Interview
  - ✓ Letters of Recommendation
  - ✓ Extra Curricular
  - ✓ Additional
- How many students applied for admission last year?
  - ✓ What percent of applicants were selected for admission?
  - ✓ What percent of applicants actually enrolled?
  - ✓ When will I know when I'm accepted?
- Will applying for financial aid affect my chances of admission?
  - ✓ Do you admit students on a rolling admissions basis or a fixed application date?
  - ✓ Does your college offer early action or early decision?
  - ✓ Are interviews required in the admissions process?
  - ✓ Does your college accept the common application?
- How many students were on the wait list last year?
  - ✓ Did you admit students from your wait list?
  - ✓ How was that selection handled?
  - ✓ What percentage of wait-listed students was offered admission?
- Does your college have a process for student transfer?
  - ✓ If so, how do I learn which of my courses may count toward transfer?
  - ✓ What percentage of transfer credits was accepted by your college last year?
  - ✓ What is the basis for denying credit it doesn't accept?
  - ✓ Does your college accept credits for a certificate of completion from a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)?
- Do you have an honors program and is there a separate deadline or application?
- What other colleges do you compete with for students each year?
- How many students leave after their freshman year?
- What type of orientation program does your college conduct for new students?

- Does your college have any special programs for first-generation college applicants?
- Do you have overnight programs for future students?
- I am considering majoring in \_\_\_\_\_ in college. Right now I am taking \_\_\_\_\_ courses, (AP, Honors, etc.) in high school. What do you suggest I do to improve my chances of being accepted into your college?

### Financial Aid Questions

- What are your college's financial aid deadlines for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and College Scholarship Service (CSS)?
- What scholarships does your college offer students?
- What percentage of students receive some form of financial aid?
  - ✓ What percentage of students graduate with debt?
  - ✓ What is the average debt of students at graduation?
  - ✓ What is the average amount of parent loans?
- What is the average cost to attend your college once you subtract the average financial aid package from total tuition, room, board, and fees?
- Are monthly payment plans available?
- What is the state of the college's financial health?
  - ✓ How much money does the college earn from tuition once the financial aid budget is exhausted?
  - ✓ Is the college a not-for-profit or for-profit school?

### Housing Questions

- What type of housing is assigned to freshmen?
  - ✓ Are freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing?
  - ✓ Are freshmen all grouped together on campus?
  - ✓ How is housing handled after freshman year?
- Does the college assist students in finding off-campus housing?
- What meal plans are available?
  - ✓ Are meals offered on Saturday and Sunday? What time of day do they begin?

### Sports Participation Questions

- What opportunities exist for participation in an organized program of intercollegiate/intramural sports?
- Does the college offer \_\_\_\_\_, (sport of your interest)?
  - ✓ NCAA level?
  - ✓ Team record?
  - ✓ Campus contact person \_\_\_\_\_

### General Questions

- What is the current major issue on campus?

- What are the college's priorities? How does academic rigor fit in?
- Do you have a Disability Coordinator and what types of support services do you have on campus?
- What are the distinctive/unique features of your college?
- What type of calendar year does the college follow? (4-1-4, 3 terms, block, etc.) What are the advantages/disadvantages of your college's calendar approach?
- What percentage of students is from out-of-state? How many students come from my state?
- Has your campus had any safety issues and how is security handled on campus?
- What is the average class size the first year? And after?
- What is the college's percentage of full-time faculty, and how many teach first-year classes?
  - ✓ Do freshmen have an opportunity to take some courses from the college's "star" professors?
  - ✓ Who teaches freshmen courses – graduate assistants or permanent staff?
  - ✓ Do students participate in faculty research projects?
  - ✓ How approachable are faculty and administration members?
- How many students graduate on time?
  - ✓ What are your college's job and graduate school placement rates? Average salaries of graduates?
- What teaching methods are used in classes – large lecture or discussion? What is the average size of large lectures?
  - ✓ How many professors mix technology with lectures so that instruction can be viewed outside of class?
  - ✓ Do students have a choice of course formats, for instance, face-to-face, hybrid and/or online?
  - ✓ Do courses use adaptive learning software, allowing students to spend class time on what they don't know, and pass by what they already have mastered?
  - ✓ What sizes are the classes approximately? (If you visit an actual class, estimate how many students are in attendance.)
- What is the library like? Hours? How much time do students spend there?
- How often is the student newspaper published?
- How active and effective is the student government?
- What special interest groups, clubs, and teams are active on campus?
- Will I need a car?
- Can students get real-life work experience off-campus?

### Program Questions

- Does the college offer \_\_\_\_\_ (major you're interested in)?
- How easy is it to double major? What are the most popular double majors?
- What opportunities exist for work study or part-time jobs in the community or on campus for practical application of classroom experiences?
- How many hours of homework/preparation are expected for each hour of class?
- What is the level of interaction between faculty and students?

## Fraternity/Sorority Questions

- Are fraternities/sororities the dominant way of life on campus?
- What is the ratio of Greeks to independents?
- How well organized are the independents?
- Do I have to belong to a fraternity/sorority to be a campus leader?
- What social and academic benefits would I derive from membership in a fraternity/sorority or living in a cooperative house?

## On-Campus Religious Questions

- Is there any particular orientation towards religion on campus?
- What types of religious services are offered?
- If not on campus, what is the nearest location of my denomination?
- Are there any on-campus religious clubs?
- If the college is affiliated with a religious denomination, are all students required to take religion courses?