

After Acceptance: How to Finally Decide on One School

Did you receive multiple college acceptance letters? Here's how to settle on that final school.

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Congratulations! Getting acceptance letters to more than one school is a great problem to have. As a reward for all of your hard work in high school, you now have a big decision to make. Here's how to narrow down your choices and find that perfect college or university:

Choose Your Top Priorities

What factors are the most important to you about your future college or university? Do you want small class sizes? Specific academic programs? A good sports program or active Greek community? Is distance from home an issue? What are your housing options at each potential college? Revisiting these and other pertinent questions can help you highlight the pros and cons of different colleges and universities, which can make your decision more clear.

Compare Degree Programs

From online degrees to traditional 4-year programs to MBAs, each major or program of study comes with a unique level of prestige and quality. Will a degree from one university give you more bargaining power when it comes to your future careers? Which school's courses and majors will help you get into the graduate school programs you're interested in? These questions can certainly swing your final college decision.

Review Your Financial Aid Package

Cost is undoubtedly an important factor in your college search. Differences in tuition fees and financial aid packages for each university can often be incentive enough to choose between two similar schools.

If a less desirable financial aid package is preventing you from attending your dream school, contact the school to discuss whether a better financial aid deal is possible. If colleges and universities know that you have been offered more competitive packages at other schools, they may be willing to offer additional financial aid. This practice is becoming increasingly common as schools compete for top candidates.

Consider Whether the Environment Suits You

Weather and climate are often overlooked or underestimated when selecting a school, but can have a significant impact on your college experience. Similarly, city and campus environment are just as

important. Consider revisiting campuses during different seasons to determine which college choice "feels" right to you and whether you can handle any weather extremes.

Considering a community college close to home or distance learning program? If you're planning on furthering your education close to home, you'll already be familiar with the climate and location, but you should consider whether you'll continue to be happy in that area for the next two or four years, however long you plan to study toward your degree.

Read College Blogs

You'll likely find college blogs to be a good, quick way to check the pulse of the student complaints and accolades. These blogs often feature insider information from current college and university students. As such, blogs can be a great place to learn less biased information about colleges and universities than you'll find in college brochures.

Compare Your Colleges

Compare each degree program in your college search using Campus Explorer's Compare Schools feature. To use, go to My Schools and click the "Compare Schools" button.

Keep in mind that there's no right or wrong decision when choosing the college or university to attend. The best you can do is to make an informed decision based on the information you have. Good luck!

Deciding on a School Tips & Tactics

- As soon as you've made your final decision, let the schools you're rejecting know. That way, they can offer your spot, and any financial aid, to another student.
- If you've made personal relationships with admissions officers or students at schools you're rejecting, consider sending them a personal note thanking them for their help. It's always good to maintain good relationships – especially if you may end up transferring in the future.
- Don't think you can coast through your senior year. A college acceptance is conditional, meaning that if you let your grades tank or get in trouble at your school or with the law, your acceptance could be revoked.