

How do you know if a postsecondary institution is right for you?

Look for “best fit”

The first step is to visit and ask plenty of questions!

At the university fair

1. Say “**Hello**” while maintaining eye contact; you may shake hands with the representative. Introduce yourself and try to remember their name (this sounds basic, but you will be surprised how many people forget to do this).
2. No need for formalities of “How are you” at a fair, but it is nice if it feels natural.
3. Know exactly what you’re interested in - but **be open to alternatives** and say so.
4. Make sure you have “**an ask**”.
5. Get follow-up **contact info**, ideally with a purpose (but not necessary) - get that email address! Or if you really like them, get on the mailing list.
6. **Thank them** for their time and wish them a good rest of the day.

Example opener: Hi! I am very interested in Course A at your university as it speaks to my **career goals** of B and C.

Questions you may ask

The following questions are for **reference** only. We encourage you to **create your own questions or adjust the ones below** to fit what you’re trying to find out!

Academics

1. What programmes is your university most proud of and why?
2. How about specialised academic tracks, minors, or interdisciplinary programs?
3. Who are some professors at your university you think are the most popular and why?
4. Does your institution have some unique programs?
5. What are your fastest-growing programs?
6. Do you have any new buildings or programs being developed?
7. What is the most popular course on campus? Why?
8. How common is it for students to change their course after arriving at your university?
9. Do your professors have work-related experience?
10. Are there research possibilities with the faculty for undergraduates? In what areas?

11. Are there research funding opportunities for international students?
12. Is the faculty interested in and accessible to students after class? Do faculty members participate in student activities?
13. Do you offer accelerated degrees? (Degrees you can condense and finish earlier)
14. What is the average class size of a first-year undergraduate student?
15. Do you have an Honours Program, and if yes, what is the benefit?
16. What is distinctive about education here? What is the educational philosophy of the school? Has it changed much in recent years?
17. Do you think that students are generally enthusiastic about their classes? Do people talk about their courses outside of class?
18. Are any new programs scheduled for the next 3-four years?
19. Are there any new buildings scheduled to open in the next year or two?
20. What can I expect the classrooms to look like in terms of size and structure?
21. How would you characterise the academic pressure and workload?
22. Is it possible to study at other universities (exchange) as part of the course?
23. What do you recommend as other options if I do not achieve the grades required for course X?
24. What electives are available in course X?
25. What is an average student class size?
26. Do students at your campus actively work/study together and help each other? Or are they more competitive in nature?
27. Are there any Fast Track courses?

US only:

28. How easy is it to double major? How easy is it to major in one area, such as science, and minor in another, such as business?
29. When do I need to declare a major?
30. Are there any programs I can apply to directly? As in begin my major in Year 1.

Setting

1. What distinguishes your university from most other colleges and universities? What is unique about this university?
2. How would you describe the area the campus is located in to someone who has never had an opportunity to visit you?
3. What are some of your university's biggest strengths?
4. Can you describe the atmosphere at your university?
5. What are the strengths of your university?
6. What is the major difference of this university compared to _____?
7. Why do you think students choose to go to your university (their feedback)?
8. What are the tutor centres like at the university?
9. What is one thing that students (like) and (don't like as much) about your campus?
10. What is your campus culture, identity, and environment? (What is your school known for?)

Admissions

1. I noticed that X was optional when applying to your university/program. Would it hurt my chances of acceptance if I do not do it? Why make it optional? (ie. number of recommendation letters, video submissions, extra sections to fill out, and external testing)
2. When you read applications, what stands out to you?
3. What are your institutional goals this year? Any major changes from previous years?
4. What are the pros and cons of applying undecided?
5. What if I want to take a Gap Year - Is this allowed/encouraged? If so, what should I plan for a Gap Year?
6. What in your view makes a strong application?
7. If I have the opportunity to visit your university, what are some things I should make sure to do on the tour or when booking the tour? I want to make the most out of it
8. How important is a resume or CV when I'm applying for university?
9. How can I make my application stand out?
10. When do you think I should start preparing for university applications?
11. How important are activities outside of my IB classes?
12. How can I build the capacity for resilience when I live in a city like Hong Kong?
13. Are there any big changes in the works I should know about?
14. For programs requiring a Portfolio: Is the Portfolio more important than the other application materials?

US only:

15. How many letters of recommendation do you recommend I submit with my application? X is required, but Y is optional.
16. Do you think it is worth applying to Regular Decision, or should I apply Early Decision/Early Action?

Additional question, trying to find the best-fit

1. How would you describe this university in 3 words?
2. What makes it different from others that are in the same area/ similar on the surface?
3. Why did you choose this university?
4. How will my classes be taught? Problem-Based Learning (PBL)? Lecture? Other?
5. What opportunities exist for this specific program (name the program)?
6. Will I feel at home at this school?
7. Who would be the happiest at this college?
8. When do you think I should start preparing for university applications?
9. If I have the chance to visit your university/college, what do you think I should experience to really get an idea of what the campus culture is like?
10. What makes your university unique? What is your campus culture, identity, and environment? What is your school known for? What is one thing that students (like) and (don't like as much) about your campus?

Diversity and Internationalism

1. What is the biggest challenge for an international student attending your school?
2. What are the opportunities for study abroad?
3. What percentage of your student body studies abroad?
4. Do you network with international students and/or provide support for them?
5. What jobs/internships are available for international students?
6. International student percentage/ ethnic breakdown? What are the cultural opportunities for someone like me?
7. Are there any LGBTQ+ clubs or services?

Service and Internships

1. Do many of your programs offer an internship, job-related assignment, or clinical rotation for a valuable learning experience?
2. Does your college host career and job fairs?
3. Will your college assist me in creating an online professional profile to start my career?
4. I am interested in a career in _____. Can you tell me about the range of courses you have on offer that I could do to follow my desired career path?
5. Does your college have a Centre for Academic Success?
6. What is the Potential Return on Investment (ROI) for the following career path X?
7. How do you help graduates find employment?
8. Does each student have a personally assigned advisor, or is advice conducted by an "advisement centre?" Does the student have an opportunity to select or change his/her advisor?
9. What services are offered to students needing help or tutoring?

Student and Campus Life

1. What's the security like on campus?
2. What's the surrounding area like? Is it easy to get around?
3. What type of opportunities do you provide for students to develop leadership skills?
4. What is the campus dining like?
5. How are roommates assigned? Do they live in the same room or have their own room?
6. What do the students like most about campus?
7. How do students get around campus?
8. Is there a good balance of academics, social life, and extracurricular activities?
9. What is the role of the campus newspaper?
10. What were the social or cultural highlights last year?
11. Are there club or intramural sport teams available?
12. Do you have a _____ club? (great opportunity to find out if you can create this on campus/contribute to their campus life)
13. What do most students do on the weekends?
14. Is there a doctor, nurse, psychologist, or career counsellor on campus? What is the waiting period for appointments?

15. What is there to do in town? How would I get there?
16. How would you describe the student body's personality/school climate? What are your school traditions?
17. How would you describe a (insert university name) student?
18. I am currently involved with (club/community service/sport), what activities on campus do you have that are similar?
19. I am interested in _____ (sports/activities). Is this available?
20. How do I find out about the clubs and societies available?
21. What are popular student clubs, and how active is your student government?
22. Can you tell me about student accommodation facilities?
23. What sport/music/performing arts facilities are there? Are there other hangouts?
24. Do you have part-time jobs available on campus?
25. Is there support for learning difficulties?
26. Can you tell me about your library facilities?
27. What transportation is available to and from the university?
28. Are there things to do on campus or in town, or do most students go home?

US only:

29. What percentage of students become members of fraternities or sororities?
30. Are fraternities and sororities a big part of campus life? If I didn't want to join, could I have a satisfactory social life?

Finances

1. What is the Cost of Attendance (COA)?
2. What is the Potential Return on Investment (ROI)?
3. Can someone at your college help me figure out the overall cost to attend your university?
4. UK only: How do you assess home status? What is the procedure?

Scholarships

1. What kinds of scholarships do you offer international students?
2. What kinds of scholarships do you offer nationals who attend high school in Hong Kong?
3. Can someone at your college help me find scholarships before I consider applying to your college?
4. What are some scholarships you typically see international students apply for?

Housing

1. Is housing guaranteed to first-year undergraduates?
2. What variety of housing styles on campus are there, ie, suites, apartments, etc?
3. Is there something I should know about housing that would help me in my choice?
4. Are meal plans required? What are the types of food plans? All you can eat? Vegan? Vegetarian? Kosher? Halal?
5. What are the housing options for first-year students?
6. Do many students live off campus?

Life after graduation

1. How does the university support international students to stay in the country after they graduate from the university?
2. What is the job placement rate for grads?
3. What jobs do people get with my intended major? Potential Return on Investment (ROI)?
4. Is there an active alumni association? What does that look like? Are they active in Hong Kong?

CP Questions

Build Up

- I am not taking traditional qualifications because I know what I want to do in the future. I'm taking a mixture of IB Courses such as D, E, F and an external provider G.
- I will graduate with a Secondary School Diploma, my IB Courses and transcript from G, which will be [\[insert qualification name\]](#). The IB Courses, CP Core, and CP external provider together are the IBCP qualification.

Ask

- Is this a qualification I can apply to course X at your university? I'd like to talk more about this with you.

Alternatives

- Are there alternative programs that are similar at your university that could be a good fit for my qualifications and interests?

Follow Up

- Is there an email address or someone at your university who is familiar with CP?
- Thank you so much for your time! I really appreciate it, and I'll be in touch.

Other possible questions to add

- Are any new programs scheduled for the next 2 years that would fit the career path that I'm looking to go into?
- What is the major difference between this university and other universities offering similar programs?
- On this sheet, it says that you accept IBCP students. Could I double-check that with you?
- Could I ask what IBCP qualifications you would normally accept into this programme?
- Why did you choose to work at this school? What is something that you believe this school/course is unique for and makes it different from other universities/courses?
- I was curious what it's like outside and near campus. Can you tell me more about that?
- What are the students typically like at your school?
- Also, how do internships typically work for students?
- Is there anything your university would be looking for in strong candidates other than subjects?

Come prepared - avoid asking these questions

Below are **questions you should not ask the university representatives**. These are points you should have researched **BEFORE the fair**, to get a general idea of the university. This approach can show maturity and genuine interest, which the university representative can appreciate.

If you couldn't find the information, or didn't find enough, you can say something like: **"During my research, I couldn't find (enough about) _____. Can you help me understand it a bit better?"**

1. Where are you located?
2. What is your acceptance rate? **Alternative:** How competitive is course X for the average applicant?
3. What are the entry requirements?
4. What majors/courses do you offer?
5. Type of university (public, private, research, liberal arts, community college, etc.)
6. Campus setting (urban/ rural/ college town, etc) - look it up on Google Maps - /Online Tour Links
7. Size of Uni / # of undergrad students
8. What is the average GPA / IB Score?
9. Are you listed in any rankings?
10. Are you a "good" school?
11. Where can I meet or read about students' perspectives on your campus?
12. Do you accept Fall and Spring applications?

In-person University Visits

Not required, but a good option if you want to extend yourself.

Speak with a student, take a tour, then mention you did this to the Uni Rep ***but*** follow up with further questions to showcase your interests, dig deeper

- [Unibuddy](#) (scroll down to 'Time to Take Action') - chat to current students
 - [Campus Reel](#) - campus tours
1. What is the typical class size for freshmen and for upperclassmen? (This is a much more useful piece of information than the student-faculty ratio.) What have been the tour guide's largest and smallest classes thus far?
 2. All schools say their professors are accessible to the students. Does this mean more than scheduled office hours? Do professors offer coffee get-togethers or other points of contact? Does your tour guide know her faculty adviser? How well? What outstanding professors or courses might the tour guide recommend regardless of a student's major?
 3. Are most classes taught in a lecture style? If there are discussions, do students actually participate? Are there chances for group work or hands-on work in class?
 4. Is there a writing centre? Does the school provide tutors? Is there a fee for such additional help?
 5. Is housing guaranteed for all four years? What percentage of students live on campus?
 6. Does the administration plan any major changes to the campus, programs, or student life in the near future?
 7. How safe does your tour guide feel walking around the campus at night?
 8. How is the student turnout at sporting events?

9. What is the political climate like on campus? How active are students in service and other community-related activities?
10. Does your tour guide know students who have worked directly with professors? Do students have research opportunities outside of class? If so, do they take advantage of them?
11. Is the student body diverse, or does one type dominate?
12. What happens on the campus on the weekends? Does it empty out, or is there plenty to do on and/or near campus? Does it feel necessary to have a car?
13. US-only: Is there Greek life (fraternities and sororities)? What percentage of the student body gets involved? Do the Greeks have their own houses? When is Rush? Are parties open or closed to the rest of the student body?