

## Questions to ask college representatives

College reps, as well as college students, admissions counselors and faculty, genuinely enjoy talking to high school students. They like to share their ideas about their college, and they all appreciate students who have thought about the college and want to know more than is in the course catalog, in the viewbook, or on the Web site. They like thoughtful questions, and their answers can help you make a good college match. Ask questions of interest to you in the following categories:

### Students

- How would you characterize the majority of students?
- From what economic background are the majority of students?
- Are there clubs, activities or housing that are minority related?
- What do students like most about the college? Like least?
- Has the student government made any real contribution to the school? How do you get into student government?
- What political, social or academic issues concerned students last year? How did the administration react? What was the resolution?

### Social life and campus activities

- What do students do for fun?
- What is the role of fraternities and sororities on campus? If I didn't want to join, could I have a satisfactory social life?
- What are the dominant social groups on campus? Do the groups get along with one another? Have there been any problems?
- What role do team sports play in the social life of the college? What happens on football or basketball weekends? If I didn't want to join in, would I find kindred spirits?
- Is there a good balance of academics, social life and extracurricular activities?
- What were the social or cultural highlights last year?
- What is the role of the campus newspaper?
- Is there an alcohol problem and, if so, how is the college handling it? What is the incidence of binge drinking? Do students feel safe on campus?

### Campus facilities

#### *Housing and dining*

- Is there something I should know about housing that would help me in my choice?
- What are the types of food plans? All you can eat? Vegetarian? Kosher?

# Questions to ask college representatives

## (page 2)

### *Activity centers and athletic and recreational facilities*

- What kinds of facilities does the student center have? Is it a magnet for student activities? Are there other hangouts?
- Do you think the college pays attention to its appearance?
- How would you rate the fitness center?

### *Health, career counseling, special student services and security*

- Is there a doctor, nurse, psychologist or career counselor on campus? What is the waiting period for appointments?
- Is the office for special services adequate to the demand?
- How good is the security on campus?

### *Library*

- What have been students' experiences with the library? Have there been complaints?
- Is the library well equipped with computers and copy machines?

### **The community off campus**

- What is there to do in town? How would I get there?

### **Academics and faculty**

- What is distinctive about education here? What is the educational philosophy of the college? Has it changed much in recent years?
- Is the honor code working? How widespread is cheating?
- What is the most popular major on campus? Why?
- Do you think that students are generally enthusiastic about their classes? Do people talk about their courses outside of class?
- How would you characterize the academic pressure and workload?
- Are there research possibilities with the faculty? In what areas?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the advising system?
- What is the quality of student and faculty relationships? Is the faculty interested in and accessible to students after class? Do faculty members participate in student activities?
- Are curriculum changes in the works? How will that affect my college years?
- Are any departments being cut back or discontinued? If so, why?
- Are any new programs scheduled for the next four years?

**Source:** Adapted from *Campus Visits & College Interviews* by Zola Dincin Schneider (College Board, 2002). This book has many more questions you might ask of college representatives, plus chapters on every aspect of the interview and campus visit.

## College resources for students and families

### General Web sites

**Campus Tours: Virtual College Tours.** Virtual tours with still pictures and descriptions, webcams, campus maps and videos of hundreds of colleges throughout the United States. Provides a first look at colleges. [www.campustours.com](http://www.campustours.com).

**The College Board.** A complete site, with college and scholarship searches, information about the SAT® and SAT Subject Tests™, and other material pertaining to the college search and application process. Easy-to-use college search feature. [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

**Collegiate Choice Walking Tours Videos.** A site run by a group of independent counselors in New Jersey who offer videos of walking tours of more than 350 colleges, providing “an unedited recording of an actual student-guided campus tour offered at that college.” [www.collegiatechoice.com](http://www.collegiatechoice.com).

**eCampusTours.com.** Virtual tours of colleges. Useful for its 360-degree views of dorm rooms and other buildings. [www.ecampustours.com](http://www.ecampustours.com).

**NCAA Eligibility Center.** Official NCAA Web site that gives details of student-eligibility requirements to play NCAA sports. Watch this site for changes in eligibility; students can print the “Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete.” [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net).

**Peterson's Education Portal.** An all-purpose site including a college search, as well as information about summer programs, summer camps and jobs. The site asks you to register before using some of the search engines and other resources, but there is no registration fee. There is a charge for some of the services provided. [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com).

**U.S. Department of Education.** The federal government's Web site is easy to use and an excellent source of information on financial aid, much of it in Spanish as well as English. [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).

### Financial aid Web sites

**The College Board.** Has a scholarship search, a loan calculator and an online application form for the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® form, which is required by some colleges. [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

**FAFSA on the Web.** The Web site for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This form must be submitted in the senior year (after January 1 and by June 30) for families applying for need-based aid. Students may complete it electronically at this site. [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

**FastWeb.** Extensive information on merit- and need-based scholarships and aid. [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com).

**FinAid!** Good site for information about types of financial aid and applying for financial aid. [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org).

## College resources for students and families (page 2)

### Books

#### Comprehensive objective directories

*Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc. Updated every two years.

*The College Board College Handbook*. New York: The College Board. Published annually.

*Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges*. Princeton, NJ: Peterson's Guides. Published annually.

*Peterson's Guide to Two-Year Colleges*. Princeton, NJ: Peterson's Guides. Published annually.

#### Subjective guides

Fiske, Edward, and Robert Logue (contributor). *The Fiske Guide to Colleges*. Naperville, Ill.: Sourcebooks Trade. Updated annually.

Greene, Howard, and Matthew W. Greene. *Greene's Guide to Educational Planning: The Public Ivies*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

Greene, Howard R., and Matthew W. Greene. *The Hidden Ivies: Thirty Colleges of Excellence*. New York: HarperCollins, 2000.

Pope, Loren. *Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About Even If You're Not a Straight-A Student*. New York: Penguin, 2006.

Staff of *Yale Daily News*. *The Insider's Guide to the Colleges*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Updated annually.

#### Specialized topics

Aaron, Scott. *Jewish U: A Contemporary Guide for the Jewish College Student*. New York: Urj Press, 2002.

*College Board Book of Majors*. New York: The College Board. Published annually.

Detailed descriptions, written by professors, of more than 180 popular majors, plus lists of 900 majors and the colleges that offer them.

*Getting Financial Aid*. New York: The College Board. Published annually.

Mathews, Jay. *Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College That Is Best For You*. New York: Prima Publishing, 2003. Good insights on the college choice process from the education columnist for the *Washington Post*.

Nelson Reference. *Nelson's Complete Guide to Colleges & Universities for Christians*. 2002.

Princeton Review et al. (eds.). *The Hillel Guide to Jewish Life on Campus*. 14th ed. New York: Random House Information Group, 1999.

Princeton Review et al. (eds.). *K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or Attention Deficit Disorder*. 8th ed. New York: Random House Information Group, 2005.

Schoem, David. *College Knowledge: 101 Tips for the College-Bound Student*. University of Michigan Press, 2005. Practical advice on how to become engaged in college intellectual and cultural life.

Windmeyer, Shane L. *The Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*. Boston: Alyson Publications, 2006.

## Assessing your list of colleges

As you develop a list (mental or otherwise) of colleges that interest you, be sure you can answer these questions about them.

### The basics

- Where is the college? Can you locate it on a map? Is it too close to home? Is it too far? Is it too cold or too hot there?
- Have you taken the course work the college requires for admission?
- What size is the college? How many students are undergraduates?
- What is the college's selectivity ratio (what proportion of applicants were admitted last year)?
- Does the college offer majors that interest you?
- Is the college coed or single sex?
- What percentage of students live off campus?
- How many of the students graduate in four years? Five years? Six years?
- How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
- How much does the program cost? What is the total per-year expense?
- What type of financial aid is available?

### Where would you fit in?

- What are the admission test scores at the colleges that interest you? Where does that place you?
- What were the high school GPAs of most of the freshmen last year?
- Are freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing? If not, where do they live?
- Are there extracurricular activities that interest you?

### Visit the colleges' Web sites, read the guidebooks and look at their literature

- What are their strong academic programs? (Ask a college representative, students, graduates and teachers.)
- What courses are required for graduation?
- Are the courses you need/want available each semester? At convenient times?
- Are there special programs that interest you (study abroad, internships, etc.)?
- What is the social life like? What percentage of students join fraternities or sororities?
- Do the pictures and the language the college uses to describe itself attract you?
- What is your general impression of the college?

## **Assessing your list of colleges (page 2)**

- Is the school accredited?
- If professional certification is required for employment in the field that interests you, how many students enrolled in the school's program pass the certification exam?

### **Admissions process**

- When are applications due?
- Does the college accept the Common Application? If so, does it require supplemental forms?
- What does the application contain? Are essays required?
- Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
- When may you visit the college? What is its policy regarding campus visits?
- What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

### **Now answer these questions**

- Am I a strong candidate for admission to this college?
- If I am not a strong candidate, what are my chances?
- Do I want to visit this college?
- What additional information do I need?

**Source:** Susan Staggers, Cary Academy, North Carolina

## College planning: How to get started

### **Get started.**

Assess your strengths, weaknesses, goals, passions, learning style and social skills. What is most important to you in the college-search process? What do you hope to gain from the process?

### **Make some basic decisions.**

Where do you want to live? Will you go to college full-time? Part-time? Do you want to attend a single-sex school, a technical college, a public or private college, a large university, a small liberal arts college, or a historically black or religiously affiliated college? How important to you is the cultural/ideological diversity of the student body?

### **Enlist help.**

Who do you want to assist you in this process (parents, teachers, siblings, relatives, friends)?

### **Consult references.**

Look at college directories (*College Board College Handbook*, Barron's, Peterson's) and use college searches ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)).

### **Talk with your teachers and your school counselor about your dreams and goals.**

Discuss your plans with your parents. Ask for their advice.

### **Meet with college representatives when they visit the school.**

The guidance office will post information on upcoming visits. Have questions ready.

### **Visit campuses every chance you get.**

Take a tour, meet with an admissions representative and ask students what they think of the college.

**Source:** Amherst Regional High School, Massachusetts

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## Teaching work readiness is easy when you use *Job Ready Career Skills* online

### For Students

- 210 lessons on essential topics
- Pre-and post-tests
- T/F assessment with every lesson
- Activity with every lesson
- Video for each topic
- Certification of completion

### For Teachers

- Choice of required and optional lessons
- Grade by lesson and topic for each student
- Class analysis by lesson, topic, and category
- Grades exportable to spreadsheet
- Reset lesson ability for score improvement
- Extreme teacher friendliness

### One more thing

An annual site license covers all teachers and students in one school!



For a Guided Tour of *Job Ready Career Skills*, [click here](#).  
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# Career Headlines



Monday, February 24, 2014

## The Remainder of the U.S. News Best Jobs of 2014

Over the last several weeks, you've learned about 70 of the *U.S. News Best Jobs of 2014*. Today's *Career Headlines* describes the remaining 30 jobs that show good prospects between 2012 and 2022. Next week *Career Headlines* will provide an activity to help you explore good career choices for yourself.

**Human Resource Specialist** Median Salary \$55,930 or \$26.89 per hour  
This person is responsible for attracting, selecting, training, assessing, and rewarding employees. They oversee organizational culture and ensure compliance with labor laws. Growth of 15.5% is expected.

**Personal Care Aide** Median Salary \$19,910 or \$9.57 per hour  
Like a home health aide, a personal care aide helps clients bathe and dress. But they could also assist with light housekeeping, groceries and errands. Expect growth of 48.8%.

**Sales Manager** Median Salary \$105,260 or \$50.60 per hour  
A sales manager has to be comfortable meeting new people and hiring and supervising salespeople. Sales managers can be the central faces associated with their companies. Expect growth of 8.3%.

**Taxi Driver and Chauffeur** Median Salary \$22,820 or \$10.97 per hour  
Opportunity is abundant for taxi drivers and chauffeurs who deliver passengers from place to place. Expect 15.5% employment growth.

**Logistician** Median Salary \$72,780 or \$34.99 per hour  
Logisticians procure, receive, store and issue materials and parts to manufacturing, retail, and military groups, often in large scale disaster-relief efforts. Expect expansion of 21.9%.

**Marriage and Family Therapist** Median Salary \$46,670 or \$22.43 per hour  
Marriage and family therapists play peacemaker between two individuals with a marriage on the rocks. The BLS projects a 30.6% spike in the profession.

**Surgical Technologist** Median Salary \$41,790 or \$20.09 per hour  
It's the surgical technologist's job to sterilize the tools the surgeon will use to fix up your body.

The BLS projects 29,300 new openings for this crucial job.

**Computer Support Specialist** Median Salary \$59,090 or \$28.41 per hour

These professionals maintain company software and hardware. It's a low-paying tech position, but one of the fastest growing. An estimated 123,000 new specialists will be needed.

**Administrative Assistant** Median Salary \$32,410 or \$15.58 per hour

Administrative assistants offer support to all levels of organizations. They schedule meetings, maintain files, conduct research and assist with managerial projects. Growth of 15.7% is expected.

**Sales Representative** Median Salary \$54,230 or \$26.07 per hour

Sales representatives travel extensively, introducing and selling products to customers. They generate excitement and build a relationship with a product's loyal clientele. Expect 8.9% employment growth.

**Nursing Aide** Median Salary \$24,420 or \$11.74 per hour

In hospitals, long-term care facilities and nursing homes, it's the nursing aides and assistants who help patients bathe, dress and eat. More than 312,000 new caregivers will be needed.

**Interpreter and Translator** Median Salary \$45,430 or \$21.84 per hour

While interpreters use hand gestures and various forms of sign language, translators change words from one language to another. A rise in global interaction leads to growth of more than 46%.

**Pharmacy Technician** Median Salary \$30,430 or \$14.63 per hour

Pharmacy techs work side by side with pharmacists to count tablets, package medications and process insurance claims. This fast-growing occupation should add about 70,700 new positions.

**Preschool Teacher** Median Salary \$27,130 or \$13.04 per hour

Compared to other teachers, early childhood educators use more group play to educate. New recruits should be energetic and creative, and have abundant patience. Expect 76,000 new jobs.

**Public Relations Specialist** Median Salary \$54,170 or \$26.04 per hour

A public relations specialist generates publicity to enhance their clients' reputations. Excellent communication skills plus sales and marketing knowledge are a must. Expect 27,400 new job openings.

**School Counselor** Median Salary \$53,610 or \$25.77 per hour

A school counselor is an educator who works in elementary, middle, and high schools to provide academic, career, and college readiness. Nearly 12% job growth is expected.

**Paralegal** Median Salary \$46,990 or \$22.59 per hour

Abundant hiring is expected, as firms attempt to lower expenses by using the service of more cost-effective paralegals as opposed to lawyers. The BLS predicts 46,200 new paralegals.

**Paramedic** Median Salary \$31,020 or \$14.91 per hour

Considering they witness gruesome scenes among people with emotional or physical traumas, paramedics' salaries are low. But a favorable growth rate of 23.1% is expected.

**Real Estate Agent** Median Salary \$39,140 or \$18.82 per hour

A real estate agent knows the buyer's desires and matches them to the housing market. The BLS predicts this position will grow 38,000 new jobs.

**Glazier** Median Salary \$37,610 or \$18.08 per hour

Glaziers are responsible for cutting and installing the glasswork on office buildings and in homes, places

of worship and other structures. There should be 8,000 new job openings.

**Art Director** Median Salary \$80,880 or \$38.88 per hour

Art directors oversee the visuals in an advertisement, magazine, television show, film or corporate website. An increase in jobs of 7.4% is expected.

**Architect** Median Salary \$73,090 or \$35.14 per hour

An architect's creative accomplishments are seen in office buildings, libraries, restaurants, city parks and more. The BLS predicts there will be 18,600 new openings.

**Customer Service Representative** Median Salary \$30,580 or \$14.70 per hour

Working in customer service isn't just about fielding complaints, it's also about problem-solving and people-pleasing. The profession is expected to grow by 12.6%.

**Plumber** Median Salary \$49,140 or \$23.62 per hour

What would we do without plumbers? These highly trained professionals install, inspect and repair the pipes and fixtures that carry water, steam, air and gas. Expect 21.3% growth and job security.

**Office Clerk** Median Salary \$27,470 or \$13.20 per hour

An office clerk needs good communication, organization and planning, plus plenty of patience and tact. The BLS predicts employment growth of 6.2% for this job.

**Auto Mechanic** Median Salary \$36,610 or \$17.60 per hour

Tinkering with cars is respectable and profitable. The BLS predicts 8.6% employment growth and 60,400 new jobs for auto mechanics, including entry-level positions.

**Mental Health Counselor** Median Salary \$40,080 or \$19.27 per hour

The patient list and scope of work are broad for a mental health counselor. Duties range from diagnosing disorders to coordinating care with other health professionals. Expect growth of 28.5%.

**Landscaper and Groundskeeper** Median Salary \$25,870 or \$12.43 per hour

Landscapers plant trees, shrubs and flowers and construct patios and fences. Groundskeepers clean swimming pools, shovel snow and handle trash removal. Expect employment of 12.4%.

**Structural Iron and Steelworker** Median Salary \$46,140 or \$22.18 per hour

Structural iron and steel workers erect steel beams, girders and columns at tall heights and in nearly every type of weather. The BLS predicts there will be nearly 13,000 new openings.

**Painter** Median Salary \$38,590 or \$18.55 per hour

A professional painter undergoes a three- or four-year apprenticeship that includes about 2,000 hours of on-the-job training to learn about paint, stain and coatings. Expect 62,000 new painter positions.

Adapted from *US News/Money/Careers*

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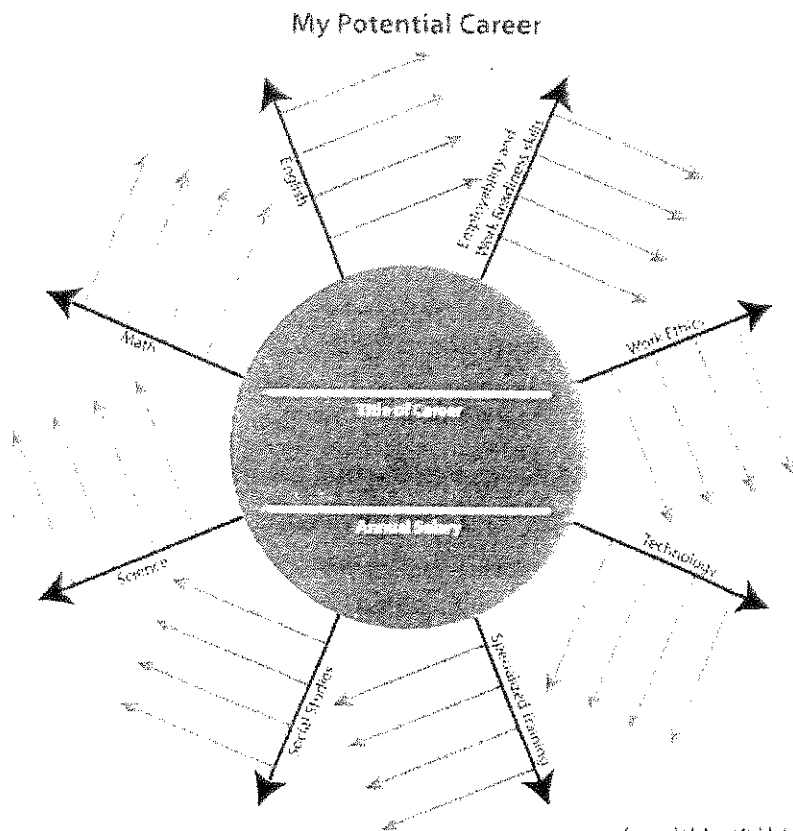
# Career Headlines

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Monday, March 3, 2014

## Best U.S. Jobs of 2014 Activity

Which of the *U.S. News Best Jobs of 2014* from previous *Career Headlines* interest you? To be successful in one of these careers, what skills and knowledge will you need? By filling in the blanks of the starburst and answering the questions at the end, you'll have a head start on a career plan. For example, if IT Specialist is the job you choose, you might list these four English skills: Ask questions, listen to users' comments, analyze the problem, and explain your corrective actions. If you need assistance learning more about a career, search the career in your browser.



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**Note to Instructors:** To access the starburst needed for this activity, [click here](#).

1. I can take these steps now to prepare for this career:

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2. These are the things I need to do during my remaining years of school to prepare for this career:

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3. This is the type of internship, apprenticeship or part-time work experience I will need to complete while in school:

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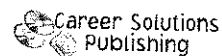
4. I will need this additional education to succeed in this career:

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# Career Headlines



Monday, March 10, 2014

## The Big Four for Career Success

Ask any employer to name what's most important for getting and keeping a job, and the answer may be much simpler than you think.

Good work ethics  
Readiness for employment  
Communication skills  
Ability to apply technology



Let's look at what bosses mean when they name these four as the big success indicators.

### Good work ethics

- ☐ I will show up for the job every day and be on time.
- ☐ I will always hold myself responsible for turning out high-quality work.
- ☐ I'll be honest and trustworthy.
- ☐ I'll be loyal to the company and boss who pay my salary.

### Readiness for employment

- ☐ My attitude will be positive because I know negativity is a career stopper.
- ☐ I won't let my personal opinions cause problems for a team.
- ☐ I'm willing to ask questions when I don't understand something.
- ☐ My goal is to help my company be successful.

### Communication skills

- ☐ I think before I talk.
- ☐ I learn by listening.
- ☐ I avoid sarcasm, defensiveness, and arrogance when communicating.
- ☐ I read what I write and rewrite it when the message isn't clear.

### Ability to apply technology

- ☐ I know how to use word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software.
- ☐ My general computer knowledge will allow me to learn a company's specialty software quickly.
- ☐ I can troubleshoot minor technology problems.
- ☐ I won't abuse technology at work by doing personal things on company time.

**Action:** Reread the list and add a check by each item that describes your current preparedness for career success.

**Note to educators:** *Job Ready Career Skills* covers these career attributes. [Click here](#) for a demonstration.