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Top Factors to Consider When Choosing a School

Application season is quickly approaching

With school back in session, you're probably just getting settled into your routine of homework, assignments, extracurricular activities, volunteering, and maybe even a part-time job. In your grade 12 year, you'll have to start applying to post-secondary schools, but first, you **need to know which schools you want to apply to**. You **only have a few months to select your choice of post-secondary schools once your senior year begins**, so choose wisely.



Factors to consider when selecting schools

There are thousands of schools for you to choose from all over the world, so figuring out which ones you should apply to can be difficult. But, if you consider these factors, you'll definitely **narrow down your choices to create a list of schools perfect for you!**

1. Personal preference

Here are **questions you should ask yourself** before applying to schools:

a) Are you more hands-on or theoretical?

Based on your style of learning, you'll need to consider college, university, or both. If you consider yourself to be more hands-on, then you may want to consider applying to colleges. But, if you prefer the academic/theoretical side of learning, then university is best for you.

b) Do you prefer a small or a large campus?

Large campuses typically have **more resources such as larger gyms, more food options, etc.** But, small campuses mean you can **walk to your next class on the other side of campus without breaking a sweat** or being late. Class sizes are also important. The smaller the **student to faculty ratio** the more your classes will feel like discussions rather than long lectures.

2. Location

Where a school is located can have a **big impact on your experience**. Ask yourself these questions:

a) Do you want to study abroad, nationally, or locally?

The first thing you need to consider is where you want to be located. Do you want to be **close to home or out exploring the world**? What are you most comfortable with?

b) Do you want to live on- or off-campus?

Do you want to **live on-campus with other first year students socializing 24/7** or do you want some **independence and live off-campus**? Does the school offer residences for first year students or resources to help students find housing off-campus?

3. Academics

Now, time to think about the actual **education part** of each school:

a) Do you have the necessary prerequisites?

Most importantly, do you have the **required courses and grades** to get into the program you want? If not, ask your counsellor how you can get the requirements you need.

b) Does the school have the program you want? What sets it apart from other schools?

If a school doesn't have the program you're interested in, then there's no point in applying there. If they do, what does the program offer? Can you do **co-op placements**? Are there **courses that align with your interests**? Is there anything about their program that catches your eye?

c) What kind of academic and career support does the school offer?

The transition from high school to post-secondary can be difficult, so you may find that your grades are slipping. Does the school offer **tutoring or other academic support** to help you? How about when you're looking outside of school towards your career? Does the school offer **career counselling and resumé help**?



4. Scholarships, bursaries, grants, and other financial resources

Consider these questions when **reviewing each school's financial aid options**:

a) What is the application process like for financial aid?

Applying for scholarships is important, but what is the process like at each school? Some schools have **one application for all awards**, whereas **others may ask that you submit multiple applications**.

b) Is there a limit of how many scholarships a student may have?

Make sure you learn more about the school's scholarship opportunities if this is a large factor for you. Some schools may only allow students to **receive one entrance award**, while others may allow you to **receive as many as you earn**.

c) Are there scholarship and financial aid opportunities after your first year?

Scholarships in your first year are great, but what about when you're in your upper years? Are there still scholarship opportunities for you? If so, **is it enough to help you through your education?**



5. Campus life

Ask these questions to discover **what the school has to offer outside of academics**:

a) What kinds of extracurricular activities can you get involved in?

School isn't just about studying. You can also **explore your interests, hobbies, and favourite sports**. Find out if the school has something that you could get involved in.

b) What facilities are on campus?

What does the school offer that is part of your day-to-day life? This could be gyms, recreation areas, cafés, food courts, pharmacies, banks, grocery stores, etc.

Good luck finding your dream school

Finding your dream school can take some time, but with these questions in mind you'll find the best school for you. Good luck and **enjoy getting to know your potential schools!**

