

Factors to Consider Discussion Guide

Instructions and purpose: Examine the various school and lifestyle factors to consider when choosing a program. Highlighting the factors that matter the most to you will help you narrow the list of schools or programs you apply to. With your mentor, think through the considerations involved and determine which are most important to you and why. Review your rankings and compile a top 10 list to guide your thinking moving forward.

Ranking: 1 = critical to my decision; 2 = important but not a deal breaker; 3 = preferred; 4 = less important; 5 = not a factor

Issue	Information to help you think through the question	Rank importance 1–5	Explain your ranking
SCHOOL FACTORS			
Career goals			
Does this school offer the right major?			
Does this school offer transferable credits?			
Does this school offer a certificate in my field of study?			
Type of school			
Will credits at this school count toward the type of degree I want to obtain?			
Should I start at a 2-year school (associate's degree), 4-year school (bachelor's degree), trade school (associate's degree or certificate), or tech school (associate's degree or certificate)?			
Should I choose a public or private school?			
Should I choose an in-state or out-of-state school (out-of-state is often more expensive)?			

Issue	Information to help you think through the question	Rank importance 1–5	Explain your ranking
Cost			
How much will it cost to attend this school?			
What type of financial aid is available?			
Is the amount I will pay reasonable compared to the salary I will earn in my chosen career?			
School's reputation			
What do people say about this school?			
Does this school have a good reputation in the community?			
Is it accredited by an independent agency?			
Do graduates get jobs in their field?			
LIFESTYLE FACTORS			
Class flexibility			
Will I need to attend classes at night or on weekends?			
Are summer classes or programs available?			
Is distance learning an option?			
Campus student support services			
Is there an academic success center that provides free tutoring?			

Issue	Information to help you think through the question	Rank importance 1–5	Explain your ranking
Is there a career center that will help with resumes, internships, and job searches?			
Is there an on-campus daycare or co-op?			
Are there student organizations that I would like to be a part of like the Women's Center or Native American Student Union?			
Location			
Will I have to move to attend this school?			
Would leaving my current community be a good thing?			
Are the commute time and distance reasonable?			
Will parking be an issue?			
Is it easily accessible via public transportation?			
Local support system			
Do I have family or friends in the area available for practical and moral support if needed?			

After you've considered all of the factors, revisit your ranks and record you top 10 factors for easy references.

My Top 10 Factors

Factor	Ranking
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	