

Getting the best out of Open Days



Getting the best out of Open Days – Finding the best fit course for you requires serious thought and engagement. If you prepare well, Open Day experiences can provide an ideal opportunity to help you to do this. Even if you are sure of your course, you need to find out as much as you can about it before you put it on your CAO application.

Establish your interests: This might relate to subjects within school or quite different interests outside of school. Look for courses that fall within your area of interest. Eliminate what you dislike.

Research: Use the Internet to research these courses. Don't limit the search to one college. Explore and you will be surprised at what information you will find about what you will be expected to study and the commitment that will be required.

Make a list of questions. This list will change over the course of your search and many times over the year ahead.

Attend talks: Be discerning when you are attending talks. Take notes and refine your list of questions following the talks.

Ask questions: You must ask. Be selfish about your own interest. Talk to students, lecturers, admission staff and any others who are at the stands. Make use of the short time available. Listen to others asking questions too and more importantly the answers they get.

Evaluate the experience: What have you gained from attending? What else do you need to find out? You will need to extend your network by searching far beyond Open Day engaging with your school, community, family and friends. Try and find graduates from the course who will only be delighted to share their experiences with you.

Remember: You will be in college for three or four years. It is important to make a course and college choice that suits you. Refine your questions as you find out more and follow up with the Colleges (and individual courses). They welcome your enquiries throughout the year.

For all courses you are thinking about: Ask yourself one question and ask it many times over the coming year, 'How would I feel if I were offered this course in August 2015?'. The answer might be telling.

College entry is highly competitive so be sure to give yourself lots of options in the area of your interest when completing the CAO application.

Open days are all about you, the student. Make things happen for you.

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