

Best-Fit University Workbook

There is no single “best” university.

The goal of this workbook is to help you figure out what makes a university a good fit for you, before you start comparing universities.

For each category, think about:

MUST-HAVE

Something you genuinely need.

NICE-TO-HAVE

Something you'd really like, but could live without.

DEAL-BREAKER

Something that would make a university the wrong fit for you.

And for each choice, ask yourself:

Why does this matter to me?

1. ACADEMICS

What do I want my academic experience to look like?

Think about your subjects, degree program, teaching style, flexibility, class size, research opportunities, and academic environment.

MUST-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

NICE-TO-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEAL-BREAKERS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do these things matter to me?

2. LOCATION

Where do I want to live while I attend university?

Think about city vs. town, climate, transportation, distance from family, travel connections, culture, language, and whether you want somewhere familiar or completely new.

MUST-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

NICE-TO-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEAL-BREAKERS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why does location matter to me?

3. COMMUNITY & STUDENT LIFE

What kind of university community will help me feel connected?

Think about campus size, residential life, clubs and activities, sports, international students, campus culture, and how students typically spend their time.

MUST-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

NICE-TO-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEAL-BREAKERS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why does community matter to me?

4. SUPPORT

What will help me succeed at university?

Think about academic support, learning support, accessibility services, counseling and wellbeing, international student services, peer mentoring, career services, and first-year transition programs.

MUST-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

NICE-TO-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEAL-BREAKERS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What kind of support or resources matter most to me?

5. FINANCES

What needs to be financially realistic for my family?

Think beyond tuition. Consider housing, food, transportation, travel home, insurance, visas, fees, and other costs.

MUST-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

NICE-TO-HAVES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEAL-BREAKERS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do these financial priorities matter to me?

MY UNIVERSITY FIT PROFILE

You've identified what matters to you. Now, let's put it all together.

My Top 5 Priorities

If I could only choose five things that matter most in my university search, they would be:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

My 3 Non-Negotiables

These are the things I genuinely need for a university to work for me.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Something I'm Willing to Compromise On

I don't need a university to check every box.

One thing I'm willing to be flexible about is:

Why?

My Ideal University Environment

Complete the sentences:

Academically, I want a university that...

For location, I would prefer...

For community and student life, I want...

For support, I need...

Financially, I need...

BEFORE YOU START SEARCHING...

Keep this page nearby as you research universities.

When you find a university you like, don't ask only:

“Is this a good university?”

Ask:

“Is this a good university for me?”

And remember to ask yourself why.

If you discover that one of your priorities doesn't actually matter as much as you thought, change your list. Your definition of “best fit” is allowed to evolve as you learn more.

My university search starts with:

What I need to thrive:

What I'm willing to compromise on:

What I won't compromise on: