

Demonstrated Interest for College Admissions: What it is and Why it Matters

College admissions can be a competitive process. Universities are not only looking for academic excellence – they are also seeking students who genuinely want to attend their institution. One way to stand out in the admissions process is to demonstrate your sincere interest in the college. Doing so can be crucial in tipping the scales in your favor.

What is Demonstrated Interest?

Demonstrated interest refers to the ways a student shows a college that they are genuinely interested in attending. Colleges use various methods to gauge this interest, including whether you've connected with the college's representatives at campus visits, interviews, college fairs, and visits to your high school. It's important to note that colleges also track who attends their online information sessions and tours. Some colleges track whether you open the emails they've sent you and how long you spend reading them. Students who demonstrate their enthusiasm for a particular school are signaling that they are not just applying because it's a backup option, but because they genuinely believe it's the right fit for them.

Why Does Demonstrated Interest Matter?

1. **Positive Impression:** By showing genuine interest, a student creates the impression that they are more likely to enroll, and admission readers are more likely to admit students who they believe will accept the offer of admission.
2. **Fit and Engagement:** Demonstrated interest helps colleges determine if a student is a good fit for their institution. If a student has researched the college extensively and still expresses enthusiasm, it suggests that they've found a place where they see themselves thriving academically and socially.
3. **Merit Aid and Scholarships:** Some colleges offer merit-based aid or scholarships, and demonstrated interest can play a role in selection for these awards.

How to Show Demonstrated Interest to Admission Staff:

1. Visit Campus

Visiting a college campus is one of the most powerful ways for a student to demonstrate interest. While on a college visit, students should engage with students, faculty, and admissions representatives. They should also ask insightful questions that can't be easily found on the college's websites and take notes. Later, a student can reference these interactions in their application essays and interviews. Tips on college visits can be found [here](#).

That said, colleges do recognize that not all students can visit campus due to time or budget constraints. Alternative ways to show interest include attending online information sessions, taking online campus tours, and participating in online open houses or webinars.

2. Take Advantage of Interview Opportunities

If the college offers interviews, students should take advantage. Some tips for these interviews include dressing appropriately (business casual is fine), arriving on time (whether it's online or in person), and being prepared to discuss interest in that specific institution. You should prepare for the question, "Why are you interested in attending our college?" Being able to demonstrate knowledge about the college's programs, culture,

and values is a must. Students should send a thank you note after the interview to express their continued interest.

3. Attend College Fairs

College fairs are excellent opportunities to meet admissions representatives from various schools. Students should make a list of the colleges they're interested in and ask substantive questions of those representatives. Shake their hand, look them in the eye, and introduce yourself before launching into conversation. Tips on navigating college fairs can be found [here](#).

4. Connect With Admissions Representatives

Students can engage with admissions officers through email or social media. Sending them thoughtful questions about the college or their application shows interest. However, avoid spamming them with excessive messages; interactions should be meaningful and respectful of their time.

5. Tailor Application Essays

In the supplemental application essays, students should be specific about why they want to attend that particular college. If the prompt calls for it, students should discuss how the school's programs align with their academic and career goals. We recommend including any campus visits or interactions with faculty or students that left a lasting impression.

6. Apply Early

If the college offers Early Decision (ED) or Early Action (EA) options, students should consider applying through these routes. ED demonstrates a strong commitment to that institution, and EA shows that you're organized and ready to apply early.

7. Express Enthusiasm in Correspondence

If students have updates or additional information to provide to the college, they should convey their continued interest in emails. Remind your student to be professional and concise and to express their enthusiasm for attending.

8. Join Mailing Lists/ Open Emails

Students should subscribe to the college's mailing list to receive updates and newsletters. They should also open and engage with the content sent, spending some time with each email as colleges can track how long a student spends with email -- and on the website.