

How to Demonstrate Interest in a College

8 Ways to Tell a School Your Interest is High

By [Allen Grove](#), About.com Guide

According to a NACAC study, about 50% of colleges claim that a student's demonstrated interest in the school is either highly or moderately important in the admissions process. Be sure to learn about why demonstrated interest matters to colleges.

But how exactly do you demonstrate interest? The list below presents some ways to tell a school that your interest is more than superficial.

1. [Supplemental Essays](#)¹

Many colleges have an essay question that asks why you want to attend their school, and a lot of colleges that use [The Common Application](#)² have a college-specific supplement. This is a great place to show your interest. Make sure your essay isn't generic. It should address the specific and unique features of the college that most appeal to you. Show that you've researched the college well and that you're a good match for the school. Check out this [sample supplemental essay](#)³, and be careful to avoid these common [supplemental essay mistakes](#)⁴.

2. [Campus Visits](#)⁵

Most colleges keep track of who visits campus, and the campus visit is important for two reasons: not only does it demonstrate your interest, it also helps you get a better feel for the college. Campus visits help you choose a school, craft a focused essay, and perform well in an interview. Here's [how to make the most of your campus visit](#)⁶.

3. [College Interviews](#)⁷

The interview is a great place to demonstrate your interest. Be sure to research the college well before the interview, and then use the interview to demonstrate your interest through both the questions you ask and those you answer. If the interview is optional, you should probably do it. Here are some reasons [why an optional interview is a good idea](#)⁸.

Make sure you're prepared for these [12 common interview questions](#)⁹, and work to avoid these [10 interview mistakes](#)¹⁰.

4. **College Fairs**

If a college fair is in your area, stop by the booths of the colleges you are most interested in attending. Introduce yourself to the college representative and be sure to leave your name and contact information. You'll get on the college's mailing list, and many schools keep track of the fact that you visited the booth. Also be sure to pick up the college rep's business card (see why in #6 below).

5. **Contacting Your Admissions Representative**

You don't want to pester the admissions office, but if you have a question or two about the college, call or email your admissions representative. Plan your call and craft your email carefully -- you'll want to make a good impression. An ungrammatical email filled with text-speak isn't going to work in your favor.

6. **Sending a Thank You Note**

If you chatted with a college representative at a fair, send an email message the next day to thank him or her for taking time to talk with you. In the message, note one or two features of the college that appeal to you. Similarly, if you meet with a regional representative or interview on campus, send a follow-up thank you. You'll be demonstrating your interest as well as showing that you are a considerate person.

If you really want to impress, send an actual snail-mail note of appreciation.

7. **Requesting College Information**

You're likely to get a lot of college brochures without asking for them. Colleges work hard to get mailing lists of high school students who show promise. Don't rely on this passive approach to getting print materials, and don't depend entirely on a college's website for information. A short and polite email message requesting college information and application materials shows that you are actively interested in the school. It's flattering when a college reaches out to you. It demonstrates interest when you reach out to the college.

8. [Applying Early](#)¹¹

There is perhaps no better way to demonstrate interest than to apply to a college through an [early decision](#)¹² program. This is for the simple reason that you can apply to just one school through early decision, and if accepted your decision is binding. Early decision should be used only if you are 100% sure that the college is your top choice. Realize that not all colleges offer early decision.

[Early action](#)¹³ also shows your interest, and through this admissions program you are not bound to a single school. Early action does not demonstrate as high of a level of interest as early decision, but it does show that you care enough to get your application submitted early in the admissions cycle.

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