

# NAVIGATING THE COLLEGE SEARCH

FAMILY TOOLKIT



 MESSIAH  
UNIVERSITY

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace  
as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with  
hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*—Romans 15:13 (NIV)*





Dear Students and  
Family Members,

You are embarking on  
an **exciting time of  
discovery**—deciding  
how to spend your years  
after high school. We  
hope this workbook  
will help answer some  
of your initial questions  
about the college search  
process and encourage  
productive conversations  
that will help set you  
upon the right path.

Sincerely,  
**John Chopka**,  
*vice president for  
enrollment management*



### PRO TIP

While this journey is student-centered, family can be an invaluable guide. We encourage you to work through this together!

Watch for these **Pro Tips**  
as you read to help you with  
the college search process!



# WHO do I want to be?

The first step in this journey is about **you**. Who **you** are now. Who **you** want to become.

Circle 5-8 qualities below that **you hope to develop** during your college years.

*Resourceful*

*Cutting-edge*

*Adaptable*

*Compassionate*

*Reliable*

*Cultured*

*Competent*

*Artistic*

*Creative*

*Ambitious*

*Innovative*

*Honorable*

*Analytical*

*Faithful*

*Organized*

*Daring*

*Perceptive*

*Passionate*

*Altruistic*

*Responsive*

List a few others here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_







**PRO TIP**

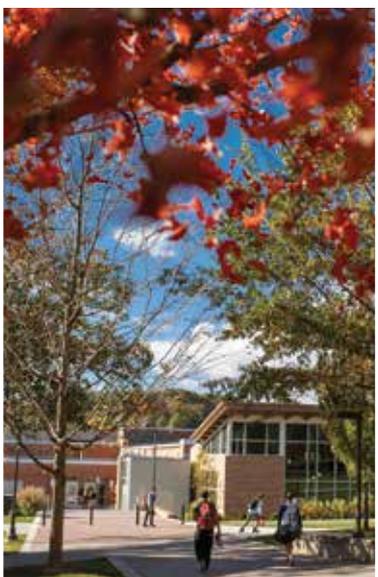
Use these descriptors to develop your initial college list and then to begin to narrow it down from there.

# WHAT'S important to me?

Every college is different. Some factors will be **extremely important to you.**

**Circle 5-8 words** below that describe **important characteristics in the place you will call home** for several years.

- |          |               |             |              |
|----------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Suburban | Mentorship    | Travel      | Athletics    |
| Urban    | Community     | Social life | Residential  |
| Busy     | Research      | Secular     | Commuter     |
| Public   | Christian     | Far away    | Honors       |
| Rural    | Close to home | Missions    | Experiential |



What other factors are important to you?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



# WHAT should I study?

To begin discovering which major may be the best fit with your personal interests, abilities and career goals, **circle 5-8 categories** below that align with things you're passionate about.

- |                   |                        |                     |                         |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Animals</i>    | <i>Videography</i>     | <i>Athletics</i>    | <i>Computer science</i> |
| <i>Kids</i>       | <i>History</i>         | <i>Photography</i>  | <i>Music</i>            |
| <i>Healthcare</i> | <i>Coding</i>          | <i>Cultures</i>     | <i>Engineering</i>      |
| <i>Math</i>       | <i>Drawing</i>         | <i>Teaching</i>     | <i>Design</i>           |
| <i>Business</i>   | <i>Social services</i> | <i>Theology</i>     | <i>Environment</i>      |
| <i>Science</i>    | <i>Economics</i>       | <i>Broadcasting</i> | <i>Foreign language</i> |
| <i>Painting</i>   | <i>Writing</i>         | <i>Research</i>     | <i>Nutrition</i>        |



What else are you passionate about?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



**PRO TIP**

Want more help choosing a major? Visit [messiah.edu/explore-u](http://messiah.edu/explore-u) for more resources.





## HOW do I learn more?

Take some time to talk to **people in your life who can help you**, do some research, fill out information requests on college websites, etc.

### People who can help:

1. High school counselor
2. Teacher or coach
3. Youth pastor
4. Family members

### Visit college campuses:

Make an individual appointment or attend an Open House.

### Research online:

1. College websites
2. Virtual tours
3. Naviance
4. The Common App
5. Christian Connector
6. US News & World Report
7. BigFuture
8. Niche

Follow Messiah's Instagram Account @messiah\_univ and join our student community on ZeeMee to learn about campus life.



Some schools I might be interested in:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT does it all mean?

Admissions language can be confusing! Check out these definitions to help with the application process. Be sure to research the process for each school you are interested in, they can be different.

**Rolling admissions:** non-binding, no deadlines, decisions typically within a few weeks

**Early action:** non-binding, early deadlines, decisions well in advance of the regular response date

**Early decision:** When offered, this option is for students applying to their first choice school and is a binding commitment. Upon acceptance, students will withdraw their applications to all other institutions.

**Regular decision:** For those students who are considering several colleges and would like to decide where to attend after hearing from all of them, non-binding, deadlines and decisions can be made in the late winter/early spring.

**Test optional:** Admissions applicants may choose to seek admission without submitting standardized test scores. Instead, a school may take a holistic approach to application review for all students. All aspects of a student's application may be considered including the GPA, difficulty of curriculum, student performance in core academic courses, essay, involvement and any honors or recognitions.



Top schools:

1. Messiah: rolling, test optional

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

“I chose Messiah because **I really wanted to come to a school where I could grow in my faith, in my academics, and gain valuable professional experience.** Messiah had a good blend of all three of those qualities, as well as being situated on a beautiful campus.”

— Emilie Rush '23



## HOW can I grow?

Your years at college can be a pivotal time of growth. Choose a place that stretches you to become the best version of you possible. Growth occurs in many areas and ways!

### Spiritually

Attending a faith-based institution is a great way to invest in your spiritual growth. Many schools offer various chapel opportunities, Bible studies and worship experiences to help you explore and strengthen your faith. Be intentional about researching a school's spiritual environment and how it fits with your values.

### Professionally

Choose a school with a strong commitment to preparing you for success after graduation. Academic programs and co-curricular activities built with values and faith integrated into the curriculum can push you to excel in the future. Engaged faculty have a wealth of knowledge and can mentor you in your faith, intellect and help in career preparation.

### Personally

A faith-based community will provide you with the best opportunities to meet people who will help you grow, encourage you in your faith and become your lifelong friends and mentors. Look for opportunities for service on and off campus as well as studying abroad. College is the perfect place to develop your character and expand on your academic and faith foundation.






**PRO TIP**

Utilize each school's net price calculator to get an estimate of what you might pay. Check out Messiah's at [messiah.edu/netpricecalc](http://messiah.edu/netpricecalc).

# How much does it cost?

College CAN be affordable. Tuition at any college is not what it may seem at first glance. As you look deeper into the cost of a college education, you'll soon discover that the actual price equals the "sticker price" minus a package of financial aid—consisting of loans, grants, scholarships and work programs—that the University's financial aid office will put together for you. Be sure to take all of this financial assistance into account when evaluating a specific school. It can help make college much more affordable than you thought it could be.



100% OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS RECEIVE FINANCIAL AID

## Messiah University's financial aid tips

For accepted students in their senior year of high school.



### APPLY FOR AID

Complete the FAFSA (*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*) and other financial aid forms as instructed. After filing your FAFSA, you'll receive your student aid report, which includes a summary of your FAFSA application data. Review this report carefully and make any necessary corrections requested by the federal processor. **FAFSA code** 003298



### REVIEW YOUR AID

Once your financial aid application has been reviewed, a notice will be sent to your Messiah University email for you to view your online award. (Only accepted students receive an award notice.)



### UNDERSTAND YOUR AID

Connect with your admissions counselor to review your award package and have your questions answered. **[messiah.edu/counselor](http://messiah.edu/counselor)**



### UPDATE SCORES AND GPA

Submit improved test scores and/or GPA with Messiah for scholarship review and consideration.



### DEPOSIT AND ACCEPT AID

Submit a \$200 enrollment deposit to secure your place in the class and accept your financial aid award. **[messiah.edu/deposit](http://messiah.edu/deposit)**



## WHERE do I go from here?

### Freshman–sophomore year

Continue to explore your interests and research schools.

### Junior year

Create and cultivate your list of schools and visit them. If you're interested in pursuing college athletics, this is the time to reach out and connect with coaches at your top schools.

### Senior year

Apply to your top schools in the the fall of your senior year and consider visiting again to connect with faculty in your area of interest; begin the financial aid process.

**“I love how purposeful Messiah is about incorporating faith into the application process; it really shows the intentionality of developing faith formation before coming to Messiah. I also appreciate how willing my admissions counselor was to talk to me about faith at Messiah and how it differs for everyone depending on what you put into growing in your faith!”**

– Lucas Burkhart '23





Office of Undergraduate Admissions  
One University Ave  
Mechanicsburg PA 17055  
[messiah.edu](http://messiah.edu)

*Address Service Requested*



At **Messiah University**, your life,  
your faith, your world  
and your possibilities open up.

**You see anew.**

[messiah.edu/seeanew](http://messiah.edu/seeanew).



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