Choosing the Right College for You

Not All Colleges Are Created Equal
You may already know that choosing the right college can make all the difference for your future. But do you know what makes a college right for you? You are probably building your college list based on the likelihood of being admitted and dividing schools into “safety,” “match,” and “reach.” That’s a good start, but did you know that schools that accept students with similar GPA and test scores can have very different graduation rates? This means that you may be less likely to graduate from one college than another, even if the two schools seem very similar.

Where Am I Most Likely to Graduate?
Graduation rates can be very different between colleges. When creating your school list and making your choice, be sure to check each school’s graduation rate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Reach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College A</td>
<td>College C</td>
<td>College F</td>
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<tr>
<td>College B</td>
<td>College D</td>
<td>College G</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Acceptance Rate
- Safety: 65%
- Match: 66%
- Reach: 65%

Average ACT Score
- Safety: 23–27
- Match: 22–29
- Reach: 25–28

Average SAT Score
- Safety: 1040–1260
- Match: 1010–1280
- Reach: 1030–1260

Average HS GPA
- Safety: 3.3
- Match: 3.3
- Reach: 3.3

Graduation Rate
- Safety: 68%
- Match: 55%
- Reach: 55%

Did You Know?
- Schools with similar average graduation rates can have very different outcomes for different students.

Where Can I Get In?
Most students choose colleges based on familiarity, cost, distance, and how likely they are to be admitted to each school.

Which Schools Are Right for Me?
When choosing a college, look for the graduation rates for students like you. Use the Department of Education’s free College Navigator tool and speak to your counselor to find out specific graduation rates for students like you at each school.

Graduation Rate for Students like Me*
- Safety: 49%
- Match: 60%

* Graduation rates can vary based on race, ethnicity, gender, income, and more.