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9 Key Questions

Every university you visit must be able to answer so you can make the best decision about which school you choose!
IN TODAY’S FIERCELY COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE, YOU CAN’T AFFORD THE RISK OF CHOOSING THE SCHOOL THAT IS NOT THE EXACT FIT FOR YOU!

Universities in Ontario are all good options, they offer degrees, majors, minors, you will make friends there, and each city has a nightlife scene. None of these things are a differentiating factor from one to the next. **If you are looking to make the BEST choice, it is important that the choice you make is the right one for YOU SPECIFICALLY.** We’ve got a list of questions for you to ask when you’re doing tours and open houses so you can find the perfect place for you to spend the next 4 years!

Missed Fall Open House but still want to take a tour of campus? Click here to check out what Renison has to offer UWaterloo students

**Question #1 - Does this University have a good reputation?**

We all know some version of the story about something getting stolen from (insert place here) and the kid with the bad reputation getting blamed for it while the person who actually did it totally gets away with it. The opposite is also true, **a good reputation can open doors for you.** Think about what having a University with a great reputation looks like on your resume? What if the other person has the exact same qualifications as you? Who gets the job?

**Bottom line:** A school with a good reputation is THE thing you want to have on your resume when you go out job hunting. **It’s like having a celebrity endorse your products.** Your future employer may not know you, but they will know the school you went to if you choose one with a great reputation.

**Question #2 - What type of support do you offer to students to help them succeed?**

This is very important.

Everyone goes through ups and downs. You are most likely about to move away from home, possibly move to a new city (likely a completely different part of the city at the very least). You want to know before you go, that the University you choose has your back when you need it. That means **they should have extra support for people struggling emotionally or academically.**

Make sure the place that you choose has clear supports in place just in case.
Question #3 - What does your University do to make sure students have access to the LATEST trends in each subject?

As mentioned above, all Universities in Ontario have good programs and teach subjects that can stand the test of time. In some cases however, there are subjects that meet the needs of a specific generation but this information today would be considered old school at best.

The key answer you are looking for when it comes to this question is whether or not the University you are looking at has a good reputation for INNOVATION. Does this University produce graduates and research that is cutting edge?

When you go to University it’s not only what you know, it’s who you’re learning what you know from. You need to look at what the graduates of the University you’re looking into are doing to get a good idea of what the potential for you is.

Question #4 - Does your University have a solid grasp of not only the latest trends but how this translates into jobs for graduates?

This is a critical factor to consider when looking at applying to University.

Look for a University that has a great working relationship with a variety of businesses. A big plus is a University that has a co-op program or experiential learning that is at least part of its programming. Again look at what people who graduate from the University you are looking at are doing.

Question #5 - Does your University offer different residence styles that would suit my needs?

After all, you are also looking at where you are going to live next year too. Nobody wants to rent an apartment or buy a house that doesn’t check most of the boxes of what they want. So why would you do that when you choose your residence?
Insider Tip: Make sure to ask if your tour guide if there is a smaller close-knit style residence if you are looking for something a little more chilled out and don’t want to live in one of the huge 24 hour party residences. Even if you think that might be great, remember, you can always visit those (after all, the party does go all day) if you are looking to cut loose but you don’t have the option of going home if you live there.

Maybe you have specific needs such as accessibility or you prefer to have a roommate. Make sure you ask about all of your options on campus.

Another Insider Tip: If you have a friend that you want to live with, do this instead. Request to be in the same residence and each of you get a roommate. That way you’ll likely double your group of friends immediately.

Question #6 - Do the residences at your University put people together who are in the same program?

Look at whether or not the people around you are going to be studying the same thing as you. That way you will have people to study with, bounce ideas off of and it is another easy way to make friends.

Ask whether or not your University offers communities in their residences where there is an entire floor or wing that has people from the same program in it. Maybe you are a student athlete and you want to have a chance to live with other athletes that have a similar busy schedule to yours.

Again, this is about making the best choice for you so make sure you know what options are available.

Question #7 - What is the city like? How easy is it to get around?

Let’s face it, you aren’t going to spend all of your time on campus, you’ll want to ask what the city is like and how easy it is to get around. Ask if a bus pass is included in your student fees or if that will be an extra expense. Ask about what all is walking distance and your options around bringing a bike or a car.
Maybe there are big festivals that the city is known for, **oftentimes your tour guide is an upper year student or a graduate of the University you’re touring**, they will know, be sure to ask them!

**Question #8 - What clubs does your University have? How easy is it to start one if I have an interest you don’t have a club for?**

Different people have different interests and clubs are a great way to meet people with common interests to yours.

**Question #9 - What about sports and recreation?**

You may not be a varsity athlete but still want to remain active. Make sure you check out what is available to you in terms of fitness and activity.

Well there it is, don’t forget to print the checklist we provided for you so you can write notes and compare answers after you make your visits. It was mentioned at the beginning and it is important to restate it here. Ontario has phenomenal Universities – so we know it can be tough to choose the right fit for you. Hopefully this checklist helps you with that decision.

Best wishes for your success,

Colin Durkin  
Marketing and Advancement Officer, Renison University College

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