

12 Questions to Ask Before Hiring an Independent Educational Consultant

1. Do you guarantee admission to a school, one of my top choices, or a certain minimum dollar value in scholarships? (Do NOT trust any offer of guarantees.)
2. How do you keep up with new trends, academic changes and evolving campus cultures? How often do you get out and visit college, school, and program campuses and meet with admissions representatives? (The ONLY way to know about the best matches for you is to be out visiting schools regularly—we suggest a minimum of 20 campuses per year.)
3. Do you belong to any professional associations? (NACAC and IECA are the two associations for independent educational consultants with established and rigorous standards for membership.)
4. Do you attend professional conferences or training workshops on a regular basis to keep up with regional and national trends and changes in the law?
5. Do you ever accept any form of compensation from a school, program, or company in exchange for placement or a referral? (They absolutely should not!)
6. Are all fees involved stated in writing, up front, indicating exactly what services I will receive for those fees?
7. Will you complete the application for admission, re-write my essays, or fill out the financial aid forms on my behalf? (No, they should NOT; it is essential that the student be in charge of the process and all materials should be a product of the student's own, best work.)
8. How long have you been in business as an independent educational consultant (IEC)?
9. What was your background prior to going into independent educational consulting? What was your training and education?
10. Will you use personal connections to get me in to one of my top choices? (The answer should be NO. An IEC doesn't get you admitted—they help you to demonstrate why you deserve to be admitted.)
11. What specialized training do you have (LD, gifted, athletics, arts, etc.)?
12. Do you adhere to the ethical guidelines for private counseling established by IECA?

One way to ensure that an independent educational consultant is ethical is to hire an IECA member educational consultant who has been vetted through IECA's intense application process.

