

Frequently Asked Questions About HECA Tours

Who can attend HECA tours?

Only active HECA members may attend HECA tours. They are offered as a benefit to members only.

What are the different types of tours offered?

There are two types of HECA Tours: tours that take place before and after the annual conference, and stand-alone tours offered throughout the year. Tours of different locations are offered several times a year. The Tour Committee periodically surveys the HECA membership about interest in different locations.

How can I register for a tour?

1. **Only HECA members can register for tours.** If you try to register without membership, or if your membership has lapsed, you will receive an "Access Denied" message. In order to rectify this situation, pay the membership fee online, or contact membership@hecaonline.org.
2. Members are sent an email prior to registration, giving the date and time that registration will open. Do NOT wait for an email at the time of registration. Check the HECA tours page regularly for information updates (<http://hecaonline.org/tours>).

What do I need to consider before signing up for a tour?

1. **Read all the information in the tour listing**, including Cost and Logistics, Travel Arrangements, Cancellation Policy and Gentle Reminders (<http://hecaonline.org/gentlereminders>).
2. Make sure you are available for the entire duration of the tour. Full participation is required: When you register for a tour, you make a **commitment to participate in the entire tour**. You cannot intentionally arrive late, make alternate plans during tour events (including meals that are part of the tour program), skip a college, leave early.
3. There will be **no refund if you cancel** your participation in the tour and registrations are not transferable. Tour organizers must be notified of any cancellations by emailing collegetours@hecaonline.org.

How does the registration process work?

1. Tour registration is first-come, first-served. You may register beginning on the designated day and time until the tour has reached capacity. Tours are often extremely popular and may fill within minutes after registration opens.

2. For the best chance of getting on a tour, please note:
 - You do not have to wait for an email message announcing the opening of registration.
 - Open the tour registration page at the appointed day and time.
 - If the tour registration page is open before the registration date and time, there will not be a “Register” button. The button only appears after registration has opened. You must refresh the page in your browser to see the “Register” button.
 - Please note that you will be asked to provide the name and cell number of the person to contact in case of emergency during the tour.
 - Payment is due immediately after registration. Due to heavy demand for the tours, we are not able to hold your place if you delay payment.
 - After you register for the tour, make hotel reservations promptly. What are my responsibilities as a member of a HECA college tour?

What are the behavior guidelines for the tour?

- Dress professionally.
- Please be on time for the bus and allow time for boarding before the scheduled departure time. We will not hold the bus for latecomers. If you miss the bus, you will need to find your own transportation to join us at our next destination.
- Do not talk in side conversations during tours or information sessions.
- Silence all cell phones. Do not take calls or texts during tours or information sessions.
- Do not take close-up, personally identifiable photos of students, especially tour guides. Photos of students in the distance are acceptable.
- Let the tour guides lead the tours. Keep your questions relevant. Save your off-topic questions for the end of the tour or while you’re walking.
- Remember that tour guides are young people who are doing their best. Please be respectful and kind. Don’t be dismissive of their efforts because you’ve heard similar information at other colleges (e.g., blue lights or books in the library). Don’t ask personal questions that might make your guide uncomfortable (e.g., where else did you get in).
- Phrase your questions in a manner that helps you understand the college and the fit for your students.
- Do not bring up or discuss your specific clients with admissions representatives.
- Avoid questions that are aimed at challenging the speaker or the college’s educational philosophy or admissions practices.
- Please be respectful of your fellow consultants and do not monopolize the conversation. Leave time for others to ask their questions.

Do I have to register for the conference to attend a conference tour?

Yes. Participation in the pre- and post-conference tours is limited to conference attendees who are HECA members.

I want to schedule my own tour around the conference.

HECA members are prohibited from *scheduling individual tours on the same day as conference tours*. We are guests of the schools and must respect their desire to limit capacity. The tour represents a large demand on the school's resources, and the schools will be striving to serve prospective students and families as well. Thank you for respecting our host school preferences.

Do I have to stay in the hotel?

Participation in the tour requires you to **stay in the HECA room block at the tour hotel(s), regardless of other housing options** (required to meet HECA hotel commitment; out of fairness to all, there are no exceptions and your hotel reservation will be checked). **Please reserve your room as early as possible, within two weeks after registering** and identify yourself as part of the HECA tour to obtain the group rate. **The HECA group rate is arranged as a courtesy but is not guaranteed.** Be sure you understand each hotel's cancellation policy. To make your reservation, contact the hotel and mention HECA or, when available, use the HECA room reservation link.

Does the tour price include hotel?

The tour price includes bus transportation between the hotel(s) and all the colleges (including driver gratuity). The price also includes lunches sponsored by the colleges. **Lodging is not included and participants must pay to stay in the tour hotel(s) the night prior to and during all tours, including multiple day tours.** Participants are responsible for their own lodging costs at the tour or conference hotel.

I need to cancel, can I get a refund?

There will be **no refund if you cancel** your participation in the tour at any time and registrations are not transferable. Tour organizers must be notified of any cancellations by emailing collegetours@hecaonline.org.

If your plans change and you cannot attend the tour, please do not cancel your room reservation directly! Contact collegetours@hecaonline.org as soon as possible.

I have dietary issues. Can they be accommodated?

Please list your dietary issues on your registration. That information will be conveyed to the colleges who are providing lunches for the tour. Most of the dinners will be on your own, and you can arrange your own meals for those. If you have a very limited diet, please consider bringing your own food to supplement what is provided by the colleges.

I have mobility difficulties. Can I get a golf cart or special tour?

Tour participants need to be ready for extensive walking across campuses, in all types of weather, and climbing stairs, even if only to access the bus. As part of the registration process, participants will be asked to indicate physical needs and request accommodation. Every effort will be made to ensure participant safety but please keep this in mind with regard to your personal comfort level and physical stamina.

Can my spouse or friend join me on the tour?

Informal participation not permitted: **Individuals not participating in the official tours may not join the tour events at the colleges.** You may share your hotel room with whomever you like, and most tours end before dinner each night.

I need a roommate. Can you find me one?

HECA members can post on the listserv to find roommates for tours. The Tour Committee is not able to pair up members on the tours.

I have to leave the tour early. Can I still attend?

Scheduling conflicts or special circumstances can affect all of us, but they are not able to be accommodated by the tours. Out of fairness to all, everyone who attends a tour must abide by the tour policies. Tour policies are provided in advance to avoid participants making arrangements outside of policy guidelines. Do not schedule your return flight until the time listed on the tour announcement.

Why are tour policies so strict? It seems like it would be easy to make an exception.

Policies have been developed after much thought and consideration of fairness to ALL members as well as the volunteer tour leaders and committee chairs. We understand that many people have reasons for exceptions to be made, but it is not fair or feasible to do so. People make sacrifices to attend the tours and follow policy; it is not fair to extend favors to some. The tours require considerable time and effort to plan and implement; having clear policies in place is essential. Tour leaders have a lot of responsibilities and need to focus on leading the tour with minimum distractions.

What happens if I choose not to follow policy?

We sincerely hope you will not opt for this route, as it is disruptive to the overall tour management and may be disrespectful to the host colleges. **Not following policy will result in**

a one-year ban on attending future HECA college tours. Thank you for your understanding of and respect for HECA tour policies and other HECA members.

Additional questions?

If your question is not answered above, please contact the HECA Tours Committee by emailing collegetours@hecaonline.org.