

Accreditation The recognition by an outside agency that a school maintains high standards, which enables students to qualify for admission to other accredited institutions.

Admission Requirements A set of rules established by each college for a student to be accepted.

Advanced Placement (AP) A system by which college freshmen may bypass entry-level courses by proving that they have already taken the equivalent in high school. Credit may be awarded if a student earns a certain grade on an AP exam taken in high school.

AP Scholar Awards recognizing high school students that demonstrate college-level achievement through the AP courses and exams. There are several levels of this award.

Advanced Standing Admission status when a student has completed more than 12 college credits.

Aid Package Aid list (scholarships, grants, loans, and work study) determined by the college financial aid office.

American College Test (ACT) A four-year college admissions test covering English, Math, Reading, and Science.

Bachelor's Degree The degree awarded for completing a college program of at least four years of academic work. Usually this degree is either a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or a Bachelor of Science (B.S.).

College Board A nonprofit organization that provides tests and many other educational services for students, schools, and colleges.

College Catalog A publication, often available online, by a college describing services and courses offered, as well as requirements for admission and degrees. The college counselor at your high school may have a selection of college catalogs which includes college addresses.

Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success (CAAS) A group of public and private colleges and universities collaborating to improve the college application process who created the CAAS application to streamline the process.

College Scholarship Service (CSS) PROFILE A financial aid form used by many private colleges to award private, non-federal funds. The CSS Profile is available through the College Board website.

Common Core Curriculum A national initiative that specifies what high school students should know at each grade level and describes the skills that they must acquire in order to achieve college or career readiness.

Credit Also called "Semester Hours," "Unit Hours," "Quarter Hours," or "Unit." A way of referring to credits earned in a course. If a class meets three hours per week, it is usually a 3-credit course. A full-time college student is usually defined as one who attends three to four classes and earns at least 12 credits per semester or quarter.

Cumulative Record The complete record of all courses and grades earned. A student transcript is a copy of his/her cumulative record.

Degree A diploma given as official recognition for satisfactory completion of a course of study. A four-year degree is usually a B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) or B.S. (Bachelor of Science.) A fifth or sixth-year degree is often an M.A. (Master of Arts) or M.S. (Master of Science.) A Doctoral degree (Ph.D.) requires five or more years beyond the B.A./B.S.

Associate of Arts (A.A.) Degree A two-year degree with a humanities emphasis that is usually earned at a community college.

Associate of Science (A.S.) Degree A two-year degree with a science emphasis that is usually earned at a community college.

Audit To attend a class for the purpose of reviewing the information. No grades or credits are given.

Early Action (EA) Highly-qualified candidates who apply early may receive offers of college admission by mid-December. An EA plan does not require an applicant to commit to the school or make any response to an offer of admission until the May 1 deadline. Some colleges offer a Restrictive Early Action application, but students should proceed cautiously as this program doesn't allow students to apply Early Action to other colleges.

Early Decision (ED) Students that are certain of their desire to attend a specific college may use the Early Decision application if the college offers it. Students may apply to only one ED college and *must* commit to attending if accepted. Students may apply to other colleges, but must name the early decision college as their first choice and agree to enroll at that college and withdraw all other applications if accepted. For further information contact the college admissions office. This choice should be used with caution.

Economically Disadvantaged Any individual or family whose annual earnings meet the United States Department of Labor definition of low income.

Elective A course needed for graduation credit, but one that does not meet a specific course requirement.

Fee Waiver A form available to students whose eligibility is primarily determined by membership in a family with annual income falling within guidelines based on number of dependents and family income. The Fee Waiver is submitted instead of money when applying for college testing or admission.

Financial Aid Scholarships, loans, grants, and/or a part-time job given to a student with financial need. The financial aid package of funds is determined by family financial need and the availability of college or government funds.

Financial Need The difference between your expected contribution and the school's student budget — also known as financial aid eligibility.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) The federal application form required to apply for financial aid including grants, loans, and work study programs.

Full-time Student Generally, a college student who takes a minimum of either 12 units per quarter or semester. This minimum number of units is usually required to maintain financial eligibility.

General Educational Development Examination (GED) A series of tests that adults or students aged 18 (17 1/2) or older take to qualify for a high school equivalency certificate or diploma. Some colleges will accept satisfactory GED test results in place of a high school diploma. Students may not take the GED until they are at least 17. A letter of permission from the high school is required.

General Education Requirements A specific group of courses from different academic areas required for any degree at some colleges. The general education requirements are described in each college catalog - also called Breadth Requirements.

Grade Point Average (GPA) The average number of grade points earned divided by the number of credits attempted.

Grants Financial aid that does not need to be repaid — usually awarded based on need, but can be awarded for academic achievement, special skill, talent, heritage or other criteria.

Impacted Program or Major An overcrowded program or major in which there are many more applications than available spaces. Supplementary admissions criteria often must be met for consideration.

International Baccalaureate (IB) A course of study that allows high school students to satisfy admission requirements of universities in more than 70 countries. Students can earn university credit for scores of 5 or higher on IB Higher Level examinations.

Liberal Arts College A college in which the emphasis is on a program of philosophy, literature, history, languages, and basic science.

Lower Division Introductory/general education classes usually taken during the first two years of a four-year college program.

Major A student's main field of study in college.

Master's Degree The degree given for completing a one to two-year course of study beyond a Bachelor's Degree. Some Masters Degrees are Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.S.), Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.), and Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.).

Minor A subject-area emphasis earned by completing approximately 18 credits in an area outside a student's major.

Part-time Student A college student who takes fewer than a full-time (12 units) schedule of classes and is ineligible for many financial aid programs.

Pell Grant Financial aid from the federal government available to students with significant financial need, to be used at many types of colleges and vocational schools.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) A shortened version of the SAT offered in October to high school juniors and below. The scores are helpful in college admission planning and/or qualifying for National Merit Scholarships.

Prerequisites Courses, test scores, and/or grade-level classes that must be completed before taking a specific course.

Prior-Prior Year (PPY) Refers to a Financial Aid policy that allows families to use tax information from two years ago when filing the FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid.)

Private College (Independent College) A school which is not supported by state taxes.

Profile Supplementary College Board financial aid document required by some private universities. Also known as the CSS Profile.

Provisional Acceptance College acceptances often require final validation of gpa, graduation and other stats.

Qualified Acceptance Occasionally, an institution postpones action on an application and will suggest that the applicant pursue a particular course in its summer session. Upon satisfactory completion of this course, the college agrees to accept the student for its regular degree programs at the beginning of the first or second semester.

Rolling Admissions This means that a college gives an admissions decision as soon as possible after an application is completed and does not specify a notification deadline. Usually, it is wise to apply early to such colleges, since applications are usually not accepted once the admissions quota has been reached.

Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) Many colleges have units of the Reserve Officer's Training Corps that offer two and four-year programs of military training culminating in an officer's commission. In some colleges, credit for the courses can be applied toward a degree. ROTC scholarships, which pay for full college costs, are available.

SAT Test A college admission exam measuring critical reading and math reasoning skills. The SAT also includes a writing section with multiple-choice questions and an essay.

SAT Subject Tests One-hour exams offered in five different subjects, required by some schools and/or some majors. Check each school's requirements carefully. Up to three SAT subject tests may be taken in one sitting.

Scholarship A gift of money (which does not need to be repaid) given to recognize student achievement, skills, and talent. It may be based partly on financial need.

State and Regional College Tuition Discounts Most common tuition discounts given based on residency: Academic Common Market, Western Undergraduate Exchange, Midwest Student Exchange, Tuition Break for NE Residents.

Statement of Intent to Register (SIR) This form must be returned to the college of the student's choice by a specified date (usually the beginning of May.) It confirms the student's intent to register at the college and reserves a spot.

Student Aid Report (SAR) A form distributed by the College Scholarship Service for the purpose of estimating the family contribution to a student's college costs.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) An English language exam for foreign students used for admission purposes and for placement in college English classes.

Transcript An official copy of high school or college grades earned by a student.

Transfer Courses College courses that may be transferred to another college.

Transfer Major Students who intend to transfer to a four-year college pursue a transfer major at a community college. This consists of the lower-division requirements for a major at a particular college.

Transfer Students College students who transfer from one college to another, usually at the end of the sophomore year. Changing colleges during the junior or senior year, when the student is completing major requirements, is not recommended.

Tuition The fee for instruction at a college or vocational school.

Unit A fixed amount of scholastic study used as a basis for calculating academic credits. College units for a course often equal the number of hours per week the course meets. You must earn a specific number of units to receive a degree.

Undergraduate A college student who has not yet received a bachelor's degree.

Upper Division The courses usually taken during the last two years of a four-year college program. The courses typically are advanced courses in one's major and other areas.

Waitlist In addition to accepting and rejecting applicants, many colleges place students on a waitlist for admission. As accepted applicants decide to attend other colleges, the school will offer their places to students on the waitlist.

Weighted Courses A policy that rewards accelerated and/or advanced performance by giving a bonus grade point for designated courses.

Work Study A federally-funded program that makes part-time jobs available to students with financial need.