



# OUR COLLEGE TERMINOLOGY

**Academic Advisor/Counselor** - This person will help you select the courses, review the course requirements in the field you have selected to pursue and help you with any academic problems you may encounter. Advisors can be faculty or staff members. If you are unsure of what classes to select, please feel free to sit down and talk with your academic advisor or academic counselor.

**Academic Probation** – All colleges require students to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) to remain in school, usually a 2.0 GPA (a “C” average). If you do not maintaining satisfactory progress will be placed on probation and your financial aid can be affected. Tutoring and Student Support Services can help prevent this before it happens. If you are unsure of where the tutoring services or student support services are, please feel free to ask your enrollment services representative, academic advisor, or academic counselor.

**Academic Suspension** – If you have been on academic probation, you may also be placed on academic suspension if you continue to not maintain the minimum cumulative GPA required, usually a 2.0 GPA (a “C” average). If you are placed on academic suspension, you will be dismissed from the college for a specified time period - one or two semesters. Specific requirements may be placed on your re-entry into college, but it is possible and it can be done. Please feel free to sit down and talk with an advisor to help plan your college re-entry.

**Advanced Standing Credit** - These are credit hours that an institution accepts toward a degree from courses that you have earned after high school, but outside of college. Such credit may be given for work done at another higher education institution by examination or "testing out" or by military service. If you are unsure, please feel free to sit down and talk to the admissions or the placement testing office for more information.

**Alumni** – once you have graduated from your college or university, you will become an alumni.

**ACT and SAT** - These letters are acronyms for the American College Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Both tests are designed to measure a student's level of knowledge in basic areas such as math, science, English and social studies. Colleges may require the results of either the ACT or SAT before granting admission, but some colleges or programs do not require it. There is **no shame** in having a low or no ACT or SAT. Please feel free to sit down and talk to the admissions department to learn if your college of interest has a bridge program or allows placement testing to become an admitted student.

**Application** - Application is the process you would submit the required forms and credentials to your chosen institution. Application criteria may include previous academic records, test scores, interviews, letters of recommendations, and other information requested by the institution.

**Associate's Degree** – This is the undergraduate degree offered by two-year colleges. Associate Degree is granted upon completion of a program of at least two years (depending on full-time or part-time attendance) of college work. Your Associate's Degree is conferred to you when you have successfully completed programs designed for transfer to a four-year college. The Associate Degree requires completion of a minimum of 60 credit hours with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 (a "C" average).

**Bachelor's Degree** - This is the undergraduate degree offered by four-year colleges and universities. The Bachelor of Arts degree requires that a significant portion of your studies be dedicated to the arts - literature, language, music, etc. The Bachelor of Science degree requires that a significant portion of the studies be in the sciences - chemistry, biology, math, etc. So if you are looking to go to medical school, for example, getting a Bachelor of Science in Nursing is one path that you may want to take. The minimum credit hour requirement for a Bachelor's Degree is 120 hours with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 (a "C" average).

**Bookstore** - All colleges have bookstores. It will generally stock all the books and other materials required in all the courses offered at the institution; but do know that they usually charge the most for textbooks. Other alternatives for lowering the cost of textbook purchases are Chegg.com, Amazon.com, Ebay.com, and Half.com. Another option is to rent your textbooks from the bookstore or from Chegg.com or Amazon.com. Another option is to borrow your textbook from the State Library Share System (called I-Share in the State of Illinois), where you can borrow your textbook for the entire semester at no cost (speak with a librarian because terms do apply). This is where you get to exercise your right to become an "educated consumer" – Spend wisely!

**Business/Bursar Office** - The Business Office or the Bursar Office is responsible for all financial transactions of the institution. This is where your financial aid can be processed and/or your payments for tuition can be accepted. If you are unsure of your tuition and/or financial aid, please feel free to sit down and talk to a financial aid representative.

**Catalog** - College catalogs provide all types of information that you and your family members will need to know about a college or university. It lists the institution's history and philosophy, policies and procedures, its accreditation status, courses of study, degrees and certificates offered, physical facilities, admission and enrollment procedures, financial aid, student life activities, etc. If you or your family member do not understand the information inside the catalog, please feel free to speak to an Admissions or Enrollment Services representative.

**CLEP** - The College Level Examination Program can be administered to students who desire to obtain college credit by taking proficiency tests in selected courses. If the student scores high enough on the test, college credit can be awarded. There is a charge for each test taken. Information concerning an individual institution's policies toward CLEP Tests can be found in the institution's catalog, and if you cannot find it, ask an Admission or Enrollment Services representative or go to the Placement Testing Office.

**College** - A College is an institution of higher education that grants degrees and certificates. There are different levels of accreditation for colleges and universities, (1) public, (2) private, and (3) profit. If you are unsure, you can ask a high school guidance counselor or you can check with the U.S. Department of Education Database of Accreditation of Postsecondary Institutions and Programs at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx>. If your college of interest is not listed in this database, it is not accredited, and thus, the college credits are not transferrable.

**Commuter** – If you live off-campus and drive to or take public transportation to your classes, you are considered a commuter student.

**Concurrent Enrollment** – You can enroll and attend two educational institutions at the same time provided that certain criteria are met. For example, you can be a high school senior and concurrently enroll in college courses provided that you meet specific criteria. You can also concurrently enroll at two higher education institutions provided that certain criteria are met. Permission for concurrent enrollments are generally made in advance. If you are not sure if your high school and/or college participates in concurrent enrollment, ask your high school guidance counselor and/or your college admissions representative.

**Course Numbers** - All courses are identified by numbers usually containing 3 or 4 digits. For example, Freshman English might be "English 101". The first digit usually indicates the class year in which the subject is usually taken, the middle 1 or 2 digits identify the course within the subject field (nobody I've ever met knows what they mean), and the last digit indicates the number of credit hours the course carries. A course number beginning with a "0" indicates that it does not carry credit hours applicable to a degree. If you have questions in regard to college courses, please sit down and talk with your advisor, preferably every quarter (8 to 10 weeks) or every semester (14 to 16 weeks).

**Credit Hours** - Courses taken in college are measured in terms of credit hours. To earn one credit hour, you must attend a class for one classroom hour (usually 50 minutes) per week for the quarter (8 to 10 weeks) or the semester (14 to 16 weeks). Classes are offered in 1 - 5 credit hour increments, and sometimes larger amounts. To be considered a full-time student, you must take 12 credit hours or more. To be considered a part-time student, you must take 11 credit hours or less. If you are unsure of where you stand, please feel free to ask your advisor at any time.

**Curriculum** - A curriculum is composed of those classes outlined by an institution for completion of a program of study leading to a degree or certificate.

**Degree Requirements** - The requirements outlined by your college institution for completion of a program of study are generally termed degree requirements. Requirements may include a minimum number of credit hours, required GPA, prerequisite and elective courses within the specified major, and/or minor areas of study. If you are unsure of where you stand, please feel free to sit down and talk to your advisor at any time.

**Degrees** - Your degree is awarded to you for the successful completion of your program of study. There are three basic types of degrees: Associate's Degree - obtainable at a community or junior college; Bachelor's Degree - offered by colleges and universities; and Graduate Degrees - Obtained after the bachelor's degree, i.e., Masters (M.A., M.S), Doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D.), Juris Doctorate (J.D.), and Medical Doctorate (M.D.).

**Department** - A department is the basic organizational unit in a higher education institution and it is responsible for the academic functions in a field of study. It may also be used in the broader sense to indicate an administrative or service unit of an institution, such as Student Support Services. If you would like to know how the department operates, please feel free to make an appointment so that you can sit down and talk to a department representative.

**Division** - A division could be several different things: an administrative unit of an institution that can consist of more than one department or a branch of the institution, academic or not, such as the Division of Student Affairs. If you would like to know how the department operates, please feel free to make an appointment so you

**Drop and Add** - You are generally permitted to drop courses from your class schedule and/or add other courses. Colleges allow varying lengths of time for students to add and drop classes, especially when considering getting a refund of tuition spent for the course you want to drop. The college catalog or class schedule will specify the timeline for adding or dropping a class, but do know that dropping classes may affect your financial aid or tuition paid. Before dropping or adding a course, sit down and talk with your advisor and financial aid representative so you can better understand your options. For special circumstances, you may need documented proof and/or written approval from a designated college official to initiate dropping or adding a class.

**Enrollment** - This is the procedure by which students choose classes each semester. It also includes the assessment of fees. If you are unsure about your enrollment, please feel free to sit down and talk to your advisor.

**Extra-Curricular Activities** - These are non-classroom activities that can contribute to a well-rounded education, build your resume, and introduce you to networking. They can include athletics; cultural, social, and political clubs and organizations; student government; and campus events. If there is not a club or organization that you are not interested in, you can start your own club or organization and get funded for it. Please feel free to ask your Student Activities representative for more information.

**Faculty** - The faculty is composed of all persons who teach college courses. For example, English 101 may have 20 different courses, thus multiple faculty members who teach it. In college, you get to choose your faculty member that you would like to learn from. To get an idea of what your faculty member is like, as your advisor, your classmates, or you can go to [www.ratemyprofessor.com](http://www.ratemyprofessor.com).

**FAFSA** - Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which can be found [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). The application for financial aid, which includes grants (money you do not pay back), federal student loans (money you do pay back), college work-study (money earned usually while working on campus), and other federal and state programs. It is often required before a student can be considered for scholarships as well. If you are unsure of your financial aid award, please sit down and talk to a financial aid representative.

**Fees** - Fees are additional charges that are not included in the tuition. Fees may be charged to cover the cost of classroom materials and/or lab equipment needed in certain courses, and they may be assessed for student events (sports, recreation center), programs (guest speakers, workshops, professional development), and publications (newspapers). If you are unsure of your fees, please feel free to sit down and talk to your financial aid representative.

**Final Exams (Finals)** - These exams are usually given during the last week of classes each quarter or semester. The type of final administered in a course is left to the discretion of the instructor, but will be clearly indicated in your syllabus. Finals can be a written exam in the form of an in-class or take home essay (anywhere from 2 to 10 pages), multiple choice sheets or scantron forms, an individual or group project with in-class presentation, or a combination. Final exams are given on specified dates that may be different than the regular class time, and are listed in your class syllabus.

**Financial Aid** – Financial Aid is made available from grants (money that you do not pay back), scholarships (money that you do not pay back), loans (money that you do pay back), and work-study (money earned with part-time employment, usually on-campus) from federal, state, institutional, and private sources. Awards from these programs may be combined in an "award package" presented in an award letter to meet the cost of education. The types and amounts of aid awarded are determined by financial need, available funds, student classification, academic performance, and sometimes the timeliness of application. If you are unsure of your financial aid award package, please feel free to sit down and talk with your financial aid representative.

**Fraternities/Sororities (The Greek System)** - Fraternities (for men) and sororities (for women) are social organizations that are active in various activities. Through a process of mutual selection, called Rush (which takes place during a specified period of time), students may be offered the opportunity to "pledge" a certain fraternity or sorority. Not all colleges have these organizations, but if you are unsure, ask your Student Activities representative.

**Full-Time Enrollment/Part-Time Enrollment** – If you are enrolled in 12 or more credit hours in a quarter or semester or 6 credit hours or more for the summer term, you are a full-time student. If you are enrolled in 11 credit hours or less in a quarter or semester or 5 credit hours or less for the summer term, you are a part-time student. Enrollment status depends on your life outside of the classroom. If you have a lot of responsibilities that include being a parent or the guardian or caregiver to younger or older relatives, work a full-time job, or other life events that require more of your time, it might be best to be a part-time student. On the other hand, if you have minimal responsibilities and have more time to devote to classes, it might be best to be a full-time student. If you are unsure of how to plan a full-time or part-time academic schedule, sit down and talk with your academic advisor.

**Honor Roll** - Students are placed on honor rolls for GPAs above certain specified levels. Criteria for President's, Dean's, Program's or other honor rolls vary at different institutions. In some cases, students must be enrolled full-time to be eligible. If you are unsure of the honor roll criteria, please feel free to sit down and talk with your advisor.

**Humanities Courses** - Humanities courses are classes covering subjects such as literature, philosophy, and the fine arts. Most undergraduate degrees require a certain number of humanities credit hours. If you are unsure, please feel free to sit down and talk with your advisor.

**Junior/Community College** - A Junior/Community College is a two-year institution of higher education and a great introduction to your college education. Course offerings generally include a transfer curriculum with credits transferable toward a Bachelor's degree at a four-year institution. There are also occupational or technical programs with courses of study designed to prepare students for employment in two years. To be sure of what transfer and employment programs are offered, please feel free to sit down and talk to an admissions representative or academic advisor.



**Lecture/Laboratory/Discussion Classes** - In lecture classes, students attend class on a regular basis and the instructor lectures on class material. Laboratory classes require students to perform certain functions in controlled situations that help them test and understand what is being taught in the lecture. Discussion classes offer students the opportunity to talk about material being taught, ask questions, and discuss material with their classmates. Discussion classes are sometimes taught by graduate students that are working towards their Master's or Doctoral degrees. If you are unsure of what faculty members or instructors are teaching your course, please feel free to review the class schedule or sit down and ask your advisor.

**Letter Grades/Grade Point Averages (GPA)** - Most colleges use both letter grades and GPAs in determining your grades. Grades at most colleges are figured using the following method: An "A" is worth 4 points. A "B" is worth 3 points. A "C" is worth 2 points. A "D" is worth 1 point. An "F" is worth 0 points. To calculate your GPA, simply multiply the number of hours a course is worth by the number of points for the letter grade, then add up the totals for each course and divide by the number of credit hours. The result is your grade point average, but if you are unsure of how to calculate your GPA, please feel free to sit down and talk with an enrollment services representative or your advisor.

**Major/Minor** - A major is your chosen field of study. It usually requires the successful completion of a specified number of credit hours. A minor is designated as a specific number of credit hours in your secondary field of study. If you are unsure of how to choose your major and/or minor, please feel free to sit down and talk with your academic advisor.

**Mid-Term Exams (Midterms)** - During the middle of each quarter or semester, instructors may give mid-term exams that test students on the material covered during the first half of the quarter or semester. Some classes have only two tests, a midterm and a final. If you are unsure if your class has a midterm, please feel free to ask your instructor to help you review your syllabus for additional clarity.

**Non-Credit Courses** - These are classes or courses that do not meet the requirements for a certificate of a degree at a given institution. Non-credit courses may serve one of several purposes: to explore new fields of study, increase proficiency in a particular profession, develop potential or enrich life experiences through cultural and/or recreational studies, but these classes for professional development can be added to your resume.

**Open-Door Institution** - Open-door institutions are usually public two-year junior/community colleges. The term open-door refers to an admission policy that states that anyone, whether they are a high school graduate or not, can be admitted to that college, but there are stipulations in regard to financial aid if you do not have a high school diploma or a GED. If you would like to learn more, please feel free to sit down and ask an admissions and financial aid representative.

**Pass/Fail Courses** - Pass/fail courses do not earn letter grades or grade points for students. If you pass a pass/fail course, you will receive a "P" (pass) or "S" (satisfactory) on the transcript. If you do not pass the course, you will receive an "F" (fail) or a "U" (unsatisfactory) on the transcript. The evaluation for the pass/fail course is not figured into your GPA.

**Petition** - A petition is both the process and the form you would fill out to request consideration of special circumstances. For example, you can petition your financial aid award if your financial situation changes to where less money comes into your home or you believe that their financial aid decision on academic probation or academic suspension is not founded; you can petition your grade if believe that you earned a higher grade than you received, you can petition the Registrar or Enrollment Services if you believe that you earned more credit hours to be transferred into new college institution, or you can even petition the department of Admissions about their decision on your admission. In all cases, supporting documentation must be submitted in order for your petition to be filed. If you are unsure of the procedure, please feel free to sit down and ask a representative of the department that you would like to consider your special circumstances.

**Prerequisite Courses** - A prerequisite course is a course taken in preparation for another course. Communication 101 is a prerequisite for Communication 102.

**Private/Public/Profit Institutions** – Private, Public, and Profit institutions differ primarily in terms of their source of financial support and their level of accreditation. Public Institutions receive funding from the State, Federal, and other governmental entities and are administered by public boards. Public Institutions (community colleges, state universities) are nationally accredited, the college credit hours are transferable, and their awarded college degrees are credible. Private Institutions rely on income from private donations, from religious or other organizations and student tuition and are governed by a board of trustees. Private Institutions are nationally accredited, the credit hours are transferable, and their awarded degrees are credible. Profit Institutions, sometimes called “For-Profits” Schools”, largely are not nationally accredited, most credit hours are not transferable, and they are managed and governed by corporations. If you are unsure of your school’s accreditation, please feel free to visit the **U.S. Department of Education Database of Accreditation of Postsecondary Institutions and Programs** at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx> If your college of interest is not listed in this database, it is not accredited, and thus, the college credits are not transferrable or the degree credible.

**Registrar** - The registrar of an institution is responsible for the maintenance of all academic records and may include such duties as: maintenance of class enrollments, providing statistical information on student enrollment, certification of athletic eligibility and student eligibility for honor rolls, certification of the eligibility of veterans, administering probation and retention policies and verification of the completion of degree requirements for graduation. If you are unsure of your academic status, please feel free to make an appointment to sit down and talk with a registrar representative.

**Schedule of Classes** - Colleges publish and distribute (in either a booklet or online) a Class Schedule book for each quarter or semester. With the help of academic advisors and/or faculty members, students make up their own individual class schedules for each quarter or semester they are enrolled. Courses are designated in the Class Schedule by course department, course number, time and days the course meets, the room number and building name, and the instructor’s name. If you are unsure of how to navigate the class schedule, please feel free to sit down and talk with your academic advisor or your faculty members.

**Student Identification Card (I.D.)** - A student ID is usually required in college and the initial card is given at no charge. It generally includes a photograph of you, your student ID number, your name, and the name of your college. Your ID card is often required for admittance to facilities (i.e. the recreation center) and functions (i.e. sporting events and other forms of entertainment) sponsored by the college, for identification when meeting with staff and faculty members, and to receive student discounts. If you would like to know what student discounts are attributed to your student ID, please feel free to review the catalog or sit down and talk to an Admissions, Student Activities, or Student Services representative.

**Syllabus** - An outline of the important information about your college course. Written by the professor or instructor, it usually includes important dates, assignment due dates, and expectations and policies specific to that course. College differs from high school, in that, instructors likely will not...let me repeat...they will not...remind you of the assignments, quizzes, and exams that are due. Some syllabi are quite lengthy and can be as long as 10 pages, but do not become overwhelmed. The syllabus’ purpose is to help you plan your quarter or semester, thus learning to use your student planner, Google Calendar, or your preferred form of organization. If you would like assistance in building your quarter or semester planner, please feel free to sit down and talk to your academic advisor or instructor.

**Textbooks** - Books required of students enrolled in college classes. Professors notify students which books they must purchase (and sometimes additional and optional textbooks) at the beginning of each quarter or semester. All colleges have bookstores. It will generally stock all the books and other materials required in all the courses offered at the college; but do know that they usually charge the most for textbooks. Other alternatives for lowering your costs is to purchase at Chegg.com, Amazon.com, Ebay.com, and Half.com. Another option is to rent your textbooks from the bookstore or from Chegg.com or Amazon.com. Another option is to borrow your textbook from the State Library Share System (called I-Share in the State of Illinois), where you can borrow your textbook for the entire semester at no cost (speak with a librarian because terms do apply). This is where you get to exercise your right to become an “educated consumer” – Spend wisely!

**Transcript** - The transcript is a permanent academic record. It may show courses taken, grades received, academic status and honors received. Transcripts are not released by the college if the student owes any money to the college. If you are unsure whether or not you have a balance with your institution, please feel free to sit down and talk with the Bursar Office, Enrollment Services, or Financial Aid at any time.

**Transfer of Credits** - Some students attend more than one institution throughout their college career. If you move or transfer from one college to another, you can also transfer accumulated credit hours from the former institution to the new one, but credits will only transfer from nationally accredited institutions. If you are unsure, you can ask your high school guidance counselor or you can check with the **U.S. Department of Education Database of Accreditation of Postsecondary Institutions and Programs** at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx> If your college of interest is not listed in this database, it is not accredited, and thus, the college credits are not transferrable. Your new institution determines which courses will apply toward graduation requirements. If you are unsure of which of your college credits transferred, please feel free to sit down and talk to an academic advisor.

**Tuition** - Tuition is the amount paid for each credit hour of enrollment. Tuition does not include the cost of books, fees, or room and board. Tuition charges vary from college to college and are dependent on such factors as in-district residency or out-of-state status, level of classes enrolled in (lower, upper or graduate division), and whether the institution is publicly or privately financed. If you are unsure about your cost of tuition, please feel free to sit down and talk with your financial aid representative.

**Tutor** - A tutor is a person, generally another student or faculty member, who has completed and/or demonstrated proficiency in a course or subject, and is able to provide instruction to another student. Tutors usually help students better understand course material and make better grades. If you are unsure of where your tutoring center is, please feel free to sit down and talk to your academic advisor.

**Undergraduate** - An undergraduate is a student who is pursuing an Associate's Degree or a Bachelor's Degree. If you are unsure of your undergraduate standing, please feel free to talk to your academic advisor.

**University** - A university is composed of undergraduate, graduate, and professional colleges and offers degrees in each. If you are unsure as to what your college or university offers, please feel free to sit down and talk to your academic advisor.

**Withdrawal** - Students may withdraw from courses during a quarter or semester, but there are established procedures for doing so. The College Catalog and/or Class Schedule generally specifies the procedures. Written approval from a college official may be required, depending on the time of withdrawal and your circumstances, and some tuition and fees may need to be paid. If you are unsure of what your financial obligation will be provided you will need to withdraw, please feel free to sit down and talk with your financial aid advisor.