

Certificate: See Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma.
Class rank: The relative numerical position of a student in his or her graduating class, calculated by the high school on the basis of grade-point average, whether weighted or unweighted.
College-preparatory program: Courses in academic subjects (English, history and social studies, foreign languages, mathematics, science, and the arts) that stress preparation for college or university study.
Common Application: The standard application form distributed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals for a large number of private colleges who are members of the Common Application Group.
*Community service program: Referral center for students wishing to perform volunteer work in the community or participate in volunteer activities coordinated by academic departments.
Commuter: A student who lives off campus in housing that is not owned by, operated by, or affiliated with the college. This category includes students who commute from home and students who have moved to the area to attend college.
Contact hour: A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students. Also referred to as clock hour.
Continuous basis (for program enrollment): A calendar system classification that is used by institutions that enroll students at any time during the academic year. For example, a cosmetology school or a word processing school might allow students to enroll and begin studies at various times, with no requirement that classes begin on a certain date.
Cooperative housing: College-owned, -operated, or -affiliated housing in which students share room and board expenses and participate in household chores to reduce living expenses.
Cooperative (work-study plan) program: A program that provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government.
*Counseling service: Activities designed to assist students in making plans and decisions related to their education, career, or personal development.
Credit: Recognition of attendance or performance in an instructional activity (course or program) that can be applied by a recipient toward the requirements for a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.
Credit course: A course that, if successfully completed, can be applied toward the number of courses required for achieving a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.
Credit hour: A unit of measure representing an hour (50 minutes) of instruction over a 15-week period in a semester or trimester system or a 10-week period in a quarter system. It is applied toward the total number of hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.
Cross-registration: A system whereby students enrolled at one institution may take courses at another institution without having to apply to the second institution.
Deferred admission: The practice of permitting admitted students to postpone enrollment, usually for a period of one academic term or one year.
Degree: An award conferred by a college, university, or other postsecondary education institution as official recognition for the successful completion of a program of studies.
Degree-seeking students: Students enrolled in courses for credit who are recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or formal award. At the undergraduate level, this is intended to include students enrolled in vocational or occupational programs.
Differs by program (calendar system): A calendar system classification that is used by institutions that have occupational/vocational programs of varying length. These schools may enroll students at specific times depending on the program desired. For example, a school might offer a two-month program in January, March, May, September, and November; and a three-month program in January, April, and October.
Diploma: See Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma.
Distance learning: An option for earning course credit at off-campus locations via cable television, internet, satellite classes, videotapes, correspondence courses, or other means.

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Doctoral degree: The highest award a student can earn for graduate study. The doctoral degree classification includes such degrees as Doctor of Education, Doctor of Juridical Science, Doctor of Public Health, and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in any field such as agronomy, food technology, education, engineering, public administration, ophthalmology, or radiology. For the Doctor of Public Health degree, the prior degree is generally earned in the closely related field of medicine or in sanitary engineering.

Double major: Program in which students may complete two undergraduate programs of study simultaneously.

Dual enrollment: A program through which high school students may enroll in college courses while still enrolled in high school. Students are not required to apply for admission to the college in order to participate.

Early action plan: An admission plan that allows students to apply and be notified of an admission decision well in advance of the regular notification dates. If admitted, the candidate is not committed to enroll; the student may reply to the offer under the college's regular reply policy.

Early admission: A policy under which students who have not completed high school are admitted and enroll full time in college, usually after completion of their junior year.

Early decision plan: A plan that permits students to apply and be notified of an admission decision (and financial aid offer if applicable) well in advance of the regular notification date. Applicants agree to accept an offer of admission and, if admitted, to withdraw their applications from other colleges. There are three possible decisions for early decision applicants: admitted, denied, or not admitted but forwarded for consideration with the regular applicant pool, without prejudice.

English as a Second Language (ESL): A course of study designed specifically for students whose native language is not English.

Exchange student program-domestic: Any arrangement between a student and a college that permits study for a semester or more at another college **in the United States** without extending the amount of time required for a degree. **See also Study abroad.**

External degree program: A program of study in which students earn credits toward a degree through independent study, college courses, proficiency examinations, and personal experience. External degree programs require minimal or no classroom attendance.

Extracurricular activities (as admission factor): Special consideration in the admissions process given for participation in both school and nonschool-related activities of interest to the college, such as clubs, hobbies, student government, athletics, performing arts, etc.

First professional certificate (postdegree): An award that requires completion of an organized program of study designed for persons who have completed the first professional degree. Examples could be refresher courses or additional units of study in a specialty or subspecialty.

Open admission: Admission policy under which virtually all secondary school graduates or students with GED equivalency diplomas are admitted without regard to academic record, test scores, or other qualifications.
Other expenses (costs): Include average costs for clothing, laundry, entertainment, medical (if not a required fee), and furnishings.
Out-of-state tuition: The tuition charged by institutions to those students who do not meet the institution's or state's residency requirements.
Part-time student (undergraduate): A student enrolled for fewer than 12 credits per semester or quarter, or fewer than 24 contact hours a week each term.
*Personal counseling: One-on-one or group counseling with trained professionals for students who want to explore personal, educational, or vocational issues.
Post-baccalaureate certificate: An award that requires completion of an organized program of study requiring 18 credit hours beyond the bachelor's; designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree but do not meet the requirements of academic degrees carrying the title of master.
Post-master's certificate: An award that requires completion of an organized program of study of 24 credit hours beyond the master's degree but does not meet the requirements of academic degrees at the doctoral level.
Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma: Includes the following three IPEDS definitions for postsecondary awards, certificates, and diplomas of varying durations and credit/contact hour requirements—
<i>Less Than 1 Academic Year:</i> Requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in less than 1 academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters) or in less than 900 contact hours by a student enrolled full-time.
<i>At Least 1 But Less Than 2 Academic Years:</i> Requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 1 but less than 2 full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 30 but less than 60 credit hours, or in at least 900 but less than 1,800 contact hours.
<i>At Least 2 But Less Than 4 Academic Years:</i> Requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 2 but less than 4 full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 60 but less than 120 credit hours, or in at least 1,800 but less than 3,600 contact hours.
Private institution: An educational institution controlled by a private individual(s) or by a nongovernmental agency, usually supported primarily by other than public funds, and operated by other than publicly elected or appointed officials.
Private for-profit institution: A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk.
Private nonprofit institution: A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives no compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk. These include both independent nonprofit schools and those affiliated with a religious organization.
Proprietary institution: See Private for-profit institution .
Public institution: An educational institution whose programs and activities are operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials, and which is supported primarily by public funds.
Quarter calendar system: A calendar system in which the academic year consists of three sessions called quarters of about 12 weeks each. The range may be from 10 to 15 weeks. There may be an additional quarter in the summer.
Race/ethnicity: Category used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. A person may be counted in only one group.
Race/ethnicity unknown: Category used to classify students or employees whose race/ethnicity is not known and whom institutions are unable to place in one of the specified racial/ethnic categories.

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Non-need athletic awards
Non-need federal grants
Non-need state grants
Non-need outside grants
Non-need student loans
Non-need parent loans
Non-need work
Non-need-based self-help aid: Loans and jobs from institutional, state, or other sources for which a student need not demonstrate financial need to qualify.
Scholarships/grants from external sources: Monies received from outside (private) sources that the student brings with them (e.g., Kiwanis, National Merit scholarships). The institution may process paperwork to receive the dollars, but it has no role in determining the recipient or the dollar amount awarded.
Work study and employment: Federal and state work study aid, and any employment packaged by your institution in financial aid awards.