



COLLEGE VOCABULARY 101

Here's a list of key terms that you should be familiar with when you are in college:

Academic Advisor - College administrators that offer counsel and guidance in order to assist students meet their academic goals. They may also assist with course planning and registration.

Associate's Degree - Often called a two-year degree, it requires completion of 60 credits. It can take 2 or more years full time or 2-5 years part-time to earn.

Bachelor's Degree - Often called a four-year degree, it requires completion of 120-128 semester credits. It can take 4 or more years full time or 4-8 years part-time. You may be able to put your credits from a two-year degree towards this degree.

Certificate – They vary in length (usually less than a year), but are the quickest way to earn a college credential and entry into the workforce. At most community colleges, they will require the completion of 20-30 credits.

College credit - Each course is worth a number of credits, which you earn when you pass the course. Each college requires students to complete a specific number of them to graduate.

College Placement Test - A test that determines how prepared you are to do college level work. The test measures the student's reading comprehension and mathematic skills. Community Colleges generally require these for student admissions consideration.

Community College - Community colleges offer diplomas, certificates, and associate degrees. Some may offer a handful of bachelor's degrees as well. These institutions typically cost less than four-year schools.

Credit Hour - The number of credit hours per course usually represents the number of class hours per week. A metric used to determine the intensity/length of a course

Co-requisite class - Two or more classes that are required to be taken simultaneously.

Developmental Courses - Depending on a student's college placement test scores, they may be required to take college preparation courses in basic reading, writing and math. (College financial can be used to pay for these courses, however, students will have less aid to apply towards courses in which they receive actual college credit.)

Drop/Add Period - Most colleges have an add/drop period of 1-2 weeks at the beginning of a semester. During this time, students can change their courses after they have begun attending class.

Elective course - Unlike general education and core courses, electives allow students to take classes in any subject they find interesting. For instance, business students who want to learn fencing can take a fencing class as an elective.

Enrollment - The process of registering and paying for courses.



ESL (English as a Second Language) - Many colleges provide ESL classes for international students whose first language is not English

Faculty - The teachers and professors at a school or college.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) - Used to determine financial aid from federal resources. Many colleges also require it for institutional aid.

Federal Grant: Supplied through the U.S. Department of Education, federal grants provide approved students with educational funding that does not require repayment as long as all the terms are met.

Financial Aid - Financial resources designed to assist students who are unable to meet the cost of post-secondary education. This aid lowers a student's overall tuition expenses.

Full-Time Student - To qualify as a full-time student, learners must take a minimum number of credits per semester. At the undergraduate level, most schools and funders require at least 12 credits to qualify.

General Education Courses - Usually taken in the first two years of studies, general education classes cover topics within the arts and sciences and serve as a foundation for advanced learning.

Grant - A grant is a type of financial aid typically provided by state and federal governments, as well as by private institutions. It does not require repayment so long as learners meet the terms of the grant.

Loan - After exhausting other financial aid options, some students still need to take out federal or private student loans to cover the remainder of their college costs. Loans require repayment at a set interest rate over a specified amount of time.

Major - The primary subject of a student's study in college. A majority (but not all) of your college courses will be related to your major.

Mandatory/Core/Required course - A class that is necessary to complete your degree.

Matriculate - To enroll in a college or university as a candidate for a degree.

Online course - These are regular college classes utilizing computer technology, including the internet, to deliver course information and to promote class discussion. These courses can be completely taken off campus.

Placement Test - Placement tests help school administrators determine a student's readiness for postsecondary education and allow them to place students in the appropriate class levels.

Prerequisite class - A class that is required to be completed before a student may enroll in higher level classes.

Private college or university - A self-supporting institution of higher education operated with private funds.



Public college or university - An institution of higher education operated with state funds.

Proprietary school - A privately owned and operated post-secondary school organized as either a non-profit or profit-making venture, primarily to teach vocational skills.

Scholarship - Money offered to students from organizations based on academic achievement, financial need, or for other reasons. A student must apply for this money and it does not require repayment.

Stafford Loan - The U.S. Department of Education provides Stafford Loans to approved undergraduates and pays the interest on the loan while the student is enrolled. Learners must demonstrate financial need.

Subsidized Loan - Provided by the U.S. Department of Education, these types of loans provide subsidization of interest accrued on a federal loan while the student is enrolled. Some also provide a six-month grace period after graduation.

Survey course - A course designed to provide a general overview of an area of study.

Syllabus - An outline of topics to be covered by the instructor including assignments to be completed during the course by specific deadlines.

TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) - Aid received by eligible New York State residents to pay tuition at approved schools in New York State. Students must live in NYS for one year to be eligible for this grant.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) - Schools typically require international students to provide a passing score on the IELTS or TOEFL exams, both of which ascertain a student's level of English fluency.

Tuition & Fees - A student's basic payment towards the cost of instruction at a college or university. Most institutions also charge fees for laboratory equipment and materials, computer use and other costs.

Transfer Student - A student that has completed coursework at one college and seeks to transfer those credits to another college they choose to attend.

Transcript Evaluation - occurs when a college admissions staff reviews college courses a student has taken at another college to determine if that course(s) is equivalent to theirs, so that they can accept it as transfer credit.

Withdraw - A student may withdraw from a class if they realize they will not earn the grade they need, either for their major or any financial awards. They can retake the class again and aim for a higher grade.

Work Study - On campus jobs provided for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay educational expenses.