

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Academic Achievement The record of a student's progress in such subjects as English, science, history, foreign language, and mathematics.

Academic Record Transcript of grades, courses, credits, and related academic information kept on file by the school. The transcript often includes grade point average (GPA) and/or rank in class. Standardized test scores may or may not be recorded on the transcript.

ACT Assessment An admission test used widely by college and university admission offices. The ACT tests students' ability in four distinct areas of study: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning, plus an optional writing test required by some selective universities.

ACT, Inc. A not-for-profit organization providing assessment, research, information and program management services. In addition to the ACT, the EXPLORE and PLAN programs are all services of the organization.

AP (Advanced Placement) Tests Standardized tests designed for students who have completed a rigorous college level course in high school. AP's are given in specific subject areas and are used to determine if a student may gain advanced standing in college and/or college credit. The AP exams are graded 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

Admission The decision to allow a student to enter a college or university.

Admission Test A standardized test used in the admission process to predict the likelihood of a student's success in college. The most widely used tests are the ACT and the SAT. Some colleges also require SAT Subject Tests, which are one-hour exams in specific academic subjects.

Application Formal submission of a request and required forms and materials for admission to a college or university.

Associate Degree A two-year degree that prepares students for further study. Some associate degree programs are sufficient training for certain careers, but many students in two-year colleges intend to complete their studies at a four-year college.

Bachelor's Degree A four-year degree awarded after the satisfactory completion of a four-year full-time program of study at a college of university.

Billable Costs College costs that are paid directly to the college or university, including tuition, student activity fees, laboratory fees, and other charges. For students who live on campus, the cost of room and board will also be a billable cost.

Certificate An award for completing a particular program or course of study, sometimes given by two-year colleges or vocational or technical schools.

Class Rank The relative numeric position of a student in his or her graduating class. Rank is calculated according to GPA and/or other measures of scholastic achievement.

College An institution at which students study toward two- or four-year undergraduate degrees after completing high school.

College Admission Counselors Professional educators working in the nation's colleges and universities to assist students with the exploration of educational options and the transition from high school to postsecondary education.

College Board A non-profit organization with membership that includes counselors, admission officers, college faculty, and financial aid officers. College Board sponsors many tests and services connected with the college admission process.

College Fair or College Night An event that allows students and parents to meet and talk with representatives from different colleges and universities.

College Guides or College Guidebooks Publications that include profiles of colleges and universities and can be used as part of the college exploration process.

College Preparatory Courses High school courses that provide students with the knowledge and skills required to do college-level study.

College View books Publications developed by individual colleges or universities to promote and present information about their respective institutions including campus setting, academic program, student life, costs, and other related information.

College Visit A visit by a student to a college or university that allows the student to experience the academic, student life and related campus features.

Common Application A standard application form that is accepted by almost 300 colleges. Students should check with each admission office to see if the college will accept the Common Application and if additional materials are required.

Community/Junior College A college offering a two year program. One option is vocational which allows the student to go directly into the vocation after graduation. The other option is academic, so the student can transfer to a four year institution.

Community Resources People (such as librarians, tutors, etc.) or related services (such as workshops, special programs, etc.) which are available within the community to support students and parents.

Cooperative Education A program that allows students to go to college and get paid to work while receiving credit for both; sometimes called a co-op program.

Cost of Attendance Expenses, including tuition and fees, books and supplies, and living expenses while the student attends college. The cost of attendance is compared with the student's expected family contribution to determine the student's financial need.

CSS Profile A Web-based financial aid form required by some colleges (mostly private). Processing fees are charged, so only colleges requiring the Profile should receive it.

Diploma Certificate issued by a school, college or university to students who have met coursework and graduation requirements.

Early Action A program in which the student receives an admission decision earlier than the standard response date and is not required to accept the offer or make a deposit before May 1st.

Early Decision A program that commits participating students to enroll at the college if admitted and offered a satisfactory financial aid package. Application deadlines are usually in November/December with a decision before January 1st.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) The amount students and their families are expected to pay toward college costs derived from a financial needs analysis, usually based on income and assets.

Extracurricular Activities A school activity such as athletics, drama or music that offers the student the opportunity to compliment his or her classroom experiences.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) A form completed by all applicants for federal and state financial aid. The FAFSA cannot be filed before January 1st of the student's senior year of high school.

Financial Aid or Assistance Any financial award to a student: may be a grant, scholarship, work-study or loan.

GED (General Educational Development) A series of five tests that individuals who did not complete high school may take through the state education system to qualify for a high school equivalency certificate.

Grade Point Average (GPA) An average of the student's academic achievement as measured by grades. Computed by multiplying the numerical grade received in each subject (or course) by the number of credits offered for each, then dividing by the total number of credits or courses studied.

Graduation Requirements Standards set by the school or state for awarding a high school diploma.

Grant A type of financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid. Grants are often based on financial need.

IB (International Baccalaureate Program) A two-year comprehensive and rigorous course of study, usually beginning in the 11th grade, that is similar to the final year of secondary school in Europe. Many colleges award credit or advanced placement to students who have completed an IB program.

Indirect Costs College costs that do not show up on the college bill and include books and supplies, travel, and personal expenses (laundry, entertainment, clothing, etc.) The amount spent on these items will vary according to need and preference.

Interview A personal meeting (individual or group) between a prospective student and the admission representative of a college or university.

Liberal Arts A course of study in college that provides a well-rounded education, including arts, sciences and the humanities.

Loan Money borrowed by the student and/or parent to pay for college expenses; the loan must be repaid, usually with interest.

Matriculation The process whereby a student is accepted, pays fees and enrolls in class, officially becoming a student at the college.

Major The course of study in which a student concentrates coursework, time and attention. A major in a subject often results in career preparation.

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) A national, professional association of more than 10,000 school counselors, college admission personnel and independent counselors and related organizations.

Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) Annual publication from the US Department of Labor that describes careers and outlines the nature of the job, working conditions, educational requirements, and employment outlook.

Open Admission A college admission policy that admits virtually all applicants with high school diplomas. Such colleges usually have extensive programs designed to provide remedial or developmental help to students who enroll with academic deficiencies.

Parent Conference A meeting between the parent and teacher or counselor to discuss the student's progress.

PLAN A pre-ACT test, generally administered in the sophomore year, that consists of four curriculum-based tests in English, reading, science, reasoning, and math, plus an assessment of a student's career interests.

Private College/University An institution of higher education not supported by taxes. The school may be independent or church related.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) A practice SAT test, administered to sophomores and juniors in October. It serves as the qualifying test for scholarships awarded by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Public College/University An institution of higher education supported by taxes [332](#) or other public funds.

Recommendation A written assessment of the student's achievement, written by a teacher or counselor and used by colleges and universities in the admission process.

Regular Decision A term used to describe the application process in which an institution reviews most of its applications before notifying its candidates.

Rolling Admission A term used to describe the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are received and offers decision to students as applications are reviewed.

SAT Reasoning Test An admission test used widely by college and university admission offices. The SAT Reasoning Test is designed to test a student's language skills and mathematical reasoning abilities. The SAT is a multiple choice written examination that provides math, critical reading, and writing scores, each graded 200 (low) to 800 (high), or combined scores of 600–2400.

SAT Subject Tests Tests in specific subjects used by some colleges and universities not only to help with admission decisions but also to assist in course placement and exemption of enrolled first-year students.

Scholarship A type of financial aid that doesn't have to be repaid. Scholarships may be based on need, on need combined with other criteria, or solely on other criteria such as academic achievement, artistic ability or athletics.

School Counselor Professional educator working in elementary, middle/junior high, or secondary schools to assist students with personal, social, educational, and career development.

Section 529 Plans State-sponsored college savings programs often referred to as “529 Plans” after the section of the Internal Revenue Code that provides the plan’s tax breaks.

Standardized Tests Tests such as the ACT and SAT that provide college admission officers with a comparative standard for evaluating a student’s academic likelihood of success in college.

Statement of Principles of Good Practice A professional code of ethics, developed by the NACAC, that guides the conduct of college admission representatives, school counselors and independent counselors as they help students in the college transition process.

Students’ Rights and Responsibilities A statement developed by NACAC that outlines students’ duties in the college admission process and describes what treatment students may rightfully expect from the colleges and universities to which they have applied.

Subsidized Loan A loan based on financial need in which the federal government pays the interest during the time the student is in school, thereby subsidizing the loan.

Test Preparation Course A program or course designed to help students become familiar with test-taking and review the areas that may be covered in admission tests.

Time Management Skills The ability to schedule school assignments and tasks in a manner that ensures that they are completed on time and with minimal interruption of routine.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) The TOEFL helps students demonstrate their English language proficiency at the advanced level required for study in colleges in the US Many colleges require that applicants from non-English-speaking countries take the test as part of the admission process.

Transcript A student’s official academic record that lists all courses taken and grades received. A transcript is usually required as part of the college admission process.

Tuition The cost for instruction or study at a college, university or school.

Tuition Deposit/Admission Deposit/Commitment Deposit or Fee Money paid by admitted students to verify their intention to enroll. The deposit is usually applied to the student’s tuition charges for the upcoming year. The tuition deposit should be submitted to only one college by May 1st, the uniform reply date.

Tutoring Assisting a student with some aspect of their schooling, such as mathematics or language skills. Tutoring goes beyond the attention given to the student in a regular classroom setting and can be provided for both enrichment and remedial purposes.

Undergraduate Degree A two-year (Associate) or four year (Bachelor's) degree.

Undocumented Students and/or parents who are not US citizens or permanent residents.

University An educational institution that may be the same as a college, but which usually offers graduate and/or professional degrees in addition to undergraduate degrees.

Unsubsidized Loan A loan that is not need based, and the borrower is responsible for accrued interest.

Vocational/Technical Education A program of study designed to train students for a particular occupation, business or trade.

Wait List A list of students who meet admission requirements, but will be offered a place in the class only if space becomes available.

Web Site An address on the Internet that contains information written and designed by a particular individual or organization.

Work Study A financial aid program that allows the student to work on-campus or with approved off-campus employers to earn money to pay for college expenses.