

Admission Glossary

ACT

The American College Testing program, a standardized college entrance test offered on a number of dates (see your guidance counselor for testing calendar) and consisting of four parts: English, math, reading, and science reasoning. Most colleges accept either the ACT or [SAT I](#).

Academics

Basic, general areas of study such as English, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign language, etc., as opposed to strictly technical or vocational courses. High school success in these core subjects is used as a predictor of success in college.

Advanced Placement (AP)

A series of exams offered in classroom subject areas in May each year. Many high schools offer AP courses in many subject areas. Students may earn from one to five college credits depending on the score earned on the test. The colleges determine what credit will be given for specific scores.

Arts and Sciences

The liberal arts division of the college (usually the largest division). Liberal arts are not engineering, business, pharmacy, or nursing. They consist of the humanities; physical, life, and natural sciences; math; and social science disciplines. Many students apply to the arts and sciences division.

College (as different from a university)

An educational institution that offers instruction beyond the high-school level in a two- or four-year program only, or an academic division of a university, such as the [College of Arts and Sciences](#).

College Day or College Night Programs

A program sponsored by a high school or school district to provide information to students about the college selection process. Representatives from colleges and universities are present to answer questions about their institutions.

College Representative or Admission Officer

Many colleges send admission officers to high schools to promote their schools and introduce their programs to prospective students.

College Scholarship Service (CSS)

The division of the College Board responsible for the [PROFILE](#) and the needs analysis that determines the family's contribution toward payment of a student's education.

Common Application

The Common Application is a form that can be used to apply to over 100 private colleges; college applicants need to fill out only one form. Duplicates of the form serve as applications to participating colleges.

Co-op Program

In a cooperative education program between a college and a corporation, studio, or lab, the student attends classes and then works off-campus, for pay, at the business site in the student's career field to gain experience.

Credits

The unit used for measuring educational accomplishment based on a given number of classroom periods per class, per week, throughout a term. Most undergraduate programs require an accumulation of approximately 120 credit hours to graduate.

Deferred Admission

A process by which seniors apply for and are accepted for admission to colleges during their senior year of high school, but choose to enter as freshmen after a one-year absence from school. A deferred admission is a commitment on the part of the college to take the student; a deferred acceptance is a commitment on the part of the student to attend after one year. Check with the college for specifics on deferring your enrollment.

Deposit

An amount of money that a student must send to the college, once he or she has been accepted. The deposit indicates that the student accepts the college's offer and will enroll. The enrollment deposit is nonrefundable. A housing deposit, also required, is often applied toward the first semester of housing.

Distribution Requirements

Most colleges won't let students take only history courses or only math courses; instead, they usually require that a student take some humanities courses, math courses, language courses, etc., in order to be liberally educated (i.e., not specialized). Some colleges have a core curriculum that is very specific about required courses. Almost all require freshman composition (i.e., English).

Early Action

This is a decision plan allowing students to apply to college(s) early and in return, the college(s) respond with an admission decision early in the cycle. It differs from [Early Decision](#) because Early Action is nonbinding. Check with the schools to which you are applying to see which decision plans they offer.

Early Decision (ED)

This is an early application process that involves a binding agreement on the part of the student. If a student is admitted under ED, he or she agrees to enroll at a particular college and to withdraw all other applications in process at other schools. This option is a good plan for students who have a clear first choice and are willing to stand on academic and extracurricular records through their junior year. ED deadlines vary from school to school. Students not admitted under Early Decision may sometimes be reconsidered with [Regular Decision](#)

FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid form available from your high school counselor's

office. This form must be submitted for a student to receive federal financial aid. Web site: www.fafsa.ed.gov/

GPA

The Grade Point Average is an average of all or most high school grades. Some colleges consider only the GPA of core courses.

Grant

An amount of money given (rather than loaned or earned) to a student for a specified time of study or research. Certain grants are based on need, as are the federal Pell Grant and the Missouri grant.

Greek Life

Fraternities and sororities associated with a college or university, including their sponsored activities.

High School Visit

Admission officers visit selected schools in cities throughout the U.S.A. and in some foreign countries to which they travel. These informational meetings, similar to group and information meetings (above), are used to give students information as well as to maintain good relations with high schools and to develop interest in high schools not previously visited.

Liberal Arts

A broad undergraduate program of education stressing the core courses; pre-professional training is often also available. (also see [Arts and Sciences.](#))

Loans

The most commonly used loans are:

- Federal Stafford Loan--obtained from a local bank, with the interest paid by the federal government while the student attends college. Repayment begins six months after completing (or leaving) college.
- Federal Perkins Loan--carries the lowest interest rates and is offered through the college as part of a financial aid package.
- Parent Loan Program (PLUS)--parents borrow from participating banks; repayment begins 60 days after inception of the loan.

Major

A subject of academic study chosen as a field of specialization.

Merit Scholarships or No-need Scholarships

Money given to students to cover college expenses without regard for financial need; e.g., athletic scholarships, academic scholarships, music scholarships, etc.

Minor

A subject of academic study requiring less intense specialization than a major.

National Merit Scholarship Program

This program offers qualified students scholarships financed by more than 400 corporations, company foundations, professional associations, unions, and company trusts. Winners are chosen on the basis of [PSAT](#) scores, course work, grades, leadership, interests, goals, and school recommendations.

NMSQT

The National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is the [PSAT](#) (Preliminary Student Aptitude Test). Scores on the PSAT are used by the [National Merit Scholarship Program](#), in combination with other student attributes, to determine scholarship winners.

Prerequisite

A course required before taking another course (i.e., French I would normally be required before taking French II).

CSS PROFILE

The form used by the [College Scholarship Service \(CSS\)](#) to assess a family's ability to pay for a college education. After information is analyzed, a complete report is sent to institutions and agencies designated by the student. Need-based financial aid is awarded according to the results. You must register with CSS to receive the PROFILE Packet. See your guidance counselor for registration forms. Web site: www.collegeboard.com

PSAT

The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test is offered to students in October of the junior year. Some students take it during the sophomore year.

Regular Decision

This is the most common admission program. Applications for admission are due sometime between January 1 and January 15 at most selective colleges; applicants are notified of their admission status between April 1 and April 15.

Residential Campus

A college that provides or requires on-campus housing for most or all students. Many colleges require all first-year students (freshmen) to live in college housing; this is usually referred to as guaranteed housing.

Rolling Admission

This means that as soon as applications arrive at a college, the admission office starts reading them and making decisions--often within three or four weeks. Usually, if you are accepted under this plan, you will not have to commit yourself until May 1, but be sure to read the fine print. Most, but not all, state universities operate with Rolling Admission; the earlier you apply, the better the chance for acceptance at most colleges using this plan.

SAT

The abbreviation for the standardized college entrance test offered by the [College Board](#). The

Scholastic Aptitude Test is offered on a number of dates and consists of two parts; verbal and math. Each part of the test is scored on a scale of 200-800.

SAT Subject Tests

A series of 16 subject-area exams sponsored by the Educational Testing Service. Students may take one, two, or three exams on any test date. The scores provide a national standard to measure a student's classroom achievement. Test subjects include areas such as English composition (all multiple choice or with essay), literature, American history, European history, math, Latin, Spanish, biology, chemistry, and physics. Tests are scored on a scale of 200-800. Information about these tests can be obtained from the high school guidance counselor's office.

Scholarship

Money given to students demonstrating high academic achievement, outstanding leadership, or special interests or talents. This money may be used for payment of all or part of their college expenses and is not required to be paid back.

Selective Admission

The ability of a college to choose a freshman class from an applicant pool that has more qualified candidates than the college can accommodate. Only about 100 U.S. colleges are truly selective and only a few are highly selective, i.e., in the position to deny 50 percent of the students who apply.

Transcripts

The official record from a school showing the student's grade records, list of courses taken, cumulative [Grade Point Average](#), and class rank (if the school ranks its students). An official transcript, sent directly from the high school to the college admission office, is always required for a student to be admitted.

University

Latin for the whole (uni) truth (veritas), this term refers to an academic organization that grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and supports at least two degree-granting professional schools that are not exclusively technological (such as medicine, journalism, or agriculture) and is composed of a number of schools or colleges, each of which encompasses a general field of study.

Viewbook

A viewbook contains a broad range of information about a particular college or university, such as the size of the student body, the size and quality of the faculty, information about the faculty, information about life on campus, and certain specific information about the courses of study available at the school. Other information is sometimes needed to supplement viewbook information for a particular specialization.

Wait List or Alternate List

The number of qualified candidates at a selective college who initially receive neither a letter of acceptance nor a letter of denial, but who may be offered a place in the freshman class after the Candidates' Reply Date if "yield" doesn't fill the class. Some colleges may go to the Wait List as

late as July or even August. Students who receive a Wait List letter may be asked if they want to remain on it.

Work-Study

A special federally sponsored college program combining class hours and work hours on the campus. Pay is usually minimum wage or slightly above for approximately 10-15 hours per week. The earnings from the job are used as part of a financial aid plan to help pay for tuition and other college expenses.