

50 Common Terms Used in Higher Education

1. **ACT** (American College Test): A standardized test used for college admissions in the United States, covering English, math, reading, and science.
2. **AP** (Advanced Placement): A program offering college-level courses and exams to high school students with the potential to earn college credit.
3. **Academic Advisor**: A faculty member who provides guidance to students on academic matters, such as course selections and career advice.
4. **Academic Affairs**: The division of a college or university that oversees academic programs, faculty, and curriculum development.
5. **Academic Hold**: A restriction placed on a student's record that prevents them from registering for classes or accessing transcripts, often due to unpaid fees or unmet requirements.
6. **Academic Year**: The period during which a student attends classes, typically from August or September to May or June.
7. **Accreditation**: Official recognition that a college or university meets the standards of a regional or national accrediting agency.
8. **Admissions**: The process through which students apply and are accepted into a college or university.
9. **Adjunct Faculty**: Part-time instructors who are hired on a contractual basis, often for a specific course or semester.
10. **Alumni**: Graduates or former students of a particular college or university.
11. **Asynchronous Course**: A course where students do not meet in real-time and can complete coursework on their own schedule.
12. **Audit**: To attend a course without receiving academic credit.
13. **Bachelor's Degree**: An undergraduate academic degree awarded by colleges and universities upon completion of a course of study, typically lasting four years.
14. **Bursar**: The office or official responsible for managing the financial affairs of a college or university, including billing and payments.
15. **Capstone Course**: A final course in a program of study designed to integrate and apply what students have learned throughout their coursework.
16. **Cohort**: A group of students who progress through a program of study together.
17. **Commencement**: A ceremony where degrees or diplomas are conferred upon graduating students.
18. **Comprehensive Exam**: An extensive examination covering a wide range of material, often required for advanced degrees.
19. **Convocation**: A formal assembly of members of a college or university, often for a special ceremony such as the start of the academic year.
20. **Course Load**: The number of courses or credit hours a student takes in a given semester.
21. **Credit Hour**: A unit of measure representing an hour of instruction per week over a semester.
22. **Curriculum**: The set of courses and their content offered at a school or university.
23. **Dean**: An administrative official in charge of a specific academic unit or department within a college or university.
24. **Drop/Add**: The period at the beginning of a semester when students can drop or add courses without penalty.
25. **Elective**: A course that a student can choose to take, as opposed to a required course.



Common Terms Continued...

- 26. **Enrollment:** The act of registering or entering a student into a college or university's courses or programs.
- 27. **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): A form used by U.S. students to apply for financial aid from the federal government.
- 28. **FERPA** (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act): A federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.
- 29. **Federal Work-Study:** A federally funded program that provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay for education expenses.
- 30. **Financial Aid:** Funding that is available to students to help cover the cost of college, including scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study programs.
- 31. **Full-Time Student:** A student who is enrolled in a minimum number of credit hours or courses as defined by their institution, typically required to maintain eligibility for certain financial aid, scholarships, and other benefits.
- 32. **GPA** (Grade Point Average): A numerical representation of a student's academic performance, typically on a 4.0 scale.
- 33. **Graduate Student:** A student who has completed a bachelor's degree and is pursuing advanced studies, such as a master's or doctoral degree.
- 34. **Grant:** A form of financial aid, often based on financial need, that does not need to be repaid.
- 35. **Hybrid Course:** A course that combines both online and in-person instruction.
- 36. **Internship:** A temporary position that provides students with practical experience in their field of study.
- 37. **Major:** The primary field of study chosen by a student in college.
- 38. **Minor:** A secondary field of study chosen by a student, requiring fewer courses than a major.
- 39. **Office Hours:** Designated times when professors are available to meet with students.
- 40. **Prerequisite:** A course or requirement that must be completed before enrolling in a more advanced course.
- 41. **Provost:** The senior academic administrator at a college or university responsible for overseeing academic policies and programs.
- 42. **Registrar:** The office or official responsible for maintaining student records and managing course registrations.
- 43. **SAT** (Scholastic Assessment Test): A standardized test used for college admissions in the United States, covering reading, writing, and math.
- 44. **Scholarship:** A financial award given to a student based on academic achievement, talent, or other criteria, which does not need to be repaid.
- 45. **Syllabus:** An outline of the topics, assignments, and policies for a specific course.
- 46. **Synchronous Course:** A course where students meet in real-time, often through online platforms, to participate in live lectures and discussions.
- 47. **Tenure:** A permanent position granted to faculty members, typically after a probationary period, providing job security and academic freedom.
- 48. **Transcript:** An official record of a student's academic performance, including courses taken and grades received.
- 49. **Tuition:** The fee charged by a college or university for instruction.
- 50. **Withdrawal:** The process of officially dropping a course or leaving a college or university after the add/drop period has ended. This may result in a "W" grade on the student's transcript, and it can have implications for financial aid and academic progress.