

COLLEGE GLOSSARY

Application Process

Applicant: Any student who has completed the college application process for an institution

Advanced Placement (AP): AP courses are college-level classes taught in the high school that follow a particular curriculum and end in an AP exam offered by The College Board. Students may receive high school credit for the course, depending on the guidelines of the institutions that they are accepted to.

Application Deadline: The date set by the college admissions team, after which applications to that school will no longer be accepted.

Application: A college application is part of the college admissions process. Students are usually required to submit academic records, personal essays, letters of recommendations and a list of extracurricular activities with their application. Most colleges & universities also require the SAT or the ACT.

Best Fit: Applying to college is not about getting into the best college. It is about getting into the best college for you. Some students do best at large universities, while others prefer smaller classes and personal attention. Don't just apply to a big-name school; find the best one for you.

Campus Interview: This is a face-to-face meeting between an admissions representation and an applicant. Interviews are rarely required but a great option for students who would like to show their interest in a school.

Campus Visit: A service offered by college admissions offices for students which allows them to visit various campus buildings, meet key institutional personnel, and get a first-hand look at campus life.

College Essay: A brief composition (usually around 500 words) on a single subject required by many colleges as a part of the application process. If the college accepts a Common Application, it may require a second, shorter essay.

College Fair: An event at which colleges, universities and organizations related to higher education present themselves in an exposition format for the purpose of attracting and identifying potential applicants.

College Rep Visit: This is when a college or university admissions representative visits a high school for the purpose of recruiting students for admission.

Common Application: The Common Application (informally known as the Common App) makes it possible for students to use one admissions application to apply to any of 450 member colleges and universities. This requires students to only fill out one application to be submitted to all colleges with the same information going to each.

Demonstrated interest: A student's expression of his or her desire to attend a particular college through campus visits, contact with admissions officers and other actions that attract the attention of college admissions personnel. Studies have shown more than half of institutions consider this in their admissions decision.

Extracurricular Activity: Anything you do that is not a high school course or paid employment.

Grade Point Average (GPA): Measure of a student's grades that is calculated by averaging the numerical value of the grades of every class the student has taken since 9th grade.

In state Student: A student who permanently lives in the same state as the college or university she plans to attend. At public universities, tuition is generally less for in-state students.

Out-of-State Student: A student who permanently lives in a different state than the college or university she plans to attend. At public universities, tuition is generally more for out-of-state students.

Prospective student: Any student who is a potential applicant for admissions, particularly if they have shown interest in a school.

Reach School: A college or university you have a chance of getting into, but your test scores, GPA and/or class rank are lower than what is stated on the school's profile. Extremely selective U.S. colleges and universities (Ivy League Schools for example) should always be considered a reach.

Recommendations: Statements, or letters of endorsement, written on a student's behalf during the college admissions process.

Safety School: A college or university where you clearly meet the admissions requirements: minimum GPA, minimum test scores, etc. It's important to remember that the school should be one you want to attend should you not be accepted into more selective schools.

School Profile: An overview of your high school's program which is submitted to admissions offices along with your transcript.

Selectivity: The degree to which a college or university admits or denies admission based on the individual student's records.

Transcript: The official document containing the records of a student's academic performance and Regents testing history. Transcripts must be signed by a high school official to be considered official for the purposes of admission.

College Entrance Exams

ACT: Approximately 3 hours, this exam measures a student's knowledge and achievement in four subject areas—English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning—to determine the student's readiness for college. There is an optional writing section that students are highly encouraged to complete. The ACT is scored on a scale from 1 to 36.

PSAT Test: Taken in your sophomore and junior years, this exam prepares students for the SAT and is used to qualify students for the National Merit Scholarship semifinals and other awards.

SAT: Widely used as a college entrance exam, the SAT assesses student's critical thinking skills as they relate to verbal, mathematic and writing skills. The revised SAT will be given beginning in March of 2016 and will be approximately 3 hours long with a 50 minute optional essay. The revised SAT will be score on a scale from 400-1600.

SAT Subject Test: Known as SAT II tests, these exams are offered in many areas of study. Some colleges require students to take one or more SAT subject test when applying.

Post-Secondary Institutions

College: An institution of higher learning which grants a bachelor's degree.

Community College: An institution of higher learning that is typically a two-year public school that provides degrees such as an associate's degree or certificate programs.

CUNY College/University: An institution of higher education that is a part of the City University of New York system. CUNY schools are primarily funded by New York City taxes and typically have lower tuition than private universities.

Graduate School: Usually within universities, these schools offer degree programs beyond the bachelor's degree.

Historically Black College/University (HBCU): Historically black colleges and universities are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established with the intention of serving primarily the black community. There are approximately 105 HBCUs across the United States.

Private Institution: This college or university is funded by private sources without control by the government.

SUNY College/University: An institution of higher education that is a part of the State University of New York system. SUNY schools are primarily funded by New York State taxes and typically have lower tuition than private universities.

Vocational/Trade School: Similar to community colleges, these institutions offer specific career-oriented programs that can last anywhere from a few months to a couple of years. Most offer specializations in a specific area.

Post-Secondary Degrees

A.A.S: “Associate of Applied Science” - earned at some two-year colleges when a student’s course load specializes in math or sciences.

A.A: “Associate of Arts” - earned at some two-year colleges after a student studies when a student’s course load specializes in liberal or fine arts.

B.A. or B.S.: “Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science” - these are earned at four-year colleges and are dependent upon one’s field of study.

Graduate Degrees: These degrees are earned beyond a bachelor’s degree when the student completes graduate school requirements. Common examples are a master’s degree (M.A.), doctoral degree (Ph.D.) and medical doctor (M.D.).

Acceptance Terminology

Acceptance: The decision made by an admissions officer to offer the opportunity for enrollment to a student.

Deferred Admission: A decision made in conjunction with early applicants that indicate a student has not been admitted early decision/action but will be reconsidered during the review of applications for regular admissions.

Deferred Enrollment: Available at some institutions, accepted students may decide to take a semester or year off before enrolling. The agreement must be made with the college and must be for a justifiable reason.

Early Action: A non-binding application which is submitted by an earlier deadline than regular decision. The applicant receives notice of an admissions decision earlier than if they were to apply regular decision.

Early Decision: A binding agreement which is submitted by an earlier deadline than regular decision and is a contract between the applicant and the college upon acceptance. The student must enroll in the school if accepted, so students should only apply early decision to their number one school of choice.

Rolling Admissions: Admissions practice used by some institutions to review and complete applications as they arrive. Students utilizing rolling admission should apply as early as possible.

Waitlist: An applicant is put on a waitlist when an admissions committee decides to offer the applicant the opportunity to enroll only if there is space available in the incoming class after fully admitted students have responded. This is reserved for students who may be strong, but are competing against a stronger pool of applicants.