

Glossary for ASPIRE Advisors, Students and Families

Academic Records

Academic information kept on file by the school. This record includes a transcript of grades, test scores, and related academic materials.

ACT

The American College Test is used widely by college and university admission offices. The ACT tests students' ability in English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.

Advanced Placement Tests (AP)

Designed for students who have completed college level work in high school. AP tests are given in specific subject areas and are used to determine if a student may gain advanced standing and/or college credit.

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 (See ACT and SAT).

American College Testing Program (ACT)

A non-profit agency that designs and administers tests used in the college admission process.

Application

Formally submitting required forms and materials for admission to a college or university.

Articulation agreement

An agreement between a two-year community college and a four-year college, that guarantees a graduate of the two-year school admission to the four-year school.

ASSET:

A group of tests developed by American College Testing and required at many two-year colleges as part of the course placement and advising process. The tests measure a student's reading, writing, and mathematical skills and are administered by the college.

Associate's Degree- A.A. (Associate of Art), A.S. (Associate of Science)

A two-year degree that generally prepares the student for additional study at a four year school. Some associate's degree programs are sufficient training for certain careers, but many students in two-year colleges intend to complete their studies at a four-year school.

Award Letter

After applying for admission, completing the FAFSA and receiving a SAR (Student Aid Report) you will receive an award letter from the financial aid office. Your award letter will tell you what type of financial assistance and the amount you will receive. Your financial package may include any or all of the items listed under the FAFSA definition (see section F of this glossary).

Bachelor's Degree

A four-year degree awarded for study in a specific subject.

B.A. (Bachelor of Art) requires that the student take a foreign language.

B.S. (Bachelor of Science) requires more science and math classes.

B.F.A. (Bachelor of Fine Art) designates subject emphasis in fine and applied arts.

Certificate

Recognition provided to a student for completion of short-term vocational or career training programs.

CIS-Career Information Service

The CIS is a computer program, which lists information about careers, post-secondary educational training programs, and scholarships. This program is available in many high schools counseling centers and is updated annually.

Class Rank

A student's approximate standing in their graduating class. Rank is based on grade point average and presented either in "percentiles" (such as "upper fifth") or numerical order (such as 72nd in a class of 410).

College

Postsecondary schools where students study toward two or four-year undergraduate degrees.

College Admission Counselor

A professional educator employed by the college or university to assist students with the admission process, exploration of educational options and the transition from high school to postsecondary education.

College Board

A non-profit organization, whose members include counselors, admission officers, college faculty and financial aid officers. They sponsor many tests, education services and materials connected with the college admission process.

College Calendar

Traditional semester – two approximately equal semesters

Early semester – two semesters, the first ending before Winter Break

Quarter – three equal terms of about 12 weeks each

Trimester – calendar year divided into three equal sessions, the third session replaces summer school

4-1-4 – two equal terms of about 16 weeks each, with a 4-week interim term

College Fair or College Night

A program organized to allow high school students and parents to meet and talk with representatives from different colleges and universities.

College Guides

Publications, which 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 Transfer Courses

Courses intended for transfer at college credit to bachelor's degree programs elsewhere.

College View Books or College Catalogs

Publications developed by individual colleges or universities to promote and present information about their respective institutions: campus setting, academic programs, student life, costs, and other related information.

College Visit

Actual visit by student to a college or university to observe first-hand the academics, student life, and related campus features. Students may visit independently or as part of an Open House.

Common Application

Allows a student to fill out one application form that can be photocopied or e-mailed and sent to more than one college. Students should check with the admissions office to see if a college will accept the Common Application and if additional materials are required.

Community Colleges

Public institutions that offer certificate programs (one year) and associate degrees (two years). Students may transfer from a community college to a 4-year school.

Cooperative work-study education:

A program in which the student alternates between full-time college study and full-time paid employment related to the area of study. Under this plan, the bachelor's degree often requires five years to complete.

Credit Hour

A unit of academic credit that often represents one hour of class time per week for a period of study (semester, quarter, etc.).

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.

Degree

The rank or title given by a college or university to a student who has met certain academic requirements (see "Undergraduate Degree").

Diploma

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

ETS-Educational Talent Search

A project funded by the US Department of Education to motivate and assist youth to pursue higher education. A paid ETS representative is usually in Student Services three days a week to work with students seeking a college education whose parents did not complete college and/or have financial limitations. In addition, the representative may take students on visitations to colleges, assist them with their study habits, and encourage academic success in any way.

Educational Testing Services (ETS)

Educational Testing Services is private non-profit organization that provides information about college and graduate school admissions and placement tests.

Early Action

The term used to describe the application process which permits a student to apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision during the senior year, well in advance of the normal response dates in the spring. The candidate is not committed to enroll at that particular institution.

Early Admission

Many colleges have a program that allows a student to apply for admission during their junior year in high school. The early admission program at most colleges is reserved for truly exceptional students whose academic preparation and achievement level are sufficient for early entrance to college.

Early Decision

The term used to describe the application process in which a student makes the commitment to an institution, that, if admitted, the student will enroll. Only a student who can make a deliberate and well-reasoned first choice decision should apply under an Early Decision plan because the institution will require a nonrefundable deposit well before May 1 and request the student withdraw any applications they have made to other schools.

Elective

A course students may select to meet total graduation requirements.

Extracurricular Activities

Any school activity such as athletics, drama, or music, that offers the student the opportunity to complement his or her classroom experiences.

FAFSA (The Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

To apply for federal and state financial aid, students must complete the FAFSA. Some schools require the Financial Aid Profile in addition to the FAFSA. Financial aid forms cannot be filed until January 1 and must be filed each year. Always keep a copy of the financial aid forms you mail. Types of money programs accessed through the FAFSA and FAF are:

- *Pell Grants- Federal free money awarded to the most needy.*
- *State Grants and Institution Grants- Free money from private and public sources.*
- *Tuition Waivers- A part or all of a year's tuition may be waived based on a variety of talents. Varies with the school.*
- *Work Study- On campus jobs provided by the school.*

- *Loans – Money you borrow which must be paid back.*

Financial Aid or Assistance

Any financial award given to a student. It may be in the form of a grant, scholarship, work-study job or loan.

Fee Waiver

Students may qualify to have four-year college application and/or SAT/ACT fees deferred if they can show proof of financial need, such as eligibility for the school free lunch program. See your high school counselor.

Four-year schools

Colleges and universities that offer professional degrees (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral degrees).

Grade Point Average

An average of the student's academic achievement in grades for a specific time period (term or semester). A cumulative GPA is the average over the entire high school or college career. Letter grades are given a point value (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1). Calculate the GPA by totaling the number of grade points earned for all courses and dividing by the number of courses carried. For example if a student has received A,B,B,C for four courses in one term, the calculation would be

$$4+3+3+2=12 \text{ total points} \div 4 \text{ classes} = 3.00 \text{ GPA}$$

Graduation Requirements

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

Grant

An outright financial gift for college costs, that does not have to be repaid by the student. Grants are generally given for a specified time of study or research. Certain grants are awarded based on student financial need.

Interview

Face-to-face interaction (individual or group) between a prospective student and the admission representatives of a college or university.

Liberal Arts

A course of studies in college that provides a well-rounded education that includes arts, sciences, and the humanities as well as career courses.

Loan

Money borrowed to pay for college expenses. Loans must be repaid, usually with interest.

Major

The course of study in which students concentrate their coursework, time, and attention.

National Association for College Admission Counseling

A national, professional association of more than 6,200 school counselors, college admission personnel, independent counselors, and related organizations.

National Merit “commended”:

An award given out by the College Board for high PSAT score by state. It is a runner-up to the higher designation of National Merit Semifinalist.

Open Admission

Some colleges offer admission to ALL students who apply. Such colleges usually have extensive programs designed to provide remedial or developmental help to students who enroll with academic deficiencies.

OSAC- Oregon Student Assistance Commission (formerly Oregon State Scholarship Commission)

The state agency that oversees a growing number of scholarships and financial aid programs.

OUS- The Oregon University System

OUS oversees Oregon’s public, 4-year colleges and universities

EOU Eastern Oregon University, LaGrande

OHSU Oregon Health and Sciences University, Portland

OIT Oregon Institute of Technology, Klamath Falls

OSU Oregon State University, Corvallis

PSU Portland State University, Portland

SOU Southern Oregon University, Ashland

U of O University of Oregon, Eugene

WOU Western Oregon University, Monmouth

PLAN

A comprehensive guidance resource that helps students measure their current academic development, explore career/training options, and make plans for the remaining years of high school and post-graduation years. PLAN can help all students—those who are college-bound as well as those who are work-bound.

PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)

The PSAT/NMSQT is a practice test designed to prepare juniors for the SAT and is used in the awarding of National Merit Scholarships. Colleges do not often use the PSAT scores as admission criteria.

Postsecondary

Opportunities that are available after graduation from high school (secondary school). Postsecondary usually refers to vocational schools, colleges or universities as in “postsecondary institutions” or “postsecondary education.”

Private School

Schools that are not funded by public taxes. Tuition costs are the same whether the student lives in that state or is a resident of another state.

Proprietary College

A for profit school often specializing in technology related fields or trades such as beautician or barber.

Public School

Schools that are tax supported. Tuition costs are less for students who live in the same state as the school.

Recommendation

A written assessment of the student's aptitudes, abilities, and interests. Recommendations are written by teachers, counselors or employers 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 prior to notifying the majority of its candidates.

Rolling Admission

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

SAR (Student Aid Report)

A Student Aid Report is sent to you from the company processing your FAFSA. The report is a summary of the information you submitted on your FAFSA. The SAR lists your family's EFC (expected family contribution toward their student's college education) on the top of the right corner of the first page. The EFC is derived from the information on your FAFSA and a computation formula. Students and family should review their SAR to verify that all information is correct.

SAT

The SAT is usually taken in the high school student's junior year and again in their senior year and is a required test for admission to many colleges. The SAT is a three-hour exam that measures two sets of skills -- verbal and mathematical reasoning. The Sat I is designed to test a student's aptitude for scholastic work, not intelligence. Low scores are not indicative of a student's ability to do competitive work in college, merely that someone else who has taken the same test has achieved higher scores. The SAT II tests abilities in specific subject areas.

SAT II

Formally known as achievement tests, these tests are one-hour subject tests prepared by the College Board in over seventeen different academic subjects. Mostly highly selective colleges require two or three of these tests for admissions.

Scholarship

Scholarships are financial awards that do not need to be repaid. They are awarded based upon criteria established by the donor. This criteria could include one or more of the following: the student's financial need, school activities, work history, grade point average, community service, career interests, and skills such as music or athletics.

Standardized Tests

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

Title IV Codes

A post-secondary school code number used on the FAFSA. The applicant designates which schools they are applying to for admission. These are different from the standard college code used for the SAT and ACT tests.

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

A test given worldwide by the Educational Testing Service to determine a student's ability to function in an English-speaking classroom environment. The test is used for undergraduate, as well as graduate, admission.

Transcript

The official record of a student's high school or college coursework and grades. A transcript is usually required as part of the college admission process. TuitionThe cost for attending classes at a college, university, or vocational school. Tuition does not include room and board.

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.

Undergraduate Degrees

Two-year (Associate's) or four-year (Bachelor's) degrees.

University

An institution, which may be the same as a college, but which usually, offers graduate degrees in addition to undergraduate degrees, as well as research facilities.

Vocational/Technical Education

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

Wait List

A term used by institutions to describe a process in which the institution does not initially offer or deny admission, but extends to a candidate the possibility of admission in the future.

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. Federal work-study is funded by a federal grant to the school. The school funds campus work-study.