



## **AA**Aardvark University **Glossary of College Related Terms**

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### **A**

**A, grade of**- highest performance score for a course; where grades are based on a 4 point scale, A=4.0; where plus and minus are also considered, A- = 3.67.

**AAUP**- American Association of University Professors; advocate for teachers and academic freedom.

**academic costume**- cap, gown, hood, etc. worn at graduation ceremonies; usually black; doctoral graduates have colored trimmings.

**academic drop**- dismissal from school due to unsatisfactory academic work.

**academic unit**- credit hour; usually based of one credit hour per weekly hour of lecture.

**academic year**- usually August through May and divided divided into two semesters (fall and spring).

**academy**- college offering training in a specialized subject.

**accreditation**- approval by an outside rating organization that reviews educational institutions and/or programs for quality.

**ACE**- American Council on Education; higher education advocacy group.

**ACT**- entrance test for college; covers English, reading, science, and math.

**add/drop**- enrolling in or stopping enrollment in a course.

**adjunct faculty**- members of the faculty that are part-time.

**administrative action**- oral or written warning, reprimand, etc.

**admission**- acceptance into a program of study.

**admissions counselor**- advisor who assists in the preparation of a student's application materials.

**advanced placement**- the waiving of some normally required classes; usually granted on the basis of prior study and/or performance on a special exam.

**advisor**- counselor to student who offers academic advice.

**advisory**- condition of course enrollment that a student is advised to meet but is not actually required to meet.

**advisement**- meeting between academic advisor and student where program of study, class selections or career plans are discussed.

**alma mater**- college or university one has attended and usually from which one has graduated.

**application essay**- admission essay; common requirement when applying to an institution; vehicle for uncovering the human side of applicants.

**alumni**- graduates of a school.

**articulated credit**- college credit granted for high school course work.

**articulation agreement**- equates courses at one institution (college, community college, high school) to another.

**assignment**- required course work completed in-between class meetings.

**assistant professor**- college or university teacher who ranks below an associate professor and above an instructor.

**assistantship**- financial aid awarded to a graduate student in which the student assists a professor, usually with teaching or research.

**associate professor**- a teacher in a college or university who ranks in-between a professor and an assistant professor.

**associate's degree**- awarded for completing a two-year program at a community or junior college; usually 60 credits or more; common programs are arts (AA), applied science (AAS), fine arts (AFA), and science (AS).

**athletic conference**- group of college sports teams which play against one another.

**audit**- to attend a course without receiving academic credit.

**award letter**- informs a prospective student of the amount of financial aid available to him or her.

## **B**

**B, grade of**- above average performance score for a course; when grades are based on a 4 pt. scale, B=3.0; when +/- are awarded as well, B+=3.33 and B-=2.67.

**bachelor's degree**- awarded for completing a four-year program at a college, university or professional school; usually 120 credits or more; common programs are arts (BA), business administration (BBA), fine arts (BFA), and science (BS).

**blue book**- booklet with blue cover that contains lined paper for writing essay test answers.

**board of regents**- governs and supervises a collection of state learning institutions; a.k.a. board of governors.

**board of visitors**- an institution's governing body; usually responsible for budget approval and long-term planning; a.k.a. board of trustees.

**bookstore**- sells textbooks and other items of use to students.

**bridge courses**- non-credit college classes on material normally learned in high school.

**bulletin**- booklet with information about curricula and courses; includes facts about the college.

**bursar**- treasurer or business officer.

## C

**C, grade of-** average performance score for a course; where grades are based on the usual 4 point scale, C equals 2.0; at schools where plus or minus are also given, C+=2.33 and C-=1.67.

**calendar, academic-** lists registration and deadline dates, college holidays and other time sensitive information.

**campus-** the building and grounds of a school.

**catalogue-** see bulletin.

**certificate-** a document that signifies completion of studies; does not award a degree.

**certificate program-** specialized training in a specific area of study; usually completed in a year or less.

**chancellor-** chief administrative officer.

**CHEA-** Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

**class schedule-** course details for the current semester; when and where class meets.

**class standing-** student's year in school (e.g., sophomore); based on semesters and/or credits completed.

**CLEP-** College Level Examination Program; tests taken to show proficiency in subject(s) and for which college credits are received.

**code of conduct-** rules and regulations establishing acceptable student conduct.

**college-** four-year higher education institution, often emphasizing the liberal arts; alternatively, a division within a university.

**colloquium-** conference of scholars or other experts at which a specific topic is discussed or analyzed.

**commencement-** ceremony at the end of the academic year when diplomas are given to graduates.

**commons-** campus area for the use of all; alternatively, large dining room.

**community college-** two-year school with programs for associate's degrees; junior college.

**commuter college-** a school where students live off-campus and commute to classes.

**competency requirements-** verification of competency in reading, writing and mathematics; a condition of graduation at many colleges.

**concurrent enrollment-** current attendance at more than one institution.

**continuing education-** non-degree programs with courses offered for the sake of personal or professional growth.

**corequisite-** a course that must be taken in conjunction with another course.

**core courses-** the required courses of an academic program.

**correspondence course-** a course conducted via mail.

**course load**- number of credit hours a student is carrying during a semester.

**course number**- number code that identifies a course; usually 3 digits with first digit indicating the normal class year in which course is taken.

**course overload**- carrying excess credits (typically 19+ at the undergraduate level); requires approval.

**credit hours**- value assigned to a course; typically 1 credit hour equals = 1 hour of class per week.

**cum laude**- lowest of three honors awarded to graduating students for exceptional grades; typically requires 3.4+ GPA.

**cumulative grade point average**- weighted average of the grades for all courses taken to date. See GPA.

**curriculum**- the courses that comprise a learning program.

**cut**- skipping attendance of a class meeting.

## D

**D, grade of**- below average performance score for a course; where grades are based on a 4 point scale, D=1.0; at institutions where +/- grades are also given, D+=1.33 and D-=0.67.

**dean**- director of an academic division; each school has a dean; other types include dean of admission and dean of students.

**dean's list**- students with a high GPA for the semester; usually at least 3.5/4.0

**default**- failure to repay a student loan.

**deferral**- postponement of a fee that is due.

**degree**- title awarded upon completion of an academic program.

**degree program** - prescribed classes and other requirements which when completed lead to a degree.

**delivery method**- the way in which a course is made available; may be face-to-face or via the Internet, television, videotape, CD-ROM or the mail.

**department (academic)**- division within a school; offers courses pertaining to a specific discipline.

**department chairperson**- faculty member who heads an academic department.

**diploma**- document which confers a degree.

**direct cost of attendance**- the cost of tuition and fees plus room and board.

**dissertation**- research conducted for a doctoral degree.

**distance learning**- course is provided via the Internet or through the use television, videotape, etc.

**doctor's degree**- awarded for completion of the most advanced studies.

**dorm**- dormitory; building housing students, usually in semiprivate rooms.

**double major**- simultaneously seeking two degrees in two majors.

**drop/add**- changing your course schedule by stopping enrollment in a course and/or enrolling in a course; must meet a specified deadline.

## E

**EFC**- Expected Family Contribution; family's ability to pay the cost of attendance plus living expenses; based on a standardized formula.

**elective**- course not required in major.

**ESL**- English as a Second Language.

**endowment**- the funds or other assets donated to an institution; becomes capital that provides income.

**essay**- written composition; vehicle for students to demonstrate their knowledge of a subject.

**expelled**- institutional dismissal.

**extracurricular activities**- student activities apart from class work.

## F

**F, grade of**- signifies unacceptable performance in a course; no credit is awarded.

**faculty**- teaching staff.

**FAFSA**- Free Application for Federal Student Aid; filed by all seeking aid; used to determine aid eligibility.

**FAQ**- Frequently Asked Questions.

**fees**- required costs in addition to tuition; fees are typically charged for parking, registration, lab usage, special events and health services.

**final exam**- last examination of the semester.

**financial aid package**- a student's total amount of financial aid; may include loans, scholarships, grants and/or work-study participation.

**financial need**- cost of attendance less expected family contribution (EFC).

**fraternity**- social organization with male student members.

**freshman**- student in the first year of studies; has completed less than 30 credit hours.

**full-time student**- student carrying full course load; for undergraduates, usually 12 or more credit hours a semester.

## G

**GED**- General Education Development; examination taken as an equivalent substitute for high school graduation.

**GER-** General Education Requirements; courses that all undergraduates must complete.

**GMAT-** Graduate Management Admission Test; required by most business schools for MBA and similar programs.

**good academic standing-** status that reflects achieving or surpassing the minimum GPA requirement.

**GPA-** grade point average; the weighted average of course grades; usually based on a 4.0 scale. For example, course X is 3 credit hours, course Y is 4 credit hours and course Z is 1 credit hour. The respective grades for X, Y and Z are A, C and B.  $GPA = (3*4)+(4*2)+(1*3) / (3+4+1) = 23 / 8 = 2.88$

**grade-** performance score for a course; usually based on A, B, C, D, F. For grade point calculations, A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1.

**graduate studies-** studies beyond the bachelor's degree.

**grant-** money given to a student to pay for all or part of cost of college; repayment is not required.

**GRE-** Graduate Record Examination; taken when seeking admission to graduate level studies.

## H

**half-time student-** student carrying half of a full course load; for undergraduates, usually 6 credit hours a semester.

**hearing officer-** school official assigned to conduct disciplinary proceedings.

**higher education-** postsecondary education generally; given at colleges and junior colleges, universities, professional schools, institutes of technology, etc.

**honor code-** rules defining academic honesty.

**honor society-** student organization with members who maintain high grade averages.

**humanities courses-** courses in philosophy, literature, and art.

## I

**ID card-** student identification card; usually issued upon beginning attendance and revalidated each semester thereafter.

**incomplete grade-** grade (I) signifying satisfactory but incomplete course work. Usually changed to F if work is not completed within an allotted time.

**independent study-** for credit study that is not a part of a course.

**instructor-** a teacher in a college or university who ranks below an assistant professor.

**internship-** job held by a student and usually with work activities related to the student's major.

**intersession-** period between the fall and spring semesters.

**Ivy League-** eight prestigious schools located in America's northeast: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale.

## J-K

**junior**- student in the third year of studies; has completed 60-89 credit hours.

**junior college**- two-year school with programs for associate's degrees; community college.

## L

**lab**- laboratory; classroom with special equipment necessary for learning, experimenting or demonstrating.

**lecture**- method of instruction; exposition delivered to a class.

**liberal arts**- studies in subject areas that provide general knowledge (as opposed to technical knowledge); includes, history, languages, literature, philosophy, and social sciences.

**library**- building or area containing books, periodicals, and other materials.

**loan**- financial aid for students or parents; must be repaid, but often not until student finishes studies.

**lower division course**- course intended for freshmen and sophomores.

**LSAT**- Law School Admission Test; required of applicants to law schools.

## M

**magna cum laude**- next to the highest of three honors awarded to graduating students for exceptional grades; typically requires 3.6+ GPA.

**major**- area of study or field of specialization; concentration of courses.

**master's degree**- awarded for completion of studies beyond a bachelor's degree.

**matriculated**- admitted and enrolled.

**mascot**- symbol adopted by a school as its source of good luck; often an animal.

**MCAT**- Medical College Admissions Test; required exam for medical school admission.

**merit-based financial aid**- aid given on the basis academic performance as opposed to financial need.

**mid-term exam**- examination given in the middle of the semester.

**minimal pass**- lowest grade or score necessary to complete a course and gain credit.

**minor**- secondary area of study.

**multiple-choice exam**- test with questions followed by multiple answers, only one of the answers is correct.

## N

**NCAA**- National Collegiate Athletic Association; large group of US colleges and athletic conferences; organizes and supervises sports programs.

**need-based financial aid**- aid is given on the basis of the financial need for assistance.

**NMSQT**- National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

**nonresident**- student enrolled at a state supported institution who lives outside the state or otherwise fails to meet state residency requirements.

## O

**objective test**- exam with multiple choice, true or false, or similar fact seeking questions.

**open admissions**- very liberal admission policy; usually allows anyone over a stated age to enroll, or sometimes allows any high school graduate or GED holder to enroll.

**open-book exam**- test during which students are allowed to refer to the course textbook.

**oral exam**- test for which answers are given by speaking.

**orientation**- program that introduce new students to their campus and its various resources.

## P

**part-time student**- student carrying less than a full course load; for undergraduates, usually less than 12 credit hours a semester.

**pass/fail**- grading system based only on whether students pass or fail.

**Pell Grant**- federal grant given to low-income undergraduate students.

**Perkins Loan**- low interest loan given to students with exceptional financial need.

**PhD**- Doctor of Philosophy; a type of doctor's degree.

**Phi Beta Kappa**- national honor society; founded in 1776 at College of William and Mary.

**placement test**- subject specific test used to advance students to higher than normal levels of study; credits may or may not be awarded.

**plagiarism**- representing written material or other work as one's own when it has been copied from someone else without permission.

**PLUS Loan**- federal non-need based loan for parents.

**pop quiz**- short unannounced test.

**postsecondary education**- education which occurs after and beyond the scope of high school.

**prerequisite**- a course that must be completed to qualify for enrollment in another course.

**private institution**- university or college relying mainly on private as opposed to government funding.

**probation (academic)**- status signifying unsatisfactory academic work; usually occurs when cumulative GPA falls below 2.0; student must improve performance within a specified period or face dismissal.

**proctor**- overseer of an exam; on duty to prevent cheating.

**program (academic)**- a series of courses designed to lead to a degree in a field of study.

**professor**- college or university teacher of the highest rank.

**provost**- head administrator of educational activities; deans usually report to this official.

**PSAT**- Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test; taken by students in the 10th or 11th grade as practice for their SAT.

**public institution**- university or college relying mainly on government as opposed to private funding.

## Q

**quarter system**- division of the academic year into four parts or quarters; typically one quarters is 12 weeks.

**quiz**- short test; given periodically between exams.

## R

**readmission**- the re-enrollment of a former student.

**reciprocity agreement**- agreement between states to charge in-state tuition to each other's students.

**rector**- chief administrative officer; a.k.a. president, chancellor.

**registrar**- official in charge of maintaining student records.

**registration**- process of selecting, enrolling in and paying for classes.

**required course**- course that must be taken and passed in order to gain a degree.

**research paper**- report summarizing empirical and/or secondary research findings as well as conclusions based on the findings.

**resident**- student enrolled at a state supported institution who lives in the state or otherwise meets state residency requirements.

**resident advisor**- advisor who lives in a dormitory; assists and counsels dorm residents.

**rolling admission**- notifying students as they are accepted.

**ROTC**- Reserve Officers Training Corps; scholarship program conducted by the US military. Provides money for tuition, fees and a monthly allowance in return for military service after graduation.

## S

**sabbatical**- period of leave from teaching; often used for research.

**salutatorian**- student with second highest grades in graduating class

**SAT-** Scholastic Aptitude Test; measures aptitude in mathematics, verbal comprehension and problem solving. Taken by students in their junior and/or senior year of high school. Required by many colleges as a condition of admission.

**schedule of classes-** published list of classes offered; details days and time of class meetings, instructor, class location, etc.

**scholarship-** money awarded to a student based on need, merit or other criteria.

**school-** academic division within a university; for example, school of arts and letters.

**semester-** a period lasting about 15 weeks or half an academic year; typically there are fall and spring semesters.

**semester system-** division of the academic year into two parts or semesters; usually a fall and spring term of fifteen weeks each. Typically, there is also a summer session of seven weeks.

**seminar-** course; typically for graduate students.

**senior-** student in the fourth year of studies; has completed 90 or more credit hours.

**SEOG-** Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant; federal grant for undergraduates with extraordinary financial need.

**SLEP-** Second Language English Placement Test.

**social sciences-** disciplines that study human interaction such as history, political science, sociology, and anthropology.

**sophomore-** student in the second year of studies; has completed 30-59 credit hours.

**sorority-** social organization with female student members

**Stafford Loan-** federally guaranteed student loan; can be need or non-need based.

**standing (academic)-** student's scholastic standing; based on GPA.

**statement of purpose-** a.k.a. personal statement or letter of intent; essay submitted as part of the admission application; usually required for graduate studies; subject matter centers around applicants' goals and aspirations.

**student activities-** extracurricular activities.

**student council-** student governing body made of elected members.

**student union-** campus building used for social and recreational activities.

**student-teacher ratio-** total students divided by total faculty; important metric for comparing institutions.

**subjective test-** exam requiring answers in the form of essays or sentences; usually seeks beliefs or opinions as opposed to factual information.

**summa cum laude-** highest of three honors awarded to graduating students for exceptional grades; typically requires 3.8+ GPA.

**summer session-** term conducted during the summer.

**suspension**- temporary expulsion.

**syllabus**- outline of a class prepared by its teacher; usually features course topics and test dates as well as readings and other requirements.

## T

**take-home exam**- test completed by students outside the classroom; typically students are allowed to use all available resources to complete the examination.

**TBA**- to be announced; to be arranged.

**tenure**- permanent employment status

**term**- divisions of the school year.

**term paper**- essay or report assignment; usually due to be completed by the end of a term or semester.

**test**- collection of questions and/or problems used to evaluate a student's understanding of course material.

**three quarter-time student**- student carrying three-fourths of a full course load; for undergraduates, usually 9 credit hours a semester.

**TOEFL**- Test Of English as a Foreign Language; assesses English proficiency; common requirement for international students pursuing studies in the US.

**transcript**- official record of a student's courses and grades.

**transfer student**- a student who enrolls after previously attending another school.

**transferability**- credit for a class taken at one institution can be accepted at another institution.

**true or false exam**- test with questions the correct answers for which are either "true" or "false".

**tuition**- the money charged for course instruction.

**tutor**- superior or advanced student who helps other students with course material.

## U

**undergraduate studies**- studies leading to an associate's or bachelor's degree.

**university**- higher education institution usually offering graduate degrees and organized into various schools.

**upper division course**- course intended for juniors and seniors.

## V

**valedictorian**- student with best grades in graduating class. Gives valedictory (farewell speech) at graduation ceremony.

**visiting faculty**- temporary teaching staff who come from another institution.

## W-Z

**waiver-** permission for a student to omit a normally required course.

**web registration-** registering for classes via the Internet.

**web-based classes-** classes conducted via the Internet instead of in a physical classroom.

**William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan-** federal loan funded directly by US Department of Education.

**withdrawal-** official removal from enrollment in a course; usually signified by a "W" in student records; tuition may or may not be accompanied by a refund.

**work-study program-** aid program providing students with part-time employment on campus.