

## College Planning Glossary of Terms

The terms listed below are commonly used in college application, admission, and description processes. If you are in doubt to the meaning of a specific term in relation to a particular college, contact the admissions office at that college to ask for clarification.

**Academic calendar:** Colleges create academic calendars that support their academic programs. Some are semester calendars, some are trimesters, and some schools require matriculation during J-term (January or winter term) or summer semester.

**Accreditation:** Accreditation is a process by which colleges or universities are recognized for meeting certain academic standards.

**Admissions tests:** SAT, ACT, SAT subject tests. Required test scores are specified by the admissions office or on the college application.

**Advanced Placement (AP):** Some colleges grant college credit for an AP course taken in high school. This process varies with each college or university and may even vary within majors. Earning AP credit may relieve the student of taking a required course in college. For example, a high enough score on the AP Biology exam may count for a biology or science requirement for a student majoring in psychology or education. This information is usually available on each college's website.

**ACT:** One of the two standardized tests used for admission at many colleges. For more information, see Standardized Testing.

**Associate's degree:** Certain two-year college program result in the earning of an associate's degree. Jobs may specify having an associate's degree as a requirement. Sometimes it is a stepping stone to a bachelor's degree.

**Bachelor's degree:** Earned through a four-year program, this designation is also referred to as a baccalaureate degree.

**Candidate Reply Date Agreement (CRDA):** This is an agreement that allows applicants who are offered admission to wait until notified by all colleges before notifying the school of a decision to attend. Usually notification is on May 1. This gives applicants time to weigh options, including doing a financial aid comparison.

**CSS/Financial Aid Profile:** A financial aid form from College Board that is required by some colleges. Not all colleges require this form; speak to the financial aid office of the college for clarification.

**Cooperative education:** Some colleges believe that alternating between academic work and full-time employment is the best way to develop knowledge and skills. Additionally, the internship experiences form the basis of an active resume upon graduation and students have connections and experience to draw upon while seeking employment. Some co-op programs require five years of college.

**FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid):** Information is requested from both parents and students on income and assets in order to determine eligibility for federal student aid. All families applying for financial aid must fill out this form each year the student is applying for federal aid. Students and parents are encouraged to apply online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) **as soon as possible** after Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>.

**GPA (Grade Point Average):** This number is arrived at by translating a letter grade to a numerical earned grade on a 4.0 scale. Colleges consider GPA as one factor in the student application.

**Grants:** Grants are given to students as financial aid. Grants do not have to be paid back. They are different from loans.

**Honors Program:** Some colleges offer specially designed, academically rigorous programs for strong academic students. These programs offer the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, accelerated coursework, and advising. Some honors programs have additional requirements and benefits such as priority registration for courses. Students are either invited into an honors program or need to fill out a separate application.

**Loans:** Loans are financial aid offered to students that do have to be paid back. Loans have to be paid back with interest in a timely manner. Understanding all of the requirements is essential before accepting a loan.

**Need Aware Admission:** Colleges include the ability to pay as a factor in the decision to offer admission to an applicant.

**Need Blind Admission:** Colleges do not consider the student's ability to pay as a factor in the decision to offer admission to an applicant.

**New England Regional Student Program:** Public colleges in New England offer tuition breaks to out-of-state students who select majors not offered at a public institution in the student's state of residence. If considering an out-of-state college because of an interest in a major not offered in Vermont, students should inquire about tuition advantages.

**Pell Grants:** Federally sponsored and administered financial aid program that awards educational grants to students based on need.

**Perkins Loan:** A federally funded program that provides loans to undergraduate students. Repayment does not begin until the student completes his/her education, military service, or Peace Corps or AmeriCorps. Repayment terms are favorable and may be waived with certain kinds of employment.

**ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps):** Many colleges and universities have an ROTC program in conjunction with the US Armed Forces (Army, Navy, or Air Force). Local recruiting offices supply details. See the section on Joining the Military.

**SAT:** One of the two standardized tests used for admission at many colleges. For more information, see Standardized Testing.

**SAT Subject Tests:** College Board offers standardized tests in specific subject areas. Some colleges and universities require scores from SAT Subject Tests for consideration for admission. Please check college websites to see if these are required.

**Study Abroad:** Many colleges and universities support study abroad programs in which students go overseas for a semester or year. Students are responsible for making sure the college or university will accept earned credit for coursework completed during a study abroad program. Some colleges have cooperative agreements with other colleges so students can participate in programs from other schools.

**TIP:** Check your assumptions when applying to a college or a particular college program. In addition to asking people you know, contact the admissions office, the financial aid office, or the office of the dean to ask questions.