



Pride, Tradition & Courage

COLLEGE APPLICATION LINGO –

Need help understanding some of the vocabulary words used in the college application process? Here's a helpful list for you!

Academic Probation: If your grades fall below a certain level, your campus may place you on academic probation. This traditionally means that you need to raise your GPA or face the possibility of being removed from your school for academic reasons.

Academic Year: Usually this refers to the August - May school year.

ACT: One of the most common college entrance exams, often required for admission to many colleges.

Adjunct Professor: A professor who is usually part-time.

Admission Tests: These are standardized tests that assess the test-taker's academic knowledge and skills. Most colleges use scores from admission tests to help them decide which students to accept.

Admissions Office: The office on a college campus which houses the people who recruit, interview and admit students to the college.

Admitted: Approval for a student to attend an educational institution.

Advisor: A member of the college faculty or staff who assists students with planning quarter or semester schedules as well as their overall programs of study. Advisors may also help with career planning.

Alumni: Both male and female graduates.

AP: Advanced Placement (or AP) refers to college-level classes offered by some high schools in various subject areas. Students participating in AP courses often take national AP exams prior to the end of the school year for placement purposes in college and/or for testing out of certain college requirements.

Application: The first step in requesting admission to an institution of higher education. Usually there is a form to fill out by a certain deadline; sometimes there is an application fee to pay.

Application Fee: A nonrefundable fee usually charged for applying to a particular college.

Apprentice: A person who works for another in order to learn a trade.

Apprenticeship: A kind of job training that involves following and studying a master of a trade on the job instead of in school.

Articulation Agreement: An agreement between colleges; designed to make it easier for a student at a two-year college to transfer to a four-year college.

Associate Degree: The associate degree is awarded by a college after satisfactory completion of a program of study. Full-time students typically complete the program in two years.

Award Letter: This is a document sent to admitted students describing the terms of the financial aid that the college is offering them, including the types and amounts of aid offered, the conditions that govern the awards, and a deadline for accepting the awards.

Audit: A student who audits a course formally registers and pays for it and attends class sessions but earns no credit and has no obligation to complete homework projects or take tests.

Bachelor's Degree: Bachelor's degrees are awarded by a college, typically after satisfactory completion of a four- or five-year, full-time program of study.

Board of Directors/Board of Trustees: Most colleges have a board that oversees all parts of the campus. Traditionally, the board hires (and possibly fires) a president; manages the college or university's finances; and is responsible for all major policy decisions. Many college and university boards comprise alumni, faculty, staff, community leaders, and (sometimes) students.

Board of Regents: Similar to how a Board of Trustees oversees a single college or university, a Board of Regents traditionally oversees a state system of public colleges or universities.

Bookstore: A store where you can purchase your classroom books, reading and writing materials, promotional school gear and usually serves as a convenience store.

Bursar: The bursar is the college official responsible for handling billing and payments for tuition, fees, housing and other related expenses.

Cafeteria: A place where you eat on campus.

Campus: The land and buildings that a college or university uses for instruction or student services.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA): The CRDA requires participating colleges to give admitted students until May 1 to accept or decline an offer of admission. This agreement gives students time to get responses from most of the colleges they have applied to before deciding on one.

Catalog: A comprehensive resource listing college regulations, program and course descriptions, degree and graduation requirements, transfer requirements, and other essential information.

Chancellor/President: The leader of a university.

Class Rank: A student's standing based on his or her academic record as compared with that of the other members of the class.

College: An institution of higher education that awards degrees and certificates.

College Calendar: The way the academic year is divided, dates of the start of terms, list of holidays, vacations, examinations, etc.

Commencement: Usually another name for graduation.

Community and Technical College: A two-year institution of higher education. Courses and credits can generally transfer to a four-year college. These colleges also offer work-related and technical programs to prepare students for the world of work.

College Credit: When a college grants credit for a course, that means that successful completion of the course counts toward a degree. Colleges may also grant degree credit for scores on exams.

Class Schedule: The specific courses that an individual student is taking or plans to take for a given semester or quarter.

Cost of Attendance: The cost of attendance is the sum of the total amount of money spent while attending college. It includes money spent on tuition and fees, books and supplies, and living expenses.

Consortium: A consortium is group of colleges that offer joint programs that allow students to share facilities and course offerings at member campuses.

Course: Often means the same as class.

Course Load: The number of hours the student is permitted to schedule in a given semester or quarter.

Credit: A unit of measure for college work. Generally speaking, one credit hour represents one hour of classroom attendance each week for one quarter.

Dean: A Dean is someone traditionally in charge of a major area of a college. For example, there may be a Dean of Students, a Dean of the Faculty, and a Dean of Arts & Sciences.

Deferred Admission: This type of admission allows a student who is accepted by a college to postpone enrolling for one year.

Degree: A rank conferred by a college or university and earned by a student who has successfully completed specified courses and requirements.

Department: An organizational unit within a college or university, offering courses dealing with a particular field of knowledge; for example, the English department.

Discipline: On a college campus, a discipline is often synonymous with a major. It usually refers to a field of study. (Of course, if you are charged with violating campus or community rules, you may be required to have a disciplinary hearing.

Doctorate Degree: Highest academic degree awarded by a college or university for advanced graduate study. This degree can take 5 or more years after a bachelor's degree to complete.

Dorm/Residence Hall: Is a place you live on campus.

Drop: To cancel registration in a course after enrolling into it. Students often add and drop courses before settling on a class schedule for a particular quarter or semester.

Early Decision (ED): Students who apply under early decision make a commitment to enroll at the college if admitted and offered a satisfactory financial aid package.

Elective: A course that is not required for a particular instructional program. Many programs require a certain number of elective credits.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): The EFC is the amount a student's family can reasonably be expected to pay for one year of college.

Fees: Fees can be charged for anything from seeing a doctor in the campus health center to returning your library books late. Additionally, you may see something listed as "student fees," which cover some other student services.

Final exam: Final exams are held the last week of each quarter for credit students.

Finals Week: The last week in the academic quarter in which final exams are given. Normal class schedules often vary during finals week.

Financial Aid: Anything related to the way you are paying for school. Loans, scholarships, grants, work awards, and any other resource you use are all considered part of your financial aid.

Financial Aid Office: The office on a college campus that is responsible for processing students' financial aid.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): Submitting a FAFSA is a requirement for all students seeking federal financial aid. Most colleges require the FAFSA, and in many states, completion of the FAFSA is also sufficient to establish eligibility for state-sponsored aid programs.

FYE (First Year Experience): A new-student orientation designed to welcome students and give them information on how to succeed in college.

Grade: A formal indicator of a student's overall performance in a course, recorded on the official transcript.

Grade Point Average (GPA): The GPA indicates a student's overall academic performance. It is computed by assigning a point value to each grade.

Graduate Student: A student who has earned a Bachelor's Degree and is continuing college to earn a "Graduate Degree" (Masters Degree or Doctorate).

Grants: Similar to scholarships in that you don't need to pay them back.

Greek System: This term refers to fraternities and sororities on campus, whose names originate from letters in the Greek alphabet.

Incomplete: A temporary grade given to a student who is doing satisfactory work but is forced by illness or other emergency to miss an exam or a major assignment. The instructor and student arrange how and when the student will complete the work and have the "I" changed to a final letter grade.

Independent Study: This program allows a student to earn credit through self-designed course work, which is usually planned and evaluated by a faculty member.

Instructor: An instructor is often someone who is teaching at a college or university.

International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB): The IB diploma is awarded to students who pursue rigorous pre-college coursework and successfully complete required examinations.

Internship: A supervised short-term apprenticeship or temporary job in a real-world setting closely related to a student's field of study.

Interview: An opportunity to exchange information with an admissions officer.

Legacy: A legacy is an applicant whose parents or grandparents are graduates of the college that the student is applying to.

Loan: Money that you must pay back.

Major: A major is an area of concentration in a particular field of study.

Masters Degree: Degree conferred for completion of a specified program of study after the bachelor's degree, usually involving one or two years of additional study.

Minor: Students may minor in a subject different from the one they major in. They take course work that is not as extensive as that in a major.

NCAA Eligibility Center: Students who plan to play Division I or II sports during their freshman year of college must register with the NCAA during their senior year of high school. This certifies that the student has met certain academic and other standards, as required under NCAA guidelines, to compete and receive athletic-based financial aid.

Need-Based Financial Aid: This means financial aid that is awarded on the basis of a family's inability to pay the full cost of attending a particular college.

No-Show: a student who registers for a course; but neither goes to class nor officially withdraws.

Non Credit: Courses or instructional programs which do not require extensive homework or examinations and which do not offer college credit. Students frequently take noncredit courses for basic skills improvement, job training or career enhancement, or personal enrichment.

Non Resident: Someone who isn't a resident of the state they are attending college in.

Office Hours: Professors are usually required to hold office hours on a regular basis throughout the semester, which is when students are able to drop in or make an appointment to meet with them.

Placement Tests: These tests measure academic skills that are essential for student success in college.

Postsecondary: Refers to all educational programs for students past high-school age; it includes community and technical colleges and job training programs as well as baccalaureate colleges and universities.

Practicum: A course that includes job-related activities and stresses the practical application of theory in a field of study.

Prerequisite: A requirement which must be met before a certain course can be taken.

Private College/University: An educational institution of higher education which is not supported by public taxes. May be independent or church related.

Priority Date: This is the date by which an application, whether for admission, housing or financial aid, must be received in order to be given the strongest possible consideration. After this date, applicants are considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Professor: Most students come from high schools where their teachers were called . . . teachers. In college, most of your "teachers" are called professors.

Provost: A provost is the senior academic administrator in a college.

Quarter System: This system divides the nine-month academic calendar into three equal parts of approximately 12 weeks each. Summer sessions, if any, are usually the same length.

Reciprocity: An agreement which allows a non-resident to pay in-state resident fees at a particular college or colleges.

Recommendation: Evaluations by teachers, counselors, headmasters, etc., which are an important part of the admission decision.

Records: Refers to all the information the college might keep regarding a student; it includes registration activity (enrollment, withdrawal, etc.), grades, payments, awards received, financial aid applications and award notices, and notes on disciplinary actions, as well as address, phone number, and student identification number.

Refund: Money that is paid back to a student who has met their financial responsibility to the school.

Registrar: This is the college official who registers students and collects fees. The registrar may also be responsible for keeping permanent records, maintaining student files and forwarding copies of students' transcripts to employers, other colleges and graduate schools.

Register/Registration: To sign up or enroll in a course or courses. "Registration activity" includes enrolling, dropping/withdrawing, choosing "pass/fail" in place of letter grades, making payments, etc.

Remedial Course: A non-credit course taken to help the student with a weak background in a particular area.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC): ROTC combines military education with college study leading to a bachelor's degree. For students who commit themselves to future service in the Army, Air Force, Navy or Marines, there is usually an offer of financial aid.

Resident Adviser (RA): Usually an undergraduate student, an RA is in charge of smaller sections of a residence hall. You can go to them for help with adjusting to college, problems with your roommates, and advice on just about anything.

Resident: For purposes of calculating a student's tuition and fees, someone who has lived in the state for a specified length.

Requirements: Minimum standards defined by the college mandatory for admission, program entry, or graduation.

Rolling Admission: Colleges with this type of admission procedure consider each student's application as soon as all the required credentials have been received (e.g., high school record, test scores).

Room and Board: The cost of having a place to sleep (room) and food to eat (board) while at school.

Roommate/Suitemate: A person or persons that share a dorm or apartment style residence hall.

Rush Week: A period set aside with the approval of the college for fraternities and sororities to issue invitations to prospective members.

SAT: One of the most common college entrance exams often required for admission to many colleges.

Scholarship: Money being given to you for your studies. You do not need to pay scholarship monies back. Scholarships can come from your school, an organization, or a contest.

Semester System: This system divides the academic year into two equal segments of approximately 18 weeks each. Summer sessions, if any, are shorter, but require more intensive study.

Seminar: Course in which a small group of students, headed by a professor, engage in research and discussion.

Student Aid Report (SAR): This is a report sent to families in response to their submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). It indicates the expected family contribution (EFC).

Student Loan: Is a loan that must be repaid.

Student Union/Commons/Lounge: A place where college students socialize.

Syllabus: An outline plan for a particular class, including textbook requirements, class meeting dates, reading assignments, examination dates, and the instructor's grading standards, etc.

Teaching Assistant (TA): Often the same thing as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI), a TA is often a graduate student who helps out in your classes. They make grade papers, lead seminar discussions, and sometimes teach classes.

Tenure: Tenure is something unique to higher education. A traditional path of someone who wants to teach at a college is to get their PhD, and then get a job as a professor on a campus. For the first six years or so that they are teaching, they are usually in a "tenure-track" position. This means that they are focusing on teaching, doing research, getting published, and contributing to the campus community. If all goes well, the professor is then granted tenure. Earning tenure is equivalent to ensuring one's job on a campus. If you have a tenured professor teaching your class, it means you have someone who has been at the school for a while and been judged, by a committee of their peers and the academic dean, to be an essential member of the faculty and campus community.

Term: A unit of time that can refer to either a quarter or a semester, depending on which system the college or university follows.

Transcript: This is the official record of a student's course work at a school or college. A high school transcript is generally required as part of the college application process.

Transfer Program: A transfer program is an education program offered by a two-year college for students who plan to continue their studies at a four-year college.

Transfer Student: A transfer student is a student who enrolls in a college after having attended another college.

Trimester System: This is an academic calendar that is divided into three equal terms or trimesters.

Tuition: The cost of your classes. Some schools charge tuition based on how many units you are taking, while others charge a base rate per semester as long as you stay within a certain range of units.

Undergraduate: An undergraduate is a college student working toward an associate or bachelor's degree.

University: A university is an institution of higher education that is divided into several colleges, schools or institutes. When applying to a university, students typically have to apply for admission to a specific college, which may have its own admission requirements.

Visiting Professor: A visiting professor usually has a PhD. However, a visiting professor is usually someone not normally associated with your college or university. He or she may only be there for one semester or one academic year, and is usually also doing research or other work.

Wait List: This is a list of applicants who may be considered for acceptance if there is still space after admitted students have decided whether or not they'll attend.

Waiver: An exception from a requirement, rule, or penalty.

Withdrawal: The process of officially dropping a class or classes after the quarter or semester has started.

Work-Study: In this federally funded program, students take campus jobs as part of their financial aid package

