

AVID Preparing for College

GLOSSARY

ACT: A college entrance exam that measures English, math, reading and science reasoning. Scores range from 1–36 along with a composite score. An optional writing test is offered.

Advanced Placement (AP®) Tests: 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 in college.

Admission: The decision to allow a student to enter a college or university.

Application: A formal request for admission to a college or university; requires the submission of forms and other materials.

Aptitude: A natural ability or talent.

Associate’s Degree (A.A., A.S.): A two-year degree that generally prepares a student for further study at a four-year institution or may provide sufficient training for a specific career.

Award Letter: A financial aid letter or document indicating the amount and type of financial support the school is able to provide for the upcoming year.

Bachelor’s Degree: A four-year degree from a college or university for a prescribed course of study. Also referred to as Baccalaureate degree, B.A. (Bachelor of Arts), B.S. (Bachelor of Science), etc.

Certificate: Awarded upon successful completion of a short-term vocational or career training program.

Class Rank: A student’s approximate standing in her/his graduating class, based on grade point average (e.g., 72nd in a class of 410; in the “upper fifth” of the class).

College Entrance Exam: Standardized exam used in the admission process to predict the likelihood of a student’s success in college.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP): the College Board’s credit-by-examination program enabling students to demonstrate college-level achievement in 34 different subject areas and receive up to two years of college credit.

Common Application: A standardized undergraduate application used by more than 400 colleges (mostly selective, independent) for admission.

Credit Hour: Unit of value given to college classes that denotes the amount of time a student will invest in formal instruction. Credit hours may be used to determine part-time and full-time course loads. Specific numbers of credit hours in certain areas of study are required for graduation.

Deferral: When a student’s application for early decision or early action is postponed, and will be considered with the regular applicant pool.

Deferred Admission: Allows an admitted/accepted student to postpone enrollment for one year.

Degree: The rank or title given by a college or university to a student who has met certain academic requirements.

Diploma: Certificate issued by a school, college or university to a student who has met coursework and graduation requirements.

Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.): One of the highest levels of an academic degree. Typically requires the completion of a Master's Degree plus advanced graduate courses in a specialized area.

Early Action (EA): Early action is a plan under which a student applies early in the fall and often receives an admission decision prior to January. EA allows the accepted candidate until May 1 to accept or decline the offer of admission.

Early Decision(ED): Early decision is a plan under which a student applies to the first-choice college early in the fall (usually by November 1 of the senior year) and *agrees by contract to enter that college if offered admission*. Early decision applicants are judged on the basis of their junior year test scores, class rank, and grades.

Educational Testing Service (ETS): A non-profit agency established by the American Council on Education (ACE), Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the College Board to produce a variety of educational tests and conduct research (www.ets.org).

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): An amount the student *and* student's family are expected to contribute toward his/her education. It is used in determining eligibility for federal student aid.

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

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): A form required by the government for application to any federal education aid program. A FAFSA determines the specific federal student aid programs that contribute to a student's total college financial aid package and in what proportions. High school seniors should submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1.

Financial Aid or Assistance: Any financial award to a student (e.g., grant, scholarship, work study, or loan).

Grade point average (GPA): An indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance.

Grants: Awards are usually based on financial need and do not require repayment. Grants are available through the federal government, state agencies, private organizations and educational institutions.

Honors program: University programs offering the opportunity for superior students to enrich their educational experience through independent, advanced or accelerated study.

Letter of Recommendation (LOR): An assessment of the student's aptitudes, abilities, and interests, written by a teacher or counselor and used by colleges and universities in the admission process.

Major: The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize; a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years of college.

Master's Degree (M.S., M.A.): Bachelor's Degree plus graduate courses in specialized area. A Master's Degree usually requires two additional years of full-time study after completion of a Bachelor's Degree.

Open admission (open enrollment): The policy of some colleges of admitting virtually all high school graduates, regardless of academic qualifications such as high school grades and admission scores.

PLAN: a pre-ACT, curriculum-based test and examination of interests and skills for 10th graders.

Post-secondary: Opportunities that are available after graduation from high school (secondary school); usually refers to colleges and universities in the admission process.

PSAT/NMSQT[®]: Preliminary SAT[®] and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Enables students to practice for the SAT[®] Reasoning Test and serves as the qualifying test for scholarship competitions conducted by National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Regular Decision: The application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time, but not later than April 15.

Rolling Admission: The application process whereby a college reviews an application when the application is completed and communicates the admission decision within a few weeks of reviewing the application.

SAT[®] Reasoning Test: College entrance exam designed to measure critical reading, math and writing skills needed for academic success in college. SAT[®] scores range from 200 to 800 in each of the three sections (writing, math and critical reading).

Scholarship: Financial aid based on merit and/or criteria set by the donor. This award money does not have to be repaid and is either paid directly to the student or deposited in a university account.

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 success in college.

Student Aid Report (SAR): The information received after the FAFSA has been processed. The SAR summarizes the data in the FAFSA and reports the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Transcript: The official record of high school or college courses and grades; generally required as part of the college application.

Work/Study: Money earned in a job obtained through the help of the college's financial aid office. Hours and location of the job are compatible with academic life and school schedule.