

# COLLEGE 101

Class is in session! In this section, we will break down college and keep you in the know of some basic info that will help prepare you and your student to start college strong.

## TYPES OF COLLEGE DEGREES

### CERTIFICATE

An official document attesting to a particular fact or accomplishment. In the postsecondary realm, students complete a series of specified courses, and sometimes an internship, and typically pass a test to obtain certificates in specific trades or areas of expertise required to work in those fields. Examples include welding, medical technology, auto mechanics, massage therapy, and court stenography.

### ASSOCIATE

A degree granted after successful completion of a course of study requiring approximately 60 credits, typically by a community or junior college. Full-time community college students taking 15 credits per semester can generally finish an associate degree in two years (also known as AA, AS, or AAS degree, short for Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science.)

### BACHELORS

A degree earned for a course of study that normally requires 120 to 130 credits, involving specific classes related to the student's major. Full-time students ideally complete a bachelor's degree in four years, although changing majors, transferring institutions, taking fewer than 15 credit hours per semester, and/or taking courses that don't count toward one's declared major can make it take longer (also known as BA or BS, short for Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.)



# CAMPUS CONTACTS

The transition from high school to college can be challenging - especially in terms of who to contact! We have broken down each office on a college campus below to help make the process easier. On the opposite page is a place for you to write down specific numbers and emails for each of these at your student's school.

**ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION CENTER:** If your student needs any accommodations, their college will have a specific office just for them. It may have a different name depending on their school, but this office will arrange accommodations for disabilities and help your student adjust to college life and classes.

**ADMISSIONS:** This is the go-to office for any and all questions. They will process your application, collect required documents, and issue your acceptance letter. They also have a wealth of knowledge about the college, including programs available and tuition cost, and can typically connect you to any office on campus.

**ATHLETIC TICKET OFFICE:** If your student is participating in athletics or just wants to watch a game, this is the best office to contact. Most schools allow students to attend athletic events for free, but some larger schools might charge for special games.

**BURSAR OFFICE:** One of the most unique names you will find on a college campus, the "Bursar" is a college-specific term meaning "Business Office." This is where your student can go to pay tuition and fees, or get info on specific costs.

**CAMPUS CARD OFFICE:** Every student will need a campus card or student ID to serve as their main form of identification on campus. It may be used to open their residence hall room, to purchase meals, or even to receive discounts around town.

**CAMPUS PARKING:** Most college campuses require a parking pass. This is the place to obtain one, along with a parking map.

**CAMPUS POLICE:** All colleges will have some form of campus police to ensure the safety of their students. Be sure that you and your student have their direct phone number saved in your phone in case of emergency. Also, be sure to sign up for text alerts, if offered at your student's college.

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER:** It's never too early to start thinking about job opportunities. This office helps students with resume building, interview skills, career exploration and internships. Check with this office about employment opportunities for after graduation.

**FINANCIAL AID:** This office is your go-to for everything from FAFSA, federal aid, HOPE scholarship, TN Promise, fee waivers, and more! If you have a questions regarding financial aid, they are the experts.

**HEALTH CENTER:** The place to go if your student comes down with a cold, or if their are special needs with medications. They may also keep track of your student's immunization records.

**HOUSING/RESIDENTIAL LIFE:** If your student is living on campus, this office will coordinate room assignments, as well as have a list of items that they are able to have in on-campus housing.

**INFORMATIONAL TECHNOLOGY (IT) SERVICES:** Need technical help? Trouble with your student email or portal? This is the office to visit.

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' OFFICE:** For all international or DACA students, this is the main hub for all questions. They will process all paperwork and help with adjusting to college life.

**MILITARY & VETERANS OFFICE:** For all those who are serving or have served, this office is for you. They provide assistance about available financial aid options, and most offices have organizations to join to meet fellow military students.

**MULTICULTURAL & DIVERSITY CENTER:** This office has an abundance of resources for students of diverse backgrounds. Many offices also offer organizations for students to join to connect with other diverse students.

**NEW STUDENT & FAMILY PROGRAMS (ORIENTATION):** Your student's first step to onboarding is going through new student orientation. This office puts on all registration events, as well as fun activities during welcome week.

**REGISTRAR:** The go-to office to contact about class schedules. They can assist in adding or dropping a course, grade appeals, graduation requirements, and more.

**SCHOLARSHIPS:** Most colleges will have a separate office just for scholarships. They handle scholarship applications for their school, as well as process any outside scholarships that your student receives.

**STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER:** Some colleges have a specific advising center for first-year students. This is where your student can get help registering for courses their first semester, or ask about other resources on campus.

**TUTORING CENTER:** If your student finds themselves needing a little extra help on certain subjects, they can contact the tutoring center. They will connect your student with tutors to help improve their knowledge and study skills.

**UNIVERSITY BOOKSTORE:** Not only can students purchase all of their required textbooks from this location, they also offer other supplies, snacks, and college apparel. A great place to get a t-shirt to show your school pride!

# WHAT TO EXPECT DURING YOUR STUDENT'S FIRST YEAR IN COLLEGE

We surveyed parents and families about their experience of sending their student to college. Whether their student moved on campus or just out of the house, commuted to school or lived in a residence hall, these are some great pieces of advice that we want to pass along to you!

**College can be overwhelming. Be there to offer encouragement and support when needed!**

Encourage your student to get involved on campus! The more they are connected, the better their experience will be.

My child was so homesick after moving to college and called me crying! Everything in me wanted to tell her to come home right away, but I encouraged her to stay over the weekend. That night, she had dinner with some new friends and even joined an intramural sports team! She loves it now and just needed a little push to be brave.

Due to FERPA (a law protecting student information) colleges are not allowed to give out a student's information. Yes, that's all information, even financial aid! For you to access your student's information, your student must complete an information release form, or you won't be able to talk to anyone about your student's business needs.

**Teach your child to do laundry now. They - and you - will thank me later!**

There are a ton of people on campus willing to help. Don't feel like you or your student have to figure out everything on your own!

**Attend a FAFSA workshop at your student's school!  
We learned everything we need - what a lifesaver!**

On-campus counseling is a real and awesome thing. My student needed some extra emotional support and they really came through.

Let them make mistakes and figure it out on their own. If something breaks, let them figure out how to fix it.

**My student commuted while living at home, but it was still time for them to grow up and take on some responsibility! I gave him the job of weekly grocery shopping for himself and paying his share of the electric and water bills.**

Be sure to complete your FAFSA each year! I was surprised when my student couldn't get their financial aid because our FAFSA wasn't complete. It opens on October 1 every year and now our family fills it out every year together!

# Glossary

There are a lot of acronyms and confusing terms on the road to college. Here are a few that you might be wondering about. If there's one you don't see listed here, check with your college/career counselor for assistance.

**2+2 programs:** A postsecondary pathway in which students begin at a community college where they complete general educational requirements over two or three years and then transfer to a university (for the remaining one or two years) to complete a bachelor's degree.

**ACT/SAT:** Standardized college entrance exams. Many colleges and universities ask for ACT or SAT scores as part of the application process. ACT stands for American College Testing. SAT stands for Scholastic Assessment Test.

**Admission:** Notification from the college to which you applied that you are accepted. Students must respond by the given deadline to inform the college if they will accept the offer. Students accepted to multiple schools will want to compare their financial aid packages to help them decide which school to attend.

**Advisor:** A college staff member or professor who helps a student plan and complete a course of study at a college or university.

**Application:** A form that must be filled out to be considered for entry into a university, community college, or technical school; to be considered for a scholarship or grant; and, in many cases, to be considered for a job.

**Associate Degree:** A degree granted after successful completion of a course of study requiring approximately 60 credits, typically by a community or junior college. Full-time community college students taking 15 credits per semester can generally finish an associate degree in two years (also known as AA, AS, or AAS degree, short for Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science.)

**ASVAB:** A test to determine qualification for enlistment in the U.S. Armed Forces. It stands for Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

**Award Letter:** Notice from a school of the amount and type of financial aid that the school is willing and able to provide a student.

**Bachelor's Degree:** A degree earned for a course of study that normally requires 120 to 130 credits, involving specific classes related to the student's major. Full-time students ideally complete a bachelor's degree in four years, although changing majors, transferring institutions, taking fewer than 15 credit hours per semester, and/or taking courses that don't count toward one's declared major can make it take longer (also known as BA or BS, short for Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science.)

**Certificate:** An official document attesting to a particular fact or accomplishment. In the postsecondary realm, students complete a series of specified courses, and sometimes an internship, and typically pass a test to obtain certificates in specific trades or areas of expertise required to work in those fields. Examples include welding, medical technology, auto mechanics, massage therapy, and court stenography.

**Community College:** A public postsecondary institution (Motlow State, for example) that offers courses to residents in the surrounding area. Students may attend community colleges to obtain associate degrees or technical certificates, or may take courses there toward a bachelor's degree before transferring to a four-year university (2+2 pathway). Students can also take courses to enhance their skills in an area, or just for fun.

**Cost of Attendance (COA):** The total cost of going to college, including tuition, fees, room and board, books, transportation, and personal expenses.

**Deferment:** A period in which payment is not required. In the postsecondary realm, students can obtain deferment on paying their enrollment deposit as well as on paying interest and/or principal on student loans. Deferments do not last forever; eventually these payments must be made.

**Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program:** A kind of administrative relief from deportation. This policy allows young children (under the age of 16) who came to the United States without documentation, and have been educated by U.S. school systems, the opportunity to remain in the U.S. by following specific guidelines.

**Early Action:** When a student applies for admission to a college by an early deadline (before the regular admission deadline) and receives notice of acceptance, denial, or deferment, with no obligation to the university to enroll.

**Early Decision:** When a student applies for admission to a college by an early deadline (before the regular admission deadline), with the understanding that if accepted, the student must enroll in that school. Students should apply for early decision only to their first choice school.

**EPSO:** Early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) include a course and/or exam that give students a chance to obtain postsecondary credit while still in high school.

**FAFSA:** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is an online form submitted annually by current and prospective college students (undergraduate and graduate) in the United States to determine eligibility for student financial aid. Students who are eligible to file the FAFSA should complete it every year.

**FAFSA Student Summary:** The FAFSA Student Summary summarizes the information included on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA Student Summary provides the Expected Family Contribution (EFC), which is used to determine whether a student is eligible for a federal Pell Grant and other federal aid.

**Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID:** A user name and password used by current and prospective students and their parents to log into U.S. Department of Education Websites including the FAFSA Website. The ID is used to sign documents electronically (it has the same legal status as a written signature.)

**Fee Waiver:** Permission to not pay a fee, based on meeting some requirement or condition. In the postsecondary realm, waivers of college application fees and ACT or SAT fees are often available for students based on financial need.

**Financial Aid Package:** The amount and types of federal, state, and college aid that a college/university offers to a student it has accepted for admission, to offset the cost of attendance at their school. This is also referred to as an Award Letter. Depending on the package, sometimes it can be cheaper for a student to attend an expensive school because more aid is offered to offset the cost. This is why it is important to apply to the schools you want to attend, even if you don't think you can afford it. There are different types of aid available including loans, work-study, scholarships, and grants.

**Four-Year University:** A postsecondary college/university that offers undergraduate (bachelor's) degrees. Many four-year institutions also offer graduate (master's) degrees.

**Full-Time Student:** A student who enrolls in at least a minimum number (determined by your college or university) of credit hours or courses.

**Grade Point Average (GPA):** The average of all of the course grades you have received in high school, or in college, on a four-point scale.

**Ivy League:** A group of long-established colleges and universities in the eastern U.S. having high academic and social prestige. It includes Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Dartmouth, Cornell, Brown, and the University of Pennsylvania.

**Letters of Recommendation:** Letters of endorsement (often from high school teachers/staff) written on a student's behalf during the college and/or job application process.

**Major:** A concentration of study focused on a discipline, which requires completion of specific courses.

**Minor:** A college or university student's declared secondary academic discipline during their undergraduate studies.

**Orientation:** A meeting/event many colleges offer (hour-long or days-long) where incoming students and parents/guardians receive information about registering for classes, meet their advisor, and learn about school resources and policies.

**Pell Grant:** Money from the U.S. government to support a student's education that does not have to be paid back. Pell Grants are awarded to U.S. citizens and legal residents based on financial need and timeliness of completing the FAFSA.

**Placement Test:** Colleges and universities may require students to take tests to determine the appropriate level of college math and/or English needed.

**Postsecondary Education:** The broadest term to describe any education beyond high school, including community college, university, technical school, etc.

**Residence Hall:** A building primarily providing living/sleeping quarters for large numbers of students. Also known as a dorm

**Resident:** A student who lives in and meets the residency requirements for the state where a public university is located. Tuition at public universities often is more expensive for non-residents.

**Resumé:** A brief account of a person's education, qualifications, and previous work experience, typically sent with a job application.

**ROTC:** Programs to train college students to become officers in the U.S. Armed Forces. ROTC stands for Reserve Officer Training Corps.

**Room & Board:** The cost of a room in a residence hall and a dining hall meal plan at a college or university.

**Scholarship:** Money to support a student's education that does not have to be paid back. Scholarships are awarded based on academic, athletic, artistic, or other types of achievements, affiliations, or competitions.

**Student Aid Index (SAI):** The portion of a family's financial resources that should be available to pay for college, based on a federal formula using the information on the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

**Student Loan:** Money a student borrows to help pay for college, which must be paid back. Subsidized loans are offered to students who qualify financially as determined by the FAFSA. The federal government pays the interest while the student is in college. There are also unsubsidized loans where interest begins accruing as soon as the loan is accepted.

**Summer Bridge Programs:** Programs offered by many universities and some community colleges, which occur in the summer between high school graduation and fall transition to college. They offer students accelerated, focused learning opportunities that can help better prepare them to succeed in college.

**Technical School:** A general term used for a college that provides mostly employment-preparation skills for trained labor, such as welding and culinary arts. These programs generally take no more than two years to complete. Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs) are examples of this kind of school.

**THEC:** The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The Commission develops, implements, evaluates postsecondary education policies and programs in Tennessee while coordinating the state's systems of higher education, and is relentlessly focused on increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary credential.

**TN Promise:** Tennessee Promise is both a scholarship and mentoring program focused on increasing the number of students that attend college in our state. It provides students a last-dollar scholarship, meaning the scholarship will cover the cost of tuition and mandatory fees not covered by the Pell grant, the HOPE scholarship, or the Tennessee Student Assistance Award. Students may use the scholarship at any of the state's 13 community colleges, 27 colleges of applied technology, or other eligible institution offering an associate degree program.

**Transcript:** An official academic record from a specific school which lists when you attended, the courses you have completed, grades, and sometimes test scores. Universities, colleges, and technical schools usually require high school transcripts be submitted as part of the application process.

**TSAC:** Created by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1974 as a non-profit corporation with the merging of the Tennessee Educational Loan Corporation and the Tennessee Tuition Grant Program, the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC) administers over 20 different state student financial aid programs, including the HOPE scholarship, Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Reconnect, Tennessee Student Assistance Award, and the Dual Enrollment grant.

**Tuition:** The amount of money charged for instruction/classes at postsecondary institutions (see also cost of attendance.)

**Undeclared/Undecided:** A term used to describe a student who has not yet selected a major at a college or university. Colleges typically ask students to pick their major by the end of their sophomore year.

**Work-Study:** A federal program that provides the opportunity for college students to work part-time jobs (often on the campus of the school they attend) to earn money to pay educational expenses. Students receive compensation in the form of a paycheck, much like a traditional job. Students must submit the FAFSA to be considered for work-study positions.