

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS GLOSSARY

Acceleration: Speeding up the educational process. Students can sometimes graduate in three years by gaining college credits for International Baccalaureate or Advanced Placement courses in high school or, in some colleges, by going to school year-round.

ACT: The abbreviation of American College Test. This is an aptitude test that covers English, mathematics, social studies reading, and science reasoning (and an optional writing section) and is accepted by all colleges equally in addition to or replacement of the SAT Reasoning Test. The scores are reported on a scale from 1 to 36.

Aptitude tests: SAT Reasoning Test or ACT standardized test, which presumably measure a student's potential for success in college.

Associate's degree: A two-year degree earned at a community college (some abbreviate A.A.).

Bachelor's degree: (B.A. -- Bachelor of Arts (also written as A.B.); or B.S. -- Bachelor of Science): A diploma earned after successful completion (usually spanning four years) of required courses at a university or college.

Calendar: The system by which an institution divides its year into shorter periods for instruction. The most common calendars are semester, quarter, and 4-1-4.

4-1-4: Consists of two terms of 16 weeks separated by a one-month term used for intensive short courses, independent study, off-campus work, or other educational experiences.

Quarter: A quarter is an academic calendar period of 11 weeks. Students normally attend three quarters each year and take three or four courses per quarter rather than the traditional five taken under the semester system.

Semester: A semester is a division of the school year into two parts, usually 18 weeks in length. Schools may have an additional eight-week summer session.

Candidate Reply Date: The date by which the student must reply to the colleges' offers of admission. Nationally, May 1 is the date to which most colleges adhere.

CEEB: Abbreviation for College Entrance Examination Board, which creates and supervises the administration of the SATs and achievement tests. Each high school has a CEEB ID code. The International Academy's is 230-347 (all three campuses).

Class rank: How a student's academic performance, as determined by the grade point average, compares to other members of his/her graduating class. The International Academy does not rank.

College: The term commonly used to describe any institution of higher education. Strictly speaking, it is an institution with a single type of program, such as a four-year course leading to the bachelor's degree or a three-year course leading to the law degree. A college may be one part of a university (e.g., Yale College is the undergraduate division of Yale University), or it may be independent.

Common Application: A form devised and accepted by over 800 colleges to make things easier for students in applying. Practically, it means that if you are applying to more than one participating college, you may use the same application form for all. These forms are available online at www.commonapp.org.

Core curriculum: A specified number of courses or credits in the humanities, social sciences, life sciences, and/or physical sciences, required of all students, regardless of major, to ensure a basic set of learning experiences.

Cross registration: A system whereby students enrolled at one institution may take courses at another institution without having to apply to the second institution.

Deferred admit (Gap Year): The practice of permitting admitted students to postpone enrollment, usually for a period of one year. In order to request this, you must apply and be admitted first.

Dual degrees: A program of study in which a student receives two degrees at the same time from the same institution.

Early Action: An admissions plan whereby a student typically can submit an application by November and receive a decision by mid-December. The student is not required to enroll if accepted. Some colleges now specify whether a student may apply to more than one college Early Action. If they are not allowed to do so, this is referred to as Single Choice Early Action.

Early Decision: A program whereby a student can apply to a first-choice college early in the fall of the senior year and receive a decision by mid-December. Upon making an Early Decision application, the student agrees to enroll if accepted and to withdraw other applications immediately if admitted. Students deferred under Early Decision are usually reconsidered with the regular-decision applicants.

ETS: Educational Testing Service. This is the organization based in Princeton, New Jersey, that the College Board utilizes to write and administer its tests.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid (see section on Financial Aid).

General Education Requirements: Also called breadth or distribution requirements, or core curriculum courses, they are required by all majors for the bachelor's degree at a particular institution. The number and specificity of these course requirements vary greatly from institution to institution.

Honors program: Any special program for very able students offering the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, acceleration, or some combination of these.

Internship: Any short-term, supervised work experience usually related to a student's major field, for which the student earns academic credit. The work can be full- or part-time, on- or off-campus, paid or unpaid.

Ivy League: Although the term "Ivy League" is often misused to designate any eastern college with a strong reputation and a highly competitive situation, strictly speaking, the Ivy League is an athletic league including the following colleges: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale. These institutions are quite different from one another in terms of

philosophy and atmosphere.

Legacy: A college applicant who is a son or daughter (or sometimes a more distant relative) of an alumna/us. Private colleges are sometimes generous in admitting such candidates. (At some, the percentage of legacies admitted is twice as high as that for all other candidates.)

Liberal Arts and Sciences: A breadth of intellectual inquiry that broadens the student's knowledge and awareness in each of the major areas of human knowledge: arts, sciences, humanities. A liberal arts education prepares one to: 1) communicate thoughts and ideas clearly and efficiently, 2) to understand a wide variety of perspectives and values, to appreciate civilization, beauty and natural processes, and to continually discover with sincere curiosity the world around us. The liberal arts college offers a four-year course of study, leading to the B.S. or B.A. degree and any graduate or professional program.

3-2 Liberal Arts and Career Combination: A program in which a student earns undergraduate degrees in two separate fields, (most often in a general/liberal arts major and a professional or specialized major) in 5 years of study, whether on-campus or through cross-registration.

Major: The field of specialization or concentration for a college undergraduate. The student normally does from a quarter to a third of the total undergraduate work in his/her major field. Most often the student is asked to declare a major at the end of the sophomore year.

Minor: A secondary area of academic concentration, which may or may not be required by an institution.

NMSQT: National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (also known as the PSAT -- see below), sponsored by the United States government and several hundred private corporations and colleges and taken by high school students in the fall of their junior year. Scoring well on this test is the first step toward recognition in the National Merit Scholarship competition. National Merit Semi-Finalists are those students who score in the top 1% of all students in their state. The NMSQT index is the sum of the verbal, math and writing scores.

PSAT: Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (also known as the NMSQT -- see above) -- a test of scholastic aptitude administered to high school juniors throughout the country. Sophomores also take this test for practice. Scores are given for verbal, quantitative and writing aptitude in two-digit figures (multiply by ten to approximate SAT equivalents).

Post-graduate: (more commonly referred to as "graduate") In reference to a student, post-graduate describes one who is working beyond the bachelor's degree; in reference to a school, post-graduate describes an institution that trains in a specific professional field and grants a post-undergraduate degree.

Profile: colleges and high schools publish profiles to give data about an entering or graduating class

- For colleges it is a description of a specific college freshman class and their statistics.
- For high schools it is a detailed description of the sending high school and the graduating class's statistics that accompanies each transcript sent to colleges.

Quarter: A college term of ten to twelve weeks. Some colleges divide the calendar year into four approximately equal portions, or into three terms (trimesters: fall, winter, and spring), plus a slightly shorter summer term. In schools using either the quarter or the trimester system, the student normally

studies fewer subjects at one time and changes his/her schedule more frequently than a student at a school using the semester system.

Rolling Admissions: A system of admissions decision notification whereby a college informs the applicant of his/her status within a short time (usually four to six weeks) after the application is complete. Most out-of-state public universities employ this admissions practice.

SAT Reasoning Test: A multiple choice test made up of verbal, math and writing sections, designed to measure abilities that are related to college success. The SAT Reasoning Test does not measure others factors and abilities – such as creativity, special talents, and motivation – that may also help you do well in college.

SAT Subject Tests: Curricular-based tests given by the College Entrance Examination Board (College Board) to measure achievement in a particular subject. Fifteen one-hour achievement tests are offered, scored on a scale of 200 to 800. Very few highly selective colleges will require two SAT subject tests, although most colleges do not.

Scholarship: Money or aid for an academically talented student. Some scholarships are based on need. Many such funds are given away by corporations, ethnic organizations, or religious groups. Each scholarship opportunity has different eligibility criteria.

Selectivity: A term used by admissions offices to describe the ratio of admitted applicants to total applicants at a given institution.

Semester: Half of the normal school year. The usual college year has two semesters (fall and spring), each 15 to 17 weeks.

Transcript: The official complete copy of a student's academic record including courses and grades. In the college admissions process, this document is traditionally given the most weight.

Undergraduate: A college student who is a candidate for a bachelor's degree; a program of study leading to a bachelor's degree.

University: An institution of higher learning comprising several colleges. An undergraduate division confers bachelor's degrees and provides facilities for learning to take place through teaching. This undergraduate division may include a College of Arts & Sciences, a College of Engineering, a College of Business, and a College of Nursing. A graduate division confers master and doctoral degrees and provides facilities for learning to take place through research as well as through teaching.

Wait list: List of students who meet the admission requirements but will only be offered a place in the class if space becomes available. Most offers of admission from the waitlist are made prior to the end of the school year. Most wait lists are not ranked; instead, they will admit students based on the college's needs and student interest.

Yield: The percentage of students admitted to a college who ultimately attend that college. The yield is often extremely high at selective colleges.

