



College Admission Terms to Know

Applying to college means you will encounter terms you may not be familiar with. This handout is designed to provide you with some common terms and their definition. These terms are used often by admission counselors.

AS (Associate degree): An associate degree is a degree a student can earn with two or more years of study, but fewer than four years. AS degrees are typically awarded by community colleges and technical schools. However, there are a few four-year colleges that offer the AS degree for two years of study in a specialized field. A two-year degree can sometimes be a stepping stone to the four-year degree, depending upon what the type of two-year degree earned.

Bachelor's Degree in Science or Art: (BS or BA) This is your reward for completing a series of prescribed courses, both a major and a minor, in a four-year college or university. It is the degree students receive after at least four years of study. If a student earns a two-year degree, there is the possibility of transferring to a four-year program and earning a bachelor's degree with two years of additional study.

Deferred admission: Some colleges will allow a student to postpone entering for one year after acceptance. However, different schools have different policies regarding this. If for some reason you want to have deferred admission, you would need to consult with an admissions counselor to learn of the particular policy of the school. In general you will not be given a deferment unless you have a particularly good reason for not entering in the upcoming fall.

Early Admission: Some colleges and universities allow students to enter their school at the end of the junior year in high school. This is something that is offered to students with exceptional abilities, grades, and ACT or SAT scores. Students must also secure permission of their high school to enter college early.

Early Action: Most schools have an early deadline you may meet if you want to be in the very first group of students screened for acceptance. Early action deadlines are usually toward the end of November or early December. Early action is considered to be a "non-binding" process. This means you are not obligated to attend a particular school that may offer you acceptance early. (See "early decision" for a binding process) Students typically pursue early action when they are very sure of the campus they want to attend and want to know as early as possible whether or not they will be admitted.

Early Decision: Early decision is a "binding" process. This means that if you participate and are accepted, you must attend the particular school offering you admission, and you will be expected to withdraw any other applications. Early decision is a process that is

looked upon with less and less favor each year, so you will not typically find a school offering it.

Matriculated: A matriculated college student is one who is working toward a particular degree. A non-matriculated student is enrolled in classes, but not pursuing a degree.

Undergraduate student: You will be an undergraduate student until you earn at least a four-year degree. Once that happens, if you go on to earn the next level of degree (the masters degree), you will be referred to as a “graduate student”. So, when you hear of someone referred to as an “undergraduate”, this simply means the student has not yet earned a four-year degree.

University: There are colleges, and there are universities. Sometimes the difference between the two is a bit hazy. However, in general, the difference between the two institutions is in their organization and their size.

A university is typically organized into several “colleges” or “schools”. Each one focuses on a particular area of study, such as the college of arts and sciences or the liberal arts college. Universities typically have programs for both undergraduate *and* graduate students.

A college typically is organized into “departments”. Each department has a focus on a particular area of study. Colleges usually offer programs for undergraduate students only, although there are exceptions.

Rolling Admissions: Often you will see that a school has a “rolling admissions” policy. This means that, instead of having a specific cut-off date for receiving applications, the school will accept applications – sometimes up to the first day of classes.

College Admission Tests: The ACT and the SAT are the two college admission tests accepted by four-year colleges and universities around the country. In the state of Washington, both tests are accepted. However, some out-of-state schools have a preference, so you must check carefully, if you plan to apply to an out-of-state school.

If you take both tests, the schools in Washington will use the better set of scores for your admission process. If you take one of the tests more than once, the school will use the best set of scores. Four-year school require that you take at least one of these tests.

Admission Fee: When you apply to a college or university, you usually will have to pay an admission fee that typically ranges from \$30.00 to \$50.00. This is why most students will typically apply to no more than five schools. It can be an expensive endeavor!!