

# GLOSSARY OF ADMISSIONS TERMS

**ACT:** College readiness exam consisting of English, Math, Reading, and Science sections; scored on a 36-point scale

**ADMISSION:** Acceptance to a college or university

**APPLICATION:** The form you submit to be considered for admission to a college or university

**BINDING:** A term used in conjunction with the Early Decision application process which means if a student is accepted to the college or university, he or she is committing to attend that college or university

**CLASS RANK:** A student's academic standing among peers in their graduating class

**CREDIT HOUR:** Unit used to measure college classes, typically based on the number of hours spent in the classroom per week

*Ex: Psychology 101 is worth three college credit hours if students have class one hour a day three times a week.*

**COLLEGE:** A higher education institution that offers only undergraduate degrees

**COLLEGE CREDIT:** The total amount of credit hours that is used to evaluate a student's eligibility to graduate

**COMMON APP:** A platform students can use to apply to multiple colleges and universities; not every institution uses this platform

**COST OF ATTENDANCE:** Total cost to attend an institution before any financial aid and scholarships have been applied; includes tuition & fees, housing, and meal plan

**DEFER:** Term often referring to an admission decision where a student has neither been accepted nor denied to an institution, but is being told "not yet"

*The meaning of the term varies among institutions, so check with the colleges and universities you are applying to for their definition.*

**DUAL ENROLLMENT CREDIT:** Credit students receive for any college courses taken before high school graduation, where they are enrolled both in high school and college at the same time

**EARLY ACTION:** A non-binding admission practice where students can apply early to an institution to be considered for admission ahead of other students

**EARLY DECISION:** A binding admission practice where students who know exactly what college or university they want to attend can apply early to an institution to be considered for admission ahead of other students

**EFC:** Expected Family Contribution, or the amount of money determined by the FAFSA that a family should be able to contribute to a student's education; determines how need-based aid is awarded

**FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid; an application for aid that uses tax/income information to determine any aid students are eligible to receive through state programs or the federal government

**FINANCIAL AID:** The combination of scholarships, grants, and loans that can be used to pay for a student's college education

**GPA:** Grade Point Average; the average of all a student's official grades in high school, typically calculated by adding their numerical grades and dividing that by the number of classes taken

**GRANT:** Financial aid given, typically based on need, which students do not have to pay back

**HIGHER EDUCATION:** An optional academic avenue for students who pursue a college degree after high school graduation; also known as post-secondary education

**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION:** A letter from someone who is not a relative and who can describe a student's accomplishments, skills, and personality in a recommendation to a college or university

**LOAN:** A sum of money borrowed that is expected to be paid back, often with interest

**NEED-BASED AID:** Aid that is dependent upon financial need as determined by the EFC (Expected Family Contribution) found through the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

**NON-BINDING:** A term used in conjunction with the Early Action application process which means if a student is accepted to the college or university, he or she may still apply to other college and universities

**PROSPECTIVE STUDENT:** A potential applicant to a college or university who has usually shown demonstrated interest in that college or university

**ROLLING ADMISSION:** A process whereby decisions for acceptance are made and released on a constant basis throughout the year

**SAT:** College readiness exam consisting of Reading, Math, and Writing sections; scored on a 1600-point scale

**SCHOLARSHIP:** Financial aid given, typically based on academic or talent-based achievement, which students do not have to pay back

**SUBSIDIZED LOAN:** Loans that do not accrue interest while a student is enrolled in college

**SUPERSCORE:** A process where a college or university takes the highest scores in each section of your ACT or SAT, even if the scores are from different testing dates, and puts them together to create and count a student's best overall score

**TRANSCRIPT:** An official academic statement displaying all courses a student has taken in high school along with their grades; additional information on a transcript may include class rank, GPA, and dual enrollment credits

**UNIVERSITY:** A higher education institution that offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees

**UNWEIGHTED GPA:** A calculated GPA that does not have any "weight" to it, regardless of the academic rigor of the courses taken

**UNSUBSIDIZED LOAN:** Loans where interest begins to accrue the moment a student receives loan funds

**WEIGHTED GPA:** A calculated GPA that involves adding "weight" to final course grades based on the course's academic rigor  
*Examples might include AP courses, IB courses, or dual enrollment courses*