

Common Data Set Definitions

All definitions related to the financial aid section appear at the end of the Definitions document.

Items preceded by an asterisk (*) represent definitions agreed to among publishers which do not appear on the CDS document but

***Academic advisement:** Plan under which each student is assigned to a faculty member or a trained adviser, who, through regular meetings, helps the student plan and implement immediate and long-term academic and vocational goals.

Accelerated program: Completion of a college program of study in fewer than the usual number of years, most often by attending summer sessions and carrying extra courses during the regular academic term.

Admitted student: Applicant who is offered admission to a degree-granting program at your institution.

***Adult student services:** Admission assistance, support, orientation, and other services expressly for adults who have started college for the first time, or who are re-entering after a lapse of a few years.

American Indian or Alaska Native: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and maintaining tribal affiliation or community attachment.

Applicant (first-time, first year): An individual who has fulfilled the requirements to be considered for admission (including payment or waiving of the application fee, if any) and who has been notified of one of the following actions: admission,

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Credit hour: A unit of measure representing an hour (50 minutes) of instruction over a 15-week period in a semester or trimester system or a 10-week period in a quarter system. It is applied toward the total number of hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma, certificate, or recognized postsecondary credential.

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 admission: The practice of permitting admitted students to postpone enrollment, usually for a period of one academic term or one year.

Degree: An award conferred by a college, university, or other postsecondary education institution as official recognition for the successful completion of a program of studies.

Degree-seeking students: Students enrolled in courses for credit who are recognized by the institution as seeking a degree or recognized postsecondary credential. At the undergraduate level, this is intended to include students enrolled in vocational or occupational programs.

Differs by program (calendar system): A calendar system classification that is used by institutions that have occupational/vocational programs of varying length. These schools may enroll

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Grade-point average (academic high school GPA): The sum of grade points a student has earned in secondary school divided by the number of courses taken. The most common system of assigning numbers to grades counts four points

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At Least 2 But Less Than 4 Academic Years: Requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 2 but less than 4 full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 60 but less than 120 credit hours, or in at least 1,800 but less than 3,600 clock hours.

Private institution: An educational institution controlled by a private individual(s) or by a nongovernmental agency, usually supported primarily by other than public funds, and operated by other than publicly elected or appointed officials.

Private for-profit institution: A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk.

Private nonprofit institution: A private institution in which the individual(s) or agency in control receives no compensation, other than wages, rent, or other expenses for the assumption of risk. These include both independent nonprofit schools and those affiliated with a religious organization.

Proprietary institution: See **Private for-profit institution**.

Public institution: An educational institution whose programs and activities are operated by publicly elected or appointed school officials, and which is supported primarily by public funds.

Quarter calendar system: A calendar system in which the academic year consists of three sessions

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Unit: a standard of measurement representing hours of academic instruction (e.g., semester credit, quarter credit, clock hour).

Undergraduate: A student enrolled in a four- or five-year degree program, an associate degree program, or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate.

counseling: Helps veterans and their dependents obtain benefits for their selected program and provides certifications to

***Visually impaired:** Any person whose sight loss is not correctable and is sufficiently severe as to adversely affect educational performance.

Volunteer work (as admission factor): Special consideration given to students for activity done on a volunteer basis (e.g., tutoring, hospital care, working with the elderly or disabled) as a service to the community or the public in general.

Wait list: List of students who meet the admission requirements but will only be offered a place in the class if

Non-need-based self-help aid: Loans and jobs from institutional, state, or other sources for which a student need not demonstrate financial need to qualify.

Work study and employment: Federal and state work study aid, and any employment packaged by your institution in financial aid awards.