

## 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 may be present on individual publishers' surveys.

Additional guidance for some terms, particularly those common with the IPEDS survey, may be found [here: https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary](https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary)

**\*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 institution's 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has been notified of one of the following actions: admission, nonadmission, placement on waiting list, or application withdrawn (by applicant or institution).

**Application fee:** That amount of money that an institution charges for processing a student's application for acceptance. This amount is creditable toward tuition and required fees, nor is it refundable if the student is not admitted to the institution.

**Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**Associate degree:** An award that normally requires at least two but less than four years of full-time equivalent college work.

**Bachelor's degree:** An award (baccalaureate or equivalent degree, as determined by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education) that normally requires at least four years but more than five years of full-time equivalent college-level work. This includes ALL bachelor's degrees conferred in a five-year cooperative (work-study plan) program. (A cooperative plan provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government; thus, it allows students to combine actual work experience with their college studies.) Also, it includes bachelor's degrees in which the normal four years of work are completed in three years.

**Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

**Board (charges):** Assume average cost for 19 meals per week or the maximum meal plan.

**Books and supplies (costs):** Average cost of books and supplies. Do not include unusual costs for special groups of students (e.g., engineering or art majors), unless they constitute the majority of students at your institution.

**Calendar system:** The method by which an institution structures most of its courses for the academic year.

**Campus Ministry:** Religious student organizations (denominational or nondenominational) devoted to fostering religious life on college campuses. May also refer to Campus Crusade for Christ, an interdenominational Christian organization.

**Carnegie units:** One year of study or the equivalent in a secondary school subject.

**\*Career and placement services:** A range of services, including (often) the following: coordination of visits of employers to campus; aptitude and vocational testing; interest inventories, personal Certificate: See **Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma**.

**Commuter:** A student who lives off campus in housing that is not owned by, operated by, or affiliated with the college. This category includes students who commute from home and students who have moved to the area to attend college.

**Comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities:** Programs designed to support postsecondary students with intellectual disabilities obtain instruction in academic, career and technical, and independent living subjects in preparation for employment.

**Clock hour:** A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students. Also referred to as contact hour.

**Cooperative education program:** A program that provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government.

**Cooperative housing:** College-owned, -operated, or -affiliated housing. (th)14.do20.9 (or)-21.ino20.95.o14.r.9 eatifed hmed housiatintsnia(th)14.7.5 (apl)28 (i)28 (a)6.5 (t)28 (n)20.8 ( i).2 (e)9.5 (d h)20.8 (o)20.ed(th)14..2 (s)-20.95ted t.2 (s) word processing school might allow students to enroll and begin studies at various times, with no requirement that classes begin on a certain date.

**\*Counseling service:** Activities designed to assist students in making plans and decisions related to their education, career, or personal development.

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



**Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

**\*On-campus day care:** Licensed day care for students' children (usually age 3 and up); usually for a fee.

**Other expenses (costs):** Include average costs for clothing, laundry, entertainment, medical (if not a required fee), and furnishings.

**Out-of-state tuition:** The tuition charged by institutions to those students who do not meet the institution's or state's residency requirements.

**Part-time student (undergraduate):** A student enrolled for fewer than 12 credits per semester or quarter, or fewer than 24 clock hours a week each term.

**\*Personal counseling:** One-on-one or group counseling with trained professionals for students who want to explore personal, educational, or vocational issues.

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

**\*Religious counseling:** One-on-one or group counseling with trained professionals for students who want to explore religious problems or issues.

**Student-designed major:** A program of study based on individual interests, designed with the assistance of an adviser.

**Trimester calendar system:**

**Tuition:** Amount of money charged to students for instructional services. Tuition may be charged per term, per course, or per credit.

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

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

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

**Weekend college:** A program that allows students to take a complete course of study and attend classes only on weekends.

**White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

**\*Women's center:** Center with programs, academic activities, and/or services intended to promote an understanding of the evolving roles of women.

### **Financial Aid Definitions**

**Financial aid applicant:** Any applicant who submits **any one of** the institutionally required financial aid applications/forms, such as the FAFSA.

**Institutional scholarships and grants:** Endowed scholarships, annual gifts and tuition funded grants for which the institution determines the recipient.

**Financial need:** As determined by your institution using the federal methodology and/or your institution's own standards.

**Need-based self-help aid:** Loans and jobs from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a student must demonstrate financial need to qualify.

**Note: Suggested order of precedence for counting non-need money as need-based:**

1. Non-need institutional grants
2. Non-need tuition waivers
3. Non-need athletic awards
4. Non-need federal grants
5. Non-need state grants
6. Non-need outside grants
- 7.