

## College Terminology

Based on definitions from The 2005-2006 Higher Education Book published by The Washington Council for High School – College Relations.

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM** – A course of study and examinations developed by Educational Testing Service whereby colleges and universities grant college credit and/or advanced standing based on evidence that the student has mastered course content. Courses are taught using a set curriculum with the culminating exam in May.

**ACT** – One of two college admission tests. The ACT assesses a student's ability in the area of English, Reading, Math, and Science. This test is curriculum based test which also includes an interest inventory. Scored from 1 – 36.

**ASSOCIATE DEGREE** – The degree granted upon completion of an educational program at a two-year institution (Community College or Technical College). Students may earn an Associate of Arts degree or an Associate of Science degree, which will be necessary for a student pursuing engineering or science-related degrees, to be transferred to a four-year institution.

**BACHELOR DEGREE** – The designation of the degree conferred by a four-year college or university based upon completion of a program normally requiring four to five academic years of study. Examples are a B.A. (Bachelor of Arts), B.F.A. (Bachelor of Fine Arts) or B.S. (Bachelor of Science).

**COMMON APPLICATION** – Used by over 300 selective colleges, the Common Application allows a student to complete one application to submit to multiple colleges. Individual colleges will likely have supplemental pieces and essays to complete in addition to the application.

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE** – A two-year institution of higher education which serves the needs of the community in which it is located. Offerings usually include a transfer curriculum to a four-year baccalaureate institution, occupational curricula, general education, and adult education.

**DEGREE, DOCTOR'S (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)** – An academic degree carrying the title of "Doctor". Higher than a master's degree, the earned Ph.D. requires extended study, coursework and research.

**DEGREE, FIRST PROFESSIONAL** – The first degree signifying completion of academic requirements necessary for professional practice, i.e. Dentistry (DDS), Medicine (MD), Lawyer (JD).

**DEGREE, MASTER'S** – A degree earned upon completion of approximately two years of study beyond the bachelor's degree. Often a thesis is required for completion of the Master's degree.

**DIRECT TRANSFER** – The Associate degree that is designed to meet the basic or general education (core) requirements at a four-year college or university in the state of Washington. This will generally enable a student to transfer two year's worth of credit to the university level. Students may complete an Associate of Arts transfer degree or Associate of Science transfer degree.

**EARLY ACTION** – An admission program whereby a student can submit an application by a designated date in early November and receive a decision by mid-December. The Early Action student, if accepted, is not legally bound to enroll. Students are not required to notify the college of their enrollment decision until May 1.

**EARLY DECISION** – An early application process that carries a legally binding commitment to enroll, if accepted, to the college. Student and parent must sign an agreement to withdraw all other applications at the time of acceptance through Early Decision and may apply to only one college Early Decision. Some colleges may consider students not admitted under Early Decision with the regular decision candidates. Students and parents will not be informed of financial aid awards prior to the decision to admit under Early Decision.

**EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION (EFC)** – Money a family is expected to contribute toward their child's education which is calculated based upon the information provided on the FAFSA.

**FEDERAL PELL GRANT** - An award of money based on demonstrated *exceptional* financial need. Each year, the maximum Pell Grant is determined by the federal government. Qualified families will receive an amount consistent with their need.

**FEDERAL PLUS LOAN** – Available to parents of dependent undergraduate students, regardless of financial need. A parent may borrow up to the full cost of education, minus financial aid, with interest accruing while the student is in school. Repayment will begin within 30 days following the full disbursement of the loan.

**FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN** – A low interest loan for both undergraduate and graduate students who demonstrate exceptional need. The loan is made and repaid to the school.

**FEDERAL STAFFORD LOAN** – A loan provided by the government which may be subsidized (repayment begins six months after graduation) or unsubsidized (option of paying interest and principal while in school).

**FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)** – The application for federal student aid used by colleges to determine aid eligibility. It will determine the student's eligibility for grants, loans, and work-study. Families may submit the FAFSA after January 1 of the senior year and are encouraged to adhere to all published deadlines in order to have priority consideration.

**INDEPENDENT COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY (Private)** – A college or university which is not directly supported by public tax money. These institutions may have church affiliation or may be independent of both church and state support.

**PROFILE** – A *supplemental* financial aid form used by some independent and public universities for additional financial aid information. There is a processing fee for the PROFILE. Students must also complete the FAFSA to be eligible for federal aid programs. The PROFILE may be submitted beginning in September of the senior year.

**SAT Reasoning** – A test designed to measure the student's ability to do college-level work. Student is tested in the areas of Verbal, Math and Writing aptitude. One of two college admission tests. Scored from 200 – 800 on each section.

**SAT Subject** – Subject specific tests required by the University of California system as well as more selective colleges and universities. A student will usually be required to take two Subject tests in addition to the SAT Reasoning test.

**WORK STUDY** – A form of federal aid, students may work to earn part of their educational costs while attending college. Work-study provides campus-related job opportunities to students.