

Common Data Set Definitions 2001

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.

***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

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 America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

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has been notified of one of the following actions: admission, nonadmission, placement on waiting list, or application withdrawn (by applicant or

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

Asian or Pacific Islander: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, or Pacific Islands. This includes people from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands,

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

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 *not* 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.)

Black, non-Hispanic: A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa (except those of

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

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

***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 counseling; help in resume writing, interviewing, launching the job search; listings for those students desiring employment and those seeking

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

Certificate: See **Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma.**

Class rank: The relative numerical position of a student in his or her graduating class, calculated by the high school on the basis of grade-point average, whether weighted or unweighted.

College-preparatory program: Courses in academic subjects (English, history and social studies, foreign languages, mathematics, science, and the arts) that stress preparation for college or university study.

Common Application: The standard application form distributed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals for a large number of private colleges who are members of the Common Application Group.

***Community service program:** Referral center for students wishing to perform volunteer work in the community or participate in volunteer activities coordinated by academic departments.

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

Contact hour: A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students. Also referred
Continuous basis (for program enrollment): A calendar system classification that is used by institutions that enroll students at any time during the academic year. For example, a cosmetology school or a word processing school might allow students to enroll and begin studies at various times, with no requirement that classes begin
Cooperative housing: College-owned, -operated, or -affiliated housing in which students share room and board expenses and participate in household chores to reduce living expenses.
Cooperative (work-study plan) program: A program that provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government.
*Counseling service: Activities designed to assist students in making plans and decisions related to their
Credit: Recognition of attendance or performance in an instructional activity (course or program) that can be applied by a recipient toward the requirements for a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.
Credit course: A course that, if successfully completed, can be applied toward the number of courses required for achieving a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.
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 other formal award.
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
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 formal award. At the undergraduate level, this is intended to include students enrolled in
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 students at specific times depending on the program desired. For example, a school might offer a two-month program in January, March,
Diploma: See Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma.
Distance learning: An option for earning course credit at off-campus locations via cable television, internet, satellite classes, videotapes, correspondence courses, or other means.
Doctoral degree: The highest award a student can earn for graduate study. The doctoral degree classification includes such degrees as Doctor of Education, Doctor of Juridical Science, Doctor of Public Health, and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in any field such as agronomy, food technology, education, engineering, public administration, ophthalmology, or radiology. For the Doctor of Public Health degree, the prior degree is generally
Double major: Program in which students may complete two undergraduate programs of study simultaneously.
Dual enrollment: A program through which high school students may enroll in college courses while still enrolled in high school. Students are not required to apply for admission to the college in order to participate.
Early action plan: An admission plan that allows students to apply and be notified of an admission decision well in advance of the regular notification dates. If admitted, the candidate is not committed to enroll; the student may
Early admission: A policy under which students who have not completed high school are admitted and enroll full time in college, usually after completion of their junior year.
Early decision plan: A plan that permits students to apply and be notified of an admission decision (and financial aid offer if applicable) well in advance of the regular notification date. Applicants agree to accept an offer of admission and, if admitted, to withdraw their applications from other colleges. There are three possible decisions for early decision applicants: admitted, denied, or not admitted but forwarded for consideration with the regular
English as a Second Language (ESL): A course of study designed specifically for students whose native
Exchange student program-domestic: Any arrangement between a student and a college that permits study for a semester or more at another college in the United States without extending the amount of time required for a
External degree program: A program of study in which students earn credits toward a degree through independent study, college courses, proficiency examinations, and personal experience. External degree
Extracurricular activities (as admission factor): Special consideration in the admissions process given for participation in both school and nonschool-related activities of interest to the college, such as clubs, hobbies,

First professional certificate (postdegree): An award that requires completion of an organized program of study designed for persons who have completed the first professional degree. Examples could be refresher
First professional degree: An award in one of the following fields: Chiropractic (DC, DCM), dentistry (DDS, DMD), medicine (MD), optometry (OD), osteopathic medicine (DO), rabbinical and Talmudic studies (MHL, Rav), Pharmacy (BPharm, PharmD), podiatry (PodD, DP, DPM), veterinary medicine (DVM), law (LLB, JD),
First-time student: A student attending any institution for the first time at the level enrolled. Includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended a postsecondary institution for the first time at the same level in the prior summer term. Also includes students who entered with advanced standing (college credit earned before
First-time, first-year (freshman) student: A student attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. Includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term. Also includes students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before
First-year student: A student who has completed less than the equivalent of 1 full year of undergraduate work; that is, less than 30 semester hours (in a 120-hour degree program) or less than 900 contact hours.
Freshman: A first-year undergraduate student.
*Freshman/new student orientation: Orientation addressing the academic, social, emotional, and intellectual issues involved in beginning college. May be a few hours or a few days in length; at some colleges, there is a fee.
Full-time student (undergraduate): A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits, 12 or more quarter credits, or 24 or more contact hours a week each term.
Geographical residence (as admission factor): Special consideration in the admission process given to students from a particular region, state, or country of residence.
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 for an A, three points for a B, two points for a C, one point for a D, and no points for an E or F. Unweighted GPA's assign the same weight to each course. Weighting gives students additional points for
Graduate student: A student who holds a bachelor's or first professional degree, or equivalent, and is taking
*Health services: Free or low cost on-campus primary and preventive health care available to students.
High school diploma or recognized equivalent: A document certifying the successful completion of a prescribed secondary school program of studies, or the attainment of satisfactory scores on the Tests of General
Hispanic: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or
Honors program: Any special program for very able students offering the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, acceleration, or some combination of these.
Independent study: Academic work chosen or designed by the student with the approval of the department concerned, under an instructor's supervision, and usually undertaken outside of the regular classroom structure.
In-state tuition: The tuition charged by institutions to those students who meet the state's or institution's
International student: See Nonresident alien .
Internship: Any short-term, supervised work experience usually related to a student's major field, for which the student earns academic credit. The work can be full- or part-time, on- or off-campus, paid or unpaid.
*Learning center: Center offering assistance through tutors, workshops, computer programs, or audiovisual equipment in reading, writing, math, and skills such as taking notes, managing time, taking tests.
*Legal services: Free or low cost legal advice for a range of issues (personal and other).
Liberal arts/career combination: Program in which a student earns undergraduate degrees in two separate fields, one in a liberal arts major and the other in a professional or specialized major, whether on campus or
Master's degree: An award that requires the successful completion of a program of study of at least the full-time equivalent of one but not more than two academic years of work beyond the bachelor's degree.
Minority affiliation (as admission factor): Special consideration in the admission process for members of
*Minority student center: Center with programs, activities, and/or services intended to enhance the college
Nonresident alien: A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.
*On-campus day care: Licensed day care for students' children (usually age 3 and up); usually for a fee.
Open admission: Admission policy under which virtually all secondary school graduates or students with GED equivalency diplomas are admitted without regard to academic record, test scores, or other qualifications.
Other expenses (costs): Include average costs for clothing, laundry, entertainment, medical (if not a required

Out-of-state tuition: The tuition charged by institutions to those students who do not meet the institution's or
Part-time student (undergraduate): A student enrolled for fewer than 12 credits per semester or quarter, or fewer than 24 contact 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.
Post-baccalaureate certificate: An award that requires completion of an organized program of study requiring 18 credit hours beyond the bachelor's; designed for persons who have completed a baccalaureate degree but do
Post-master's certificate: An award that requires completion of an organized program of study of 24 credit hours beyond the master's degree but does not meet the requirements of academic degrees at the doctoral level.
Postsecondary award, certificate, or diploma: Includes the following three IPEDS definitions for postsecondary awards, certificates, and diplomas of varying durations and credit/contact hour requirements—
<i>Less Than 1 Academic Year:</i> Requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in less than 1 academic year (2 semesters or 3 quarters) or in less than 900
<i>At Least 1 But Less Than 2 Academic Years:</i> Requires completion of an organized program of study at the postsecondary level (below the baccalaureate degree) in at least 1 but less than 2 full-time equivalent academic years, or designed for completion in at least 30 but less than 60 credit hours, or in at least 900 but less than 1,800
<i>At Least 2 But Less Than 4 Academic Years:</i> 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
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
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
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 called quarters of about 12 weeks each. The range may be from 10 to 15 weeks. There may be an additional quarter in
Race/ethnicity: Category used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. A person may be
Race/ethnicity unknown: Category used to classify students or employees whose race/ethnicity is not known and whom institutions are unable to place in one of the specified racial/ethnic categories.
Religious affiliation/commitment (as admission factor): Special consideration given in the admission process for affiliation with a certain church or faith/religion, commitment to a religious vocation, or observance of certain
*Religious counseling: One-on-one or group counseling with trained professionals for students who want to
*Remedial services: Instructional courses designed for students deficient in the general competencies necessary for a regular postsecondary curriculum and educational setting.
Required fees: Fixed sum charged to students for items not covered by tuition and required of such a large proportion of all students that the student who does NOT pay is the exception. Do not include application fees or
Resident alien or other eligible non-citizen: A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who has been admitted as a legal immigrant for the purpose of obtaining permanent resident alien status (and who holds either an alien registration card [Form I-551 or I-151], a Temporary Resident Card [Form I-688], or an Arrival-Departure Record [Form I-94] with a notation that conveys legal immigrant status, such as Section 207
Room and board (charges)—on campus: Assume double occupancy in institutional housing and 19 meals per
Secondary school record (as admission factor): Information maintained by the secondary school that may include such things as the student's high school transcript, class rank, GPA, and teacher and counselor
Semester calendar system: A calendar system that consists of two semesters during the academic year with about 16 weeks for each semester of instruction. There may be an additional summer session.
Student-designed major: A program of study based on individual interests, designed with the assistance of an

Study abroad: Any arrangement by which a student completes part of the college program studying in another country. Can be at a campus abroad or through a cooperative agreement with some other U.S. college or an
*Summer session: A summer session is shorter than a regular semester and not considered part of the academic year. It is not the third term of an institution operating on a trimester system or the fourth term of an institution operating on a quarter calendar system. The institution may have 2 or more sessions occurring in the summer months. Some schools, such as vocational and beauty schools, have year-round classes with no
Talent/ability (as admission factor): Special consideration given to students with demonstrated talent/abilities in areas of interest to the institution (e.g., sports, the arts, languages, etc.).
Teacher certification program: Program designed to prepare students to meet the requirements for certification as teachers in elementary, middle/junior high, and secondary schools.
Transfer applicant: 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 previously attended another college or
Transfer student: A student entering the institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution at the same level (e.g., undergraduate). The student may transfer with or without credit.
Transportation (costs): Assume two round trips to student's hometown per year for students in institutional housing or daily travel to and from your institution for commuter students.
Trimester calendar system: An academic year consisting of 3 terms of about 15 weeks each.
Tuition: Amount of money charged to students for instructional services. Tuition may be charged per term, per
*Tutoring: May range from one-on-one tutoring in specific subjects to tutoring in an area such as math, reading, or writing. Most tutors are college students; at some colleges, they are specially trained and certified.
Unit: a standard of measurement representing hours of academic instruction (e.g., semester credit, quarter
Undergraduate: A student enrolled in a four- or five-year bachelor's degree program, an associate degree program, or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate.
*Veteran's counseling: Helps veterans and their dependents obtain benefits for their selected program and provides certifications to the Veteran's Administration. May also provide personal counseling on the transition
*Visually impaired: Any person whose sight loss is not correctable and is sufficiently severe as to adversely
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
Wait list: List of students who meet the admission requirements but will only be offered a place in the class if
Weekend college: A program that allows students to take a complete course of study and attend classes only on
White, non-Hispanic: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the
*Women's center: Center with programs, academic activities, and/or services intended to promote an
Work experience (as admission factor): Special consideration given to students who have been employed prior to application, whether for relevance to major, demonstration of employment-related skills, or as explanation of
Financial Aid Definitions
Financial aid applicant: Any applicant who submits any one of the institutionally required financial aid
Indebtedness: Aggregate dollar amount borrowed through any loan programs (federal, state, subsidized, unsubsidized, private, etc.; excluding parent loans) while the student was enrolled at an institution. Student loans co-signed by a parent are assumed to be the responsibility of the student and should be included.
Institutional and external funds: Endowment, alumni, or external monies for which the institution determines
Financial need: As determined by your institution using the federal methodology and/or your institution's own
Need-based aid: College-funded or college-administered award from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a student must have financial need to qualify. This includes both institutional and noninstitutional student
Need-based gift aid: Scholarships and grants from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a
Need-based self-help aid: Loans and jobs from institutional, state, federal, or other sources for which a student
Non-need-based gift aid: Scholarships and grants, gifts, or merit-based aid from institutional, state, federal, or other sources (including unrestricted funds or gifts and endowment income) awarded solely on the basis of academic achievement, merit, or any other non-need-based reason. When reporting questions H1 and H2, non-
Note: Suggested order of precedence for counting non-need money as need-based:
Non-need institutional grants

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Non-need tuition waivers
Non-need athletic awards
Non-need federal grants
Non-need state grants
Non-need outside grants
Non-need student loans
Non-need parent loans
Non-need work
Non-need-based self-help aid: Loans and jobs from institutional, state, or other sources for which a student
Scholarships/grants from external sources: Monies received from outside (private) sources that the student brings with them (e.g., Kiwanis, National Merit scholarships). The institution may process paperwork to receive
Work study and employment: Federal and state work study aid, and any employment packaged by your