

GLOSSARY OF COLLEGE TERMS

ACT Test

The American College Test (ACT) is a standardized achievement test often required for college admissions. The 4-hour test, offered six times annually, covers English, math, reading and science. The highest possible score is 36. (The ACT with writing test, measuring skill in planning and writing a short essay, is required by some colleges.)

Admission Index

A number calculated using students' ACT or SAT scores and grade point average. A percentage of accepted students at each public college and university in Colorado must meet or exceed a specific Admissions Index. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) sets the Admission Index requirements for the various colleges and universities.

Associate Degree

A degree granted by most two-year colleges and some four-year colleges at the end of two years of study. A student may earn the Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree, depending on the course of study.

Award Letter

An official document issued by a college's financial aid office listing all of the financial aid awarded to the student. This letter details the analysis of the student's financial need and the breakdown of the financial aid package according to amount, source, and type of aid. The award letter includes the terms and conditions for the financial aid and information about the cost of attendance.

Bachelor's Degree

A degree granted for undergraduate college programs, concentrated in a specific field, usually requiring four years of study. (Also called a baccalaureate degree).

Candidate's Reply Date

At most schools, May 1st is the date by which accepted applicants must indicate their intention to enroll. By use of a common reply date, students may evaluate all notices of admission and financial aid awards before deciding on any one college.

College Board

An organization that sponsors the SAT, the SAT Subject Tests, the Advanced Placement Tests, and the CSS Profile financial Aid form.

College in Colorado (CollegeInColorado.org)

A free website that helps to plan, apply, and pay for college.

COF (College Opportunity Fund)

Created by the Colorado Legislature, COF provides a stipend to eligible undergraduate students. The stipend pays a portion of total in-state tuition when a student attends a Colorado public institution or a participating private institution.

Common Application

A form produced by a consortium of approximately 500 colleges that may be filled out and sent to member colleges instead of submitting each school's individual application.

Deferred Admission

A program that allows students to postpone enrollment, usually for no more than one year, after acceptance to a college or university.

Early Action

A program with earlier deadlines and earlier notification dates than the regular admissions process. Students who apply to an early action program do not commit to attending the school if admitted, unlike an early decision program.

Early Admission

A program in which colleges or universities admit outstanding students before the usual admissions date. This can also mean the admission of students before they complete high school.

Early Decision

Many colleges offer this plan to applicants who are sure they want to attend the college. This college should clearly be the applicant's first choice. Traditionally, the deadline for early decision applications has been November 1st or 15th. Colleges then render a decision by mid-December. However, it is common that students will not be informed of their financial aid package at the time they are admitted. If financial aid is a significant issue in choosing a college, applying early decision is NOT to the student's advantage.

If accepted under this plan, the student is under strong ethical obligation to attend the college and to withdraw or forego applications to all other colleges.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

The amount of money the family is expected to contribute to the student's education as determined by a need analysis formula approved by Congress. The EFC includes the parents' contribution and the students' contribution, and depends on the student's dependency status, family status, number of family members in school, taxable and non-taxable income and assets. The EFC is calculated upon submission of the FAFSA form.

Federal Direct Loan Program

Low-interest, subsidized and unsubsidized educational loans made by the federal government to students and parents through the schools. (Also known as Stafford Loans)

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The form students must file in order to be considered for federal aid programs. There is no fee to apply for federal student aid.

Grant

A type of financial aid based on financial need that the student does not have to repay.

Junior College

Another term for a two-year college.

Major

The field of study in which a student specializes.

Merit-Based Aid

Financial aid that is merit-based depends on academic, artistic, or athletic merit, or some other criteria, and does not depend on the existence of financial need. Merit-based awards look at grades, test scores, hobbies, and special talents to determine eligibility for scholarships.

Minor

A second concentration of study in a particular subject area, yet not as involved as a student's major area of study. Minors allow students to diversify their courses of study.

NCAA Clearinghouse

Prospective student-athletes at Division I or II institutions have certain responsibilities to attend to before they may participate. Information concerning who needs to register with the Clearinghouse and what documents should be submitted can be found in the [NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete](#) at <http://www.ncaapublications.com>, or by calling 1-800-638-3731.

Need-Blind Admissions Policy

An admission policy that does not take into consideration a student's ability to pay when reviewing his/her application.

Official Transcript

Most colleges will only accept a transcript that bears the high school seal and is sent directly from the high school.

Pell Grant

A federal award given to undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need to help pay for college. A Pell Grant does not have to be paid back.

Perkins Loan

A campus-administered program that provides low-interest loans to students with exceptionally high financial need.

PLUS Loan

Parents with good credit can borrow up to the full cost of education minus any other financial aid received by the student. According to the law, a financial aid form does not have to be filed to be eligible; however, many lenders require it.

Quarter System

A school that divides the academic year into four periods of approximately 12 weeks. The regular academic year includes fall, winter, and spring terms; summer quarter is usually optional.