

# College Survival Vocabulary



# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **academic year**

Usually this refers to the September-August school year. In some cases it refers to the entire year.

- ◆ **accreditation**

Certification that a school or an instructional program meets standards set by an outside reviewing organization. Many forms of financial aid are available only to students attending accredited institutions.

- ◆ **admission**

Approval for a student to attend an educational institution. The admission process usually involves an application form and may require transcripts or other supporting documents.

- ◆ **advisor**

A member of the college faculty or staff who assists students with planning quarter or semester schedules as well as their overall programs of study. Advisors may also help with career planning. See also counselor.

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **application**

The first step in requesting *admission* to an institution of higher education. Usually there is a form to fill out by a certain deadline; sometimes there is an application fee to pay.

- ◆ **articulation**

A formal agreement between high schools and colleges or between community/technical colleges and *baccalaureate* institutions, designed to make it easy for students to move from one educational level to the next without any gaps or repetition in their coursework..

- ◆ **assessment**

A method of determining a student's knowledge or skill level, often taken to find his or her best *placement* or starting level in a series of courses in English, foreign languages, math, or science.

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- ◆ **associate's degree**

A *diploma* earned after successfully completing a required *program* of study in a community or technical college. It typically requires 90 or more *credits* and takes two years of full-time study. Some associate's degrees enable students to *transfer* to *baccalaureate* colleges and universities, others prepare students to go right into the workforce in a *professional/technical* field.

- ◆ **audit**

A student who audits a *course* formally *registers* for it and attends class sessions but earns no *credit* and has no obligation to complete homework projects or take tests.

- ◆ **baccalaureate or bachelor's degree**

A college *degree* which can often be earned by following a four-year instructional *program*. A baccalaureate institution, sometimes informally called a “four-year college,” is a college or university which is entitled to grant a baccalaureate or bachelor's degree.

- ◆ **basic skills**

Usually refers to a level of *competency*—specifically in reading, writing, and mathematics—which is required for successful *college-level* work in all fields of study.



# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **campus**

The land and buildings that a college or university uses for instruction or student services.

- ◆ **catalog**

A comprehensive resource listing college regulations, *program* and *course* descriptions, *degree* and *graduation requirements*, *transfer* requirements, and other essential information.

- ◆ **certificate**

A document granted by a college or university indicating that a student has successfully completed specified *courses* and *requirements* (compare with *degree*, which usually requires more time and coursework).

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **class schedule**

(1) A publication listing detailed *course* and *section* information (days, times, room numbers, etc.) for a specific *semester* or *quarter*.

(2) The specific courses that an individual student is taking or plans to take for a given semester or quarter.

- ◆ **college-level study**

*Curricula* and instruction that assume the student has already mastered certain skills and abilities and has the level of commitment needed for *postsecondary* school work. Compare to *developmental-level study*.

- ◆ **commencement**

The ceremony at the end of an *academic year* when students receive their degrees or diplomas (compare to *graduation*).

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **competency**

In “competency-based” *courses* or instructional *programs*, students must demonstrate certain skills and abilities (instead of just earning *passing grades* in classes) before moving from one level to the next or earning the final *certificate* or *degree* .

- ◆ **counselor**

A member of the college *faculty* who has special training in guidance and who assists students in academic or personal matters. See also *advisor*.

- ◆ **course**

(1) Often means the same as *class*.

(2) A planned sequence of instruction in a particular topic; may include class meetings, lectures, readings, demonstrations, exercises, assignments, examinations, etc.; offered repeatedly to different groups of students.

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **credit**

A unit of measure for college work. Generally speaking, one credit hour represents one hour of classroom attendance each week for one term, plus the study time, homework, etc. that go along with it.

- ◆ **credit load**

The total *credit* value of the *courses* a student is currently enrolled in.

- ◆ **curriculum**

(plural: curricula)

(1) An established sequence of information to be learned, skills to be acquired, etc. in a specific *course* or in a complete instructional *program*.

(2) Collectively, all the courses offered by a *department*, *division*, or college.

- ◆ **dean**

An academic administrator or official at a school, college, or university, especially one with responsibility for students or *faculty*.

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **degree**

A rank conferred by a college or university and earned by a student who has successfully completed specified *courses* and *requirements* (compare with *certificate*, which usually requires less time and coursework).

- ◆ **department**

An organizational unit within a college or university, offering *courses* about closely related topics (at a small school there may be one foreign languages department, at a large school there may be separate departments for Spanish, French, Japanese, etc).

- ◆ **developmental-level study**

Instruction that helps students improve their English and math abilities and prepare themselves for *college-level study*.

- ◆ **diploma**

An official document issued by a college or university indicating that a student has earned a certain *degree* or *certificate*.

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **distance learning or distance education**

Instruction which is not time- or place-specific; can include correspondence courses, televised or videotaped lectures, online courses (internet and e-mail), etc.

- ◆ **distribution requirements**

Course *requirements* included in an instructional *program* to make sure that the student is well-rounded and gains some perspective outside his or her specific focus or *major*.

- ◆ **division**

An organizational unit within a college or university consisting of two or more related *departments*.

- ◆ **drop**

To cancel *registration* in a *course* after enrolling into it. Students often add and drop courses before settling on a *class schedule* for a particular *quarter* or *semester*. See also *withdrawal*.

- ◆ **elective**

A *course* that is not required for a particular instructional *program*. Many programs require a certain number of elective *credits*, and many recommend certain electives for students to choose from.



# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **ESL (English as a Second Language)**

Usually refers to *developmental-level* instruction in English language skills for non-native speakers.

- ◆ **enrollment**

(1) The process of signing up and paying for *courses*. See also *registration*.

(2) The total number of registered students attending *classes* in a particular instructional *program* or the whole school.

- ◆ **evaluation**

(1) The process and standards by which an instructor judges a student's work and assigns a *grade*.

(2) The process of determining that a student has met all requirements to complete a *degree* or *certificate* and is ready to *graduate*.

- ◆ **faculty**

The instructors or teaching staff at a school. At BCC, librarians and *counselors* are considered faculty members along with classroom instructors.

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **financial aid**

Money available from various sources to help students pay college expenses. These funds come as *loans*, *grants*, or *scholarships* from the state or federal government or other organizations. *Work-study* is also a form of financial aid.

- ◆ **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)**

The application required for students to be considered for federal student *financial aid*. The FAFSA is processed free of charge and is used by most state agencies and colleges. There is a form for each academic year. FAFSA forms are available from high schools and on the website [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

- ◆ **freshman**

A student in the first year of a typical four-year *baccalaureate degree* program (or one who has earned fewer than 45 *quarter credits* or 30 *semester credits* so far).

- ◆ **GED (General Education Development)**

A certificate representing the equivalent of a high-school diploma.

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **general education**

A set of requirements designed to help every graduating student achieve competence in a variety of learning outcome areas.

- ◆ **grade**

A formal indicator of a student's overall performance in a *course*, recorded on the official *transcript*. Traditional letter grades are "A" for outstanding achievement, "B" for high achievement, "C" for satisfactory achievement, etc.

- ◆ **grade-point average (GPA)**

The GPA is computed by multiplying the number value of the *grade* earned in each *course* (generally, A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) times the number *credits* for each *course*, then dividing the result by the total number of credits taken.

- ◆ **graduation**

The formal completion of an instructional *program* or course of study. Students graduate after successfully meeting all *credit* and *course requirements* and other criteria set by the college or university (compare to *commencement*).

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **grant**

A type of *financial aid* that does not have to be paid back after the student leaves school. Grants are available through the federal government, state agencies, and educational institutions.

- ◆ **incomplete**

A temporary *grade* given to a student who is doing satisfactory work but is forced by illness or other emergency to miss an exam or a major assignment. The instructor and student arrange how and when the student will complete the work and have the "I" changed to a final letter grade.

- ◆ **independent study**

An arrangement that allows a student to earn college *credit* through individual study and research, usually planned with and supervised by a *faculty* member.

- ◆ **instructional day**

An instructional day refers to any day of the week (M-F) after the quarter begins, not the day a class meets.

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **internship**

A supervised short-term apprenticeship or temporary job in a real-world setting closely related to a student's field of study. The student may or may not be paid but earns college *credit* for the work experience. See also *practicum*.

- ◆ **junior**

A student in the third year of a typical four-year *baccalaureate* degree program (or one who has earned 90-135 *quarter credits* or 60-90 *semester credits* so far).

- ◆ **learning outcomes**

What students are expected to know and to be able to do as a result of their experience at the college and, more specifically, as a result of completing their general education requirements.

- ◆ **load**

See *credit load*.

- ◆ **loans**

A type of *financial aid* that must be repaid to the government agency or other lending organization when the student leaves school.



# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **lower division**

The *courses* students are generally expected to complete during the first two years of a typical four-year *baccalaureate degree program*.

- ◆ **major**

Specialization in one academic *discipline* or field of study. At BCC, this is called "academic concentration" in a particular subject.

- ◆ **no-show**

A student who *registers* into a *course* but never goes to *class*.

- ◆ **noncredit**

*Courses* or instructional *programs* which do not require extensive homework or examinations and which do not offer college *credit*. Students frequently take noncredit courses for *basic skills* improvement, job training or career enhancement, or personal enrichment.



# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **open admissions**

The policy of some colleges to admit nearly all applicants, regardless of high school *grades* and admission test scores. It means different things at different schools. Community and technical colleges in Washington State admit anyone who is over 18 or has a high school diploma or *GED*.

- ◆ **outcomes**

See learning outcomes.

- ◆ **pass/passing**

At most schools, a student will earn *credit* and "pass" a *class* with a *grade* of "A" through "D." A student who earns an "F" grade fails the class and earns no credit. Different schools have different standards, so a student who passes a class with a "D" may or may not be able to use that class to meet *prerequisites* or fulfill *requirements*.

- ◆ **placement**

The appropriate level to enter a series of courses, based on the student's skills ("since she learned so much Spanish in high school, she can place into Spanish 201 in her first year at college"); often used in the context of basic skills subjects such as mathematics or English composition. See also assessment.

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **postsecondary**

Refers to all educational *programs* for students past high-school age; it includes community and technical colleges and job training programs as well as *baccalaureate* colleges and universities.

- ◆ **practicum**

A *course* that includes job-related activities and stresses the practical application of theory in a field of study. See also *internship*.

- ◆ **prerequisite**

A *course* that must be completed (often with a certain minimum *grade*) or a skill that must be demonstrated before a student can enroll in a more advanced course (for example, first-year French is a prerequisite for second-year French).

- ◆ **professional/technical**

A *course* or instructional *program* that emphasizes job skills training for a particular field of work; often called "occupational" or "vocational" education and often contrasted with "academic" or "transfer" education.

- ◆ **quarter**

Some schools (including BCC) organize the *academic year* into three main periods-Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters-plus a shorter Summer Quarter (compare to *semester*).

# College Survival Vocabulary

## ◆ **records**

Refers to all the information the college might keep regarding a student; it includes *registration* activity (*enrollment, withdrawal, etc.*), *grades*, payments, awards received, *financial aid* applications and award notices, and notes on *disciplinary* actions, as well as address, phone number, and student identification number.

## ◆ **refund**

*Tuition and fees* that are paid back to a student who has *withdrawn* from a course. The refund policy and deadlines are published in each Credit Class Schedule.

## ◆ **register/registration**

To sign up or *enroll* in a *course* or courses. "Registration activity" includes enrolling, dropping/withdrawing, choosing "*pass/fail*" in place of letter *grades*, making payments, etc.

## ◆ **requirements**

Minimum standards defined by the college, for example for *admission* or *graduation*. See also *prerequisite*; *distribution requirements*.

# College Survival Vocabulary

## ◆ resident

For purposes of calculating a student's *tuition and fees*, someone who has lived in the state for a specified length of time as shown by specified types of evidence.

## ◆ scholarship

(1) A type of *financial aid grant*. Organizations may give scholarships according to academic achievement, financial need, or any other basis. Usually there is a competitive *application* process.

(2) A person's ability and expertise in a particular *discipline* of study ("I've always admired Dr. Busacca's scholarship in Italian art and literature").

## ◆ section

A specific *class* with its own unique days, hours, location, and instructor. A number of sections of a certain *course* may be offered during a *quarter* or *semester*, each with different days, times, locations, and instructors but presenting the same *curriculum*.

## ◆ semester

Some schools organize the *academic year* into two main periods-Fall and Spring Semesters-plus a shorter Summer Semester (compare to *quarter*).



# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **senior**

A student in the fourth year of a typical four-year *baccalaureate* degree program (or one who has earned 135-180 *quarter credits* or 90-120 *semester credits* so far).

- ◆ **sophomore**

A student in the second year of a typical four-year *baccalaureate* degree program (or one who has earned 45-90 *quarter credits* or 30-60 *semester credits* so far).

- ◆ **syllabus**

(plural: syllabi)

An outline plan for a particular *class*, including textbook requirements, class meeting dates, reading assignments, examination dates, the instructor's grading standards, etc.

- ◆ **term**

A unit of time that can refer to either a *quarter* or a *semester*, depending on which system the college or university follows.

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)**

A standardized test which assesses the English language abilities of students who are not native English-speakers.

- ◆ **transcript**

An official *record* of the *courses* and *semester* or *quarter credits* a student has taken at a college or university, the *grades* and *degrees* or *certificates* earned, and any awards and honors received.

- ◆ **transfer**

To move from one college or university to another and have the second institution recognize and accept some or all of the *courses* taken and *credits* earned at the first.

- ◆ **tuition & fees**

Tuition is a student's basic payment towards the cost of instruction at a college or university. Most institutions also charge fees for laboratory equipment and materials, computer use, parking, and other miscellaneous costs.



# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **undergraduate**

A student who has not yet earned a *bachelor's degree*; also refers to the *courses* and instructional *programs* such a student enrolls in.

- ◆ **upper division**

The *courses* students are generally expected to complete during the last two years of a typical four-year *baccalaureate degree program*.

- ◆ **waiver**

To waive a right or a claim is to voluntarily give it up.

(1) If a student meets specific criteria, the college may waive some of his or her *tuition & fees* (that is, some of the money owed to the college will be forgiven).

(2) If a student demonstrates certain knowledge and abilities, the college may waive a *course prerequisite* (that is, allow the student to take the class even though he or she hasn't completed the listed *requirements* for it).

# College Survival Vocabulary

- ◆ **withdrawal**

The process of formally *dropping* a *class* or classes after the *term* has started.

- ◆ **work-study**

A type of *financial aid* which pays students to work part-time, often on campus, during the *academic year*.