

GLOSSARY OF COMMON TERMS USED AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST

A

Academic Advisor: Academic Advisors are employees, either faculty or staff, who help students know and understand requirements to graduate in their degree program. They help them select courses, understand and plan for pre-requisite courses, meet degree requirements, prepare for their career, and connect with college resources when necessary. Advisors are often a wealth of knowledge on academic matters like study skills. At IU Northwest, academic advising is conducted by faculty, in the [College of Arts and Sciences](#), and by professional advisors in the [School of Education](#), the [School of Business and Economics](#), and the [College of Health and Human Services](#).

Academic Bulletin: The [IU Northwest Academic Bulletin](#) intends to reflect current academic policies, procedures, degree offerings, course descriptions, and other information pertinent to undergraduate and graduate study at IU Northwest.

Academic Probation: All colleges require students to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) to remain in school; at IU it's 2.0 for undergraduates and 3.0 for graduate students. Any student not maintaining satisfactory progress toward their educational objectives is placed on academic probation.

Academic Suspension: A student on academic probation may be placed on academic suspension if he/she fails to maintain or achieve the minimum cumulative GPA required.

Academic year: Annual period during which a student attends and receives formal instruction at a college or university, typically from August or September to May or June. The academic year at Indiana University is divided into semesters.

Accredited: Official recognition that a college or university meets the standards of a regional or national association. Although international students are not required to attend an accredited college or university in the United States, employers, other schools and governments worldwide often only recognize degrees from accredited schools.

ACT (American College Test): A standardized college entrance exam administered by the American College Testing Program. Four separate, multiple-choice tests measure knowledge of English, math, reading and science, and one optional writing test measures essay planning and writing skills. Most students take the ACT during their junior or senior year of high school, and most colleges and universities accept scores from either the ACT or SAT.

Add/drop: The add/drop period is during the first week of classes, when a student may make a change to their course schedule without it appearing on their transcript. This is also known as the 100% refund period, as students are not charged tuition for any course dropped during the add/drop period.

Alumni: people who have graduated from the institution.

Associates degree: An undergraduate degree awarded upon successful completion of a program of study, usually requiring two years of full-time study.

Audit: To take a class to gain knowledge about a subject, but without receiving credit toward a degree.

B

Bachelor's: An undergraduate degree awarded by a college or university upon successful completion of a program of study, typically requiring at least four years (or the equivalent) of full-time study. Common degree types include bachelor of arts (B.A.), which refers to the liberal arts, and bachelor of science (B.S.). A bachelor's degree is required before starting graduate studies.

Bursar: a professional financial administrator in a school or university.

C

Campus: The grounds and buildings where a college or university is located.

Career services: An office at colleges and universities that offers counseling, workshops and other resources to help students find internships and jobs or apply to graduate programs. Some U.S. schools have advisers in these offices dedicated to working with international students.

Certificate: A certificate is awarded after completing a short-term training program (at IU Northwest, between 9 and 30 credits) and/ or a one-year program. Some programs also offer two-year certificate programs that require a few less courses than a two-year degree. The certificate is generally recognized by the industry for which the certificate is offered.

Co-curricular activities: Optional activities, such as sports, that students can participate in outside of academic classes.

Commencement: A graduation ceremony where students officially receive their degrees.

Conditional admission: An acceptance to a college or university that is dependent on the student first completing coursework or meeting specific criteria before enrollment.

Counseling: Solution-oriented and clinical support provided to students to help manage emotional and psychological stress or other difficulties that they may encounter while in school. Counselors meet with students individually to discuss any problems or issues and help students cope with the challenges they may experience.

Crimson Card: The Indiana University ID card issued to all students. It provides access to essential university services, including printing and library books, and secure entry to campus building like offices and recreational facilities. CrimsonCard is also accepted as a payment on campus.

D

Dean (Academic): The head of a division of a college or university.

Dean of Students: Working with campus and community partners, the Dean of Students advises students about services, resources, and opportunities that support their success. The Dean strives to support students during times of crisis, complexity, or emergency, and challenge them to exercise personal responsibility and practice ethical decision making. As the primary administrator of the [Indiana University Code of Conduct](#), the Dean of Students plays a key role in ensuring that student behavior does not interfere with the educational mission of the University.

Discipline: An area of academic study.

Distance Learning: Education that occurs outside of the traditional classroom and on an individual basis. The students and instructors interact through web-based communication. Lectures can be viewed online and homework assignments and questions are submitted via email. Also called online learning.

Double major: A program of study that allows a student to complete the course requirements for two majors at the same time.

E

Electives: Courses that students can choose to take for credit toward a degree, but are not required.

Enrollment: The process of choosing and signing up for the classes you would like to take during the semester. Enrollment is often done with the assistance of a college advisor. Also referred to as registration.

Exempt: Not required to do something that other students may be required to do. For example, a school may require all students to take a freshman English course, but some students may be exempt based on their high scores on a college entrance exam or their previous coursework.

F

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): Application used by U.S. citizens and permanent residents to apply for financial aid from U.S. federal and state governments. International students are not eligible for U.S. government aid, but schools may ask international students to submit a FAFSA to determine financial need. (Note: A social security number is required to complete the FAFSA.)

Financial aid: All types of money offered to a student to help pay tuition, fees and other educational expenses. This can include loans, grants, scholarships, assistantships, fellowships and work-study jobs.

Full-time student: At Indiana University, a student who is taking at least 12 credits.

G

GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test): A standardized graduate business school entrance exam administered by the nonprofit Graduate Management Admission Council, which measures verbal, quantitative and analytical writing skills. Some business schools accept either the GMAT or GRE.

GPA (grade point average): A student's overall academic performance, which is calculated as a numerical average of grades earned in all courses. The GPA is determined after each term, typically on a 4.0 scale, and upon graduation, students receive an overall GPA for their studies.

Graduate school: The division of a college or university, or an independent postsecondary institution, which administers graduate studies and awards master's degrees, doctorates or graduate certificates. (See U.S. News's rankings of Best Graduate Schools.)

Graduate student / graduate studies: A student who already holds an undergraduate degree and is pursuing advanced studies at a graduate school, leading to a master's, doctorate or graduate certificate. A "graduate" can also refer to any student who has successfully completed a program of study and earned a degree.

Grant: A type of financial aid that consists of an amount of free money given to a student, often by the federal or a state government, a company, a school or a charity. A grant does not have to be repaid. "Grant" is often used interchangeably with "scholarship."

GRE (Graduate Record Examination): A standardized graduate school entrance exam administered by the nonprofit Educational Testing Service (ETS), which measures verbal, quantitative and analytical writing skills. The exam is generally required by graduate schools, which use it to assess applicants of master's and Ph.D. programs. Some business schools accept either the GMAT or GRE; law schools generally require the LSAT; and medical schools typically require the MCAT. Effective August 2011, the GRE will incorporate key changes in the content, length and style of the exam.(See the U.S. News GRE guide for more information.)

H

Higher education: Any type of education that takes place after high school, or secondary school. (See "postsecondary").

I

Incomplete: An Incomplete is when an I is recorded on the transcript instead of a grade. At IU Northwest an I indicates that the work is satisfactory as of the end of the semester but has not yet been completed. One calendar year is generally allowed for the removal of an Incomplete. If those procedures are not followed, the I is changed to F.

Independent study: An academic course that allows students to earn credit for work done outside of the normal classroom setting. The reading or research assignment is usually designed by the students themselves or with the help of a faculty member, who monitors the progress.

Internship: An experience that allows students to work in a professional environment to gain training and skills. Internships may be paid or unpaid and can be of varying lengths during or after the academic year.

L

Laboratory classes: Laboratory classes require students to perform certain functions in controlled situations that help them test and understand what is being taught in the lecture.

Lecture classes: In lecture classes, students attend class on a regular basis and the instructor lectures on class material.

Letter of recommendation: A letter written by a student's teacher, counselor, coach or mentor that assesses their qualifications and skills. Colleges, universities and graduate schools generally require recommendation letters as part of the application process.

Liberal arts: Academic studies of subjects in the humanities, social sciences and the sciences, with a focus on general knowledge, in contrast to a professional or technical emphasis. "Liberal arts" is often used interchangeably with "liberal arts and sciences" or "arts and sciences."

Loan: A type of financial aid that consists of an amount of money that is given to someone for a period of time, with an agreement that it will be repaid later, usually with interest.

[LSAT \(Law School Admission Test\)](#): A standardized law school entrance exam administered by the nonprofit Law School Admission Council, which measures reading comprehension, analytical reasoning and logical reasoning skills. There is also a writing section; although it is not scored, it is sent to each law school to which a student applies. (See the U.S. News LSAT test prep guide for more information.)

M

Major: The academic subject area that a student chooses to focus on during his or her undergraduate studies. Students typically must officially choose their major by the end of their sophomore year, allowing them to take a number of courses in the chosen area during their junior and senior years.

Master's: A graduate degree awarded by a college or university upon successful completion of an advanced program of study, typically requiring one or two years of full-time study beyond the bachelor's degree. Common degree types include master of arts (M.A.), which refers to the liberal arts; master of science (M.S.); and master of business administration (M.B.A.).

Matriculate: To enroll in a program of study at a college or university, with the intention of earning a degree.

[MBA](#): A master of business administration degree.

[MCAT \(Medical College Admission Test\)](#): A standardized U.S. medical school entrance exam administered by the nonprofit Association of American Medical Colleges, which measures verbal reasoning and writing skills and physical and biological sciences knowledge. The MCAT will likely undergo significant changes in 2015, with new areas added, such as genetics, cell and molecular biology, psychology and sociology.

Merit aid / merit scholarships: A type of financial aid awarded by a college or university to students who have demonstrated special academic ability or talents, regardless of their financial need. Most merit aid has specific requirements if students want to continue to receive it, such as maintaining a certain GPA.

Midterm exam: An exam given after half of the academic term has passed and that covers all material studied in a particular course until that point. Not all courses have midterm exams.

Minor: An academic subject area that a student chooses to have a secondary focus on during their undergraduate studies. Unlike a major, a minor is typically not required, but it allows a student to take a few additional courses in a subject different from his or her major.

N

Need-based financial aid: Financial aid that is awarded to students due to their financial inability to pay the full cost of attending a specific college or university, rather than specifically because of their grades or other merit.

[Net price calculator:](#) An online tool that allows students and families to calculate a personalized estimate of the cost of a specific college or university, after taking into account any scholarships or need-based financial aid that an applicant would receive.

O

Orientation: A college or university's official process of welcoming new, accepted students to campus and providing them with information and policies before classes begin, usually in a half-day or full-day event.

P

Part-time student: A student who is enrolled at a college or university but is not taking fewer than 12 credits.

Pass-fail: A grading system in which students receive either a "pass" or "fail" grade, rather than a specific score or letter grade.

Ph.D.: A doctor of philosophy degree. (See "doctorate.")

Plagiarism: The use of another person's words or ideas as your own, without acknowledging that person. Schools have different policies and punishments for students caught plagiarizing, which tends to occur with research papers and other written assignments.

Postsecondary: Any type of education that takes place after high school, or secondary school. (See "higher education").

Prerequisite: A required course that must be completed before a student is allowed to enroll in a more advanced one.

Probation: A status or period of time in which students with very low GPAs, or whose academic work is unsatisfactory according to the school, must improve their performance. If they are unable to do so, they may be dismissed from the school. Students may also face "disciplinary probation" for nonacademic reasons, such as behavioral problems.

Professional school: A higher education institution for students who have already received their undergraduate degree to gain training in specific professions, such as law, medicine and pharmacy.

Provost: The senior academic officer of a college or university who typically oversees all academic policies and curriculum-related matters.

Public school: A postsecondary institution that is supported mainly by public funds and whose programs are operated by publicly elected or appointed officials. Indiana University is a public school.

R

Registrar: The college or university official who is responsible for registering students and keeping their academic records, such as transcripts.

Registration: The process in which students choose and enroll in courses to be taken during the academic year or in summer sessions.

S

SAT: A standardized college entrance exam administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) on behalf of the nonprofit College Board, which measures reading, writing and math skills. Most students take the SAT during their junior or senior year of high school, and most colleges and universities accept scores from either the SAT or ACT. In addition, students may choose to take the SAT Subject Tests in English, history, languages, math and science to demonstrate their knowledge in specific academic areas. Some schools may recommend, but not require, international students to take the SAT or ACT. (See the U.S. News college test prep guide for more information.)

Schedule of Classes: Colleges publish and distribute a Class Schedule book for each semester, during the previous semester. With the help of academic advisors, students make up their own individual class schedules for each semester they are enrolled. Courses are designated in the Class Schedule by course department, course number, time and days the course meets, the room number and building name, and the instructor's name. A class schedule is also simply a list of classes a student is taking, which includes course name and number, time and location of the class, and possibly the instructor.

Scholarship: A type of financial aid that consists of an amount of free money given to a student by a school, individual, organization, company, charity, or federal or state government. "Scholarship" is often used interchangeably with "grant." (See the U.S. News scholarship guide for more information.)

Semesters: Periods of study that divide the academic year into two equal segments which, at IU Northwest, are 15 weeks each. IU Northwest also offers two six-week summer sessions, during which classes run at an

accelerated pace.

Seminar: A course offered to a small group of students who are typically more advanced and who meet with a professor to discuss specialized topics.

Social and Behavioral Sciences:

Standardized tests: Exams, such as the SAT, ACT and GRE, which measure knowledge and skills and are designed to be consistent in how they are administered and scored. Standardized tests are intended to help admissions officials compare students who come from different backgrounds.

STEM: The collective subjects of science, technology, engineering and math.

Syllabus: An outline of the important information about a course. Written by the professor or instructor, it usually includes important dates, assignments, expectations and policies specific to that course. Some are quite lengthy.

T

Tenure: A status offered to high-level faculty members at a college or university that allows them to stay permanently in their positions, after demonstrating a strong record of teaching, service to the university and published research.

Textbooks: Books required of students enrolled in college classes. Professors notify students which books they must purchase (and sometimes additional, optional textbooks) at the beginning of each semester/class. Students can purchase new or used textbooks, or rent textbooks.

Thesis: A formal piece of writing on a specific subject, which may be required to earn a bachelor's or master's degree.

Transcript: An official record of a student's coursework and grades at a high school, college or university. A high school transcript is usually one of the required components of the college application process.

Transfer credit: Credit granted toward a degree on the basis of studies completed at another college or university. For instance, students who transfer from a community college to a four-year college may earn some transfer credit.

Tuition: An amount of money charged by a school per term, per course or per credit, in exchange for instruction and training. Tuition generally does not include the cost of textbooks, room and board, and other fees.

Tutor: A tutor is a person, generally another student, who has completed and/or demonstrated proficiency in a course or subject, and is able to provide instruction to another student. Tutors usually help students better understand course material and make better grades.

U

Undergraduate student / undergraduate studies: A student enrolled in a two-year or four-year study program at a college or university after graduation from high school, leading to an associate or bachelor's degree.

W

[Withdrawal](#): Students may withdraw from courses during a semester, but there are established procedures for doing so. The college catalog and/or Class Schedule generally specifies the procedures. Written approval from a university official must be secured, and some fees must be paid.

[Work-study](#): A financial aid program funded by the U.S. federal government that allows undergraduate or graduate students to work part time on campus or with approved off-campus employers. To participate in work-study, students must complete the FAFSA. In general, international students are not eligible for work-study positions.