

## Common Data Set Definitions

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.

Additional guidance for some terms, particularly those common with the IPEDS survey, may be found [here](https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary): <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>

**\*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 vocational goals.

**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 and South America (including Central America) and maintaining tribal affiliation or community attachment.

**Applicant (first-time, first year):** An individual who enrolls in college for the first time in the first year of the institution's academic year.

**Cooperative housing:** College-owned, -operated, or -affiliated housing in which students share food and housing expenses and participate in household chores to reduce living expenses.

**\*Counseling service:** Activities designed to assist students in making plans and decisions related to their education, career, or personal development.

**Credit:** Recognition of attendance or performance in an instructional activity (course or program) that can be applied by a recipient toward

**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 clock hours.

**Food and housing (charges)—on campus:** Assume double occupancy in institutional housing and 19 meals per week (or maximum meal plan).

**Full-time student (undergraduate):** A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits, 12 or more quarter credits, or 24 or more clock 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 their grades in advanced or honors courses.

**Graduate student:** A student who holds a bachelor's or equivalent, and is taking courses at the post-baccalaureate level.

**\*Health services:** Free or low

\*Personal counseling



**Note: Suggested order of precedence for counting non-need money as need-based:**

1. Non-need institutional grants
2. Non-need tuition waivers
3. Non-need athletic awards
4. Non-need federal grants
5. Non-need state grants
6. Non-need outside grants
7. Non-need student loans
8. Non-need parent loans
9. Non-need work

**Non-need-based self-help aid:** Loans and jobs from institutional, state, or other sources for which a student need not demonstrate financial need to qualify.

**Work study and employment:** Federal and state work study aid, and any employment packaged by your institution in financial aid awards.