



TIGER

TERMS

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- **2 + 2:** A plan that lists the courses students should take their freshman and sophomore level years, and the courses to take at a four-year institution the junior and senior years.
- **3-PEAT:** Third attempt tuition charge. Due to state legislation, the Alamo Colleges Districts is no longer reimbursed by the state for courses taken by students who have attempted the same course three or more times previously (which includes courses taken that results in a grade of “W”). Therefore, the tuition for such a “three-peat” course will be the current cost for out of state tuition
- **Academic Adviser:** A member of a school's staff who provides advice and guidance to students on academic matters, such as course selections.
- **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 may be divided into semesters, trimesters, quarters or other calendars.
- **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. SPC is accredited through SACDCOC
- **Alamo Promise-** Working with local government and community partners Alamo PROMISE provides community college tuition along with mandatory fees to eligible students who plan to earn an associate degree, certification, courses for transfer or workforce training. Also provides last dollar funding to fill in the gaps to financial aid awards and the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for up to three years at one of the Alamo Colleges Districts five colleges.

- **Assistantship:** A financial aid award granted to a graduate student to help pay for tuition that is offered in return for certain services, such as serving as a teaching assistant or research assistant.
- **Associate's:** An undergraduate degree awarded by a college or university upon successful completion of a program of study, usually requiring 2 years of full-time study or 60 credits. An associate's is typically awarded by community colleges; it may be a career or technical degree, or it may be a transfer degree, allowing students to transfer those credits to a four-year bachelor's degree-granting school.

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 or 120 credit hours. Common degree types include bachelor of arts (B.A. or A.B.), which refers to the liberal arts, and bachelor of science (B.S.). A bachelor's is required before starting graduate studies.

C

- **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.
- **Commencement:** A graduation ceremony where students officially receive their degrees, typically held in May or June at the end of the academic year, though some colleges and universities also hold August and December ceremonies.
- **Common Application:** A standard application form that is accepted by more than 750 member colleges and universities for admissions. Students can complete the form online or in print and submit copies to any of the participating colleges, rather than filling out individual forms for each school. However, international students will typically need to submit additional application materials unique to each college.
- **Community College:** A public, two-year postsecondary institution that offers the associate degree. Also known as a "junior college." Community colleges typically provide a transfer program, allowing students to transfer to a four-year school to complete their bachelor's degree, and a career program, which provides students with a vocational degree.

- **Conditional Admission:** An acceptance to a college or university that is dependent on the student first completing coursework or meeting specific criteria before enrollment. For an international student, this can include a requirement to attain a certain level of English-language proficiency if the student's TOEFL score doesn't meet the minimum required.
- **Core Requirements:** Mandatory courses that students are required to complete to earn a degree.
- **Course:** A regularly scheduled class on a particular subject. Each college or university offers degree programs that consist of a specific number of required and elective courses.
- **Course Load:** The number of courses or credits a student takes during a specific term.
- **Course Number:** All credit courses offered are identified by a four-digit number. The first number identifies the level of the course:

0 – Developmental

1 – Freshman

2 – Sophomore.

The second number indicates the semester credit hour (SCH) value of the course. The third and fourth numbers distinguish the courses within a program area.

- **Credits:** Units that a school uses to indicate that a student has completed and passed courses that are required for a degree. Each school defines the total number and types of credits necessary for degree completion, with every course being assigned a value in terms of "credits," "credit hours," or "units."
- **Culture Shock:** Feelings of uncertainty, confusion or anxiety that can occur when adjusting to a new country and culture that may be very different from your own. International students may also experience "reverse culture shock" upon returning to their home country, after they have become accustomed to the new country and culture.
- **Curriculum:** A program of study made up of a set of courses offered by a school.

D

- **Dean:** The head of a division of a college or university.

- **Deferral / Deferred Admission:** A school's act of postponing a student's application for early decision or early action, so that it will be considered along with the rest of the regular applicant group. A "deferral" can also refer to a student's act of postponing enrollment for one year, if the school agrees.
- **Degree:** A diploma or title awarded to students by a college or university after successful completion of a program of study.
- **Department:** A division of a school, made up of faculty and or staff, that gives instruction in a particular field of study, such as the history department.
- **Dissertation:** An in-depth, formal writing requirement on an original topic of research that is typically submitted in the final stages before earning a doctorate (Ph.D.).
- **Doctorate (Ph.D.):** The highest academic degree awarded by a university upon successful completion of an advanced program of study, typically requiring at least three years of graduate study beyond the master's degree (which may have been earned at a different university). Ph.D. candidates must demonstrate their mastery of a subject through oral and written exams and original, scholarly research presented in a dissertation.
- **Dormitories (dorms):** Student housing provided by a college or university, also known as "residence halls," which typically includes rooms, bathrooms, common areas and possibly a kitchen or cafeteria.
- **Double Major:** A program of study that allows a student to complete the course requirements for two majors at the same time.
- **Drop:** To withdraw from a course. A college or university typically has a period of time at the beginning of a term during which students can add or drop courses.

E

- **Electives:** Courses that students can choose to take for credit toward a degree, but are not required.
- **Enroll:** To register or enter a school or course as a participant.
- **Extracurricular Activities:** Optional activities, such as sports, that students can participate in outside of academic classes.

F

- **Faculty:** A school's teaching and administrative staff who is responsible for designing programs of study.
- **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.)
- **Fees:** An amount of money charged by colleges and universities, in addition to their tuition, to cover costs of services such as libraries and computer technology.
- **Fellowship:** An amount of money awarded by a college or university, usually to graduate students and generally based on academic achievement.
- **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.
- **Fraternity:** A student organization, typically for men, formed for social, academic, community service or professional purposes. A fraternity is part of a college or university's Greek system. Some fraternities, such as those with an academic or community service focus, may be coed.
- **Freshman:** A student in the first year of college / university.
- **Full-time Student:** A student who is enrolled at a college or university and is taking at least the minimum number of credits required by the school for a full course load at SPC which is 12 credit hours.

G

- **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.

- **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.

H

- **Higher education:** Any type of education that takes place after high school, or secondary school. (See "postsecondary.").
- **Hold:** Prevents registration and indicates the action that the student needs to take before he/she can register for classes. Examples include parking tickets, library fines, missing transcripts and academic progress issues.
- **Humanities:** Academic courses focused on human life and ideas, including history, philosophy, foreign languages, religion, art, music and literature.

I

- **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.

- **Institutes:** At SPC, our programs are grouped by institutes: Creative and Communication Arts, Business & Entrepreneurship, Health and Biosciences, Advanced Manufacturing & Logistics, Public Service, Science & Technology.
- **International Student Adviser:** A school official who assists international students, scholars and faculty with matters including orientation, visas, income taxes, insurance and academic and government rules, among other areas.
- **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.

J

- **Junior:** A student in the third year of college / university.
- **Junior College:** A two-year postsecondary institution that offers the associate degree. (See "community college.")

L

- **Letter of Recommendation:** A letter written by a student's teacher, counselor, coach or mentor that assesses his or her 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."
- **Liberal Arts College:** A postsecondary institution that emphasizes an undergraduate education in liberal arts. The majority of liberal arts colleges have small student bodies, do not offer graduate studies, and focus on faculty teaching rather than research.
- **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. International students are generally not eligible for U.S. federal government loans and will typically require an American cosigner to apply for a private bank loan.

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.
- **Nonresident:** A student who does not meet a state's residence requirements. A college or university may have different tuition costs and admissions policies for residents versus nonresidents. In most cases, international students are considered nonresidents. A "nonresident alien" is a person who is not a U.S. citizen and is in the country on a temporary basis.
- **Notarized:** Certified as authentic by a public official, lawyer or bank. Colleges and universities often require international students to submit notarized documents, such as the Affidavit of Support or high school transcripts.

O

- **Open Admissions:** A college or university's policy of accepting all students who have completed high school, regardless of their grades or test scores, until all spaces are filled. Most community colleges have an open admissions policy, including for international students.
- **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. Many colleges and graduate schools offer a separate orientation just for international students to cover topics such as how to follow immigration and visa regulations, set up a U.S. bank account, and handle culture shock.

P

- **Part-Time Student:** A student who is enrolled at a college or university but is not taking the minimum number of credits required for a full course load.
- **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.

- **Post Doctorate:** Academic studies or research for those who have completed a doctorate. A "postdoc" can refer both to a person who is pursuing a post doctorate and to the post doctorate itself.
- **Prerequisite:** A required course that must be completed before a student is allowed to enroll in a more advanced one.
- **Priority Date:** The date by which an application must be received in order to be given full consideration. This can apply to admissions, financial aid and on-campus housing. After the priority date passes, applications may be considered on a case-by-case or first-come-first-served basis.
- **Probation:** A status or period of time in which students with very low GPAs, or whose academic work is unsatisfactory according to the school. If they are unable to improve their academic work, they may be dismissed from the school. Students may also face "disciplinary probation" for nonacademic reasons, such as behavioral problems in the dorms.
- **Trade 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.
- **Public School:** A postsecondary institution that is supported mainly by public funds and whose programs are operated by publicly elected or appointed official.

R

- **RA (Resident assistant):** A student leader who works in campus dormitories and supervises issues and activities related to dorm life. RAs often receive free housing in the dorm in return for their services.
- **Registrar:** The college or university official who is responsible for keeping students' 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.
- **Room and Board:** Housing and meals. "Room and board" is typically one of the costs that colleges and universities will list in their annual estimated cost of attendance, in addition to tuition, fees, and textbooks and supplies. If students

choose to live in dormitories, they may be required to buy into a meal plan to use on-campus dining facilities.

S

- **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):** is a federal requirement that states you must meet and maintain good academic standards in order to be eligible for Federal and State aid.
 - Minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA
 - 66.66% cumulative completion rate between hours attempted and hours completed
 - No more than 99 attempted hours of college-level coursework for an Associate Degree (excluding 30 hours of remedial courses)
- **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." Add link to SPC scholarships.
- **Semesters:** Periods of study that divide the academic year into two equal segments of approximately 15 to 18 weeks each. Some schools also offer a shorter summer semester, beyond the traditional academic year.
- **Senior:** A student in the fourth year of high school or college / university.
- **Sophomore:** A student in the second year of high school or college / university.
- **Sorority:** A student organization for women formed for social, academic, community service or professional purposes. A sorority is part of a college or university's Greek system.
- **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.
- **Subsidized Loans:** A subsidized loan is a type of federal student loan available to undergraduates who demonstrate financial need. The federal government pays the interest on subsidized student loans during the in-school and grace periods, as well as during authorized deferments. Subsidized loans are usually targeted at borrowers

with financial need. Borrowers are responsible for paying the interest on subsidized student loans after the loans enter repayment.

T

- **TA (Teaching assistant):** A graduate student who assists a professor with teaching an undergraduate course, usually within his or her field, as part of an assistantship.
- **TASFA:** The Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) is a free application that collects information to help determine eligibility for state (or institutional) financial aid programs administered by institutions of higher education in the state of Texas.
- **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 and published research.
- **Term:** Periods of study, which can include semesters, quarters, trimesters or summer sessions.
- **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.

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.

V

W

- **Wait List:** A list of qualified applicants to a school who may be offered admission if there is space available after all admitted students have made their decisions. Being on a wait list does not guarantee eventual admission, so some students may choose not to remain on the list, particularly if the school is not their first choice.
- **Withdraw:** To formally stop participating in a course or attending a university.
- **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.