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## **GLOSSARY: COMMON TERMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Academic Standing:** A student's academic standing is determined by the Grade Point Average (or Quality Point Average) earned each semester in relation to their cumulative attempted Quality Hours. Students who do not meet the minimum GPA requires will see a decline in their academic standing.

**Advanced Placement (AP) test:** Advanced placement tests are examinations offered by the College Board to high school students who have completed the AP curricula in order to demonstrate college- level knowledge in subject areas. Students must receive a minimum score, determined by the institution of their choice, in order to receive college level credit for the AP course.

**Articulation Agreement:** This is an agreement between higher education institutions, especially community colleges, that outlines which credits are transferable and how credits will transfer.

**Audit:** To audit a class, students are enrolled in the course but do not receive academic credit and are not required to complete assignments or tests. Students are still required to register for the class (an Audit Permit form is required) and may be required to pay full tuition and/or a fee for an audited class. An audited course will appear on the academic transcript with a grade of "AU" which is not calculated in the GPA.

**Board of Trustees:** The policy making and governing body of a college.

**Bursar:** The person or office who manages the finances at a college. Students pay the bursar for room, board, tuition and fees.

**Classification:** Classification refers to an undergraduate student's rank based on the number of earned credit hours. One example: freshman (0 – 29.99 credits), sophomore (30 – 59.99 credits), junior (60 – 89.99 credits) or senior (90 credits or higher).

**College Level Examination Program (CLEP) test:** These examinations allow students to demonstrate competencies in required coursework instead of taking classes. Students who earn the required minimum grade or higher on a CLEP exam receive a grade of "S" for the equivalent course which they are no longer required to enroll in.

**Computer Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System (COMPASS) test:** These exams are part of a comprehensive software package developed by ACT to help postsecondary institutions determine readiness for college-level courses and to place students into appropriate course levels for Writing, Reading and Math. Students take the test if they wish to challenge their ACT placement in a course or do not have Math/English courses to measure readiness.

**Concentration:** A concentration is an area of emphasis within a major. Concentrations do not appear on diplomas, but are printed on the academic transcripts.

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**Co-requisite:** Co-requisite courses are two classes that must be registered for and taken during the same semester, i.e., PHYS 2110 and PHYS 2111 lab must be completed in the same term.

**Credit:** How schools measure a student's progress towards a degree or certificate. Credit hours are assigned to a course based on how often the class meets. Credits can also just be called hours.

**Credit by Examination:** Students earn college credit for demonstrating competencies through the testing such as ACT/SAT scores, AP exams, CLEP test and/or International Baccalaureate courses. Each college or university will have their own minimum score requirements for awarding college credit.

**Dual Enrollment:** College-level courses that students complete for college credit while still enrolled in high school. These courses appear on the academic transcript as credit earned from the higher education institution offering the dual enrollment and not from the high school.

**Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):** A federal policy that prevents any administrative department and all university personnel from discussing a student's confidential information (academic, financial or otherwise) without first receiving permission from that student.

**Full-Time:** A student who carries at least a minimum number of credits in a term. On a semester calendar, full-time undergraduate enrollment is often considered 12 credit hours during the Fall and Spring semesters. The number of credits necessary for a student to be full time varies by institution. General Education Requirements (aka Gen Ed): The general education curriculum is included in all 4 year degree programs and many associates degree programs to provide a common intellectual foundation within communications, math, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences.

**Grade Point Average (aka GPA or Quality Point Average or QPA):** An average academic score based on a 4-point scale of points earned by the letter grade received (A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1) and the total number of credit hours attempted.

**Independent Study:** Studying a subject for credit without traditional classroom instruction.

**Interdisciplinary:** Programs or courses that span two or more academic areas.

**Major:** A focused area of study. Students have specialized knowledge of their major topic and earn a degree in that area if they are earning an associates or bachelors degree.

**Matriculate:** To register or enroll in college.

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**Minor:** a declared secondary course of study. Requires fewer classes than a major. While students pursuing an associates or bachelors degree are required to declare a major, declaring a minor is optional.

**Orientation:** Programs that help new students become familiar with a school before classes begin. Prerequisite: A prerequisite course is a class that must be completed and passed before enrolling in other courses, i.e., ENGL 1010 must be completed before registering for ENGL 1020.

**Provost:** A college's chief academic officer.

**Quality Point Average (QPA):** See definition under "Grade Point Average"

**R:** R on a college schedule typically means that a class is taking place on a Thursday. Monday, M; Tuesday, T; Wednesday, W; Thursday, R: Friday, F.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):** This is a requirement used by Financial Aid to determine that students are making reasonable academic progress each semester towards completing a degree program. The criteria include GPA, pace (which outlines a minimum completion percentage of hours attempted) and limits to the maximum time frame for enrollment. Each college may have their own SAP criteria.

**Section Number:** A class or course section number is used to distinguish the same class taught on different days, times, locations and/or instructors which provides more opportunities to take the same class. For example, ENGL 1010 section 001 is offered on MWF at 9 am and ENGL 1010 section 005 is offered on TR at 1:30 pm. This number can also delineate various course delivery methods such as iLearn, RODP, or off-campus locations.

**Semester:** Calendar system used by some schools. Often, the school year is divided into two terms, each lasting approximately 16 weeks.

**Support Services:** Services on a college campus designed to help students. Often colleges have support services in various areas including: academics, health, social, financial aid and career services.

**Tennessee Transfer Pathways (aka TTP):** Degree and course information designed to help community college students plan for transferring to a Tennessee public university to complete their baccalaureate degree. The TTPs also constitute an agreement between community colleges and universities confirming that community college courses meet major preparation requirements at four-year institutions. For more information, see <http://www.tntransferpathway.org/>.

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**Transfer Student:** Any student who switches colleges.

**Trimester:** A calendar system used by some colleges that divides the school into three 10-12 week terms.