

COLLEGE DICTIONARY



A comprehensive guide to understanding college terms and vocabulary

losalamos.unm.edu
unmlainfo@unm.edu

Admission:	Acceptance by a college to take classes and potentially pursue a degree there.
Advisor:	A college staff member who offers guidance to students about academic goals, degree pathways, course selection, overcoming challenges, career preparation, transferring, and graduation.
Application:	A form to request admission to a college or university. UNM-LA's application can be submitted online or by paper.
Apply:	To submit a request (application) to be admitted to a college or university or a specific program.
Associate Degree:	A degree granted to a student who has completed an approximately two-year program of study (60 credit hours) at a college.
Audit:	An optional format for a course that allows a student to take a course but not receive credit or a grade for it. A course taken in this format cannot count toward a degree. Typically, students must pay the same tuition rate for an audited course as they would a credit-bearing course.
Bachelor's Degree:	A degree granted to a student who has completed an approximately four-year program of study (120 credit hours) at a college or university.
Bursar:	A college staff member in charge of managing and monitoring student funds, bills, etc.
Canvas:	An online learning management system used by UNM and UNM-LA that allows students to take structured, online courses without being present on campus.
Cashier:	A college staff member who handles and processes monetary transactions, such as bill payments, payment plans, etc.
Certificate:	Recognition given to a student from a college upon completion of a short program of study (8-30 credit hours).
Class Schedule:	A list of courses available to take at the college each semester.
College:	An institution of higher learning, offering generalized courses that may lead to a bachelor's degree, specialized courses toward a vocational or technical field, or one or more courses that meet standards to apply for a certification. UNM-LA is considered a community college, which offers a selection of associate degrees and certificate programs that serve the needs of the community and regional employers. The term may also be used to describe a general, post-high school, educational experience.
Concurrent Enrollment:	College classes taken before high school graduation/GED/HSE. The student is responsible for paying tuition and fees. Credits count only toward a college transcript.

Co-Requisite:	A course that must be taken during the same semester as another specified course.
Course / Class:	A coordinated set of educational material, designed to teach students a specific subject matter within one semester. A class is often considered the specific meeting time of a course (e.g., Mondays, 9:00-10:30 AM), in person or online. These two terms are frequently used interchangeably. Most colleges require that students earn a C in a course in order to count it toward their degree.
Course Fees:	An amount of money to be paid by students taking specific courses, above the standard tuition and student fees. This fee pays for the course's materials, technology, or software needed for students to participate in the course.
Credit (CR) / Credit Hour / Hour:	A measure of a course's meeting time: 1 credit hour is awarded for every 800 minutes a course meets throughout the semester. Most academic courses are 3 credit hours. A course's credit hours are <i>approximately</i> equal to the number of hours a course meets in a given week (for 16-week, face-to-face courses).
Credit/No Credit (CR/NC):	An optional grading format that allows a student to take a course on a pass-fail grading system instead of earning a letter grade. A course taken in this format may or may not count toward a degree, depending on its requirements. Typically, this grading format does not affect a student's GPA while in an associate or bachelor's degree program, but it may affect the GPA calculation when applying to some graduate programs.
Degree:	Recognition granted to a student from a college or university upon completion of a program of study that is generally two or more years in length.
Degree-Seeking:	Student status, once admitted to a college or university, that indicates the student is pursuing a degree. This status makes a student eligible to receive financial aid.
Drop / Withdraw:	To be removed or disenrolled from a college course; this process is typically initiated by the student. However, some colleges have a policy that allows instructors to drop students from their courses for various reasons (e.g., no attendance or participation). Each college can determine how many courses a student is allowed to drop and what effect dropping a course may have. In general, dropping should be used as a last resort because it often has negative effects on a student's tuition bill, financial aid eligibility, degree progression, and/or graduation date.
Dual Credit Enrollment:	College classes taken while still enrolled in high school/GED/HSE. Credits count toward both high school and college transcripts. Tuition is paid by the college; the student is responsible for paying any specific course fees. Books are generally purchased and loaned out by the student's high school.

Enrollment in a College or University:	Admission to the college or university, which grants a student the ability to sign up for courses.
Enrollment in a Course:	A student's current registration for a course. The student will be listed on the instructor's roster. The course will appear on the student's account, tuition charges, and transcript. Also often called registration.
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):	A application submitted to the U.S. government to request federal financial aid. The application is free to submit online or on paper. The FAFSA must be submitted in advance for every academic year by any student who intends to use the aid. Previous tax information for the student and possibly the parent or guardian's will be needed to submit a FAFSA. UNM encourages students to submit their FAFSAs by January 3 every year for the following academic year to receive certain types of financial aid.
Financial Aid:	A sum of money allotted to a student to pay for education-related expenses, often restricted to tuition and student fees. Some kinds of financial aid must be paid back, while others do not require repayment. Students must be degree-seeking to receive school-based financial aid. It is highly recommended that students meet with a college financial aid advisor to determine their eligibility for different kinds of aid.
Foundations / FYEX Program:	A program at many colleges and universities that guides first-time freshmen to make the choices of successful students to keep them on course in their classes, in their degree program, and on to their career goals.
Full-Time Status:	The status of a student who is actively enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours of college courses. This status is often required for many scholarships and internships. Universities often require a minimum of 15 credit hours for a student to be considered full-time.
General Education Courses / Gen Ed / Core / Basics:	A collection of courses from a variety of subject areas, which provide a base of knowledge and skills foundational to student success in their education and after graduation. Students are required to take a certain number of courses from each subject area based on their institution and degree requirements.
Grant:	A sum of money allotted to a student to use for education-related expenses; often granted by a government organization because of a student's qualifications through the FAFSA. Students are not required to pay back this amount of money if they successfully complete the courses it covers.
Internship:	A temporary employment opportunity for students to gain work-related experience in a field of interest to them before they graduate. Internships may be paid or unpaid. Students should talk with their college's career services staff or with specific businesses at which they are interested in working to determine each opportunity's eligibility criteria.

Loan:	A sum of money temporarily borrowed by a student (or a supporting parent or guardian) to pay for education-related expenses. Loans must be paid back within a certain time frame, often with interest, based on the amount borrowed. A variety of student loans exists and should be discussed with a Financial Aid officer.
Major:	A set of college courses intended to teach students an area of specialized knowledge and/or skills. When the program is completed, students often receive a degree or certificate from the college (e.g., Bachelor of Arts in English). Also often called a program or program of study.
Non-Degree:	Student status, once admitted to a college or university, that indicates the student is not pursuing a degree—just intending to take a few classes. This status is not eligible to receive financial aid.
Office Hours:	An instructor's scheduled times to be available outside of class time for student questions and assistance.
Official Transcript:	Verifiable record of a students' courses, grades, degrees, withdrawals, probation, and/or disciplinary action at an individual college, maintained by that college, sealed and/or unable to be altered. If this record is printed and mailed, it must remain sealed to be considered Official.
Orientation:	A training session for new students to familiarize them with the college and its resources. UNM-LA's orientation includes a campus tour and presentations on financial aid, the cashier's office, school accounts, useful technology, academic support, and many campus resources. Many institutions, including UNM-LA, also offer an online orientation and collection of resources that students can reference any time.
Part-Time Status:	The status of a student who is actively enrolled in 6 to 11 credit hours of college courses. The number of credit hours for this status may be higher for 4-year universities.
Placement:	A student's identified level of skills in mathematics and English reading and writing. Placement test scores, including ACT, SAT, and Accuplacer, may be used to determine which courses students will take first in their math and English sequences.
Prerequisite:	A requirement that must be completed before taking a certain course, often a placement test score or a foundational course in the same subject.
Program / Program of Study:	A set of college courses intended to teach students an area of specialized knowledge and/or skills. When the program is completed, students often receive a degree or certificate from the college (e.g., Bachelor of Arts in English). Also often called a major.
Provisional Admission:	Admission to college while still lacking specific admission requirements. This admission status may be granted when unofficial documentation is provided while waiting for certain official records to arrive.

Quality Points:	When calculating Grade Point Average (GPA), a college assigns a number value to each letter grade: A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, and F = 0. Grades of plus or minus may have a slightly greater or lesser value than the letter grade by itself (e.g., B+ = 3.33, B = 3, B- = 2.67). The value of the grade a student earns for a course is multiplied by the credit hours for that course. The answer is called quality points (e.g., earning a B in a 3-credit course would earn 9 quality points). To determine a student's semester GPA, the quality points for all courses taken are added together, and then divided by the total number of credits taken in that semester.
Register / Registration / Add:	To sign up for or enroll in a course; to be listed on the instructor's roster. The course will appear on the student's transcript. Registering for a course will also create a bill for the student. Changes to a student's registration during the semester will likely also affect a student's bill. Students must register themselves for the courses they choose each semester. Also often called enrollment in a course.
Registrar:	A college staff member who manages student records, processes registration, verifies degree completion, oversees the academic deadlines, and resolves transcript errors. At some institutions, the Registrar may also oversee articulating transfer credits, placement testing, probation and suspension, and residency.
Residency:	Proof that a student (or their parent/guardian) has lived in New Mexico for at least 12 months, which qualifies the student to pay the in-state tuition rate. If a student has not lived in the state for 12 months, residency may be waived if moving to NM for a job, marriage, and/or military assignment. Verification documentation may be requested by UNM-LA Admissions.
Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP):	The standard benchmark a college holds that determines if students are meeting expectations to complete a degree program. This is often measured by a student's cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) and percentage of courses completed (not failed or dropped). Many colleges set their standard at a 2.0 GPA, which is a C average, and a 60% completion rate. SAP is also often used to determine financial aid eligibility.
Scholarship:	A sum of money allotted to a student to use for education-related expenses; often granted by a specific organization because of a student's qualifications and/or enrollment. Students are generally not required to pay back this money. Most scholarships require an application.
Section:	An individual offering of a course within a given semester. One course may be offered at several different times or in different formats. Each time or format will have its own section number to identify it and distinguish it from other times and formats for registration purposes (e.g., CLST 1110 may be offered as Section 301 on Mondays at 5:00 and as Section 302 online).
Semester:	A length of time by which colleges divide an academic year. UNM's and UNM-LA's semesters are 16 weeks long. Individual courses start and finish within one semester.

Student Aid Report (SAR)	A paper or electronic document that summarizes information students submit on their FAFSAs and provides some basic information about their eligibility for federal student aid.
Student Fees:	An amount of money to be paid by students, alongside tuition, for taking any college-level courses. These fees pay for technology and facilities maintenance, new academic resources, or other broad-scale needs across the campus.
Student ID / ID Number:	A number assigned to a potential student when an application has been submitted. This number is typically used to link all of the student's records in the college's database systems.
Syllabus:	A summary of course resources, expectations, requirements, procedures, assignments, exams, and other necessary information laid out by the course's instructor to be successful in a course.
Term:	A length of time by which colleges divide an academic year. This may refer to semesters or shorter periods of time, like an 8-week summer session or 4-week intersession. Also may be used to identify a specific semester (e.g., the Fall 2019 term).
Transfer:	To withdraw from one college to enroll in another college or university. The transfer process is unique to each institution receiving a transferring student. This process may be initiated by students at any point in their education but may prolong the student's degree completion. Credits are not guaranteed to transfer between institutions. It is recommended to talk with an advisor in the receiving school and degree program to help determine what courses will transfer and receive guidance through the transfer process.
Tuition:	An amount of money to be paid by the student for enrollment in any college-level courses, allotted by credit hour (e.g., UNM-LA charges \$82 per credit hour to take a course).
University:	An institution of higher learning, typically offering courses that lead to 4-year bachelor's and/or 2+ year graduate degrees (master's and/or doctorate's) in a variety of fields. Also sometimes called 4-year institutions.
Unofficial Transcript:	Unverified record of a student's courses, grades, degrees, withdrawals, probation, and/or disciplinary action at an individual college, maintained by that college. This form of transcript may be unsealed, but it may not be used for official admission or transferring coursework to a different institution.
Verification for FAFSA:	A form often required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to confirm the accuracy of a student's FAFSA submission. If needed, see the Financial Aid officer for assistance with this form.

Work-Study:

A student employed by a college or university to work on campus. Wages are often paid by the student's financial aid or by state or federal funding. To be eligible, students must indicate on their FAFSAs that they are interested in work-study opportunities. Typically, students must apply for specific work-study positions, similar to the application process for a standard job posting.