

What is College: Glossary

8 Semester Tracking:

At ASU, 8 semester tracking is the evaluation of how completed courses meet degree requirements in a specific term, including both critical and necessary courses.

A.B.O.R.:

The term A.B.O.R. stands for Arizona Board of Regents—the governing institution that sets the admission standards for all state universities in Arizona.

Academic catalog:

A list of the academic programs (or majors) that could be studied.

Academic program:

A specialized program of study that leads to a degree. It is also sometimes referred to as a **degree program**.

ACT (American College Testing):

The ACT measures your reasoning skills in four subject areas: English, math, reading and science. This test is curriculum based, which means the questions directly correspond to your high school courses. The questions are multiple choice and the exam takes around three hours to complete. The scale for scoring is 1-36. You will take the ACT in the spring of 11th grade. You can take the Explore and the Plan test to prepare for the ACT.

Advanced placement (AP):

AP courses are intended to be at a college level of learning and are available in subject areas such as English, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign language and the arts. Like honors courses, they are for high-achieving students and the grades are weighted. Students enrolled in AP courses can take AP exams. (Financial assistance may be available for the cost of the exam.) Depending on the exam results, students may earn college credit or advanced placement in college.

Associate's Degree:

An associate's degree program is an undergraduate program that typically takes two years to complete. These programs are offered at community colleges and some technical schools.

There are three basic types of associate's degrees:

- 1. Associate of Science, or an AS,** is a degree in science.
- 2. Associate of Arts, or an AA,** is a degree in humanities, arts or social sciences.
- 3. Associate of Applied Sciences, or a AAS,** is a degree focused on developing occupational or technical expertise

Bachelor's Degree:

A bachelor's degree program is offered at a four-year university, such as Arizona State University and typically takes four years to complete. Upon completion of this program, you typically earn one of two degrees:

- 1. Bachelor of Science, or a BS,** is a degree in physical science, life science or mathematical sciences.

2. Bachelor of Arts, or a BA, is a degree in humanities, arts or social sciences. Other degree types such as a Bachelors of Science, Nursing (BSN) or a Bachelors of Science, Engineering (BSE) also exist.

Cambridge:

Cambridge IGCSE (9th -10th) and A/AS Level (11th -12th) courses are considered the most rigorous academic courses available to students. Cambridge courses are college-level and are available at several Arizona high schools. The grades students earn in these courses are weighted. Many universities acknowledge Cambridge courses as evidence of academic ability.

Certificates:

A certificate is a series of courses from a single field, or that crosses academic disciplines, designed to enhance a student's undergraduate studies. Certificates differ from a minor in that they may have more requirements and can be completed independently or while you pursue a major or degree. (See major)

Class rank:

Your class rank appears on your high school transcript and is used to compare you with other students in your high school graduating class. Because it is based on your cumulative GPA, it is likely to change every semester. To calculate class rank, your school lists students in your grade in order from the highest GPA to the lowest. Then your ranking is expressed as a percentage. So if there are 500 students in your grade and you are ranked number 125, you would be in the top 25% of your class (125/500). If you are ranked number 200, you would not be in the top 25% (200/500). Class rank is important for many merit scholarships and being admitted to some ASU degree programs.

College:

This term has several meanings. It is most often used interchangeably with the word *university*. "I'm getting ready to go to college." "Where did you go to college?" It is also the term used when talking about a specialized group of studies within a university: The College of Nursing and Health Innovation is part of Arizona State University, for example. The term *college* is also used when referring to a two-year Community College.

Community colleges (also known as junior colleges):

These schools offer students a variety of academic programs, including a two-year curriculum, where students can earn an associate's degree in a particular major (area of study). Many students who go to community college do so with the intention of transferring to a four-year university. The degrees they earn are sometimes referred to as transfer degrees. Community colleges also offer classes to high school students and adults that don't result in degrees.

Concurrent degree:

At ASU, students may be able to obtain concurrent degrees. This means students can obtain two degrees, at the same level, at the same time with some shared courses. Example: Engineering Management, BSE and Economics, BS (see Bachelor's Degrees) . Two diplomas are awarded. Other institutions may also offer similar programs.

Corequisite:

A requirement that must be met while taking one course, such as taking another particular course, is a corequisite. An example might be a science lab required to be taken with a science lecture course.

Course catalog:

A detailed description of all courses offered by the university.

Credit hours:

At ASU and some other institutions, credit hours are the value that is given to the time requirements of a course. This can also be called semester hours or units.

Critical Requirement:

On ASU's major maps, a critical requirement is a degree requirement that the faculty have identified as critical to a specific major. This means that these courses are the most important to your success in that major. Critical requirements can be courses, grades, GPAs or noncurricular requirements such as submitting a fingerprint clearance card.

Degree:

A certificate of completion of a program of study.

Doctorate Degree:

A doctorate degree program is type of graduate program offered at four-year universities and professional schools. There are two different types of doctorate degree programs: A doctorate of philosophy and a professional doctorate.

1. **A doctorate of philosophy program** is a research-based doctorate program that takes three to five years to complete. Graduates earn a **PhD** —the highest degree you can earn. This degree certifies you as an expert in your academic field. It also allows you to teach at a university or college.
2. **A professional doctorate program** is a doctorate program for students pursuing particular professions. These programs are offered at professional schools. The amount of time it takes to earn this degree depends on your field of study. A few *examples* of fields of study are an MD for medical fields or a JD for law.

Dual/concurrent enrollment courses (for credit):

Dual/concurrent enrollment allows qualified high-school seniors to take actual college courses. This course option is only available at some high schools. Typically these courses count for both high school and college credit, and can transfer into the state-university system. Tuition and fees for dual-enrollment students can be minimal.

Degree Audit:

At ASU and some other schools, a degree audit is an automated record which matches the courses a student has completed with the requirements of a particular academic degree program.

eAdvisor:

At Arizona State University, a suite of tools used to monitor student progression towards degree completion including Degree Search, major maps and the tracking of critical and necessary requirements (eAdvisor Tracking Tools).

FAFSA:

FAFSA is a federal application for student financial aid. By filing a FAFSA form, the government assesses your financial need using an index to calculate your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)—based on the information you provide—and then subtracting it from the Cost of Attendance (COA) of the college or university you have chosen to attend.

Four-year universities and colleges:

These schools offer academic degrees in a variety of majors. After successfully completing a four-year academic program, graduates can earn a bachelor's degree. Many colleges and universities also offer graduate programs that can last an additional one to five years. Graduates of those programs can earn either a master's degree or doctoral degree.

For-profit schools:

A for-profit school is owned by a private company. These schools follow a business model—which means they are expected to make money in addition to educating students. Many online and technical schools are for profit. University of Phoenix is *one example* of a for-profit school.

Freshman:

At ASU, a student who has earned 24 or fewer semester hours is a freshman. The number of credits can vary by college or institution.

General Studies Requirements:

General studies requirements are the foundation courses that help give you a well-rounded education and prepare you for later course work in your program of study. At ASU, all undergraduate students must complete a minimum of 35 credit hours of approved General Studies courses. These requirements are sometimes called General Education and may be called something else at other universities and community colleges.

GPA:

Your grade point average, or GPA, is the calculated average of the grades you earn in school. Each letter grade you earn is worth a certain number of points. At the end of each grading period, those points are totaled and then divided by your total number of grades—this gives you your GPA.

Graduate program:

A graduate program is a program of study for students who have already graduated from a college or university with an undergraduate degree. Students in graduate programs can earn advanced degrees.

Grants and scholarships:

Grants and scholarships are gifts of money that do not have to be repaid. They can come from the federal or state governments, schools, individuals, private companies, nonprofits, religious groups and professional organizations. Grants and scholarships can be based on merit or financial need. Merit-based scholarships require the student to meet or exceed the standards set by the scholarship or grant giver, or are based upon a talent, trait or interest. Grants or scholarships based on financial need means that students are only qualified if their families' income is less than a certain amount. Most grants are (such as the Pell grant) are based on financial need.

Highly-selective schools:

These schools, both public and private, accept a very low percentage of applicants and have a highly competitive admission process. Harvard University is *one example* of a highly-selective school. In 2012, Harvard admitted only 5.9% of the students who applied.

Honors:

Honors courses offer students challenging course work which can better prepare them for college. They are for high-achieving students and are available in subject areas such as English, mathematics, science, social studies and foreign language. To take an honors class, students must perform above grade-level and have a teacher or counselor recommendation. The grades students earn in honors courses are weighted, so they are a great way to boost your weighted GPA and class rank!

Institute

This term is used to describe a college or university with the primary purpose of research (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). An institute is also an organization created for a specific purpose; therefore, any organization or for-profit school can call itself an institute.

In-State:

Students who are residents of the same state as the college or university they plan to attend are considered in-state and usually are required to pay less for their tuition than students who are not. That's because state colleges and universities receive tax support from residents. As a resident of the state of Arizona, you will pay the in-state tuition rate at all public colleges and universities within the state, including Arizona State University. (For ASU, see <https://students.asu.edu/residency>).

International Baccalaureate (IB):

IB courses are for academically talented and highly motivated students. They are available at several Arizona high schools and give students an opportunity to take college-level classes that meet standards set by the International Baccalaureate organization based in Geneva, Switzerland. The grades students earn in these courses are weighted. Upon completing IB courses, students take an IB exam and may earn college credit. Students can take individual courses and earn a certificate of completion for each course or they can complete a two-year IB program for juniors and seniors and earn an IB diploma.

Loans:

Loans to attend college are available to students and parents. They have to be repaid and are subject to varying interest rates. There are federal loans, provided by the federal government (such as the Stafford Loans) and private loans, provided by private banks and other financial institutions.

Lower-division Courses:

Lower-division courses are designed primarily for freshmen and sophomores. In a course number system that goes from 100 - 400, lower division courses are courses numbered from 100 to 299.

Math intensity:

At Arizona State University, our undergraduate degree programs are categorized by math intensity which is the level and number of math courses in the program. This helps you decide if the program is right for you based on the math skills you have.

Major:

A major is a group of courses in the primary subject you choose to study. Students in college declare a major, indicating their primary area of study.

Major Map:

At ASU, a major map is list of courses, organized over eight semesters. By taking courses in the order outlined on the major map, students should be able to graduate in four years. Critical requirements, GPA requirements and milestones that occur within the first four semesters are highlighted on the major map. A major map helps you stay on track towards your degree.

Master's Degree:

A master's degree program is a graduate program—which means you must successfully complete an undergraduate program and earn a bachelor's degree before you can begin this program. Master's degrees are offered at four-year universities and typically take one to three years to earn. At ASU, as with some other schools, there are accelerated programs where you can obtain your undergraduate degree and your master's degree together in a shorter amount of time.

Students who earn master's degrees in an area of study generally receive one of two types of degrees:

1. Master of Science, or a MS, is a degree in physical science, life science or mathematical sciences.

2. Master of Arts, or a MA, is a degree in humanities, arts or social sciences.

Milestones:

At ASU and some other institutions, a milestone is a curricular or noncurricular requirement that needs to be completed by a specific point in time. Examples: portfolio review or audition.

Minor:

A minor is a formalized group of courses contained within the primary subject you choose to study designed to complement or add value to your major subject of study. A minor is available from some instruction units.

Necessary Requirement:

On ASU major maps, a necessary requirement is a degree requirement that the faculty have identified as necessary to complete in a specific order or term within your degree so you can graduate within 4 years.

Nonprofit schools:

These schools do not operate to make a profit. They are typically state universities and community colleges which receive a significant portion of their funding from the government. Arizona State University, like other state universities, is both a nonprofit school and a public university. Some private universities are also nonprofit institutions, such as Midwestern University.

Off-Track:

At ASU, a student who has not met one or more critical or necessary requirement as stated on the major map in a given fall or spring semester is off-track. ASU provides this information to the student so they can be informed of the action that needs to happen to get on-track again.

Online schools:

These schools provide academic classes that students can take from home, provided that they have a computer and Internet access. Depending on the school, students can earn licenses, associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees and even doctorate degrees online. Many traditional universities, such as Arizona State University, also offer some online undergraduate and graduate programs.

On-Track:

At ASU, a student who has met all critical and necessary requirements outlined on the major map in the current term and previous terms against which they are being evaluated.

Out-of-State:

Students who do not live in the same state as the college or university they plan to attend are considered out-of-state. These students usually pay more for their tuition than students who live in the state—sometimes as much as double. That's because state colleges and universities receive no tax support from non-residents. As a resident of the state of Arizona, you will pay the out-of-state tuition rate at all public colleges or universities located in a different state.

Prerequisite:

A requirement to be met before registering for one course, such as completing another particular course, is a prerequisite. Example: English 101 is a prerequisite for English 102.

Professional schools:

These schools are graduate-level schools that prepare students for careers after they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree. Academic programs can last anywhere from one to 12 years depending on the field. Graduates from professional schools earn professional degrees that allow them to practice in their chosen field. Some of these schools also offer undergraduate degrees in specific fields.

Public colleges and universities:

These schools are partially funded by state and local governments; therefore, the tuition tends to be lower than at private universities. Public universities are typically larger and more diverse than private universities. Arizona State University, is *one example* of a public school.

Private colleges and universities:

Unlike public universities, these schools receive little to no money from state and local governments. They are mostly funded through tuition costs and private donations, which makes the cost to attend them typically higher than public schools. Private universities are usually known for smaller class sizes and more stringent admission requirements. Thunderbird School of Global Management is *one example* of a private school.

Professional Certificate/License:

Certificate and license programs can help students get the training they need in a particular industry or career. These programs don't require students to take classes in a broad range of subjects. Instead, students focus on their area of interest. Upon completion of the program, graduates receive a certification or a license. Certificate and license programs are offered at technical schools, community colleges and some four-year universities and typically take one to two years to complete. A few examples include automotive or cosmetology.

SAT:

SAT Reasoning test measures students' critical thinking skills and is divided into three sections: critical reading, writing and math. The test takes around four hours to complete and the scale for scoring is 200-800 points per section. Many schools, such as Arizona State University, don't look at the score for the writing section—they are only interested in your reading and math scores. Most students take the SAT once in the spring of their junior year and a second time during the fall of their senior year. You can take the PSAT to prepare for the SAT.

Schedule of Classes:

A list of classes which are scheduled each term or semester. Students can search the Schedule of Classes for classes to build their schedule, looking at the times and dates a class is offered and whether seats are available.

Semester:

A semester is typically a 15 week period of time in which one set of classes is taken.

Senior:

At ASU, a student who has earned 87 or more semester hours is a senior.

Sophomore:

At ASU, a student who has earned from 25 to 55 semester hours is a sophomore.

Student fees:

These vary depending on the school, but they typically include things such as recreation fees, library access, technology fees and class fees. Colleges and universities may include the amount for student fees in their tuition figure, rather than breaking out the individual costs.

Technical schools (also known as trade and vocational schools):

These schools teach students the skills they need for specific careers in mechanical, industrial and applied sciences. Programs of study at technical schools take between one and two years to complete and graduates typically receive a specific certification or license.

Transcript:

This is the complete record of the courses and standardized tests you take in high school and the grades you earn. This official document gives colleges and universities a snapshot of your abilities and performance in high school. You will receive a transcript of your college studies as well.

Transfer Associate's Degree:

A transfer associate's degree program is offered by a community college as an interim step to obtaining a bachelor's degree from a four-year university. It takes two years to complete and is designed for students who plan to transfer to a public four-year university. This degree guarantees admission (if you meet that school's standards) and a junior-level standing.

Tuition:

This is the price students pay for the classes they take in one academic year. Average tuition costs are usually based on a full-time student taking 12 credit hours (four classes) each semester.

Undergraduate program:

A program of study for students who have not yet graduated from a college or university.

University:

This term is used to indicate an institution of higher education which grants degrees. In the US, it is often used interchangeably with the word *college*.

Upper-division courses:

At ASU, courses numbered from 300 to 499 are designed primarily for juniors and seniors. Upper-division courses should have at least a generic prerequisite (e.g., "56 minimum hours" or "junior standing" for a 300-level course).

Work-study programs:

Work-study programs allow students to work part-time to help pay for their education. They also provide valuable work experience. Students could be employed by the college itself; a federal, state or local public agency; a private nonprofit organization; or a private for-profit organization.