

say what?

A Post-Secondary Glossary

Post-secondary education has its own vocabulary. Here are a few terms you'll hear as you make the transition from high school into college or university.



Academic advisor (or faculty advisor): The person who helps you decide which classes to take and provides academic advice about degree programs and academic regulations, practices and procedures. Academic advisors usually work in the faculty or department where you're registered. Get to know yours!

Admission: Getting accepted into college or university after meeting the admission requirements. This is different from registration, which means enrolling in classes.

Application: The form, transcript, fee and other required documents that you submit to the school(s) you want to attend. Depending on the province where the school is located, you may submit your application directly to the institution or to a central processing centre, such as the Ontario Universities Application Centre (OUAC). Your application is the first step toward getting into a college or university. Next comes admission (getting accepted), then registration (enrolling in classes).

Applying: Submitting your application to the school(s) of your choice.

Auditing: Attending a class without receiving a credit.

Bursary: An award of money toward tuition based on financial need. Bursaries usually don't have to be repaid. Information about bursaries is available through the Student Awards or Financial Aid office of your college or university.

Co-requisite: A required course that is to be taken at the same time as another course. You must register for both courses at the same time.

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Credit: A unit that gives weighting to the value, level or time requirements of an academic

course. To obtain a degree, you are required to complete a certain number of credits. Different institutions have different ways of determining credits. Some schools equate one full-year course (September–April) as being 6 credits, and a half course (September–December) as being 3 credits. Other schools use a credit value of 1 credit per full-year course and .5 credit for a half course.

Department: A branch that deals with a specific area of study within a faculty. For example, the Department of Mechanical Engineering is one department within the Faculty of Engineering.

Early conditional admission: A notice you receive while you're still in high school telling you that you've been admitted into a university based on your Grade 11 or Grade 11 and 12 marks. Once you've completed Grade 12, you must submit a high school transcript and meet final admission requirements to be accepted into the university.

Elective: A course of your choice, as opposed to a required course. This is an opportunity to study something that you're interested in, but that may not be one of the courses you need to complete your degree.

Faculty: 1) Parts of an academic institution that are grouped together based on related academic disciplines; 2) The professors and instructors who teach within a given discipline.

Graduate degree: Usually a master's or doctorate (Ph.D.). A graduate degree is completed after an undergraduate (bachelor's) degree.

Graduate student: A student who is working towards a master's or doctorate (Ph.D.) in a certain discipline.

Honours: A degree program that offers a more intensive concentration in your major subject area. An Honours program usually takes longer to complete than a regular program.

Major: The academic discipline you choose as your primary specialization within a degree. For example, if you're completing a major in English, the majority of your courses will be in that field.

Minor: The academic discipline you choose as your secondary specialization within a degree.

For example, you may wish to complete a major in Communications, with a minor in English literature. A minor requires fewer credits than a major.

Prerequisite: A course that you must complete before registering in another, usually more advanced course. It is important to know which courses have prerequisites so that you take them in the right sequence.

Program: A prescribed set of courses leading to a degree, certificate or diploma.

Registration: Enrolling in classes once you've been accepted into an institution and a program.

Required course: A course that you must take, and pass, in order to graduate or study at a higher level.

Section number: Distinguishes different sections of the same class that are offered on different days and at different times during the semester.

Semester: The main periods of instruction of the academic year: Fall (September–December), Winter (January–April), and Spring/Summer (May–June/July–August).

Syllabus: A course outline that each professor gives to students at the beginning of the semester. The outline lists the readings students must complete, notes when tests or reviews will take place, and helps identify key learning points for the course.

Undergraduate student: A student who is working towards a bachelor's degree in a certain discipline.

Withdrawal: Dropping a course in the middle of a semester, before the deadline. A "W" will appear on your transcript. If you drop a course after the deadline, you will receive a failing grade for the dropped class. **CO**