Common Data Set Definitions	
All definitions related to the financial aid section appear at the end of the Definitions document.	
Items preceded by an asterisk (*) represent definitions agreed to among publishers which do not appear on the CDS document but may be present on individual publishers' surveys.	
*Academic advisement: Plan under which each student is assigned to a faculty member or a trained adviser,	
who, through regular meetings, helps the student plan and implement immediate and long-term academic and vocational goals.	
Accelerated program: Completion of a college program of study in fewer than the usual number of years, most often by attending summer sessions and carrying extra courses during the regular academic term.	
Admitted student: Applicant who is offered admission to a degree-granting pro	

Certificate:	

Doctoral degree: The highest award a student can earn for graduate study. The doctoral degree classification includes such degrees as Doctor of Education, Doctor of Juridical Science, Doctor of Public Health, and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in any field such as agronomy, food technology, education, engineering, public administration, ophthalmology, or radiology. For the Doctor of Public Health degree, the prior degree is generally earned in the closely related field of medicine or in sanitary engineering.

Double major: Program in which students may complete two undergraduate programs of study simultaneously.

Dual enrollment: A program through which high school students may enroll in college courses while still enrolled in high school. Students are not required to apply for admission to the college in order to participate.

Early action plan: An admission plan that allows students to apply and be notified of an admission decision well in advance of the regular notification dates. If admitted, the candidate is not committed to enroll; the student may reply to the offer under the college's regular reply policy.

Early admission: A policy under which students who have not completed high school are admitted and enroll full time in college, usually after completion of their junior year.

Early decision plan: A plan that permits students to apply and be notified of an admission decision (and financial aid offer if applicable) well in advance of the regular notification date. Applicants agree to accept an offer of admission and, if admitted, to withdraw their applications from other colleges. There are three possible decisions for early decision applicants: admitted, denied, or not admitted but forwarded for consideration with the regular applicant pool, without prejudice.

English as a Second Language (ESL): A course of study designed specifically for students whose native language is not English.

Exchange student program-domestic: Any arrangement between a student and a college that permits study for a semester or more at another college **in the United States** without extending the amount of time required for a degree. **See also Study abroad**.

External degree program: A program of study in which students earn credits toward a degree through independent study, college courses, proficiency examinations, and personal experience. External degree programs require minimal or no classroom attendance.

Extracurricular activities (as admission factor): Special consideration in the admissions process given for participation in both school and nonschool-related activities of interest to the college, such as clubs, hobbies, student government, athletics, performing arts, etc.

First professional certificate (postdegree): An award that requires completion of an organized program of study designed for persons who have completed the first professional degree. Examples could be refresher courses or additional units of study in a specialty or subspecialty.

First professional degree: An award in one of the following fields: Chiropractic (DC, DCM), dentistry (DDS, DMD), medicine (MD), optometry (OD), osteopathic medicine (DO), rabbinical and Talmudic studies (MHL, Rav), Pharmacy (BPharm, PharmD), podiatry (PodD, DP, DPM), veterinary medicine (DVM), law (LLB, JD), divinity/ministry (BD, MDiv).

First-time student: A student attending any institution for the first time at the level enrolled. Includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended a postsecondary institution for the first time at the same level in the prior summer term. Also includes students who entered with advanced standing (college credit earned before graduation from high school).

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*Freshman/new student orientation: Orientation addressing the academic, social, emotional, and	
intellectual issues involved in beginning college. May be a few hours or a few days in length; at some	
colleges, there is a fee.	
Full-time student (undergraduate): A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits, 12 or more quarter	
credits, or 24 or more contact hours a week each term.	
Geographical residence (as admission factor): Special consideration in the admission process given to	
students from a particular region, state, or country of residence.	
Grade-point average (academic high school GPA): The sum of grade points a student has earned in	
secondary school divided by the number of courses taken. The most common system of assigning numbers	
to grades counts four points for an A, three points for a B, two points for a C, one point for a D, and no points	
for an E or F. Unweighted GPA's assign the same weight to each course. Weighting gives students additional	
points for their grades in advanced or honors courses.	
Graduate student: A student who holds a bachelor's or first professional degree, or equivalent, and is taking	
courses at the post-baccalaureate level.	
*Health services: Free or low cost on-campus primary and preventive health care available to students.	
High school diploma or recognized equivalent: A document certifying the successful completion of a	
prescribed secondary school program of studies, or the attainment of satisfactory scores on the Tests of	
General Educational Development (GED), or another state-specified examination.	
Hispanic: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or	
origin, regardless of race.	
Honors program: Any special program for very able students offering the opportunity for educational	
enrichment, independent study, acceleration, or some combination of these.	
Independent study: Academic work chosen or designed by the student with the approval of the department	
concerned, under an instructor's supervision, and usually undertaken outside of the regular classroom	
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Religious affiliation/commitment (as admission factor): Special consideration given in the admission process for affiliation with a certain church or faith/religion, commitment to a religious vocation, or observance of certain religious tenets/lifestyle.

*Religious counseling: One-on-one or group counseling with trained professionals for students who want to explore religious problems or issues.

*Remedial services: Instructional courses designed for students deficient in the general competencies necessary for a regular postsecondary curriculum and educational setting.

Required fees: Fixed sum charged to students for items not covered by tuition and required of such a large proportion of all students that the student who does NOT pay is the exception. Do not include application fees or optional fees such as lab fees or parking fees.

Resident alien or other eligible non-citizen: A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who has been admitted as a legal immigrant for the purpose of obtaining permanent resident alien status (and who holds either an alien registration card [Form I-551 or I-151], a Temporary Resident Card [Form I-688], or an Arrival-Departure Record [Form I-94] with a notation that conveys legal immigrant status, such as Section 207 Refugee, Section 208 Asylee, Conditional Entrant Parolee or Cuban-Haitian).

Room and board (charges)—on campus: Assume double occupancy in institutional housing and 19 meals per week (or maximum meal plan).

Secondary school record (as admission factor): Information maintained by the secondary school that may include such things as the student's high school transcript, class rank, GPA, and teacher and counselor recommendations.

Semester calendar system: A calendar system that consists of two semesters during the academic year with about 16 weeks for each semester of instruction. There may be an additional summer session.

Student-designed major: A program of study based on individual interests, designed with the assistance of an adviser.

Study abroad: Any arrangement by which a student completes part of the college program studying in another country. Can be at a campus abroad or through a cooperative agreement with some other U.S. college or an institution of another country.

*Summer session: A summer session is shorter than a regular semester and not considered part of the academic year. It is not the third term of an institution operating on a trimester system or the fourth term of an institution operating on a quarter calendar system. The institution may have 2 or more sessions occurring in the summer months. Some schools, such as vocational and beauty schools, have year-round classes with no separate summer session.

Talent/ability (as admission factor): Special consideration given to students with demonstrated talent/abilities in areas of interest to the institution (e.g., sports, the arts, languages, etc.).

Teacher certification program: Program designed to prepare students to meet the requirements for certification as teachers in elementary, middle/junior high, and secondary schools.

Transfer applicant: An individual who has fulfilled the institution's requirements to be considered for admission (including payment or waiving of the application fee, if any) and who has previously attended another college or university and earned college-level credit.

Transfer student: A student entering the institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution at the same level (e.g., undergraduate). The student may transfer with or without credit.

Transportation (costs): Assume two round trips to student's hometown per year for students in institutional housing or daily travel to and from your institution for commuter students.

Trimester calendar system: An academic year consisting of 3 terms of about 15 weeks each.

Tuition: Amount of money charged to students for instructional services. Tuition may be charged per term, per course, or per credit.

*Tutoring: May range from one-on-one tutoring in specific subjects to tutoring in an area such as math, reading, or writing. Most tutors are college students; at some colleges, they are specially trained and certified.

Unit: a standard of measurement representing hours of academic instruction (e.g., semester credit, quarter			
credit, contact hour).			
Indergraduate: A student enrolled in a four- or five-year bachelor's degree program, an associate degree rogram, or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate.			
*Veteran's counseling: Helps veterans and their dependents obtain benefits for their selected program and			
provides certifications to the Veteran's Administration. May also provide personal counseling on the transition			
from the military to a civilian life.			
*Visually impaired: Any person whose sight loss is not correctable and is sufficiently severe as to adversely			
affect educational performance.			
Volunteer work (as admission factor): Special consideration given to students for activity done on a			
olunteer basis (e.g., tutoring, hospital care, working with the elderly or disabled) as a service to the			
		community or the public in general.	
Wait list: List of students who meet the admission requirements but will only be offered a place in the class if			
space becomes available.			
Weekend college:			

Non-need athletic awards
Non-need federal grants
Non-need state grants
Non-need outside grants
Non-need student loans
Non-need parent loans
Non-need work

Non-need-based self-help aid: Loans and jobs from institutional, state, or other sources for which a student need not demonstrate financial need to qualify.

Scholarships/grants from external sources: Monies received from outside (private) sources that the student brings with them (e.g., Kiwanis, National Merit scholarships). The institution may process paperwork to receive the dollars, but it has no role in determining the recipient or the dollar amount awarded.

Work study and employment: Federal and state work study aid, and any employment packaged by your institution in financial aid awards.