

Glossary





Glossary

A

Achievement levels: Achievement levels define what students should know and be able to do at different levels of performance. In the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the achievement levels are *Basic*, *Proficient*, and *Advanced*. The definitions of these levels, which apply across all grades and subject areas, are as follows:

Basic: This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade.

Proficient: This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

Advanced: This level signifies superior performance.

ACT Assessment: An examination administered by ACT, Inc. (formerly the American College Testing Program). The ACT Assessment® is designed to assess high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The ACT differs from the SAT in that it assesses students' knowledge in the curricular areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning.

Adult education: Adult education includes enrollment in a formal course of any length from 1 day to a semester or longer in any of seven types of activities: English as a Second Language (ESL); Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED) preparation classes, and adult high school programs; college or university degree

programs; vocational or technical diploma programs; apprenticeship programs; work-related courses (related to a job or career other than postsecondary credential programs or apprenticeship programs, whether or not respondents had a job when they took the courses); and personal interest courses (various types of educational activities that have an instructor and are not included in the other categories). For the purposes of this volume, informal learning activities, such as “brown-bag” presentations, conferences, or mentoring, are not considered adult education activities. The adult population includes civilian, noninstitutionalized individuals, age 16 or older, who are not enrolled in elementary or secondary school. Among adults ages 16–24, full-time participation for all or part of the year in a college or university program or in a vocational/technical diploma program was not counted as an adult education activity.

Advanced degree: Any formal degree attained after the bachelor's degree. Advanced degrees include master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and first-professional degrees.

Alternative schools: Alternative schools serve students whose needs cannot be met in a regular, special education, or vocational school. They provide nontraditional education and may serve as an adjunct to a regular school. Although these schools fall outside the categories of regular, special education, and vocational education, they may provide similar services or curriculum. Some examples of alternative schools are schools for potential dropouts; residential treatment centers for substance abuse (if they provide elementary or secondary education); schools for chronic truants; and schools for students with behavioral problems. Between 3 and 4 percent of the schools included in the Common Core of Data (CCD) files are alternative schools.

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Associate's degree: A degree granted for the successful completion of a subbaccalaureate program of studies, usually requiring at least 2 years (or the equivalent) of full-time college-level study. This includes degrees granted in a cooperative or work-study program.

At-risk: Being “at-risk” means having one or more family background or other factors that have been found to predict a high rate of school failure at some time in the future. This “failure” generally refers to dropping out of high school before graduating but also can mean being retained within a grade from one year to the next. The risk factors include having a mother whose education is less than high school, living in a single-parent family, receiving welfare assistance, and living in a household where the primary language spoken is other than English.

B

Baccalaureate degree: (See Bachelor's degree.)

Bachelor's degree: A degree granted for the successful completion of a baccalaureate program of studies, usually requiring at least 4 years (or the equivalent) of full-time college-level study. This includes degrees granted in a cooperative or work-study program.

C

Capital outlay: Funds for the acquisition of land and buildings; building construction, remodeling, and additions; the initial installation or extension of service systems and other built-in equipment; site improvement; and architectural and engineering services.

Carnegie unit: A standard of measurement used for secondary education that represents the completion of a course that meets one period per day for 1 year.

Categorical revenue: All state revenues except general formula assistance and all federal revenues that are intended to address specific educational needs.

Center-based programs: Includes Head Start, nursery school, prekindergartens, day care centers, and preschools.

Civic education: Civic education in school takes place across a wide range of courses, such as social studies, civics, history, government, global studies, and geography. It is concerned, in part, with the meaning of democracy in a national context, describing a sense of national identity, and with issues of social cohesion and social diversity.

Cohort: A group of persons who share one or more particular statistical or demographic characteristics, such as having received their bachelor's degree in a certain year or range of years.

College: A postsecondary institution that offers a general or liberal arts education, usually leading to an associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctor's, or first-professional degree. Junior colleges and community colleges are included.

Compensatory revenue: A type of categorical revenue that targets resources to school districts for instruction and other supplemental services for educationally disadvantaged students.

Constant dollars: Dollar amounts that have been adjusted by means of price and cost indexes to eliminate inflationary factors and allow direct comparison across years.

Consumer price index (CPI): This price index measures the average change in the cost of a fixed-market basket of goods and services purchased by consumers.

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Control of institutions: A classification of institutions of elementary/secondary or postsecondary education by whether the institution is operated by publicly elected or appointed officials (public control) or by privately elected or appointed officials and derives its major source of funds from private sources (private control).

Core curriculum: The most commonly implemented form of the New Basics curriculum, which includes 4 years of English and 3 years each of mathematics, science, and social studies, but not the one-half year of computer science included in the New Basics curriculum. (See New Basics curriculum.)

Current dollars: Dollar amounts that have not been adjusted to compensate for inflation.

Current expenditures for elementary and secondary education: Expenditures for operating local public schools, excluding capital outlay and interest on debt. These expenditures include such items as salaries for school personnel, fixed charges, student transportation, books and materials, and energy costs. Expenditures for state administration are excluded.

D

Dependent student: (See Financial dependency.)

Doctor's degree: An earned degree carrying the title of Doctor. The Doctor of Philosophy degree (Ph.D.) is the highest academic degree and requires mastery within a field of knowledge and demonstrated ability to perform scholarly research. Other doctor's degrees are awarded for fulfilling specialized requirements in professional fields, such as education (Ed.D.), musical arts (D.M.A.), business administration (D.B.A.), and engi-

neering (D. Eng. or D.E.S.). Many doctor's degrees in both academic and professional fields require an earned master's degree as a prerequisite. First-professional degrees, such as M.D. and D.D.S., are not included under this heading. (See First-professional degree.)

Dropout: The term is used to describe both the event of leaving school before graduating and the status of an individual who is not in school and who is not a graduate. Transferring from a public school to a private school, for example, is not regarded as a dropout event. A person who drops out of school may later return and graduate but is called a "dropout" at the time he or she left school. At the time the person returns to school, he or she is called a "stopout." Measures to describe these often complicated behaviors include the event dropout rate (or the closely related school persistence rate), the status dropout rate, and the high school completion rate. (See Event dropout rate and Status dropout rate.)

E

Educational attainment: The highest level of schooling attended and completed.

Elementary/secondary school: As reported in this publication, elementary/secondary schools include regular schools (i.e., schools that are part of state and local school systems and private elementary/secondary schools, both religiously affiliated and non-sectarian); alternative schools; vocational education schools; and special education schools. Schools not reported here include subcollegiate departments of postsecondary institutions, residential schools for exceptional children, federal schools for American Indians or Alaska Natives, and federal schools on military posts and other federal installations.

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English: A group of instructional programs that describes the English language arts, including composition, creative writing, and the study of literature.

Enrollment: The total number of students registered in a given school unit at a given time, generally in the fall of a year.

Event dropout rate: Event rates calculated using the October Current Population Survey (CPS) data for a certain year measure the proportion of students who dropped out between October of that year and October of the previous year. The event rate is determined by counting all persons in a certain age range (e.g., 15–24 years old) who were enrolled in high school in October of the previous year but had not completed high school and were not enrolled in grades 10–12 a year later. This count is then divided by the total number of persons in that age range who were enrolled the previous October to compute the rate. High school is completed when the person either earns a high school diploma or an alternative credential such as a GED.

Expenditures: Charges incurred, whether paid or unpaid, that are presumed to benefit the current fiscal year. For elementary/secondary schools, these include all charges for current outlays plus capital outlays and interest on school debt. For postsecondary institutions, these include current outlays plus capital outlays. For government, these include charges net of recoveries and other correcting transactions, other than retirement of debt, investment in securities, extension of credit, or as agency transactions. Also, government expenditures include only external transactions, such as the provision of prerequisites or other payments in kind. Aggregates for groups of governments exclude intergovernmental transactions among the governments.

Extracurricular activities: Activities in organized settings that children (or older students) may engage in on weekdays outside of school hours that are not part of a formal, before- or after-school program. Such activities may include organized sports, debate or science clubs, music lessons, scouts, or religious activities. If the child's parent reports that the extracurricular activity was undertaken at least in part to cover a period after school when the child needed adult supervision, then the activity is considered to be "nonparental care." Otherwise, the extracurricular activity is undertaken only because of the personal interest or enrichment of the child.

F

Financial dependency: Students are considered dependent for purposes of federal financial aid programs unless they meet one of the following criteria: (1) are age 24 or older; (2) are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces; (3) are enrolled in a graduate or professional program (beyond a bachelor's degree); (4) are married; (5) are an orphan or ward of the court; or (6) have legal dependents, other than a spouse. If any of these conditions are met, the student is classified as independent for purposes of financial aid.

First-professional degree: An award that requires completion of a degree program that meets all of the following criteria: (1) completion of the academic requirements to begin practice in the profession; (2) at least 2 years of college work before entering the degree program; and (3) a total of at least 6 academic years of college work to complete the degree program, including previously required college work plus the work required in the professional program itself. First-professional degrees may be awarded in the following 10 fields: chiropractic (D.C. or

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D.C.M.), osteopathic medicine (D.O.), dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.), pharmacy (Pharm.D.), law (L.L.B. or J.D.), podiatry (D.P.M., D.P., or Pod.D.), medicine (M.D.), theology (M.Div., M.H.L., B.D., or Ordination), optometry (O.D.), and veterinary medicine (D.V.M.).

Foreign languages: A group of instructional programs that describes the structure and use of language that is common or indigenous to individuals of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural traditions. Programs cover such features as sound, literature, syntax, phonology, semantics, sentences, prose, and verse, as well as the development of skills and attitudes used in communicating and evaluating thoughts and feelings through oral and written language.

Full-time enrollment: The number of students enrolled in postsecondary education courses with a total credit load equal to at least 75 percent of the normal full-time course load.

G

GED certificate: (See High school equivalency certificate.)

General formula assistance: State revenues from general noncategorical state assistance programs such as foundation, minimum or basic formula support, principal apportionment, equalization, flat or block grants, and state public school fund distributions. This assistance also includes state revenue dedicated from major state taxes, such as income and sales taxes.

General revenue: Noncategorical revenues that consist of all local revenues, state general formula assistance, and state payments on behalf of the local education agency for employee benefits.

Graduate enrollment: The number of students who hold a bachelor's or first-professional degree, or its equivalent, and who are working toward a master's or doctor's degree. These enrollment data measure those students who are registered at a particular institution during the fall of an academic year. At some institutions, graduate enrollment also includes students who are in postbaccalaureate classes, but not in degree programs.

Grants: This term can have one of two possible meanings. In this publication, grants most commonly refer to funds awarded to an individual by a college, an agency, or another institution to attend postsecondary education. Grants, also known as scholarships, do not have to be repaid. Grants may also refer to funds provided by the federal or state government or some other institution to other agencies to support the delivery of services, undertake research or another innovative activity, or to provide other beneficial services.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): Gross national product less net property income from abroad. Both gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP) aggregate only the incomes of residents of a nation, corporate and individual, derived directly from the current production of goods and services by consumers and government, gross private domestic investment, and net exports of goods and services. The goods and services included are largely those bought for final use (excluding illegal transactions) in the market economy. A number of inclusions, however, represent imputed values, the most important of which is rental value of owner-occupied housing.

Gross National Product (GNP): A measure of the money value of the goods and services available to the nation from economic activity. GNP can be viewed in terms of expendi-

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ture categories, which include purchases of goods and services by consumers and government, gross private domestic investment, and net exports of goods and services. The goods and services included are largely those bought for final use (excluding illegal transactions) in the market economy. A number of inclusions, however, represent imputed values, the most important of which is rental value of owner-occupied housing. GNP, in this broad context, measures the output attributable to the factors of production, labor, and property supplied by U.S. residents.

H

High school: A secondary school offering the final years of high school work necessary for graduation, usually including grades 10, 11, 12 (in a 6-3-3 plan) or grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 (in a 6-2-4 plan).

High school completion: An individual has completed high school if he or she has been awarded a high school diploma or an equivalent credential, including a General Educational Development (GED) credential.

High school diploma: A formal document regulated by the state certifying the successful completion of a prescribed secondary school program of studies. In some states or communities, high school diplomas are differentiated by type, such as an academic diploma, a general diploma, or a vocational diploma.

High school equivalency certificate: A formal document certifying that an individual has met the state requirements for high school graduation equivalency by obtaining satisfactory scores on an approved examination and meeting other performance requirements (if any) set by a state education agency or other appropriate body. One particular version of this certificate is the GED. The GED

(General Educational Development) Test is a comprehensive test used primarily to appraise the educational development of students who have not completed their formal high school education and who may earn a high school equivalency certificate through achieving satisfactory scores. GEDs are awarded by the states or other agencies, and the test is developed and distributed by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education.

High school teachers: Teachers who teach only students in grade 9 and those who teach students in any of the grades 10–12.

Home literacy environment: Children's home literacy environments are measured by an index that counts whether children are read to (1 point), sang to (1 point), and told stories to (1 point) three or more times a week; whether they have the average number of books or more (1 point); and whether they have the average number of children's records/audiotapes/CDs or more (1 point). Therefore, children's scores on the home literacy index can range from 0 to 5 points. The higher the value of the index, the "richer" the home environment is in terms of educational activities and literary resources.

Humanities: Instructional programs in the following fields: area and ethnic studies, foreign languages, letters, liberal/general studies, multi/interdisciplinary studies, philosophy and religion, theology, and the visual and performing arts.

I

Independent student: (See Financial dependency.)

K

Kindergarten: Includes transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and pre-1st-grade students.

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L

Limited-English proficient: A concept developed to assist in identifying those language minority students (children with language backgrounds other than English) who need language assistance services, in their own language or in English, in the schools. The Bilingual Education Act, reauthorized in 1988 (P.L. 100-297), describes a limited-English proficient (LEP) student as one who:

(1) meets one or more of the following conditions:

- a. a student who was born outside the United States or whose native language is not English;
- b. a student who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; or
- c. a student who is an American Indian or Alaskan Native and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant effect on his or her level of English language proficiency; and

(2) has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny him or her the opportunity to learn successfully in English-only classrooms.

Many ways of making this determination about an individual student's English proficiency are being used by school systems across the United States. These include various combinations of home language surveys, informal determinations by teachers, formal interviews, and a number of types of assessment tests for classification, placement, and monitoring of progress.

Loan: Borrowed money that must be repaid.

Local education agency (LEA): (See School district.)

M

Major: Primary field of study in pursuit of a bachelor's degree, implying that the individual has substantial knowledge of the academic discipline or subject area.

Master's degree: A degree awarded for successful completion of a program generally requiring 1 or 2 years of full-time college-level study beyond the bachelor's degree. One type of master's degree, including the Master of Arts degree, or M.A., and the Master of Science degree, or M.S., is awarded in the liberal arts and sciences for advanced scholarship in a subject field or discipline and demonstrated ability to perform scholarly research. A second type of master's degree is awarded for the completion of a professionally oriented program—for example, an M.Ed. in education, an M.B.A. in business administration, an M.F.A. in fine arts, an M.M. in music, an M.S.W. in social work, and an M.P.A. in public administration. A third type of master's degree is awarded in professional fields for study beyond the first-professional degree—for example, the Master of Laws (LL.M.) and Master of Science (M.S.) in various medical specializations.

Mathematics: A body of related courses concerned with knowledge of measurement, properties, and relations quantities, which can include theoretical or applied studies of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, statistics, and calculus.

Median: The value of a population characteristic above which 50 percent of the population is estimated to fall. For example, the median score of all 12th-grade students on the NAEP Mathematics Assessment in 2000

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was 301, meaning that 50 percent of the students are estimated to have scored higher than 301, and 50 percent lower than that.

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): A geographic entity designated by the federal Office of Management and Budget for use by federal statistical agencies. A metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is a metropolitan area (MA) that is not closely associated with another MA. An MSA consists of one or more counties, except in New England, where MSAs are defined in terms of county subdivisions (primarily cities and towns). (See also *supplemental note 1*.)

Middle grade teachers: Teachers who teach students in the middle grades, generally 5–8, including those teaching some combination of grades K–9 and having a main assignment field other than elementary education or special education and not teaching any grades higher than 9.

Middle school: A school that usually includes either grades 5–8 or grades 6–8.

Minority: Any individual or racial/ethnic group that is not categorized as White, not Hispanic or Latino.

N

Natural sciences: A group of fields of science and knowledge concerning observable processes of nature, such as biology or physics, as distinguished from the abstract or theoretical sciences, such as mathematics or philosophy.

New Basics curriculum: A minimum curriculum recommended by the National Commission of Excellence in Education (NCEE) in 1983 to be completed by high school graduates that consists of 4 years of English; 3 years each of mathematics, science, and social stud-

ies; and one-half year of computer science. College-bound high school graduates are also advised to complete 2 years of foreign language. (See Core curriculum.)

Nonresident alien: A person who is not a citizen of the United States and who is in this country on a temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

Nontraditional student: A student with any of the following characteristics: has delayed enrollment, attends part time, works full time while enrolled, is considered financially independent for purposes of determining financial aid, has dependents other than a spouse, is a single parent, or does not have a high school diploma.

P

Part-time enrollment: The number of students enrolled in postsecondary education courses with a total credit load less than 75 percent of the normal full-time credit load.

Permanent resident: Any non-U.S. citizen who is residing in the United States under legally recognized and lawfully recorded permanent residence as an immigrant.

Postsecondary education: The provision of formal instructional programs with a curriculum designed primarily for students who have completed the requirements for a high school diploma or equivalent. This includes programs with an academic, vocational, and continuing professional education purpose and excludes vocational and adult basic education programs. (See also *supplemental note 8*.)

Prekindergarten: Public preprimary education for children ages 3–4 (ages 3–5 in some states) who have not yet entered kindergarten. It may offer a program of general education or special education and, in some

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states, may be part of a collaborative effort with Head Start. Private preprimary educational programs are typically referred to as “center-based programs.” (See Preprimary.)

Preprimary: Elementary education programs for children who are too young for 1st grade, including center-based programs, prekindergarten, and kindergarten.

Private school or institution: A school or institution that is controlled by an individual or agency other than a state, a subdivision of a state, or the federal government; that is usually not supported primarily by public funds; and that is not operated by publicly elected or appointed officials.

Public school: An institution that provides educational services for at least one of grades 1–12 (or comparable ungraded levels), has one or more teachers to give instruction, is located in one or more buildings, receives public funds as primary support, and is operated by an education or chartering agency. Public schools include regular, special education, vocational/technical, alternative, and public charter schools. They also include schools in juvenile detention centers, schools located on military bases and operated by the Department of Defense, and Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded schools operated by local public school districts.

Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) indices: Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) exchange rates, or indices, are the currency exchange rates that equalize the purchasing power of different currencies, meaning that when a given sum of money is converted into different currencies at the PPP exchange rates, it will buy the same basket of goods and services in all countries. PPP indices are the rates of currency conversion that eliminate the difference in price levels among countries. Thus, when expenditures on GDP for different countries are converted

into a common currency by means of PPP indices, they are expressed at the same set of international prices, so that comparisons among countries reflect only differences in the volume of goods and services purchased.

R

Regular school districts: Can be either (1) a school district that is not a component of a supervisory union or (2) a school district component of a supervisory union that shares a superintendent and administrative services with other local school districts. State- and federally operated institutions charged with serving special needs populations, regional education service agencies, and supervisory union administrative centers (or county superintendents serving the same purpose) are excluded.

Regular schools: Schools that are part of state and local school systems as well as private elementary/secondary schools, both religiously affiliated and nonsectarian, that are not alternative schools, vocational education schools, special education schools, subcollegiate departments of postsecondary institutions, residential schools for exceptional children, federal schools for American Indians or Alaska Natives, or federal schools on military posts and other federal installations.

Revenues: All funds received from external sources, net of refunds, and correcting transactions. Noncash transactions such as receipt of services, commodities, or other receipts “in kind” are excluded, as are funds received from the issuance of debt, liquidation of investments, and nonroutine sale of property.

S

SAT Assessment: (See Scholastic Assessment Test.)

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Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT): An examination administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and used to predict the facility with which an individual will progress in learning college-level subjects. The SAT differs from the ACT in that it assesses students' aptitude in English, reading, and mathematics generally rather than their curricular knowledge.

School district: An education agency at the local level that exists primarily to operate public schools or to contract for public school services. Synonyms are "local basic administrative unit" and "local education agency." (See Local education agency.)

Science: The body of related courses concerned with knowledge of the physical and biological world and with the processes of discovering and validating this knowledge.

Self-care: A care arrangement in which parents allow children to be responsible for themselves when a parent or another adult is unavailable for supervision.

Social science: A body of related courses concerned with knowledge of the social life of human groups and individuals, including economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, social studies, and sociology.

Socioeconomic status (SES): A measure of an individual or family's relative economic and social ranking. In the analyses in this publication, SES is constructed based on father's education level, mother's education level, father's occupation, mother's occupation, and family income. Also, students are classified into high, middle, and low SES based on a standardized composite index score of their parents' education level, mother's and father's occupation, family's income, and certain

household items. The terms high, middle, and low SES, respectively, refer to the upper, middle two, and lower quartiles of the composite index score distribution. By definition, one-quarter of each cohort of students will be in the bottom SES quartile, even if education levels, average family incomes, and the number of persons in more prestigious occupations change.

Standard deviation: The standard deviation measures the spread of a set of data around the mean of the data. In a normal distribution, approximately 68 percent of scores fall within plus or minus one standard deviation of the mean, and 95 percent fall within plus or minus two standard deviations of the mean.

Status dropout rate: The status dropout rate is a cumulative rate that estimates the proportion of young adults who are dropouts, regardless of when they dropped out. The numerator of the status dropout rate for any given year is the number of young adults ages 16–24 who, as of October of that year, had not completed high school and were not currently enrolled. The denominator is the total number of 16- to 24-year-olds in October of that same year.

T

Teacher certification: License granted by states for teachers to teach a given subject. In 2002, all states required a bachelor's degree that included subject matter as well as pedagogical studies; all but 10 states required basic skills tests in reading, mathematics, or general knowledge; and 31 states required subject-matter examinations.

Tenure: The status that teachers or professors may be granted, after a trial period, to protect them from summary dismissal.

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Title I grant program: The federal government provides grants to local education agencies to supplement state and local education funding based primarily on the number of children from low-income families in each local education agency. The program provides extra academic support and learning opportunities to help disadvantaged students catch up with their classmates or make significant academic progress.

Total expenditures for elementary and secondary education: Total expenditures per student in fall enrollment include all expenditures allocable to per student costs divided by fall enrollment. These allocable expenditures include current expenditures for regular school programs, interest on school debt, and capital outlay. Expenditures for nonelementary/secondary programs that include community services, adult education, and other are excluded.

Tuition and fees: A payment or charge for instruction or compensation for services, privileges, or the use of equipment, books, or other goods.

U

Undergraduate students: Students registered at a postsecondary institution in a program leading to a baccalaureate degree or other formal award below the baccalaureate such as an associate's degree.

University: A postsecondary institution that consists of a liberal arts college, a diverse graduate program, and usually two or more professional schools or faculties and that is empowered to confer degrees in various fields of study.

V

Vocational/technical program: A postsecondary program, usually offered in a public or private for-profit institution, often completed in less than 2 years that generally leads to an occupational certificate or credential.

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