Glossary of NCES Definitions

**American Indian or Alaska Native**: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

**Asian/Pacific Islander**: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, and Pacific Islands. This includes people from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, American Samoa, India, and Vietnam.

**Associate’s degree**: An award that normally requires at least 2 but less than 4 years of full-time equivalent college work.

**Bachelor’s degree**: An award (baccalaureate or equivalent degree, as determined by the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education) that normally requires at least 4 but not more than 5 years of full-time equivalent college-level work. This includes all bachelor’s degrees conferred in a 5-year cooperative (work-study) program. A cooperative plan provides for alternate class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government; thus, it allows students to combine actual work experience with their college studies. Also includes bachelor’s degrees in which the normal 4 years of work are completed in 3 years.

**Black**: A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa (except those of Hispanic origin).

**Cohort**: A group of individuals that have a statistical factor in common (e.g., year of birth).

**College**: A postsecondary school 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 in this term.

**Degree-granting institutions**: Postsecondary institutions that are eligible for Title IV federal financial aid programs and that grant an associate’s or higher degree. For an institution to be eligible to participate in Title IV financial aid programs it must offer a program of at least 300 clock hours in length, have accreditation recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, have been in business for at least 2 years, and have signed a participation agreement with the Department.

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

**First-professional degree**: An award that requires completion of a 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 prior to entering the program; and
3. a total of at least 6 academic years of college work to complete the degree program, including prior required college work plus the length of the professional program itself. First-professional degrees may be awarded in the following 10 fields: Chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.), Dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.), Law (L.L.B., J.D.), Medicine (M.D.), Optometry (O.D.), Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.), Pharmacy (Pharm.D.), Podiatry (D.P.M., D.P., or Pod.D.), Theology (M.Div., M.H.L., B.D., or Ordination), Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.).

**First-professional enrollment**: The number of students enrolled in following degree programs: Chiropractic (D.C. or D.C.M.), Dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.), Law (L.L.B., J.D.), Medicine (M.D.), Optometry (O.D.), Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.), Pharmacy (Pharm.D.), Podiatry (D.P.M., D.P., or Pod.D.), Theology (M.Div., M.H.L., B.D., or Ordination), Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.).

**Source**: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
Glossary of NCES Definitions

**First-time freshman**: A student attending any institution for the first time at the undergraduate level. Includes students enrolled in academic or occupational programs. Also includes students enrolled in the fall term who attended college for the first time in the prior summer term, as well as students who entered with advanced standing (college credits earned before graduation from high school).

**Four-year institution**: A postsecondary institution that offers programs of at least 4 years duration or one that offers programs at or above the baccalaureate level. Includes schools that offer postbaccalaureate certificates only or those that offer graduate programs only. Also includes free-standing medical, law or other first-professional schools.

**Full-time-equivalent (FTE) enrollment**: A measurement equal to one student enrolled full time for one academic year. Total FTE enrollment includes full time plus the calculated equivalent of the part-time enrollment. The full-time equivalent of the part-time students can be estimated using different factors depending on the type and control of institution and level of student.

**Graduate**: An individual who has received formal recognition for the successful completion of a prescribed program of studies.

**Graduate enrollment**: The number of students who hold the bachelor’s or first-professional degree, or the equivalent, and who are working towards a master’s or doctor’s degree. First-professional students are counted separately. These enrollment data measure those students who are registered at a particular time during the fall.

**Higher education**: Study beyond secondary school at an institution that offers programs terminating in an associate’s, baccalaureate, or higher degree.

**Higher education institutions (traditional classifications):**

- **4-year institution**: An institution legally authorized to offer and offering at least a 4-year program of college-level studies wholly or principally creditable toward a bachelor’s degree. A university is a postsecondary institution that typically includes one or more graduate professional schools.

- **2-year institution**: An institution legally authorized to offer and offering at least a 2-year program of college-level studies that terminates in an associate’s degree or is principally creditable toward a baccalaureate. See also Degree-granting institutions and Postsecondary education.

**Hispanic**: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

**Master’s degree**: An award that requires the successful completion of a program of study of at least the full-time equivalent of 1 but not more than 2 academic years of work beyond the bachelor’s degree.

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

**Part-time enrollment**:  
- **Undergraduate**—A student enrolled for either 11 semester credits or less, or 11 quarter credits or less, or less than 24 contact hours a week each term.  
- **Graduate**—A student enrolled for either 8 semester credits or less, or 8 quarter credits or less.

**Postbaccalaureate enrollment**: The number of students with a bachelor’s degree who are enrolled in graduate-level or first-professional courses.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
Glossary of NCES Definitions

Postsecondary education: The provision of a formal instructional program whose curriculum is designed primarily for students who are beyond the compulsory age for high school. This includes programs whose purpose is academic, vocational, and continuing professional education, and excludes avocational and adult basic education programs.

Postsecondary education institution: An institution which has as its sole purpose or one of its primary missions, the provision of postsecondary education.

Private 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 (i.e., usually supported primarily by other than public funds) and the operation of whose program rests with other than publicly elected or appointed officials.

Public school or institution: A school or institution controlled and operated by publicly elected or appointed officials, and generally deriving its primary support from public funds.

Pupil/teacher ratio: The enrollment of pupils at a given period of time, divided by the full-time-equivalent number of classroom teachers serving these pupils during the same period.

Race/ethnicity: Categories used to describe groups to which individuals belong, identify with, or belong in the eyes of the community. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. A person may be counted in only one group. The groups used to categorize U.S. citizens, resident aliens, and other eligible non-citizens in this report are as follows: Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, White.

Student: An individual for whom instruction is provided in an educational program under the jurisdiction of a school, school system, or other educational institution. No distinction is made between the terms “student” and “pupil,” although “student” may refer to one receiving instruction at any level while “pupil” refers only to one attending school at the elementary or secondary level. The term “student” is used to include individuals at all instructional levels. A student may receive instruction in a school facility or in another location, such as at home or in a hospital. Instruction may be provided by direct student-teacher interaction or by some other approved medium, such as the Internet, television, radio, telephone, or correspondence.

Two-year institution: A postsecondary institution that offers programs of at least 2 but less than 4 years duration. Includes occupational and vocational schools with programs of at least 1800 hours and academic institutions with programs of less than 4 years. Does not include bachelor’s degree-granting institutions where the baccalaureate program can be completed in 3 years.

Undergraduate enrollment: The number of students enrolled in a 4- or 5-year bachelor’s degree program, an associate’s degree program, or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate.

Undergraduate students: Students registered at an institution of higher education who are working in a program leading to a baccalaureate or other formal award below the baccalaureate, such as an associate’s degree.

White: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East (except those of Hispanic origin).

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)