

# College Survival Vocabulary

Words in *italics* also appear elsewhere in the list.

academic year

Usually this refers to the September-June school year. In some cases it refers to the entire year.

advisor

A member of the college *faculty* or staff who assists students with planning *quarter* or *semester* schedules as well as their overall *programs* of study. Advisors may also help with career planning. See also *counselor*.

audit

A student who audits a *course* formally *registers* and pays for it and attends class sessions but earns no *credit* and has no obligation to complete homework projects or take tests.

catalog

A comprehensive resource listing college regulations, *program* and *course* descriptions, *degree* and *graduation requirements*, *transfer* requirements, and other essential information.

class

- (1) A specific group of students meeting for specific instructional purposes. It can mean the whole series of scheduled meetings ("Dr. Owen is teaching two English Composition classes this quarter") or just one session ("we had a guest speaker in my Home Economics class today").
- (2) Often means the same as *course* ("she's taking classes in Interior Design").
- (3) A group of students who start at a school together and expect to complete their studies at the same time ("he's in the graduating class of 2003").

competency

In "competency-based" *courses* or instructional *programs*, students must demonstrate certain skills and abilities (instead of just earning *passing grades* in classes) before moving from one level to the next or earning the final *certificate* or *degree*.

counselor

A member of the college *faculty* who has special training in guidance and who assists students in academic or personal matters. See also *advisor*. *course*

(1) Often means the same as *class*.

(2) A planned sequence of instruction in a particular topic; may include class meetings, lectures, readings, demonstrations, exercises, assignments, examinations, etc.

credit

A unit of measure for college work. Generally speaking, one credit hour represents one hour of classroom attendance each week for one quarter.

credit load

The total *credit* value of the *courses* in which a student is currently enrolled.

curriculum

(plural: curricula)

(1) An established sequence of information to be learned, skills to be acquired, etc. in a specific *course* or in a complete instructional *program*.

(2) Collectively, all the courses offered by a *department*, *division*, or college.

dean

An academic administrator or official at a school, college, or university, especially one with responsibility for students or *faculty*.

degree

A rank conferred by a college or university and earned by a student who has successfully completed specified *courses* and *requirements* (compare with *certificate*, which usually requires less time and coursework).

department

An organizational unit within a college or university, offering *courses* dealing with a particular field of knowledge; for example, the English department.

drop

To cancel *registration* in a *course* after enrolling into it. Students often add and drop courses before settling on a *class schedule* for a particular *quarter* or *semester*. See also *withdrawal*.

elective

A *course* that is not required for a particular instructional *program*. Many programs require a certain number of elective *credits*.

ESL (English as a Second Language)

Usually refers to *developmental-level* instruction in English language skills for non-native English speakers.

faculty

The instructors or teaching staff at a school. At BCC, librarians and *counselors* are considered faculty members along with classroom instructors.

FERPA (Federal Education Right to Privacy Act)

Enacted by the federal government, FERPA protects students' privacy and confidentiality by placing certain restrictions on the disclosure of educational records and information.

final exam

Final exams are held the last week of each quarter for credit students. The final examination shall make up no more than 33% of your grade.

finals week

The last week in the academic quarter in which final exams are given. Normal class schedules often vary during finals week. Exam schedules are printed in the credit class schedule every quarter and also posted on the website (for example, [www.bellevuecollege.edu/classes/exams/](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/classes/exams/)) for student convenience.

financial aid

Money available from various sources to help students pay college expenses. These funds come as *loans*, *grants*, or *scholarships* from the state or federal government or other organizations. *Work-study* is also a form of financial aid.

grade-point average (GPA)

The GPA is computed by multiplying the number value of the *grade* earned in each *course* (generally, A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) times the number *credits* for each *course*, then dividing the result by the total number of credits taken.

incomplete

A temporary *grade* given to a student who is doing satisfactory work but is forced by illness or other emergency to miss an exam or a major assignment. The instructor and student arrange how and when the student will complete the work and have the "I" changed to a final letter grade. At BCC, the student must finish the incomplete work within one academic *quarter*.

independent study

An arrangement that allows a student to earn college *credit* through individual study and research, usually planned with and supervised by a *faculty* member.

internship

A supervised short-term apprenticeship or temporary job in a real-world setting closely related to a student's field of study. The student may or may not be paid but earns college *credit* for the work experience. See also *practicum*.

learning outcomes

What students are expected to know and to be able to do as a result of their experience at the college and, more specifically, as a result of completing their general education requirements.

major

Specialization in one academic *discipline* or field of study. At BCC, this is called "*academic concentration*" in a particular subject.

matriculation

A combination of *assessment* of reading, writing, and mathematic skills; *orientation* to college programs and services; academic advising; and the programs and services which enable a student to reach his or her educational goals. Contrasted to a student who occasionally takes courses without a cohesive goal.

noncredit

*Courses* or instructional *programs* which do not require extensive homework or examinations and which do not offer college *credit*. Students frequently take noncredit courses for *basic skills* improvement, job training or career enhancement, or personal enrichment.

pass/passing

At most schools, a student will earn *credit* and "pass" a *class* with a *grade* of "A" through "D." A student who earns an "F" grade fails the class and earns no credit. Different schools have different standards, so a student who passes a class with a "D" may or may not be able to use that class to meet *prerequisites* or fulfill *requirements*.

placement

The appropriate level to enter a series of *courses*, based on the student's skills; often used in the context of *basic skills* subjects such as mathematics or English composition. See also *assessment*.

practicum

A *course* that includes job-related activities and stresses the practical application of theory in a field of study. See also *internship*.

prerequisite

A *course* that must be completed (often with a certain minimum *grade*) or a skill that must be demonstrated before a student can enroll in a more advanced course (for example, first-year French is a prerequisite for second-year French).

**scholarship**

(1) A type of *financial aid grant*. Organizations may give scholarships according to academic achievement, financial need, or any other basis. Usually there is a competitive *application* process.

(2) A person's ability and expertise in a particular *discipline* of study.

**section**

A specific *class* with its own particular days, hours, location, and instructor. A number of sections of a certain *course* may be offered during a *quarter*, each with different days, times, locations, and instructors but presenting the same *curriculum*.

**semester**

Some schools organize the *academic year* into two main periods-fall and spring

Semesters-plus a shorter summer semester (compare to *quarter*).

**syllabus**

An outline plan for a particular *class*, including textbook requirements, class meeting dates, reading assignments, examination dates, and the instructor's grading standards, etc.

**transcript**

An official *record* of the *courses* and *semester* or *quarter credits* a student has taken at a college or university, the *grades* and *degrees* or *certificates* earned, and any awards and honors received.

**tuition and fees**

Tuition is a student's basic payment towards the cost of instruction at a college or university. Most institutions also charge fees for laboratory equipment and materials, computer use, parking, and other miscellaneous costs.

**waiver**

An exception from a requirement, rule, or penalty. (To waive a right or a claim is to voluntarily give it up.)

(1) If a student meets specific criteria, the college may waive some of his or her *tuition* and *fees* (that is, some of the money owed to the college will be forgiven).

(2) If a student demonstrates certain knowledge and abilities, the college may waive a *course prerequisite* (that is, allow the student to take the class even though he or she hasn't completed the listed *requirements* for it).

**withdrawal**

The process of officially *dropping* a *class* or classes after the *quarter* has started.

**work-study**

A type of *financial aid* which pays students to work part-time, often on campus, during the *academic year*.