

# Academic Terms Glossary

**Academic Advisor:** A university staff person who provides guidance to students on academic matters. At FAU, students are advised by members of University Advising Services until they reach 45 credit hours. At this time, the student transitions to their college for advising.

**Academic Year (at FAU):** The academic year is divided into three semesters; fall, spring and summer. The fall (Aug.-Dec.) and spring (Jan. - May) semesters are approximately 16 weeks in duration. The summer semester consists of two 6 week semesters: summer Term 1 (May - June) & Term 2 ( June - August), and a 12 week semester (summer Term 3) that overlap both the Term 1 & Term 2 semesters. The [Registrar's calendar](#) provides important dates each semester.

**ACCESS Program:** The [ACCESS](#) Program offers a comprehensive approach to student success that focuses on academic coaching, advising, tutoring, career counseling, faculty mentoring and developing a meaningful connection to Florida Atlantic University, all of which lead to student success.

**Add/Drop:** The process by which students alter the classes by withdrawing from courses and enrolling in others. During the first week of the semester, students can drop and add courses without any financial or academic costs. **The dates of add/drop each semester can be found on the [Registrar's calendar](#).**

**Associate Degree:** This degree may be an associate degree in arts (AA) or an associate degree in science (AS). An associate degree takes 60 hours to complete and includes all of the IFP general classes. Full time students can complete this in a two-year time span. Many associate degree programs are offered at community colleges and at technical schools, but many large universities also offer such programs. Earning an associate degree does not necessarily mean a student is half way to earning a bachelor's degree. Some states have agreements that require state colleges and universities to accept all classes satisfactorily completed toward an associate degree, and to count those credits toward a bachelor's degree. This is not true in all states. FAU offers the [AA degree](#). When fully completed, it can be carried to any State of Florida University and must be accepted in whole for credits toward the general education requirement.

**Advance Placement (AP credits):** These are courses or exams taken by students while in high school, that may qualify them to earn college credits. How they are interpreted varies from institution to institution. Students should check with the Office of Admissions or an academic advisor when transferring AP credits.

**ALEKS Math Placement:** All incoming students are required to take the [Math placement exam](#) before enrolling in their first mathematics course. The exam can be taken at home, online the first time. Any subsequent attempts must be taken at the testing center.

**Baccalaureate degree:** The baccalaureate degree, more commonly called the bachelor's degree, is a college degree granted in a specific field of study. Although it is generally designed as a four year degree, it can be completed in as few as three or as many as six or more years. This degree prepares students for entry level careers in numerous fields.

**Blackboard:** The [Blackboard Learning System](#) is a virtual learning environment allowing faculty and students to access course information online, such as course documents, readings, videos, assignments, discussion boards, and grades. **Students should be aware of instructors' expectations regarding Blackboard engagement.**

**Catalog:** The [catalog](#) serves as an official college document, and is generally viewed as a "contract" between the student and institution. It outlines the mission and infrastructure of the University, and includes information on degree requirements, curriculum, faculty and administration and campus resources.

**CLEP:** Stands for [College Level Examination Program](#), and is a series of tests students may take to demonstrate proficiency in various college subjects. Students who pass a CLEP test with appropriate scores can earn college credit. CLEP tests are usually administered through the university testing office. Information about CLEP tests can be obtained through the [testing office](#) or from an academic advisor.

**Co-requisite:** Is a class, lab, or discussion component that is taken, usually in conjunction with another class. Registration for the course and co-requisite generally requires two separate transactions, however, both courses are needed to fulfill the course requirements. A co-requisite is designed to complement a course and to help students better understand the course material i.e., BSC1005 w/lab – Life Science.

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**Course Reference Number (CRN):** A five digit number used to identify a particular section of a course. For example, ENC1101 will be offered multiple times during the same semester. The CRN number identifies which day and time a particular section meets and on which campus. This number is used when registering for courses. This number is found using the [Departmental Course Schedule](#).

**Credit Hours:** A credit hour is equated to the number of “contact hours” a student will spend in class. Most classes are 3 credit hours meaning a student will attend or participate in class three hours per week. Science, foreign language, and some math courses that require a lab are worth 4-5 credit hours. This formula may vary during the summer terms.

**Degree Audit:** A computer generated document outlining the student’s progress toward completion of their chosen degree. The degree audit will list the requirements the student has still outstanding. Students can run their own degree audit using DARS (Degree Audit Reporting System) through their [MyFAU](#) account.

**Dismissal:** If a student who was once suspended for academic reasons (see Suspension), at any time, fails to earn a 2.0 GPA in all work attempted in one semester and also has a cumulative FAU GPA below a 2.0, the student will be dismissed from the university.

**Distance learning:** A distance learning course is generally taught via computer and requires internet access. Class assignments, exams, discussions etc., all take place on-line. The instructor and students typically do not meet in a classroom environment although some courses may require that students come to campus for exam days.

**Drop:** A student may choose to withdraw from a course in which they are enrolled. Depending upon at what point the student withdraws, it may have an impact on the student’s financial aid, full time status, and transcript. Each course a student withdraws from will count as an attempt and will count toward excess hours. To determine the costs and benefits of the timing of dropping a course, students should consult the [university calendar](#) and always discuss the option with an academic advisor.

**Elective:** An elective is a course that a student chooses to take outside of his or her major field of study. An elective can be in an area of interest to the student or in an area that complements the student’s major. Electives can also be used to work towards a minor or certificate. Many majors have a set number of elective hours required to meet the major degree requirements.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA):** Also known as the Buckley Amendment, ensures a student’s right to privacy as it pertains to “parental notification” and releasing information without the student’s authorized consent. Questions about FERPA should be directed to the University Attorney or the [Registrar](#).

**Flight Plan:** Standardized study plans for baccalaureate degree programs outlining specific course requirements and other academic milestones by term, which would keep students on track to graduate on time. Flight plans are tools meant to be used in conjunction with academic advising, so students can customize their academic plans to meet their personal needs. Flight plans by major can be found on the [UAS website](#).

**Full Time:** A student is classified as full-time when they are taking 12 or more credit hours. A student must be full time to live on campus. Many financial aid opportunities also require students to be full time.

**Grade Forgiveness:** The University Forgiveness Policy allows undergraduate students to repeat a course and replace the original grade with the repeated grade. This eliminates the previous grade from students’ grade point averages. Specific details of the policy can be found in the [University catalog](#). Students should meet with their academic advisor to discuss the steps necessary to pursue this option and the consequences it will have on their academic plans, financial aid packages, and calculation of excess credit hours.

**Hold:** A hold restricts a student’s ability to enroll in courses. To have the hold removed, the student must fulfill the requirements of the office who has placed it. Students can check for registration holds through their [Self-Service FAU account](#).

**Intellectual Foundations Program curriculum (IFP):** A series of courses that are required of all degree seeking students, regardless of the major. Many universities refer to these as the general education classes.

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**Living Learning Communities (LLCs):** The FAU Learning Communities consist of a combination of courses totaling 12-14 credit hours and cover a wide range of disciplines. The majority of the FLC courses fulfill the Core Curriculum. In addition to the Core, students in the learning communities take SLS 1503- Learning Strategies and Human Development, a course designed to ease student's transition into the college environment. Student participants in the LLCs share the same major, and to maximize the "cohort like" experience, enrollment is capped at twenty-five.

**Gordon Rule:** Is a policy native to the state of Florida. It is a legislative mandate requiring all students earning a degree from "public" (and some private) universities and community colleges to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in the areas of mathematics and writing. Courses in the curriculum, identified as Gordon Rule, require students to earn a grade of "C" or higher in order for the course to be counted toward the student's degree. Questions about Gordon Rule should be addressed to an academic advisor.

**GPA:** The grade point average, GPA, is the numerical grading system used by most colleges in the United States. A student's GPA determines his or her eligibility for continued enrollment, financial aid, and honors. Most colleges operate under a 4.0 system: an A is worth 4 quality points, a B 3 points, a C 2 points a D 1 point, and an F 0 points. To calculate a GPA, the number of quality points earned is multiplied by the number of credit hours carried by each course. Add this total and divide by the total number of hours for a letter grade carried to get the GPA. FAU GPA refers to the grade point average of all coursework attempted at Florida Atlantic University, excluding grades earned at other institutions.

**Incomplete:** A grade of "I," or incomplete can be temporarily given to a student who is passing a course, but cannot complete the remaining coursework on time because of an exceptional circumstance. The grade does not indicate passing or failing, and is not calculated into the student's GPA. Students seeking an Incomplete option should work closely with their instructor and advisor to develop a plan for completing outstanding coursework. Additional information can be found in the catalog.

**Major:** Refers to the student's field of specialization in college. In order to stay on track to finish a bachelor's degree in 4 years, students need to decide and declare a major by the end of their first year. Students who have not declared by the end of their first semester will be required to take SLS 1301 (Career and Life Planning) to help them decide. As much as 30 percent of the courses needed for graduation will fall into this category. Major courses usually carry higher level course numbers. An advisor can explain requirements for the major. All students with a pre-major status must declare a major by the semester of which they reach 60 credits.

**Minor:** A student's minor usually comprises six to eight courses in a specific field that complements the student's major area of study. **Whereas, all students must have a major in order to graduate, minors are optional.**

**MyFAU:** MyFAU is the University's on-line student information and registration system. Through MyFAU students can register for classes, check on financial aid awards, request transcript, view grades etc. To access MyFAU students will need to provide a student ID (referred to as Z-number) and PIN number.

**No-Credit (NC):** The No Credit grading policy allows students to recover from initial difficulties they may experience in the transition to the rigors of university academic coursework. Students will automatically receive a grade of NC (No Credit) if their grade does not meet the minimum requirement. NC grades are not calculated in the student's GPA. NC grades can be applied a maximum of four times to a limited list of courses, including the Intellectual Foundations Program (IFP) and selected lower-division courses. Additional stipulations apply to this policy, which can be found in the catalog. Students receiving NC grades should consult their academic advisor to discuss how this will affect their academic path moving forward.

**OARS:** The first year student Online Advising Resources System. This online portal assigns students with academic advisors in University Advising Services who provide the student with guidance on course selection for their first semester. It allows new students the opportunity to schedule their classes as soon as registration opens insuring the best possible class schedule. Students who wait, run the risk of closed classes.

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**OWLCard:** All FAU students are required to obtain an OWL Card, as it serves as official photo identification, debit card, Owl Bucks card, library card, residence hall building key, meal card for those who have meal plans, and ticket to many FAU events, including sporting events.

**Part Time:** Students enrolled in less than 12 hours are classified as part time.

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**Part Time:** Students enrolled in less than 12 hours are classified as part time. This can have an effect on the student's financial aid eligibility.

**Pass/Fail Option:** On occasion, students will be given the option of electing to take a course for pass/fail as opposed to earning a letter grade. Students choosing this option are required to complete all work for a course, the same as any other student in the class. However, upon completing the course the student will see the letter "P" reflected on their grade report/transcript. This indicates the student has earned passing credit for the course, but there is no numerical calculation for the GPA. If the student fails the course, a grade of "F" will appear on the grade report/transcript and the "F" is numerically calculated into the students GPA as a zero.

**Pre-major:** Some departments do not allow students to declare the major until they have completed certain pre-requisite course work, reached a set number of credit hours, and/or achieved the required GPA. Until these criteria are met, students are classified as a pre-major, for example pre-business.

**Pre-requisite:** A pre-requisite is a course that is required prior to a student being eligible to take another course, i.e., ENC 1101- College Writing I is a pre-requisite for WOH 2012 - History of Civilization I. A pre-requisite provides a foundation or knowledge base upon which students need to build in order to be prepared for the next class.

**Probation:** Students who fail to earn a 2.0 or higher on all work attempted in any term are considered to be on academic probation. Undergraduates on academic probation will be required to participate in the ACCESS program to improving their academic performance.

**Registration:** The process of enrolling in courses. Students should select classes with the guidance of an academic advisor before advanced registration begins each semester. Students are then responsible for enrolling in classes themselves.

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**Summer Attendance Requirement:** Students entering the University as First-Time-In-College students (freshmen) or transfer students with less than 60 earned credits must take summer classes (for a total of 9 credit hours) over the course of one or more years. The policy pertains to students attending a State of Florida Public University and the credit hours must be earned at one of the eleven public state institutions. This is a State policy and not FAU.

**Suspension:** A student on academic probation who fails to earn a 2.0 in their semester course work and also has a cumulative FAU GPA below a 2.0 will be suspended from the university for one semester. After a minimum of one semester, the student may return on academic probation. Upon return, students should work closely with an AcCESS coach to develop an academic success plan.

**Syllabus:** A document, usually one or more pages, distributed to students on the first day of class. It generally encompasses the professor's expectations and class requirements. The syllabus acts as a course outline, telling students what and when assignments are due, textbook readings, exam schedules, and so on. Also included may be the professor's grading system, attendance policy, and a brief description of the course and what will be covered.

**Transient Student Form:** Students wishing to "cross enroll" at another institution while simultaneously remaining a FAU student must complete a "transient student form". This form can be completed on-line via the Florida Virtual Campus [website](#), and must be submitted to and approved by an academic advisor prior to the student cross enrolling.

**Undergraduate:** Students working toward an associate or bachelor's degree are classified as undergraduates.