

A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO UNIVERSITY TERMINOLOGY

– 50 words to make you feel like part of the university

People who work at the university, such as the professors, staff, and administrators, will often speak using terms that are specific to the world of college campuses. While these terms are familiar to them, they are often new to many of the new students. Here is a list of those terms to become familiar with, so you feel more at home in your new environment.

Terminology for ESU Technology

SOFTWARE PLATFORMS FOR STUDENTS: There are many software programs on the ESU website for students to make use of, far too many to list them all. But the most essential ones for new students to know and use are:

- **D2L (DESIRE 2 LEARN):** Each of your classes has associated with it a website dedicated just to that class, providing learning supports such as the course syllabus, auxiliary reading materials, video presentations, quizzes, your grade record in the class, and more.
- **MyESU:** This program, provided by BANNER, is also called “the portal”. It is the gateway where you find these other programs essential for students:
 - **eWARRIOR:** This program enables you to add or *change your major*, as well as minors and certificate program
 - **DEGREEWORKS:** This program shows you *your progress toward meeting the course requirements for graduation*, which ones you have completed, and which you still need to do.
 - **STUDENT SCHEDULE PLANNER:** This program enables you to plan your course schedule *for the upcoming and for future semesters*.
 - **WARRIORfish:** This program enables you to communicate with all the faculty and staff in *your academic support network*: your instructors, coaches, mentors, counselors, and more. Any message to or from one of them can be shared to all, to provide the best possible advising for your college career.
 - **WARRIORLINK:** This program enables you to join and *communicate with organizations on campus*, such as student clubs and student organizations.

Terminology used on the ESU campus

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION: The university President and Vice Presidents oversee the general running of the institution. But a second set of people oversee the *academic* aspects: the Provost, the Deans, and the Department Chairs.

- **DEPARTMENT CHAIR:** This is a professor in the department who teaches but also supervises the department, e.g., deciding what courses to offer each term.
- **DEAN:** This person directs all the department chairs to institute university rules and policies to achieve the best academic outcomes for students.
- **PROVOST:** This person formulates rules, policies, and methods for achieving academic excellence at the university. The Provost directs the Deans and the Department Chairs.

ADD/DROP: This is usually the first week of school, in which a student can add or drop a course without penalty to their fees, transcript, and grade point average (GPA).

ADULT LEARNER: This term typically refers to an older student who usually has experience in the workforce and didn't necessarily attend college right after high school.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Each faculty member and/or department sets their own attendance policy for a class.

- Make sure you know what the policy is and follow it. (It will be announced in class, and it will appear on the class "syllabus" (see below).
- Poor attendance can drastically impact your grade. It is very important to attend class, even if the faculty member does not have a strict policy. Every professional—from athletes to teachers to business executives—needs to make sure they do one thing: show up. If you don't show up, you can't play—or learn, or get paid.
- If you do miss a class, find out immediately what you missed and get caught up. Make sure you send your professor an email to let them know why you missed and get a medical note or another type of official excuse to explain that you had a legitimate absence.

BURSAR: This is the student billing office; it handles all charges and payments related to student accounts. Note, this is different from the financial aid office, which handles loans, scholarships, and other awarded aid.

CAMPUS SECURITY: All campuses have a force of professionals who enhance the safety and well-being of the campus community by providing professional police, security, and health and safety services and programs. They are the university's leading resource in the areas of safety and security, and they practice a unique style of policing that involves all areas of the university community.

CATALOG: The university catalog is the official book describing all aspects of the university, especially its policies, rules, requirements, departments, programs, and courses offered. The catalog can be viewed online on the ESU website.

COLLEGES: The university groups related departments together into “colleges”. Each college is supervised by its Dean. ESU consists of 5 colleges: the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education, the College of Business & Management, the College of Health Sciences, and the Graduate College.

COMMUTER STUDENTS: Students who live off campus and commute to school each day.

COUNSELING CENTER: Counseling and Psychological Services offers a range of counseling services designed to enhance the educational, vocational, personal, social, and emotional well-being of students. These services are covered by your tuition and student fees, so do not hesitate to use them.

COUNSELOR: In university the term counselor is different than in high school. In college it usually applies to a mental health professional serving to counsel students who are dealing with anxiety, stress and other issues that affect mental health.

CREDIT HOUR: One credit hour of instruction equals 15 hours over the term, so, a three-credit course equals 45 hours of instruction.

- This is often given in the form of 3 hour-long classes per week for 15 weeks.
- However, not all this instruction is conducted in face-to-face contact with an instructor. Different types of courses require different amounts of contact time and instruction may be delivered in multiple formats, such as distance education, interactive media, and hybrid (both face to face and interactive media).

D.E., DISTANCE EDUCATION or ONLINE EDUCATION: This is when a course is delivered online rather than in a face to face classroom. D.E. is the abbreviation that is often used for this type of course.

D.E.I.: These letters stand for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. These words represent important values at the university, namely, that the university community be a diverse one, in which all groups are respected equally, and all groups are valued for their contributions.

DISABILITY SERVICES (OASIS-Office of Accessible Services Individualized for Students): All schools have an office of disability services. In higher education it is the students’ responsibility to identify themselves, request accommodation, and provide documentation of their disability. It is very important to have this documentation in place at the beginning of your university career. If you had accommodations in high school, make sure they are in place for university.

EXAM WEEK (aka FIFTEENTH WEEK): This is a period of days dedicated to giving final exams at the end of each semester. No classes meet during this (15th) week, only exam sessions are scheduled. It is imperative to be present during exam week.

FACULTY ADVISOR: All students are assigned a faculty advisor in their major field of study who will assist in choosing classes, guiding research, and suggesting internships. You must meet with your advisor each semester before you are permitted to register for the next semester.

FAFSA: This is a government program to help students with the expenses of college. All students who plan to take advantage of the federal and state financial aid programs (including the Federal Direct Loan) must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Many scholarship programs also require you to complete the FAFSA.

FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) gives students certain rights with respect to their education record. Students have the following rights:

- To inspect and review certain education records.
- To request an amendment of their education record believed to be inaccurate or misleading.
- To have control over the disclosure of education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- The right to restrict access to information identified by the institution to be made available to the public without permission from the student.
- The right to extend third-party access to education records to whomever is identified by the student in writing.
- To file with the U.S. Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by the university to comply with the requirements of FERPA.

FINANCIAL AID: The financial aid office assists with applying and administering loans, scholarships, and bursaries that you might be eligible for. It is very important to provide all information they request quickly. Students often end up owing late fees just because they did not reply to an email from the financial aid office in a timely manner.

FIRST GENERATION: First-generation students come from families in which their biological parents did not complete a four-year college degree.

FOOD INSECURITY: Students who go without meals and forgo food in order to pay rent or other necessities are considered to have food insecurity. Due to the high cost of education, many students across the country struggle with food insecurity. Most campuses now have food pantries and emergency food services to assist students when they have no funds for food.

GREEK LIFE (SORORITIES & FRATERNITIES): Fraternities and sororities are value-based organizations dedicated to the principles of scholarship, leadership, service, and friendship. Each organization subscribes to a specific set of core values and beliefs that assist in building lifelong friendships among its members.

HOMECOMING: Homecoming is a longstanding tradition at universities across America. In the fall semester, alumni, students, family, and friends of a university are invited back for a week of celebrations, usually centered around a key football game.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND STUDENT EMPLOYMENT: All campuses have an office for student employment on and off campus. In order to work on campus, there is usually a minimum amount of credits that you need to be enrolled in. It is a good networking tool to get a job on campus; it will also save you time and transportation costs that an off-campus job might require.

INCOMPLETE: If a student is unable to complete the work for a course, due to some unforeseen circumstances, the student may ask the professor to enter a grade of I (Incomplete). This gives the student up to one year to complete the course work and receive a proper grade. If the student does not make up the incomplete after one year, the I grade becomes an E.

KUDOS: This is a word from ancient Greek, meaning “a word of praise”.

MENTOR: An experienced and trusted advisor who promotes and advocates for the student. This can be a faculty member, administrator, or senior student.

MID-TERMS: This is a period of days half way through the semester when exams are given on the first half of the course. At mid-term you will then be given a mid-term grade for the class. This grade is a good indicator of how well you are doing in a course. It is important to note that mid-term grades don't usually stay on your transcript—they disappear once your final grade has been entered. This encourages students to work harder in the 2nd part of the semester in order to improve their grade.

OFFICE HOURS: All faculty are required to post a set of hours each week when they are available to meet with students. These hours can be used to help students with coursework, academic and career advising, and research. It is really important to visit faculty during their office hours—that is how they get to know you and see that you care about the topic and your coursework.

ORIENTATION: This is usually a day or weekend program that occurs on campus during the summer before school begins. Orientation is an important and significant part of preparing you for success and making meaningful connections both in and out of the classroom. This is when you will be given your schedule of classes and introduced to all the services that you will need. Parents and/or guardians are strongly encouraged to attend. There is usually specialized programming offered for both students and parents or guardians.

PLACEMENT TESTS: These tests are usually given to a student entering a university or college to determine specific knowledge or proficiency in various subjects, for the purpose of assignment to appropriate courses or classes. They are quite often used for English and mathematics classes.

PREREQUISITE: A requirement that must be met before you may enroll in a course. Typically, a prerequisite is a different course that must be taken first. Prerequisites (if any) for a course are listed in the course catalog.

PROFESSOR: a professor is an instructor who has completed a Master's degree or Doctoral degree. (A Doctoral Degree is the same thing as a Ph.D., which stands for “Doctor of Philosophy”, which means “Teacher of Wisdom”.) A Professor can have four different ranks:

- **ADJUNCT PROFESSOR:** One who teaches at the university but is not a permanent member of a department; instead, this person is a temporary faculty member who is appointed on a semester or yearly basis.

- **ASSISTANT PROFESSOR:** One who is a member of a department, but only on a 5-year trial basis.
- **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR/TENURED PROFESSOR:** One who has indeed passed the 5-year trial basis and is now a permanent member of the department. He or she is called a “tenured professor” (from the Latin word *tenere* meaning “to hold onto”).
- **FULL PROFESSOR:** One who was an Associate Professor but has been promoted to Full Professor for having made significant contributions to teaching and research.

QPA, QUALITY POINTS AWARDED: This is a number value given to each course letter grade (A awards 4 points, B 3 points, C 2 points, D 1 point); the points are given for each credit hour earned. (E.g., an A in a 3-credit course give you 12 points.) These Quality Points are used to calculate your grade point average (GPA).

- Your GPA = the total number of Quality Points divided by the number of credits attempted.
- Example: a student who has three A’s and a B in four 3-credit classes would have a QPA of (4points x 3credit hours) + (4pts x 3hrs) + (4pts x 3 hrs) + (3pts x 3hrs), which comes out to 45 points. Then, the GPA would be 45 points/12credit hours, which is 3.75.

REGISTRAR: This person oversees the scheduling of course being offered by the departments and keeps track of students’ course enrollments and completion records, and grades.

RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS: Students who live on campus in residential halls, suites, and dormitories.

SCHEDULES (MWF and TR): MWF and TR are the abbreviations that get used on university schedules to denote when classes meet. MWF means the class meets on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. TR means the class meets on Tuesday and Thursday. If a class just meets on Tuesday, it would be displayed as T; if it just meets on Thursday, it would be displayed as R.

STUDENT ACTIVITY ASSOCIATION (SAA): The SAA will provide various programs, services, and initiatives to cultivate a holistic student experience. The many student clubs and organizations on campus are usually supervised by this organization.

STUDENT AFFAIRS (CLIE-Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence): Student affairs comprises the programs and offices that are responsible for providing services and programs to support the holistic development of students. Depending on the school, this can include a variety of services, such as Student Activity Association, Student Conduct, Dining Services, Health Services, Counseling Services, Multicultural Affairs, Gender and Sexuality Center, Title IX, and anything else that doesn’t pertain to academics.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT (SENATE): The Student Government Association is the governing student body of the university. Their mission is to represent and advocate for the student body and provide services that will enrich their academic, social, and professional development at the university. A new student government is elected each year.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Students with documented disabilities have the following rights and responsibilities:

- Right of equal access to academic content, educational opportunities, and services.
- Right of access to reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids or services.
- Right to confidentiality of disability-related information and responsibility to initiate the accommodation request process and provide documentation to OASIS (Office of Academic Services Individualized for Students) in a timely manner.
- Right to receive reasonable accommodations for a documented disability in accordance with federal guidelines.

SYLLABUS: This document is your guide to a course and entails what will be expected of you in the course. Generally, it will include course policies, rules and regulations, required texts, and a schedule of assignments. A syllabus can tell you nearly everything you need to know about how a course will be run and what will be expected of you and when.

TUTOR/TUTORING CENTERS: Tutoring programs are designed to assist students with achieving personal, academic, and career goals by enabling them to adapt to the academic environment of college, improve their academic success, and enhance the quality of their scholarly work. Tutoring services provide trained tutors who connect with students at their level of knowledge to help them with course content and to help guide them toward academic success. They provide high-quality academic assistance through one-on-one, drop-in, and small group peer tutoring for various university courses. Most universities have a writing center, which will assist a student with developing their writing skills and proofreading their work.

W., WITHDRAWAL: If a student withdraws from a course after the add/drop period, a record of the course stays on the student's transcript. There will not be a grade; instead, there will be a W. It shows that the student attempted the course but did not complete it. Each university has a slightly different policy regarding withdrawals. Make sure you are well acquainted with your campus withdrawal policy. Note, withdrawing from a course with a W grade can affect your financial and full-time status, so always check with your academic advisor before you withdraw from a class.