

- **Academic Advisement Center**

All full-time and part-time students who have been formally admitted to the university and who have not yet decided on an academic major can seek advisement through the [Academic Advisement Center](#). The academic advisor assists students in decisions regarding registration, class schedules, and selection of major.

- **Academic Calendar**

Provides key dates and deadlines -- by term -- for an academic year, including add/drop and withdrawal deadlines, registration dates, mid-term and final exam periods, school holidays, and more.

- **Academic Year (AY)**

Usually this refers to the August - May school year (fall and spring semesters). In some cases it refers to the entire year.

- **Academic Honesty (cross link to plagiarism)**

[Academic honesty](#) is an integral part of the college workload. [Plagiarism](#) is strictly prohibited.

- **Academic Standing**

The [academic standing](#) reflects student performance. For example, a student who meets or exceeds minimum GPA requirements for his/her academic unit is considered to be in good standing.

- **Accreditation**

Accreditation is a process by which a program, college, or university is certified as meeting prescribed standards.

- **Adjunct Faculty**

Part-time instructors that colleges hire to fill temporary openings in full-time faculty positions. Often these adjuncts have other full-time jobs and do not have offices on campus. Refer to their syllabus when trying to contact them or ask the department secretary for help.

- **Advisor (Academic Advisor)**

Students who have declared a major are assigned a [faculty advisor](#) through that major. Advisors are here to assist students throughout their academic careers and can aid in determining academic progress, selecting courses, evaluating career and major options, and navigating the academic environment.

- **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.

- **Blackboard (Learning Management System-LMS)**

An online, electronic, education platform designed to deliver course and/or organizational content and information.

- **Bursar**

The [Bursar's Office](#) handles the Student Financials and is responsible for the billing and collection of all monies due to the university. The Bursar is also referred to as the Cashier.

- **Career Services**

The [Career Services](#) office offers workshops, career fairs, and resources connected to careers, jobs, and internships.

- **Class Standing**

Class standing is often determined by the total number of credits a student has earned. Class standing can govern eligibility for certain classes, registration start times, financial aid awards, and more.

- **CLEP**

The College Level Examination Program helps students receive college credit for what they already know. By demonstrating knowledge through CLEP, a student may qualify for college-level credit without having to attend the course.

- **Commencement**

A ceremony that recognizes degree recipients in a given semester. Commencement may be commonly referred to as “graduation.”

- **Competency**

Measurable, observable markers for student success. Also referred to as “general education requirements”, or “program requirements.”

- **Concentration**

A set of supporting courses within a major that focuses on a specific topic.

- **Core Requirements**

Courses that are the mandatory core of a specific area of study, such as general education courses or business core courses. [General education](#) courses, which are mandatory courses that students are required to complete to earn a degree.

- **Course Load**

The number of courses or [semester hours](#) a student takes during a specific term. To stay on track for a 4-year graduation, students should register for 5 classes or 15-16 credits per semester.

- **Credits**

Semester hours are often used in conjunction with the word credit. Many college courses are three credits, or semester hours. This indicates a course may meet for three hours per week for a 15-week semester.

- **Cross-Listing**

Cross-listing refers to a course that is listed under more than one academic department. This may be done in instances when the subject matter covered by the course is applicable to more than one academic discipline.

- **Dean**

The academic deans are the heads of the separate schools within the university. The [Dean of Students](#) is a reference point for all student-life related activities.

- **Dean's List**

[Dean's List](#) recognition is awarded each semester to full-time matriculated students with satisfactory completion of a minimum of 12 graded semester hour credits and a 3.5 semester average, with no "incompletes" for the semester at the time grades were processed. Part-time students are eligible for the Dean's list after successful completion of a minimum of 12 credits in an academic year.

- **Degree Audit**

The audit process of examining a student's academic record to determine if the student has completed all degree requirements and is eligible to graduate.

- **Department**

A [division of a school](#), made up of faculty and support staff, who gives instruction in a particular field of study, such as the history department.

- **Discipline**

An area of academic study.

- **Dormitories (dorms)**

Student housing provided by a college or university, also known as [residence halls](#).

- **Drop Courses (Add/Drop)**

When students remove themselves from a course that they had previously registered for it is called "[dropping](#)." Courses must be dropped within the first five days of the semester to avoid financial penalty. After this time, students must withdraw from the course. Students should check with their advisors before dropping any classes.

- **Electives**

Courses that students can choose to take for credit toward a degree, but are not required.

- **Extracurricular Activities/Co-curricular Activities**

[Optional activities](#), such as sports, student organizations, leadership programs, and others, that students can participate in outside of academic classes

- **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)**

[Application](#) used by U.S. citizens and permanent residents to apply for financial aid from U.S. federal and state governments. International students are not eligible for U.S. government aid, but schools may ask international students to submit a FAFSA to determine financial need.

- **Fees**

An amount of money charged by colleges and universities, in addition to their tuition, to [cover costs](#) of services such as libraries and computer technology.

- **FERPA**

Abbreviation for the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#). This is a federal law applying to educational agencies and institutions that receive funding under a program administered by the U.S. Department of Education. Under FERPA, schools must generally afford students who are aged 18 or over, or are attending a

postsecondary institution, access to their education records, an opportunity to seek to have the records amended, and some control over the disclosure of information from the records.

- **Financial Aid**

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

- **Finals Week**

The last week in the semester in which final exams are given. Normal class schedules often vary during finals week. Exam schedules are available [online](#) every semester.

- **Fraternity**

A [student organization](#), typically for men, formed for social, academic, community service, or professional purposes. A fraternity is part of a college or university's Greek system.

- **Freshman**

An undergraduate student who has earned fewer than 30 semester credit hours.

- **Full-Time (F/T) Students**

Undergraduate students who are registered for 12 or more semester hours in a regular school session (fall or spring).

- **General Education (Gen Ed) (cross list to Competency)**

[General Education](#) is a common core of courses that must be completed by all degree-seeking students. These courses are designed to encourage students to think critically, communicate effectively, and appreciate diversity.

- **Grade**

A [score or mark](#) indicating a student's academic performance on an exam, paper, or in a course. A "grade" can also refer to which year a student is in while at elementary, middle, or high school, but that usage typically does not apply at the college or university level.

- **Grade point average (GPA)**

A student's overall academic performance, which is calculated as a numerical average of grades earned in all courses. The [GPA](#) is determined after each term, typically on a 4.0 scale, and upon graduation, students receive an overall GPA for their studies.

- **Grant**

A [grant](#) is also referred to as an endowment. It is a sum of money given by an organization, especially a government, for a particular purpose. Grants might be part of a student's [Financial Aid](#) package and do not have to be repaid.

- **Honor Code**

A set of rules, guidelines, or principles that relate to the [academic standards](#) expected of all students and faculty. Included are sanctions for students found guilty of violating the code, from failing a class to expulsion. See also *Academic Honesty, Plagiarism*.

- **Honors (Dean's List, magna, etc.)**

To be eligible for graduation honors, students must earn a minimum of 30 semester hours of quality point-bearing credit at Western. No pass/fail credits or transfer credits are included in this minimum. Graduation honors standards are based on cumulative grade point average and are awarded as follows:

Summa Cum Laude	3.9 to 4.0
Magna Cum Laude	3.7 to 3.89
Cum Laude	3.5 to 3.69

- **Honors Program**

In a general sense, it is built on the fundamental assumption that knowledge is an open set of questions and ideas to be explored, rather than a closed set of facts to be memorized.

- **Humanities**

[Academic courses](#) focused on human life and ideas, including history, philosophy, foreign languages, religion, art, music, and literature.

- **Incomplete Grade**

A [temporary grade](#) that faculty can award a passing student who, for reasons outside his or her control (illness, death in family, etc.) cannot complete all coursework and assignments in a given term. Undergraduate students typically have six weeks into the following major semester to meet with the professor and complete the work.

- **Independent Study**

A [specialized course of study](#) under the supervision of a faculty member. The burden is usually on the student to conduct a much more self-directed study plan than in a normal class setting.

- **International Services**

At Western, the [International Services](#) office supports non-immigrant students and scholars holding F1 or J1 Visas (and their dependents) as a post admissions service. The staff provides orientation and ongoing support and guidance of the non-immigrant federal regulations. It also offers support of ISEP Exchange students.

- **Internship**

An internship is an opportunity offered by an employer to potential employees, called "interns," to work at a firm for a fixed, limited period of time. See also *practicum*.

- **International Student Exchange Program (ISEP)**

Through the [International Student Exchange Program](#), students can study abroad for a summer, semester, or full year at another university for the same price as tuition, room & board at their current university.

- **Junior**

An undergraduate student who has earned 60 or more, but fewer than 90, semester hours of credit.

- **Leave of Absence**

Students may choose to request a Leave of Absence from the university for a period of time not to exceed two consecutive major semesters (Fall and Spring). Students who may find it necessary to withdraw from the university completely, such as for medical reasons, should follow a formal withdrawal procedure.

- **Letter of Recommendation**

A letter written by a student's teacher, counselor, coach, or mentor that assesses the student's qualifications and skills. Colleges, universities, and graduate schools generally require recommendation letters as part of the application process.

- **Liberal Arts**

[Academic studies](#) of subjects in the humanities, social sciences, and the sciences, with a focus on general knowledge, in contrast to a professional or technical emphasis. "Liberal arts" is often used interchangeably with "liberal arts and sciences" or "arts and sciences."

- **Major**

A [major](#) is a course of study in which a student focuses on a specific line of classes under one topic, i.e. nursing or mathematics.

- **Make-up Days**

[Specific days](#) used for courses to meet if a class has been cancelled (usually because of the weather or other emergency) during the regular semester.

- **Matriculate**

To be admitted into a university under an offered program.

- **Midterm Exam**

An [exam](#) given after half of the academic term has passed and that covers all material studied in a particular [course](#) until that point. Not all courses have midterm exams.

- **Midterm Grades**

Midterm grades are usually posted around mid-October for fall and mid-March for spring. They provide a good sense of progress in a course, based on the work completed so far. Not all professors give midterm grades to upperclassmen.

- **Minor**

A [minor](#) is a secondary specialization to complement and enhance a major. Minors should be selected in consultation with the academic advisor.

- **Non-matriculated**

[Enrolled](#) in a college or university's courses, but not in a program of study leading to a degree. Non-matriculated students either did not apply to or were not admitted into the university.

- **Office hours**

Time set aside by professors or teaching assistants for students to visit their office and ask questions or discuss the course they teach. Information regarding the place and time when and where [office hours](#) will be held every week is conveyed at the beginning of the term. This information is also usually in a course syllabus or available through the department secretary.

- **Orientation**

A college or university's official process of [welcoming](#) new, accepted students to campus and providing them with information and policies before classes begin.

- **Pass/Fail (P/F)**

To enroll in a course on a [non-graded](#) basis. When a student elects to take a course pass/fail, they will not earn a letter grade (A, B, C, D) for the course, but they can earn credit for the class if they receive a P (for Pass). A pass is not included in the student's grade point average. However, if the student receives an F (for Fail), they will not earn credit for completing the course and the F is calculated in the grade point average. Students should speak with their advisor if they are interested in taking a course on a pass/fail basis.

- **Part-Time (P/T) Students**

Undergraduate students who are enrolled for [fewer than 12 semester credit hours](#) in a regular academic term (fall or spring).

- **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 [prerequisite](#) is a course that must be completed before taking another course.

- **Probation**

A [status](#) or period of time in which students with very low GPAs, or whose academic work is unsatisfactory according to the school, must improve their performance. Students may also face "disciplinary probation" for nonacademic reasons, such as behavioral problems in the dorms.

- **Program Sheet**

A [program sheet](#) is a guide used to determine what courses and associated requirements students need to take to earn a degree. Program sheets also provide a suggested course sequencing to lay out a program's requirements toward graduation, also known as a suggested four-year plan.

- **Readmission**

[Readmission](#) is when a student returns to college studies, perhaps after a leave of absence or some type of break.

- **Registrar**

The [registrar's office](#) is responsible for registering students and keeping their academic records, such as transcripts. Address and name changes need to be reported here, and forms such as Leave of Absence, Withdrawal, and Student Consent Forms are processed in this office.

- **Registration**

The [process](#) in which students choose and enroll in courses to be taken during the academic year or in summer sessions.

- **Resident Assistant (RA)**

A student [leader](#) who works in campus residence halls and supervises issues and activities related to hall life. RAs often receive free housing in the residence hall in return for their services.

- **Resident Director (RD)**

The [RD](#) is a leader for the housing dorms.

- **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**

Students on Financial Aid, in Housing, or Athletics programs need to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (i.e. pass enough classes with good grades each academic year) – check individual webpages for requirements.

- **School**

A “school” usually refers to one of the academic divisions of the university.

- **Semesters**

[Periods of study](#) that divide the academic year into two equal segments of approximately 15 to 18 weeks each. Some schools also offer a shorter summer semester, beyond the traditional academic year.

- **Semester Hour (S.H.)**

Also called credit - each course counts as several semester hours, most often 3 or 4. Most degrees require students to pass 120 semester hours (credits) made up of specific courses.

- **Seminar**

A course offered to a small group of students who are typically more advanced and who meet with a professor to discuss specialized topics.

- **Senior**

An undergraduate student who has completed more than 90 semester credit hours, but has not yet earned a baccalaureate degree.

- **Senior capstone (Senior Thesis)**

A senior capstone or thesis is a culminating academic work or project which reflects a theme or central study related to a student’s major. Each department has different requirements, and may offer a [showcase](#).

- **SGA**

Abbreviation for the [Student Government Association](#).

- **Sophomore**

An undergraduate student who has [earned 30 or more, but fewer than 60, semester](#) credit hours.

- **Sorority**

A student organization for women formed for social, academic, community service, or professional purposes. A sorority is part of a college or university's Greek system.

- **Standardized tests**

Exams, such as the SAT, ACT, and GRE, which measure knowledge and skills and are designed to be consistent in how they are administered and scored. Standardized tests are intended to help admissions officials compare students who come from different backgrounds.

- **Student Employment**

Students may find employment on or off campus.

- **Study Abroad**

Students have many opportunities to study abroad, either through the [International Student Exchange Program](#) or [short study abroad courses](#).

- **Syllabus**

A description of a course which also lists the dates of major exams, assignments, and course policies.

- **Tenure**

A [status](#) offered to high-level faculty members at a college or university that allows them to stay permanently in their positions, after demonstrating a strong record of teaching and published research.

- **Title IX**

[Title IX](#) is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity.

- **Transcript**

A [transcript](#) is a student's official academic record. The transcript contains information about the courses that a student has taken and the grades that have been received in those courses. Students may review their unofficial transcript.

- **Transfer Credit**

Transfer credit refers to coursework taken by a student at another institution that has been accepted (or transferred in) by your current university for academic credit. It is important that students understand that not all courses offered by other colleges or universities will be transferred. It is also important for students to be aware that not all transfer work may be applicable to their specific degree plan. Can also be AP courses/exams, college-based courses at high schools (sometimes called bridge programs)

- **Undecided/Undeclared (UND)**

This term refers to students who have not yet chosen and/or declared an academic major.

- **Withdraw/Withdrawal (W)**

Students may withdraw from a full-semester course, without academic penalty, following the add/drop period. Withdrawing from courses may have significant implications for [financial aid](#), housing, and athletic programs. Students should check with their advisors before withdrawing from any classes.

- **Work-study**

Work-study is a [financial aid](#) program funded by the U.S. federal government that allows undergraduate or graduate students to work part-time on campus or with approved off-campus employers. To participate in work-study, students must complete the FAFSA, indicate they are interested, and be eligible. In general, international students are not eligible for work-study positions.