

Glossary of Planning and Research Terminology

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-A-

Academic Semester — A sixteen-week period during which credit classes are offered.

Academic Year — The academic year includes fall and spring semesters as well as a ten-week summer term.

Accreditation — A formal means of recognizing an institution for maintaining standards that qualify the graduates for admission to higher institutions or for professional practice. Accrediting agencies are responsible for establishing the standards and evaluating the schools' compliance with them (e.g. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), most of CFCC's Health Science programs, Basic Law Enforcement).

Accountability — The acceptance of personal responsibility for the achievement of predetermined measurable objectives.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) — Courses designed primarily for students 16 years of age and older to improve basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. These courses are not intended to be part of a program leading to a high school credential, nor are they part of any academic, occupational, or vocational program at the postsecondary level.

Adult Education — Programs that provide opportunities for adults and out-of-school youth to further their education.

Appropriation — The act by which the legislature provides the state dollars for the operation of an institution. Funds are appropriated to the State Board of Community Colleges to be distributed to the institutions.

Associate in Applied Science Programs (AAS) — These programs range from 64 to 76 semester hour credits. A full-time student can typically complete one of these programs within two years.

Auditing/auditing (a class) – Term used when a student elects to take a course, but does not wish to receive credit for the course toward a degree or other formal award.

Assessment Cycle: Used for continuous improvement, this four-step cycle asks that you plan for assessment, do the assessment, check the assessment results, and act on those assessment results to develop strategies for continuous improvement. The cycle then starts again, by creating a plan based on the actions taken and then measuring the results and implementing new actions.

-B-

Baseline: The results of preliminary data gathering conducted prior to implementing a new action, service, or treatment.

Benchmark: A standard by which assessments can be compared to and judged.

-C-

Calendar system – The method by which an institution structures most of its courses for the academic year. (CFCC is on a fall, spring, and summer semester calendar).

Certificate Programs — These programs range from 12 to 18 semester hour credits and can usually be completed within one semester by a full-time student. Associate degree level courses within a certificate program may also be applied toward a diploma or an associate in applied science degree.

CIP Code – A six-digit code in the form xx.xxxx that identifies instructional program specialties within educational institutions.

Clock Hour — A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students. Also referred to as contact hour.

Closing the Loop: A term used to signify the process of using assessment results to create program improvement plans, implementing those plans, and assessing the impact of those strategies during the following assessment cycle.

College Navigator - A web tool accessed through <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> that provides selected IPEDS data to assist students, parents, high school counselors, and others obtain information about nearly 7,000 postsecondary institutions in the United States and other areas. It offers a wide range of information including programs offered, retention and graduation rates, aid available, campus safety, accreditation, and estimated student expenses. NOTE: Replaces the College Opportunities Online Locator (IPEDS COOL).

College Transfer Programs — These programs are offered through the Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Fine Arts (AFA) and Associate in Science (AS) degrees. The Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science programs are part of the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA). This agreement addresses the transfer of students between institutions in the North Carolina Community College System and the constituent institutions of the University of North Carolina.

Competency-Based Instruction — Instruction based on measurable student performance outcomes consistent with the skills and knowledge needed by entry-level employees in a particular field.

Completer – A student who receives a degree, diploma, certificate or other formal award. In order to be considered a completer, the degree/award must actually be conferred.

Contact hour – A unit of measure that represents an hour of scheduled instruction given to students. Also referred to as clock hour.

Credit Hour — A unit of measure representing the equivalent of an hour (50 minutes) of instruction per week over the entire term. It is applied toward the total number of credit hours needed for completing the requirements of a degree, diploma, certificate, or other formal award.

Curriculum Programs — A term used to describe a wide variety of planned educational programs that range in length from one semester to two years. These programs lead to certificates, diplomas or associate degrees, depending on the nature of the curriculum. Curriculum programs include certificate, diploma, Associate in Applied Science, Associate in Arts, Associate in Fine Arts, Associate in Science and Associate in General Education programs.

-D-

Developmental Education — A program providing specialized credit courses for students who need to improve their basic skill in order to perform at the level required for admission to degree and diploma programs. Usually these courses are in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Diploma Programs — These programs range from 36 to 48 semester hour credits and can usually be completed by a full-time student within two semesters and one summer term. Associate degree level courses within a diploma program may also be applied toward an Associate in Applied Science degree.

Duplicated Headcount - The figures given where it may not be possible to properly distribute students into categories (such as sites they attend classes) because they might fall into several categories. In this event, if each category's headcount were added together, their sum would be larger than overall headcount due to this duplication.

-E-

English as a Second Language (ESL) — A program of instruction to help adults with limited or no English language proficiency.

-F-

Fall Cohort — The group of students entering in the fall term established for tracking purposes. For the Graduation Rates component, this includes all students who enter an institution as full-time, first-time degree or certificate-seeking undergraduate students during the fall term of a given year. For the Outcome Measures component, all degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students who enter an institution during the fall term of a given year must be placed in one of four cohorts: full-time, first-time; part-time, first-time; full-time, non-first-time; and part-time, non-first-time.

First Year Progression—first time college students completing at least twelve hours in their first year with a grade of “C” or better.

Fiscal Year — The twelve-month period, upon which the institution's budget is based, July 1–June 30.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) — One full-time equivalent (FTE) student represents 16 student membership hours per week for 16 weeks or 256 student membership hours for each semester enrolled.

For example: You have three students taking 12 credits hours, 18 credits hours, and 6 credit hours per semester – totaling 36 credit hours. Assuming a full-time student takes 16 credit hours per semester, your full time equivalent calculation is 36 credit hours divided by 16 credit hours, or 2.5 FTE.

Full-Time Students — A student is considered full time if he/she carries 12 or more semester credit hours of classes.

-G-

General Educational Development GED®.— A high school equivalency program enabling adults to take the General Education Development Tests to determine if they are at the 12th grade completion level of English, social studies, science, reading, and math. Individuals achieving the required scores on the GED are awarded the High School Equivalency Diploma. The program is open to individuals 18 years or older.

General Education Programs — These programs are designed for individuals wishing to broaden their education, with emphasis on personal interest, growth and development. The two-year General Education program provides students opportunities to study English, literature, fine arts, philosophy, social science, science and mathematics at the college level. All courses in the program are college-level courses. Many of the courses are equivalent to college transfer courses; however, the program is not principally designed for college transfer. Successful completion of 64-65 semester hour credits leads to an associate in general education degree (AGE).

Graduation Rate – The rate required for disclosure and/or reporting purposes under Student Right-to-Know Act. This rate is calculated as the total number of completers within 150% of normal time divided by the revised adjusted cohort.

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-I-

The Curriculum Institutional Class Reporting (ICR) file produces full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment data for each institution. This FTE data form the basis of funding formulas, statistical analysis, and general curriculum class information needs of the community college system. Accurate and timely reports are critical. Data reported are also subject to audit.

Institutional Effectiveness – The extent to which an institution achieves its mission and goals. Institutional Effectiveness is monitored through ongoing, integrated, institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement of institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.

Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) – supervised by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS is designed to help NCES meet its mandate to report statistics on the condition of post-secondary education. The IPEDS system is built upon a series of interrelated surveys to collect data in such areas as enrollment, program completions, faculty and staff, and financing.

-J-

-K-

Keyholder – The person designated by an official institutional representative to have in their possession the necessary UserID and password to gain access to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data collection system to complete the survey. The keyholder is responsible for entering data and locking the site by each survey completion date.

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-M-

-N-

Non-Credit (Extension) Courses — Courses for professional training, upgrading or general interest.

-O-

Online-Learning (formally Distance Learning) - Education that uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously.

Outcomes: A specific, measureable, and attainable statement that defines an activity, performance, or product that a program/unit intends to obtain.

Out-of-state tuition - The tuition charged by institutions to those students who do not meet the institution or state's residency requirements.

-P-

Pell Grants — Needs based federally funded grants.

Program Review – Program Review is a systematic way to assess the quality of CFCC's academic programs and determine ways to improve the quality of education and service. The purpose of program review is to assure that the faculty and administration provide high quality programs for students and to identify opportunities for improvement in each program.

-Q-

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) – part of the SACSCOC reaffirmation process is the development of a focused course of action that addresses an issue related to enhancing student learning. CFCC's current QEP will focus on developing a structured first-year experience (FYE) program to improve student engagement and success. (<http://cfcc.edu/gep/>)

-R-

Retention rate – A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution, expressed as a percentage. For four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time bachelors (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduates from the previous fall who are again enrolled in the current fall. For all other institutions, this is the percentage of first-time degree/certificate-seeking students from the previous fall who either re-enrolled or successfully completed their program by the current fall.

-S-

Strategic Planning – Long-term (i.e., often 3-5 year) planning at the level of the whole institution or unit that focuses on adaptation to the organization's external environment and the future. Guided by a vision of the organization in the future, strategic planning attempts to position the organization favorably with respect to needed resources.

SPOL (Strategic Planning Online) – Strategic Planning On Line (SPOL) is a web-based software program designed to document and track the progress of the College's strategic goals and planning priorities. More specifically, SPOL allows the management and progress of the annual objectives developed by each college planning unit.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO): Measurable outcomes focused on students' knowledge, skills, or professional values after completing a degree program with the graduating student as the unit of

analysis. Learning outcomes should be specific, measurable, attainable, and achievable within an assessment cycle. At least one direct measure needs to be assessed.

Successful College Completion—is defined by achievement of certificate, diploma or degree, transfer to another institution, or completion of personal goals.

-T-

Transparency: The process of clearly stating all aspects of the assessment process (data collection, evaluation, and analysis) so that others may understand how the data was collected and analyzed and be able to replicate the data collection process in the future.

-U-

Unduplicated Headcount — The total number of students (both full-time and part-time) enrolled in all courses during a year. Each student is counted only once during the year regardless of the number of classes he/she takes or the number of semesters for which he/she registers.

Use of Results: The act step of the assessment cycle that involves the development and implementation of an improvement plan, which would be evaluated in the following assessment cycle.

-V-

-W-

Work-based learning (WBL) – activities that extend the classroom into the workplace, connecting acquired knowledge and skills to a student's future employment. (Formally called Co-op Training).

-X-

-Y-

-Z-

