Key Academic Terms – Undergraduate Learners

As a new undergraduate learner, it may seem as though Capella has its own language. Learning to understand the most common terms can help you adjust to your degree program and enable you to speak the language of higher education.

**Academic advisor:** An individual that helps you with academic related issues and questions throughout your degree program.

**Bachelor of Science degree:** A four or more year degree program that requires 180 quarter credits/120 semester credits to graduate. The bachelor of science degree includes courses that are directed toward more technical or business related careers.

**Bachelor of Arts degree:** A four or more year degree program that requires 180 quarter credits/120 semester credits to graduate. The bachelor of arts degree emphasizes courses that are less specialized and concentrate on a breadth of knowledge in a variety of disciplines.

**Capstone project or Integrated action learning project:** This project, completed as part of the final course for undergraduate learners, allows you to apply the skills and competencies you have developed throughout your program (applies to all degree programs except PhD and PsyD).

**CCE:** CCE stands for Course and Credit Evaluation. The admissions office sends you a CCE after they have reviewed your official transcripts. The CCE will reflect transfer credit that was applied to your program at Capella.

**CLEP/DANTES:**
- CLEP is an acronym for College-Level Examination Program. Learners enrolled in the undergraduate programs at Capella have the option of taking CLEP exams to fulfill credits in the lower division.
- DANTES is an acronym for Defense Activity for Non-traditional Education Support. Learners enrolled in the undergraduate programs at Capella have the option of taking DSST exams to fulfill credits in the lower division.

**Course drop:** You may drop a course during the first twelve calendar days of the course without academic penalty. A course drop during this time does not appear on your transcript and does not affect grade point average. Dropping a course may have financial implications.

**Course withdrawal:** A course withdrawal represents withdrawing from a single course for a particular quarter after the 12-day course drop deadline has passed. A course withdrawal will appear on your transcript with a grade of W (Withdrawn), which does not affect grade point average. Withdrawing from a course will have financial implications.

**Degree Completion Plan:** A document that lists the required courses for your degree program.

**Electives:** These courses can come from the general education areas or from upper division courses. You are allowed to select from a variety of courses.

**Financial aid:** A means of financing your university degree program through federal or private loans.
Financial aid counselor: An individual that can advise you on issues related to financing your education.

First course: Each learner begins their program with this course. There is a different designated first course in every degree program.

General education: This term refers to the courses that come from the communication, humanities, natural science, math, and social sciences areas.

- Communication: Courses in either English composition, research writing, speech, or visual design.
- Humanities: Courses that come from the arts, literature, philosophy, and religion.
- Natural science/math: Courses in algebra, statistics, and calculus, or biology, chemistry, and astronomy.
- Social sciences: Courses in this category come from economics, political science, psychology, and sociology.

Grade point average (GPA): A measure of the academic achievements of a learner during their university career.

Graduation and commencement: Graduation is the process by which learners have their degrees officially conferred after completing all degree requirements. Commencement represents the ceremony in which the accomplishments of our graduates and soon-to-be-graduates are recognized.

Lower division: Courses taken in the 1000 and 2000 range. These courses are introductory or general education courses.

Matriculation: This term means that the learner is officially registered for courses and begins their degree program.

Petition-for-credit: This is the process by which learners attempt to earn academic credit by demonstrating that they have already mastered course competencies through prior professional experience. To petition for credit, go to the Prior Learning Assessment section of iGuide (applies to undergrad, MS IT, and MS O&M programs only).

Prerequisite: A course that must be taken prior to taking another course.

Specialization course: This term refers to a set of upper division course in a focused area of study such as project management, accounting, and criminal justice.

Transfer credits: Credits from courses that you want applied to another degree program.

Transcript: An official record of the courses taken and grades received at a university throughout a degree program.

University withdrawal: A university withdrawal represents withdrawing from one’s degree program at Capella University.

Upper division: Courses taken at the 3000 and 4000 level.