



OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

# Glossary of Commonly Used Terms in Institutional Research and Analysis

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## TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Accreditation** - Accreditation is a voluntary process of higher education oversight that serves to assure the public of the institution’s quality and to promote continuous institutional improvement. In Arizona, the organization that accredits colleges, including MCC, is the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) which is based in Chicago, IL.

**Active Program** - Students have an “active” program status when they have declared the program and could, with the correct course set, earn a credential in that major.

**Active Student** - A student that has maintained enrollment within the last year.

**Add Date** - The date that a student enrolled in, or “added” a course.

**Add/Drop Period** - A period at the beginning of each course during which students can drop the courses from their schedule and/or add new courses to their schedule without financial penalty.

**Analysis** - A detailed study of complex statistical elements to understand or determine data.

**Analytic** - A metric that is valued by the institution. A data point the institution finds valuable.

**AOI (Area of Interest)/Major** - A group that coordinates the curriculum required for students to study a given program toward a certificate or degree in that program.

**Applicant/Prospect** - Levels of potential student engagement with MCC.

- **Applicants** - Potential students who complete an MCC admissions application but have not yet enrolled in a class.
- **Prospects** - Potential students who show interest in MCC through such means as leaving their name and contact information at a fair or other venue but have not yet completed an application for admission.

**Associate Degree** - A credential that requires at least 60 earned credits usually consisting of two years of full-time equivalent college work.

**Campus (location):**

- **Campus Internal Definition** - The physical site at which a course operates. The term is also used as a generic reference to any of the school's geographical sites. (*Note: HLC campus definition differs from MCC definition.*)
  - **Student Location** - The students assigned home campus.
  - **Course Location** - The campus at which the course takes place. A student may take a course on more than one campus; therefore, aggregate counts using course campus could be duplicated.

**Carnegie Classification** - The classification includes all accredited, degree-granting colleges and universities in the United States that are represented in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). Carnegie classifies MCC in the group of "Associate Colleges: Mixed Transfer/Vocational and Technical"

<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/institutionprofile.aspx?unitId=105206&sid=6c3a677b-0e93-4f8a-b6fb-3833f2df9d06&rtid=6>

**Census Date** - Date on which official admissions and enrollment data are extracted from the student information system. At MCC this occurs on the 45th calendar day of the semester.

**Certificate** - An academic credential awarded in recognition of successful completion of a focused collection of courses in a given discipline or set of related disciplines. Certificate programs vary in length and can be completed concurrently with, or separately from, a degree program.

**Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Codes** - A taxonomic coding scheme for secondary and post-secondary instructional programs, developed by the United States Department of Education. It is a six-digit code in the form xx.xxxx that identifies program specialties within educational institutions.

**Cohort** - A defined group of students established for tracking purposes, with specifically identified time frame and characteristics such as first-time first-year students or transfer students entering in a given semester.

**College Going Rate** - Percent of Arizona high school graduates enrolled in Arizona's community colleges within 12 months after graduating.

**Completer** - A student who completes all the academic and associated requirements for a certificate or degree.

**Compliance** - Adherence to standards of quality, process, organization and policy established by accreditation agencies or government entities.

**Concurrent Student** - A high school student who enrolls in an MCC college course on an MCC campus. This differs from a dual high school student who enrolls in a dual college course at their high school.

**Course Code** - A set of letters and numbers that identify a specific course (e.g., CIS 110).

**Course Enrollment Status:**

- **Add** - Student registers during add/drop period.
- **Cancelled** - Student dropped from cancelled course.
- **Deleted** - Student drops before add/drop period. The course will no longer appear on the student's transcript.
- **Deregistered** - Student administratively dropped from the course (e.g., non-payment, non-participation).
- **Dropped** - Student drops (with no grade assigned) during the add/drop period or drops (with withdrawal grade assigned) from their course after the end of the course add/drop period while still enrolled in other courses for the current term.
- **New** - Student registers before course add/drop period.
- **Noncourse Equivalency** - Designation for course placement based on pre-requisite.
- **Preliminary Equivalency Evaluation** - Not used by institution at the time.
- **Transfer Equivalency Evaluation** - Course that has been transferred based on official transcripts.
- **Withdrawn** - Students drops (with withdrawal grade assigned) from their last remaining course of the current term after the end of the course add/drop period.

**Course Fee** - A charge that is in addition to tuition for enrollment in specific courses. Course fees generally relate to technical or medical courses that require resources beyond a textbook.

**Course Level** - The code that indicates the academic level of a course which is then specified in the second part of the course code (see above). Developmental/Transitional courses = 000 to 099, Lower division = courses numbered 100 to 199, Upper division = courses numbered 200 to 299.

**Course Types:**

- **Lab** - Practical application type course where the major focus is on “hands on” experience to support student learning (use equipment, activities, tools, machines generally found in a laboratory).
- **Lecture** - Course focuses on principles, concepts or ideas, lecture, discussion and demonstration.
- **Clinical** - Supervised experiences (in the field) where students are afforded an opportunity to apply skills and techniques acquired from assessment and intervention-oriented course material.

**Credit Hours** - Credit hours are the form of measurement most colleges use to indicate how many credits a course is worth, based on the time you will likely spend on the class each week.

**Data Dictionary** - a detailed definition and description of data sets (tables) and their fields (columns). This specification includes information such as data type, size, allowed values, default values, constraints, relations to other data elements and meaning/purpose of data set and field.

**Data Filter** - The functional capability to select wanted records from a table or report.

**Data Point** - A singular data value from a data set.

**Degree-Seeking/Certificate-Seeking** - Degree-seeking/certificate-seeking students are those enrolled in courses for credit with the goal of earning a credential or formal award.

**Demographics** - Socioeconomic characteristics of a population expressed statistically. Common demographics include but is not limited to age, ethnicity, gender, income, first generation.

**Department** - As per the current data system, a collection of subject/prefix that are associated with specific programs.

**Division** - As per our current data system, a categorization of departments.

**Dual Enrollment** - Dual enrollment is a program that allows high school students to enroll in college courses for credit at their high school prior to high school graduation.

**Dual Student** - The dual student is enrolled in such a class where college credits earned through dual enrollment can be simultaneously applied toward high school and college graduation and can be transferred to other colleges or universities.

**Enrolled** - A student registered in at least one course during a specified time-frame of the data pull.

**Enrollment:**

- **Duplicated Headcount** - The count of students enrolled in all sections of a course/program, student can be counted more than once.
- **Unduplicated Headcount** - The count of students enrolled, where each student is counted only once during the reporting period/category regardless of how many courses the student is taking.

**First-Generation Student** - A student for whom neither parent (or guardian) earned a 4-year college degree.

**First Time First Year Student (FTFY)** - Students attending college for the first time in one or more credit-bearing courses. Students who are new to MCC but have academic credit from a previous college are considered transfer students, not first-time. Students whose only college experience was in dual courses, whether with MCC or elsewhere, are considered first time first year students when they enroll at MCC as post-high school college students.

**First Time Full Time First Year Student** - Students for whom MCC is their first college; they are in their first year of attendance and, they are enrolled in 12 or more credit hours.

**Full Time Equivalent (FTE)** - A unit of measurement that quantifies student credit hours or number of employees, allowing for comparisons across full-time and part-time statuses. It expresses how many full-time people an organization would have if all of its employees/students were full-time. One of the formulas used is full-time plus one-third part-time.

**Full-time (Resident) Faculty** - Faculty that are considered full-time and whose primary responsibility is instruction; includes department heads and faculty who are on sabbatical or have release time for research.

**Full Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) (Arizona)** - A unit of measurement that quantifies total credit hours using a formula provided by the state of Arizona. The Arizona state statute defines eligible course enrollment to calculate and determine how much the college is provided in state allocations as well as setting the expenditure limitation for the institution.

- **FTSE Roster** - A roster that confirms active student participation that is certified by faculty as requested from the registrar's office.

**Full Time Student** - Students registered for 12 or more credit hours in a single term.

**Grade Point Average (GPA)** - The sum of quality points a student has earned divided by the sum of credit hours taken. GPA value ranges from 0.0 to 4.0.

- **Term GPA** - GPA calculated using quality points and credit hours only from a given term.
- **Career GPA** - GPA calculated using quality points and credit hours from all terms taken at MCC.

**Graduation Rate** - Percentage of students being awarded a degree or award in a given time frame (4 years or 5 years or 6 years, etc.) out of a first-time cohort.

**Honor Society** - An organization dedicated to recognition of academic and professional success, and to empower students to succeed, e.g., Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Honor Society, NSTEM, etc.

**Independent Study** - Academic work chosen or designed by the student under an instructor's supervision, and usually undertaken outside of the regular classroom structure.

**International Student (Non-resident alien)** - A person who is not a citizen or national of the United States and who is in this country on a visa or temporary basis and does not have the right to remain indefinitely.

**Market Penetration** - The percent of a defined market that enrolls in a college that focuses on a population with a set of certain characteristics for selling a product or service.

**Modality:**

- **Ground** - The traditional in-class on-campus course delivery mode. Sometimes referred to as "brick and mortar" modality.
- **Hybrid** - A course which includes both on-ground and online delivery methods.
- **Online** - A course where most or all of the content is delivered online.
  - **Asynchronous** - an online course where students and instructors are not required to participate at the same time.
  - **Synchronous** - An online course in which all students and the instructor log in for instructional content at the same time.
- **Plural** - A course delivered at one site, but is attended by students from multiple campuses.

**Need-Based Financial Aid** - Aid in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, and student employment awarded to students on the basis of demonstrated financial need.

**Noncredit** - A course offered by MCC that does not award college credit towards an academic program.

**Non-Degree Seeking/Non-Certificate Seeking** - Non-degree seeking/non-certificate seeking students are enrolled in courses but are not seeking a credential or formal award.

**Non-Need Based Financial Aid** - Aid in the form of scholarships, grants, loans, and student employment not based on demonstrated financial need but usually based on past academic achievement.

**Ongoing Enrollment** - A semester/summer term in which a degree or certificate seeking student earns credit. This excludes adult education courses, non-credit courses, audited courses, failed courses, or

courses assigned a withdrawal (administrative or student-initiated) grade are not considered ongoing enrollment.

**Online program** - An academic program where 100% of the coursework can be completed online.

**Part-Time (Adjunct) Faculty** - A person who holds an appointment to the teaching staff of an institution, and is hired as needed. There are no guarantees as to continuation of employment.

**Part-Time Student** - Students registered for fewer than 12 credit hours in a single term.

**Pell Grant** - A Federal grant directed to eligible undergraduate postsecondary students with demonstrated financial need to help meet education expenses.

**Persistence Rate** - The rate at which students continue in higher education from one semester to the succeeding semester. For example: Fall to Spring, Spring to Fall.

**Prefix (subject)** - The first three characters of the course code. The prefix identifies the subject such as Business (BUS), Mathematics (MAT) or English (ENG).

**Prerequisite** - A requirement a student must meet before taking a specific course.

**Program** - A cohesive combination of courses including introductory, intermediate, and advanced coursework that designates a student's primary area of study. Programs can be established or restructured to include required or optional concentrations. A student may be active in more than one program.

**Program Review** - A process for assessing how well programs encourage continuous improvement.

**Quality Points** - Assigned numerical values given to letter grades. At MCC an A earns 4 points, B earns 3 points, C earns 2 points and D earns 1 point. Any other grade earns 0 points.

**Retention Rate** - The rate at which students continue in higher education from one year to the succeeding year. For example: Fall to Fall, Spring to Spring.

**Section Code** - A three-character code that may be numerical or alphanumeric that identifies a specific section of the course.

**Staff** - All non-faculty employees.

**Student/Faculty Ratio** - The count of FTE students divided by the count of FTE instructional staff.

**Student Identification Number** - A unique number assigned to students when they apply for admission. The assigned number always identifies the same student.

**Student Level** - Academic level of an enrolled student based on accumulated credit hours.

- **Freshman** = 0 to 29 accumulated/earned credit hours,
- **Sophomore** = 30 to 59 credit hours

**Student Status:**

- **Continuing** - A student that has attended within the last year that does not have to submit a new application to enroll.
- **New** - An incoming student who has never enrolled in an MCC course before. A “New Student” may or may not have attended another college.
- **Returning** - A student who enrolls in a current term who had been enrolled in a prior term; with more than a year absent and needs to submit a new application to enroll.

**Student Success** - The achievement of a grade of “A”, “B”, “C” or “S” in a course.

**Student Success Rate** - Is the percentage of successful grades for a given cohort of students.

**Survey** - A research method used for collecting data from a pre-defined group of respondents to gain information and insights on various topics of interest.

**Time Frame:**

- **Academic Year** - Consecutive fall, spring and summer semesters. For example: 2019AY refers to the interval from Fall 2019 to Summer 2020. Spring term is often confusing to new users because 2019SP occurs January to May 2020. Same for the summer term which for 2019SU is May to August 2020.
- **Calendar Year** - The year starts January 1 and ends December 31.
- **Date Range** - Time period specific to the requested data pull.
- **Fiscal Year** - Funding year that includes July 1 through June 30. For example: FY 2020 refers to the fiscal year from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.
- **Term/Semester** - One of three periods of time into which a school year is divided, traditionally referred to fall, spring and summer.

**Transfer Student** - A student who attended another higher education institution prior to enrolling at MCC. Students are designated as transfer students whether or not they transfer course credits from another institution.

**Tuition Rates:**

- **In-State** - A classification of students who meet the state’s or institution’s residency requirements.
- **Out-of-State** - The tuition and fees charged to those students who do not meet the institution’s or state’s residency requirements.
- **WUE** - Western Undergraduate Exchange, an association of colleges from participating states that allow reduced tuition for students from one of the member states to the other.

**Types of Data:**

- **Aggregate Level Data** - Counts/sums/aggregate functions that are used to summarize data.
- **Row Level Data** - Data that displays the actual individual records from tables in the data system.

**Visualizations** - Methods of displaying data to illustrate certain characteristics of the data.

- **Chart** - One of many graphic representations of data.
- **Dashboard** - An interactive visual representation of data.
- **Graph** - A diagram of a mathematical function that depicts a series of data points.
- **Table** - A method of displaying data in rows and columns that may represent records and fields.

## ACRONYMS

**AIR** – Association of Institutional Research

**AOI** – Areas of Interest

**ASSIST** – State System for Information on Student Transfer

**CCSSE** – Community College Survey of Student Engagement

**CTE** – Technical Education

**FAFSA** – Application for Federal Student Aid

**FTE** – Full Time Equivalent

**FTSE** – Full Time Student Equivalent

**HLC** – Higher Learning Commission

**HSI** – Hispanic Serving Institution

**IPEDS** – Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System

**IR** – Institutional Research

**NCES** – National Center for Education Statistics

**NC-SARA** – National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

**OER** – Open Educational Resources

**PTK** – Phi Theta Kappa ( $\Phi\Theta\K$ )

**SENSE** – Survey of Entering Student Engagement

**STEM** – Science, Technology, Engineering, Math

Commonly Used Terms in Institutional Research and Analysis

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