

**Community College of Aurora**  
**Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness**  
**Dictionary of Terms Commonly Used in Reporting Data at CCA**

**Introduction**

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (IR) at the Community College of Aurora (CCA) routinely publishes reports and data presentations about CCA and the students, faculty and staff at the college. This dictionary is meant to help explain common terms that we use when reporting data. The dictionary was built with input from the CCA Data Advisory Committee composed of individuals from across the college. It is a living document that will be updated frequently with new terms or clarification for existing terms. The CCA Data Advisory Committee will continue to advise IR on adding terms and modifying definitions for clarity and understanding.

**Definitions**

**Academic Year:** Time period containing three consecutive academic semesters: Summer, Fall, and Spring. In the Colorado Community College System, the Academic Year starts in Summer Term (for instance, the 2014 Academic Year consists of the following terms: Summer 2013, Fall 2013, and Spring 2014). Academic Year 2014 could be expressed as AY2014 or AY14. See also Fiscal Year and Financial Aid Year.

**Adjunct Faculty:** instructors hired to teach specific courses on a temporary, as needed basis with no guarantee of continued employment from semester to semester.

**Annualized FTE for students:** See also "FTE." The most common measure of enrollment is a simple count of students enrolled in classes (also called a headcount). Enrollment can also be measured as the number of full time equivalent (FTE) students based on how many credits they are taking. The FTE calculation is based on the sum of credits carried by all students enrolled in classes at a particular level, divided by the number of credits in a full-time load. Annualized FTE is calculated based on a full-time load over the course of a year. Full-Time status over the course of a year would equal 30 credits for students, so the calculation for annualized FTE is all credit hours divided by 30. This is the calculation used by the state of Colorado in determining funding for schools.

**Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:** The systematic collection, review, and use of information about instructional and administrative programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.

**Banner:** Banner is a comprehensive computer information system, also known as an ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software designed specifically for higher education institutions. Users input data directly into Banner through transactions such as registering students or assigning grades. It contains information on courses, students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Components of the Banner system include student, financial aid, finance, human resources, and alumni.

**Benchmark:** A standard or point of reference against which gathered data may be compared or assessed.

**CCCS:** Stands for “Colorado Community College System”. The Colorado Community College System (CCCS) consists of 13 community colleges across the state of Colorado, including the Community College of Aurora. CCCS was created by the Community College and Occupational Act of 1967 in order to change community college and vocational program oversight from the local level to the state. The State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) is the governing body for CCCS. More information on CCCS is available at:

<https://www.cccs.edu/>

**CCHE:** The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) was established by the Colorado legislature in 1965 to oversee higher education in Colorado. The CCHE has responsibilities that include but are not limited to the following: review and approve degree programs; establish the distribution formula for higher education funding; approve institutional capital construction requests; determine institutional roles and missions; and establish statewide enrollment policies and admissions standards.

**CDE:** The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is the principal department of the Colorado State Government that is responsible for education. You can find out more about the CDE at their web site:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/>

**CDHE:** The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) is the principal department of the Colorado State Government responsible for implementing the policies of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), which oversees higher education in Colorado. You can access the CDHE web site:

<http://highered.colorado.gov/default.html>

**Census Date for Official Reporting in Institutional Research Reports:** An official reporting date for institutional data that occurs 5 business days after the end of the drop/add period for regular 15-week semester courses. The census provides a point-in-time statistical portrait of the college’s enrollment, population, etc. The Institutional Research Office at CCA pulls official Census Files 17 business days after the start of term; this is set by the Colorado Community College System Office, and represents five business days after the drop/add period for a term has ended.

**CIP:** Stands for “Classification of Instructional Programs,” which is a national numerical classification and standard terminology for secondary and postsecondary programs. The National Center for Education Statistics designed the Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code "to provide a taxonomic scheme that will support the accurate tracking, assessment, and reporting of fields of study and program completions activity."

**Cognos:** Software from the company Ellucian that allows users to pull data that is stored in the Banner information system and write analytical and descriptive reports with that data.

**Cohort:** A cohort is a group of students who share common traits and a common beginning point in an institution or program. The cohort's enrollment and registration are tracked over time for the purposes of calculating retention and graduation rates. An example of a cohort would be all students at CCA in a Fall term who are new first-time students that have not previously enrolled in a higher education institution for college level courses.

**Common Data Set:** Also referred to as CDS. The Common Data Set is a product of the Common Data Set Initiative. It is a standard set of questions used by college guidebook publishers to collect commonly requested statistics about an institution. This allows for comparison of data between institutions based on a core set of agreed upon categories.

**Completion:** Successful graduation with a degree or certificate from an approved program.

**Completion Rate:** This represents the percentage of students who completed. It is calculated as the number of students reaching completion ("completers") divided by the number of students enrolled in the program ("enrolled"), multiplied by 100.

**Concurrent Enrollment:** Also described as "Dual Enrollment." A program through which high school students may enroll in college courses while still enrolled in high school. Students are not required to apply for admission to the college in order to participate.

**Course Success:** A final grade of A, B, C, or P.

**Course Success Rate:** Percentage of students who receive a passing/satisfactory grade in a course. It is calculated as the number of students who received a passing/satisfactory grade in a course divided by the number of students enrolled in the course, multiplied by 100.

**CTE:** Stands for "Career Technical Education". This is defined as programs or degrees that are meant to lead to a job after program completion.

**DOE:** Stands for "Department of Education". This is the branch of the federal government responsible for implementing and enforcing federal policy on education. The DOE also collects data from institution and reports on national and regional trends in education.

**Dual Enrollment:** See "Concurrent Enrollment".

**Ethnicity:** Category used to describe groups to which individuals belong in the eyes of the community or with which they identify. An ethnic group is a named social category of people based on perceptions of shared social experience or ancestry. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. CCA only collects data on two ethnicities, Hispanic and non-Hispanic.

**EDW:** Stands for “Educational Data Warehouse”— this is one part of the CCCS data warehouse which is populated with data from Banner (the other part of the data warehouse is the ODS; both Banner and the ODS are defined in this document). The EDW stores both current and historical data and can be used for creating analytical and trend reports over time. The data in the EDW is accessed using IBM Cognos, a Business Intelligence application which enable users to query EDW data and develop interactive reports. At CCA, faculty and staff are given access to certain reports or areas of the EDW by being assigned security roles related to their area of employment.

**Financial Aid Year:** See also Fiscal Year and Academic Year. In postsecondary institutions, financial aid funding is allocated on a semester or quarterly basis as dictated by the yearly academic calendar.

**First-Time Student:** A student attending a postsecondary institution for the first-time after graduating from high school or after obtaining a Certificate of High School Equivalency by passing the General Educational Development (GED) tests.

**Fiscal Year:** A twelve-month period running from July 1 through the following June 30. This is called a fiscal year as the budget for the institution follows this year.

For the purposes of data from the IR department at CCA, the Fiscal Year is the Academic Year and includes Summer, Fall, and Spring terms, even though the Summer term begins before July 1 and the Spring term ends before June 30. For instance, Fiscal Year 2014 includes Summer 2013, Fall 2013, and Spring 2014. It can be abbreviated as FY2014 or FY14. In the CCCS data system, these terms could be expressed numerically as 201410, 201420, and 201430. Summer term is denoted by the Fiscal Year followed by a 10 (201410); Fall term is denoted by the Fiscal Year followed by a 20 (201420); and Spring term is denoted by the Fiscal Year followed by a 30 (201430).

**Freeze Dates:** These are dates on which official data is collected to be compared against the same time period in other years (see also ‘Official Data’). For the CCA IR department, freeze dates are set at CCCS and include demographic, course, applicant, and testing data. Freeze dates include the first day of courses; census date (5 business days after the end of a term’s drop/add period); and end-of-term data (one month and one week after the last day of courses).

**Full-Time Equivalent:** See also “FTE.” The most common measure of enrollment is a simple count of students enrolled in classes (also called a headcount). Enrollment can also be measured as the number of full time equivalent (FTE) students based on how many credits they are taking. The FTE calculation is based on the sum of credits carried by all students enrolled in classes at a particular level, divided by the number of credits in a full-time load. Annualized FTE is calculated based on a full-time load over the course of a year. Full-Time status over the course of a year would equal 30 credits for students, so the calculation for annualized FTE is all credit hours divided by 30. This is the calculation used by the state of Colorado in determining funding for schools.

**Full-Time Student:** A student enrolled for 12 or more semester credits in a term.

**FTE:** See “Full-Time Equivalent.”

**Graduation Rate:** This is the percentage of students within a cohort that graduated within a set time period. For example, IR reports to the federal government on the percentage of first-time, full-time students at specific points of time, such as at 150 percent of time to an associate's degree (this is 3 years, since normally a full-time student is expected to complete an Associate's degree within 2 years) and at 200 percent of time to an Associate's degree (4 years). The calculation for the graduation rate is number of students graduating divided by the total number of students, multiplied by 100.

**Headcount:** Total number of registered students, whether full-time or part-time. The headcount can be duplicated (students are counted more than once, such as when number of students taking courses on each campus are calculated, since a student can be taking courses on more than one campus) or unduplicated (students are only counted once, such as when all students enrolled in a term are counted).

**Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System:** Also referred to as "IPEDS." The core postsecondary education data collection system for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). It is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by NCES. Provides basic data needed to describe—and analyze trends in—postsecondary education in the U.S. in terms of numbers of students enrolled, staff employed, dollars expended, and degrees earned. IPEDS gathers information from every college, university, and technical and vocational institution that participates in the federal student financial aid programs.

**IPEDS:** See "Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System"

**NCES:** Stands for "National Center for Education Statistics" which is the statistical branch of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, a principal operating component of the U.S. Department of Education.

**ODS:** Stands for "Operational Data Store"—this is one part of the CCCS data warehouse which is populated with data from Banner (the other part of the data warehouse is the EDW; both Banner and the EDW are defined earlier in this document). The ODS is refreshed with new data from Banner nightly, and the data is used for reporting with current operational data. The data flows only one way—from Banner to the ODS. The data in the ODS is accessed using IBM Cognos, a Business Intelligence application which enable users to query ODS data and develop interactive reports. At CCA, faculty and staff are given access to certain reports or areas of the ODS by being assigned security roles related to their area of employment.

**Official Data Files:** Specific data files which are pulled from Banner or Cognos on agreed upon dates according to CCCS standards. These files include Course Data, Student Demographics, Applicant Demographics, and Accuplacer Scores. This data is pulled on three dates: 1<sup>st</sup> Day Data represents data as of 5pm on the last business day preceding the first day of classes; Census Data is pulled 17 business days after the first day of classes, which represents 5 business days past the drop/add date for a term; and End of Term Data is pulled one month and one week after the final day of courses for a term.

**Part-Time Student:** A student enrolled for fewer than 12 credits per term in Fall and Spring, or enrolled for 7 or fewer credits per term in Summer.

**Persistence:** A measure of endurance by students in their continued pursuit of studies (such as persisting from term to term) towards the completion of an educational goal or training objective. Persistence is a student's continuation behavior leading to a desired goal, which differs from retention, which is an institution's rate at which they keep students from one term or year to the next.

**Race:** A category used to describe groups to which individuals belong in the eyes of the community or with which they identify. Members of a racial group share similar perceived physical characteristics or origins. The categories do not denote scientific definitions of anthropological origins. Depending on the reporting and analysis requirements of the data, participants may be counted only in one race, or may be counted across racial categories. CCA is updating files to reflect racial categories as defined and used in reporting data to the federal Department of Education (DOE) through the Integrated Post-Secondary Educational Data System (IPEDS).

**Retention:** A measure of academic progress of a cohort from one term or year to the next. Retention rate is expressed as a percentage of the students who return each term or year. Retention refers to an institution's ability to keep students, which differs from persistence, which looks at student behavior in continuing toward a desired goal.

**Student-to-Faculty-Ratio:** The ratio of full-time equivalent students (student credit hours divided by 30) to full-time equivalent faculty during a semester. This ratio is calculated by dividing the full-time equivalent student workload by the full-time equivalent faculty.

**SURDS:** Stands for "State Unit Record Data System," which is the system that the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) uses to collect data from institutions.

**Transfer:** A student entering an institution for the first time but known to have previously attended a postsecondary institution at the same level (e.g. undergraduate). The student may transfer with or without credit. An institution may have both transfer-in and transfer-out students. For instance, CCA may have a transfer-in student that comes to CCA after attending a different community or 4-year college. CCA also has many students that transfer out to other community or 4-year colleges after attending CCA.

**Trend:** A report that presents comparative information about enrollment and student characteristics, faculty and staff, etc. over a period of time. Most trend reports at CCA have at least 3 years of data, and often have five to ten years of data.

**Unduplicated Headcount:** A student is counted only once during a term or an academic year regardless of how many classes or terms the student attends during that period.