

Introductory Glossary: Essential Terms for Surviving Your First Year at University

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Navigating university life can be overwhelming, especially when you're bombarded with new terms and concepts. This glossary is your go-to guide for understanding the basics and making your first year a success.

Academic Advisor

A faculty member or staff assigned to guide students in their academic planning, course selections, and other university-related decisions.

Academic Integrity

The moral code of academia that emphasizes honesty, fairness, and responsibility. This includes avoiding plagiarism, cheating, and any other unethical behavior in studies and research.

Academic Year

The time period in which courses are offered, typically consisting of two semesters or three trimesters, depending on the university's structure. At the Faculty of Electrical Engineering the academic year consists of two semesters: winter and summer semesters. The duration of one semester is 15 weeks.

Alumni

Former students who have graduated from the university. Many universities have alumni networks that can offer mentoring, career advice, and networking opportunities.

Assignment

Tasks given by instructors that can include essays, problem sets, reports, or other work required to complete a course. Assignments often contribute to the final grade.

Campus

The physical grounds of a university, including buildings, libraries, cafeterias, sports facilities, and other resources available to students.

Credit (ECTS Credit)

A unit that represents the workload and time a student must invest to complete a course. ECTS (*European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*) credits are commonly used in European universities. For example, a full-time year of study typically equals **60 ECTS credits**. A single course might be worth anywhere from **3 to 8 ECTS credits** or more, depending on its workload. The system helps you understand how much time and effort you need to put into each course and makes it easier to transfer your credits to other universities, if needed. Each ECTS credit corresponds to around **25 to 30 hours of total work** (including attending lectures, studying, and doing assignments). So, if you are taking the **Mathematics for AI I** course worth **7 ECTS credits**, that means you'll need to dedicate around **175 to 210 hours** to that course throughout the semester.

Curriculum

The set of courses and their content offered by a study program. It outlines the subjects you will study and the skills you will develop throughout your degree.

Deadline

The last date by which an assignment, project, or paper must be submitted. Missing a deadline can result in penalties or loss of credit.

Dean

The head of a faculty or department within the university who is responsible for overseeing academic and administrative functions.

Distance Learning/Online Learning

A mode of learning where courses are taught remotely via online platforms. Students access lectures, materials, and assignments online rather than attending in-person classes.

Elective

A course that students can choose to take as part of their program, but which is not mandatory. Electives allow students to explore areas of interest beyond their core curriculum.

Exam Period

A set time at the end of a semester or term during which final exams are held. Some universities have multiple exam periods for midterms and finals.

Faculty

1. A division or department within the university (e.g., Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Science).
2. The term is also used to refer to the teaching and administrative staff of the university.

Final Exam

The final exam is a comprehensive assessment given at the end of the semester. It evaluates a student's overall understanding of the course content. Final exams are often weighted more heavily than midterms and serve as a major factor in determining the final grade.

Grading Scale

1. Grade 10 (Excellent)

- **Description:** Represents outstanding performance and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The student demonstrates strong analytical skills, originality, and the ability to apply concepts to new situations.
- **Equivalent Grade (if applicable):** A or A+
- **Performance Level:** 95-100%

2. Grade 9 (Very Good)

- **Description:** Indicates very strong knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, with only minor mistakes. The student shows a high level of competence, with good analytical and problem-solving abilities.
- **Equivalent Grade:** A- or B+
- **Performance Level:** 85-94%

3. Grade 8 (Good)

- **Description:** Reflects a solid understanding of the course material and the ability to apply most concepts effectively. The student has shown competence but may have minor conceptual gaps or errors.
- **Equivalent Grade:** B
- **Performance Level:** 75-84%

4. Grade 7 (Satisfactory)

- **Description:** Represents an acceptable understanding of the subject, with some evident weaknesses. The student can apply key concepts but may have notable gaps in knowledge or understanding.
- **Equivalent Grade:** C
- **Performance Level:** 65-74%

5. Grade 6 (Sufficient)

- **Description:** The minimum passing grade, indicating that the student has a basic understanding of the subject matter. The performance is below average, and there are significant weaknesses in knowledge, but the student meets the basic course requirements.
- **Equivalent Grade:** D
- **Performance Level:** 55-64%

Grades Below 6

• Below Grade 6 (Insufficient or Fail)

- **Description:** Represents a failure to meet the minimum requirements of the course. The student shows limited understanding of the material, significant errors, and a lack of competence in key areas.
- **Equivalent Grade:** F
- **Performance Level:** Below 55%

Lab Exercises (E)

Lab exercises are hands-on, practical sessions where students apply the theoretical knowledge learned in lectures and tutorials to real-world scenarios. In fields like engineering, computer science, or natural sciences, lab exercises involve experiments, simulations, or programming tasks, allowing students to practice skills and gain experience in a controlled environment.

Lecture Class (L)

A lecture is a formal teaching session led by a professor or instructor. In a lecture, the instructor delivers content on a particular topic to the entire class. It is usually one-way communication, where the focus is on providing information, explaining concepts, and covering the course material.

Lecture Notes

Notes taken during a lecture that summarize key points, important details, and explanations provided by the professor. They are crucial for studying and reviewing the material covered in class.

Midterm Exam

A midterm exam is an assessment held roughly halfway through the semester. It tests the material covered in the first part of the course, providing both students and instructors with feedback on progress and understanding. It helps students identify areas where they may need to focus more before the final exam.

Office Hours

Designated times when professors and teaching assistants are available to meet with students to discuss coursework, ask questions, or seek guidance on academic issues.

Plagiarism

The act of using someone else's work, ideas, or words without proper attribution. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offense and can lead to disciplinary action.

Prerequisite

A course or requirement that must be completed before enrolling in a more advanced course. Prerequisites ensure that students have the necessary background knowledge.

Program of Study (Study Program)

The main area of academic focus that a student chooses to pursue, such as Data Science, Electrical Engineering, or Psychology. A program is made up of core and elective courses.

Project

A project is an in-depth assignment where students work independently or in groups to apply course concepts to solve a particular problem or explore a topic. Projects are practical in nature and may span over several weeks or the entire semester. They often

involve research, analysis, and a final presentation or report, enabling students to demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge creatively and effectively.

Professor/Instructor

A faculty member who teaches courses and may conduct research. Professors vary in rank, from assistant professors to full professors.

- **Assistant Professor:** An entry-level position in the academic career path for faculty members who have completed their doctorate (Ph.D.) and are starting their independent teaching and research career.
- **Associate Professor:** A mid-level faculty position, usually attained after several years as an Assistant Professor. To be promoted to Associate Professor, one must have a solid record of research, teaching, and service to the academic community, as well as potentially gaining tenure (a permanent academic position).
- **Full Professor:** the highest standard rank in academia and is usually achieved after many years of teaching, research, and contribution to their field. The promotion from Associate to Full Professor requires a significant record of high-quality research, publications, teaching excellence, and service to the university.
- **Emeritus Professor:** The title of Emeritus is an honorary status granted to retired professors who have made significant contributions to the university and their field during their careers.

Registrar

The university office responsible for maintaining student records, managing course enrollments, providing transcripts, and other administrative tasks.

Semester

A semester is a half-year term in the academic calendar. It typically lasts 15 weeks, during which students attend classes, participate in various forms of coursework, and complete assessments. It is one of two main parts of the academic year, with most programs consisting of two semesters per year (Fall and Spring).

Seminar

A seminar is an interactive, discussion-based session where students explore specific topics in-depth, usually under the guidance of an instructor or facilitator. Unlike lectures, which are often more one-way in nature, seminars encourage active participation, debate, and collaborative learning. In a seminar, students may present research, discuss readings, analyze case studies, or work on solving complex problems. The goal of a seminar is to deepen understanding of the subject matter, enhance critical thinking, and develop skills in communication and collaboration.

Seminar Report

A seminar report is a written document that summarizes research, discussion, or findings on a specific topic. During a seminar session, students might present and discuss topics assigned by the instructor, and then compile their insights, analyses, or research into a formal report. This helps develop critical thinking, research, and presentation skills.

Syllabus

A document that outlines the structure of a course, including learning objectives, course topics, grading policies, assignments, exams, and deadlines. It acts as a contract between the instructor and students.

TA (Teaching Assistant)

A graduate or advanced undergraduate student who assists professors with teaching-related tasks such as grading, leading tutorials, and answering students' questions.

Thesis

A substantial research project or paper required for some programs, typically completed in the final year of study. A thesis demonstrates the student's ability to conduct independent research and contribute to their field of study.

Transcript

An official record of a student's academic performance, listing all courses taken, grades received, and credits earned.

Tutorial

A tutorial is a smaller, more interactive class session that complements lectures. It is often led by a teaching assistant or professor, providing a space for students to ask questions, discuss lecture content, solve problems, and work in a more participative environment. The aim is to deepen understanding and provide personalized support.

Undergraduate

A student who is pursuing a bachelor's degree, typically lasting three to four years.

Vice-Dean

A **Vice Dean** is an academic administrator within a faculty or department at a university who assists the **Dean** with their responsibilities. The Vice Dean often specializes in certain areas, such as **academic affairs, research, or student affairs**, and helps manage the faculty's day-to-day operations. They act as a second-in-command to the Dean, making decisions, developing policies, and ensuring the smooth running of the faculty, especially when the Dean is unavailable.

Withdrawal

The formal process of dropping a course after the registration period, which may have academic or financial consequences depending on the timing and university policies.