



USA Jag Analytics Glossary

The definitions of many terms used throughout key USA Dashboards have been provided below. Where appropriate, links to additional information or resources have been provided. For additional assistance with these terms, or if you have a suggested edit or additional term that should be added to this list, please reach out to Dr. Paul Stonecipher in the Office of Institutional Research at paulstonecipher@southalabama.edu.

Academic Year – The academic year at USA includes the fall, spring, and subsequent summer semester. For example, the 2022-23 academic year is comprised of the Fall 2022, Spring 2023, and Summer 2023 semesters.

ACT – Previously known as the American College Test, the ACT is a standardized test with a maximum score of 36 used for college admissions. The test covers four general academic subject areas: English, reading, mathematics, and scientific reasoning as well as an optional writing section.

Admission/Acceptance Rate – Calculated by the number of admitted/accepted students divided by the total number of applications, this rate indicates the rate or percentage of applicants admitted.

Admitted Student – Student applicant who has been granted an official offer to enroll at USA.

Application Status – The current status of an undergraduate, graduate or medical student's application with three options: 1. Incomplete – an application that has been submitted but still requires additional items for completion; 2. Complete – an application that has been submitted with all required documentation completed but the application awaits an admission decision. 3. Decision Made – completed applications with an official admissions decision, regardless of the student being admitted or denied.

Average Class Size – The mean number of students enrolled in all course sections.

Census Date – Takes place on the eleventh business day after the start of classes, student enrollment systems (Banner) are locked for a data capture of the enrollment data for the semester. This data is then used to establish official university-wide enrollment data for ACHE, IPEDS, and other purposes.

CIP Codes – The Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Codes provide a taxonomic structure to provide accurate tracking and reporting of fields of study and program completion activity. The CIP codes are developed and maintained by the US Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). More information and resources can be obtained at NCES website: <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode>.

Class Instructional Mode – USA provides multiple avenues for course delivery. For more information on the University’s Course Formats, please see the Academic Affairs Policy Statement (see <https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/academicaffairs/resources/policies/webcoursepolicy.pdf>).

Cohort – The group of students sharing a common characteristic(s) over a specified period. For example, first-time full-time degree-seeking freshmen are tracked as a cohort by academic year for retention and graduation rate calculations.

Degree – An academically conferred award as official recognition for the successful completion of a program of students (ex. Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctorate).

First-Time Freshman – A student who has no prior postsecondary experience and is attending USA for the first time at the undergraduate level. This designation includes students as “first-time” if they earned college credits prior to matriculation at USA, for example by AP coursework or CLEP testing.

Freshman – A first-year undergraduate student with 0 (zero) to 29.9 credit hours.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) – FTE enrollment is calculated using ACHE guidelines (undergraduate hours divided by 15, master’s level hours divided by 12, and doctor’s level hours divided by 9). Each medical (MD) student is counted as one FTE.

Full-Time Student – An undergraduate student is categorized as full-time if enrolled in twelve or more credit hours in a fall or spring semester and six or more credit hours in a summer semester. Graduate students must be enrolled in six or more credit hours to be considered full-time. See the appropriate section of the University Bulletin for additional details related to full-time status (see <https://www.southalabama.edu/bulletin/current/>).

Graduate Student – A student who holds a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent and is enrolled in a graduate program.

Graduation Rate – The percentage of a cohort of students in a given fall semester who graduated within a designated period of time.

Headcount Enrollment – The number of actively enrolled students as of the specific census date or within live data.

Junior – A third-year undergraduate student with 60.0 to 89.9 earned credit hours.

New Student – A student at the undergraduate (ex. Freshman, transfer) or graduate level, both full-time and part-time, attending USA for the first time at that student level and degree program.

Non-Resident Alien – An individual who is not a citizen or national of the United States (US) and is currently in the US on a visa or temporary basis.

Part-Time Student - An undergraduate student is categorized as part-time if enrolled in less than twelve credit hours in a fall or spring semester and less than six credit hours in a summer semester. Graduate students must be enrolled in less than six credit hours to be considered part-time.

Pell Grant Recipient – An undergraduate student who received the federal Pell Grant, a need-based financial aid program with eligibility primarily based on a student’s “estimated family contribution (EFC).”

Persistence Rate – The percentage of students who return to college in the next semester or have earned a degree.

Race/Ethnicity – Categories developed in 1997 by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) used to describe groups to which individuals belong or identify with. Individuals are asked to identify their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latino or not and then to select one or more races among the following: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and/or White. Individuals indicating two or more races are grouped as Multiracial and individuals who do not indicate a race are grouped as unknown. Additional details can be found at <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/report-your-data/race-ethnicity-definitions>.

Resident Alien – An individual who is a permanent resident of the United States (US) but does not hold citizenship.

Retention Rate – The percentage of first-time freshmen in a given fall semester who continue enrollment in the subsequent fall semester.

Returning Student – Student seeking admission after being inactive due to not enrolling for three consecutive terms or being academically suspended or dismissed.

SAT – Previously known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the SAT is a standardized test administered by The College Board with score range of 400 to 1600 used for college admissions. The test covers evidence-based reading, writing, language and math.

Senior – A fourth-year undergraduate student with 90.0 or more credit hours earned.

Sophomore – A second-year undergraduate student with 30.0 to 59.9 credit hours earned.

Stage (of Application) – Identifies the stage of the application review process including applied, reviewed, denied, admitted, cancelled, and enrolled.

Student Level – Identification of the student’s academic level, specifically designates a student as an undergraduate student, graduate student, or medical student.

Tuition Residency - The Office of Admissions determines a student’s residency status at the time of admission. This determination is based on the application information, transcripts, and other documents required for admission. More information on the various residency categories can be obtained from the University Bulletin (see <https://www.southalabama.edu/bulletin/current/admissions-enrollment/reclassification.html>).

Under-represented Minority (URM) – Students identifying as American Indian/Alaskan native, Black non-Hispanic/African-American, Hispanic, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Generally, URM can be defined as a group whose percentage of the population in a given group (such as an admissions cohort) is lower than their percentage in the population outside of the university.

Transfer Student – A student entering USA for the first time, but known to have attended a separate postsecondary institution at the same level.

Undergraduate Student – An enrolled student seeking a bachelor’s degree, undergraduate certificate, or taking undergraduate courses.