



**“Bear” Lingo: Dictionary of College Terms**  
**These are things every Potsdam student should know!**



**Academic Advisor:**

This is a faculty member who guides and advises students as they decide on a major, develop a degree plan, select courses, and apply for an internship or job. Each student at Potsdam has an academic advisor who they meet with at least once a semester.

**ACT/SAT:**

These are both college entry exams that are meant to assess a student’s general knowledge and ability to complete college-level course work. Students can choose to take one or both of these exams. Generally, they are taken during the junior and/or senior year of high school. Students accepted into Potsdam have an average SAT of 1100 (reading and math sections only) and 23 ACT composite score.

**Associate of Arts Degree (A.A. Degree):**

This is an academic program of 60 to 64 credits mostly consisting of liberal arts and science courses. This program is designed to satisfy the first two years of a four-year, baccalaureate degree and is most commonly taken by students who plan to transfer from a two-year college to a four-year university.

**Baccalaureate Degree (aka: Bachelor’s Degree):**

This is an academic program generally consisting of 120 to 128 credits, of which at least 40 must be general university studies credits and at least 40 must be upper division credits (junior and senior-level courses). Each program is designed so that a full-time student can complete it in four years. SUNY Potsdam has over 40 bachelor degree programs (majors).

**BearExpress:**

A BearExpress card is Potsdam’s own debit card. Students can put money on the card and use it on-campus at dining facilities, vending machines, and the bookstore or off-campus at local restaurants, grocery stores, and gift shops.

**BearMail;**

This is a Potsdam email account set-up for each student at SUNY Potsdam. Students can use this address to communicate with their professors, other students, friends, and family.

**Broomball:**

This popular ice sport originated in Canada and is played at Potsdam as an intramural sport. The game is played on an ice rink and has rules similar to hockey. The differences: instead of skates, the players wear boots, and instead of sticks and a puck, the players use brooms and a ball.

**Course Catalog:**

The course catalog contains information about academic policies and programs. It lists University procedures, student service information, and programs of study (outlining

required core and elective courses, faculty contact information, etc.). It provides students an outline of what their 4 years at Potsdam could look like. It can be viewed online at [www.potsdam.edu/academics/catalog](http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/catalog)

**Credit:**

At Potsdam, one credit represents one hour in the classroom per week. Courses generally range from one to four credits, with a full-time load being anywhere from 12-18 credits per semester. Successful completion of each course will earn a student the designated number of credits. In order to complete 120-128 credit hours (typical baccalaureate degree from Potsdam) in four years, students must enroll in an average of 16 hours of credit per semester.

**Cumulative GPA:**

Cumulative grade point average (GPA) refers to the overall or average GPA according to the number of credit hours and the grades received.

**FAFSA:**

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is required in order to apply for financial aid. The FAFSA is available online and should be completed as soon after Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> of the senior year in high school as possible.

**Major:**

This refers to a student's primary field of study in which he/she wants to receive a degree (see "Baccalaureate Degree" above). Go to [www.potsdam.edu/academics](http://www.potsdam.edu/academics) for more information about the majors offered at Potsdam.

**Minor:**

This is a secondary field of study consisting of fewer credit requirements than the major. Go to [www.potsdam.edu/academics](http://www.potsdam.edu/academics) for more information about the minors offered at Potsdam.

**Prerequisites:**

This is a course that must be successfully completed prior to enrollment in another course. For example, Spanish 101 must be completed before enrolling in Spanish 102. However, in certain situations, students are allowed to test out of the first course and enroll in the second.

**Rolling Admissions:**

Rolling Admissions is a policy used by many colleges to admit freshmen. Under rolling admission at Potsdam, a student is invited to submit his/her application to the university anytime within a large window. This window will open Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> and remain open throughout the winter, spring, and summer months leading to the start of the semester. Upon receiving an application, Potsdam will review it mail a decision within a week or two.

**Snoccer:**

Combine “snow” and “soccer” and you get a popular Potsdam sport: Snoccer!

**Student Union:**

This is the building on a college campus which emphasizes social activities. Potsdam’s includes a dining facility, mail room, venture outdoors office, Pete’s Place Lounge, and student government headquarters.

**Syllabus:**

This document provides students with a basic outline of what they can expect from a particular course. It typically includes an outline of the semester projects, suggested reading and research, and schedule of exams. Professors give their students a syllabus at the beginning of each semester.