The **domain** of an attribute is a description of an attribute's possible values. The characteristics of a domain depend on the type of the attribute. The domain of a simple attribute consists of both a physical and a semantic description. The physical description indicates the type of data, the length of data, and the restrictions are constraints. The semantic description indicates the function or purpose of the attribute-it distinguishes this attributes from other attributes that might have the same physical description.

The semantic description differentiates strings of seven characters that represent names of departments from similar strings that represent, say names of courses or buildings or some other attributes. In some cases, the physical description of a simple attribute domain is an **enumerated list**, the set of an attribute's specific values. The domain of a group attribute also has a physical and a semantic description. The physical description is a list of all the attributes in the group and the order of those attributes. The semantic description is the function or purpose of the group. In a sense, the domain of an object attribute is a dynamically enumerated list; the list contains all of the object instances of a particular type.