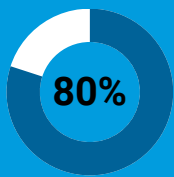




The SAT in a Test-Optional World

The SAT Suite of Assessments helps students showcase their ability, allows them to be seen by colleges and scholarship organizations, and provides opportunities for higher ed to proactively reach out to them. It also serves as a tool for K-12 to support students in college and career planning. Millions of students continue to take the SAT despite it being optional for college admissions.

In a test-optional world, the SAT is a lower-stakes test for college admissions but is still a valuable part of the admissions and enrollment process at many colleges. When considered within the context of where a student lives and learns, test scores can help confirm a student's grades or can even show their strengths beyond their high school academic performance. It will continue to give every student who wants it the opportunity to be recognized, show what they can do, and connect to scholarships to help pay for college.



According to a [survey by Morning Consult](#), more than 80% of students and parents say they want the choice to send their scores to colleges.

Test scores continue to be a valid predictor of first-year outcomes

SAT scores continue to be a strong predictor of academic success even if students do not submit scores for consideration in admissions. Findings from the [Admissions Research Consortium \(ARC\)](#)* show that among fall 2021 first-year enrollees with the same high school grades, students with higher SAT scores—regardless of their decision to disclose their test scores for admissions purposes—had higher average first-year grades, credit accumulation, and retention rates. First-year outcomes were lower for score withholders and lowest for students with no SAT score.

Test-score policy language

In the context of test-optional policies, not all students choose to submit test scores for admissions consideration. At ARC institutions, about 50% of applicants disclose test scores. While the primary driver for deciding whether or not to send scores is a student's own test score, relative to the reported scores of the colleges where they're applying, the way a school communicates about their test score policies influences student behavior.

An analysis of ARC institutions showed that test policy language that suggests scores are important and useful have average score disclosure rates of over 60%, while language suggesting that scores are unnecessary results in average score disclosure rates below 30%.



Collecting scores at enrollment

Colleges and universities value and use test scores for a wide range of purposes beyond admissions including:

- Scholarships
- Academic advising
- Honors Programs
- Course placement
- Institutional research
- Major area of study placement

With fewer students submitting test scores during the admissions process, there is a growing number of institutions collecting scores at the point of enrollment. As institutions need more information on students who are admitted under test-optional policies, it's likely more colleges will request scores to support enrolling students.

33%

Over one-third of respondents in a 2022 national College Board survey request or require enrolling students to send scores for the 2021-22 admissions cycle.

54%

54% of ARC* institutions plan to collect scores at enrollment for the 2023-24 admissions cycle. This has increased steadily since the start of the pandemic.

ACTION ITEMS:

- ✓ Review findings from the Admissions Research Consortium. Consider how these findings align with what you're seeing on campus. Discuss performance trends with the student success and advising teams on campus.
- ✓ Consider how you're communicating with students, parents, and counselors regarding your test score policy. If your institution is test-optional, are you clear about how you're using test scores for other campus practices such as placement, academic advising, and scholarships?
- ✓ Revisit your test score policy language. Does it align with your current practice and use of scores? Do you need to revise your policy language to reflect your desire for or current use of scores?
- ✓ Consider how collecting test scores during enrollment can help support students' academic progress and success. How might this data help you retain students throughout their college career?

*The Admissions Research Consortium (ARC) aims to help colleges understand how the impacts of the pandemic are shaping their incoming classes, and how these impacts might continue to affect college performance outcomes in the future. ARC is a multiyear, collaborative research initiative with 80 participating colleges and associations, including the Association for Institutional Research (AIR), American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), and College Board. ARC is also guided by a Research Advisory Committee composed of academic and institutional researchers. research.collegeboard.org/reports/college-access/evidence-admissions-research-consortium