

Test-Optional College Admissions Policies

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With Test-Optional Policies gaining momentum over the past decade, parents and students have many questions about what they are, how they differ from other admissions test policies, and whether or not to take advantage of them. Below are answers to the most frequently asked questions Open Door Education receives about testing policies.

FAQs

What are Test-Optional Policies?

Test-Optional Policies (TOPs) allow some or all prospective students to apply without submitting standardized test scores from the SAT or ACT. There are a variety of TOPs:

- Test-Optional for all applicants
- Test-Optional with additional application materials (graded work, supplemental essays)
- Test-Optional if you meet certain GPA requirements
- Test-Optional unless you are applying for specific schools or scholarships

Students who apply to Test-Optional schools may still submit SAT/ACT scores, but they are not required to do so.

What's the difference between Test-Optional and Test-Flexible Policies?

Test-Flexible Policies allow students to submit scores from other tests (e.g. AP tests, International Baccalaureate, etc) instead of SAT/ACT scores.

What does it mean if a school says it is Test-Blind?

Test-Blind Policies do not consider SAT/ACT scores at all in the admissions process, even if the student chooses to submit them. Test-Blind schools will place an increased emphasis on transcripts, essays, letters of recommendation, extracurriculars, and service.

Why do schools adopt TOPs?

Schools who adopt TOPs can anticipate an increase in the overall number of applications as well as an increase in applications from minority students and students of relatively low socio-economic status.

Who are TOPs designed for? Who should use them?

TOPs are especially helpful for students who feel that the SAT/ACT does not accurately represent their academic ability as well as for students who lack quality resources to prepare for the SAT/ACT. Any student can apply to Test-Optional schools.

Which schools offer TOPs?

There are now over 1,000 schools that have adopted some form of TOP, including the University of Chicago, Wake Forest, Brandeis, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and Bates College. To see a complete list of Test-Optional schools, visit: www.FairTest.org.

If I choose a Test-Optional school, should I still submit my scores?

Whether or not to submit your scores can be a tricky question. Students should consider the overall strength of their application, the school's median test scores, and their own perceptions of their scores. Keep in mind that schools with TOPs will see their median scores increase because students with strong test scores are more likely to submit SAT/ACT results than students with low scores. Test-Optional schools tend to lend less weight to test scores, so scores that are slightly below the median are usually worth submitting. Students may want to consider consulting with a college counselor before making the final decision whether or not to submit.

Please contact Open Door Education if you have additional questions about Test-Optional Policies.



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