

Which ivy leagues are test-optional 2025

Hi there! As of now, Ivy League schools have different policies regarding standardized testing. To help you keep track, here's a summary of each Ivy League school's current test-optional policy:1. Brown University: Requiring SAT or ACT scores for all applicants.2. Columbia University: Permanently test-optional.3. Cornell University: Will require test scores again starting with the 2025-2026 cycle.4. Dartmouth College: Requiring SAT or ACT scores for all applicants.5. Harvard University: Test-optional through at least the 2024-2025 application cycle.7. Princeton University: Test-optional through at least the 2025-2026 application cycle.8. Yale University: Requiring SAT, ACT, or IB or AP exam scores for all applicants. Please note that these policies are subject to change, so always double-check each institution's website for the most up-to-date information on their standardized testing policies. Keep in mind that if you feel your standardized test scores are an accurate representation of your academic abilities, it would likely be beneficial to submit them, even if the school is test-optional, since the Ivy League schools are so selective. If you want to learn more about how to navigate test-optional policies, I'd recommend checking out this blog post from CollegeVine: if you want a complete list of schools that have gone back to requiring standardized tests, you can check out this blog post: luck with your applications! a year ago Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in test optional colleges and universities. Where test optional schools used to be a small minority, now many of the best colleges in the U.S. have adopted test optional policies. More recently, we've seen some schools move away from being test optional. On the other hand, other schools have solidified their stance on remaining test optional. In this guide, we'll break down how we ended up with so many test optional. In this guide, we'll start by answering the question, "What is a test optional college?" then explore some of the best test optional colleges in the U.S. You'll find: A history of test optional schools Our list of the top 35 test optional schools, and ACT requirements of Ivy League schools Resources from CollegeAdvisor on how to navigate your application to test optional schools, from building your college list to getting your acceptance letter. Before we dive in, let's start with the basics: what is a test optional colleges are schools, choosing not to submit an SAT or ACT score will not negatively affect your application. There is no penalty for choosing not to submit a test score to test optional schools. Consequently, test optional schools have to put more emphasis on other piece of data that admissions officers could use to learn about applicants. Now, at many test optional schools, that piece of data no longer exists. This lends weight to your grades, essays, and letters of recommendations. You can still submit an SAT or ACT score to test optional schools, and they will use it as they did in the past. A strong score can help set you apart from other applicants and counteract any weaknesses in your academic record. However, if you don't submit a test score to a test optional college, it won't hurt your chances at admission. Now that we've answered the question "what is a test optional college, it won't hurt your chances at admission. Now that we've answered the question "what is a test optional college, it won't hurt your chances at admission. Now that we've answered the question "what is a test optional college, it won't hurt your chances at admission. Now that we've answered the question "what is a test optional college, it won't hurt your chances at admission. 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The SAT was initially meant to assess peoples' IQ and confirm that different races had be confirmed to assess peoples' IQ and confirm that different races had be confirmed to assess peoples' IQ and confirm that different races had be confirmed to assess peoples' IQ and confirmed to assess peoples' IQ assess peoples' IQ and confirmed to assess peoples' IQ assess p was race-based. Soon the SAT was being used to secure scholarships for students who were not the typical elite university applicants. The SAT became a tool of meritocracy. By 1957 there were over half a million students taking the SAT every year. However, there has been pushback to the SAT. In the early 2000s, research that high school grades were a better predictor of college success caused the SAT to adapt and add a writing section. Studies at test optional schools like Bates also went against commonly held ideas about the test. They saw students who had not submitted scores performed just as well as students who did. graduation rates. This caused some colleges to become test optional schools. Additionally, various cheating scandals followed the SAT and the ACT into the 2010s. During Covid-19, students could not assess student performance based on a test that so many students could not take. Some heralded this as a positive change that would ultimately increase diversity and equality in college admissions. However, the move towards test optional schools was not celebrated by all. And there are still debates about the policy's benefits. Next, let's dig a little deeper into the nuances of test optional policies. When applying to colleges, it's important to know the differences between test optional schools don't require you if you do not submit a score. However, test optional schools still accept SAT/ACT scores, and will take your score into consideration. Test-blind colleges, on the other hand, do not accept test scores at all. If you were to submit a test score at all. If you were to submit a test score to a test-blind college, they would not look at it or take it into account when evaluating your application. Test-blind schools can be an advantage or a disadvantage depending on your personal situation. If you took the SAT or ACT and got a score that you're proud of, you should consider applying to schools that require test scores or are test-optional. However, maybe testing is not your strong suit and you feel more confident in your essays, grades, extracurriculars, or recommendations. If that sounds like you, consider applying to test-blind colleges. Some of the best test-blind colleges include the University of California system, which went test-blind in Fall 2021. Regardless of a school's standardized testing policy, remember that college admissions is a holistic process. Admissions is a holistic process. factor. If you want to apply to test optional schools, double check the school's SAT requirements and ACT requirements before applying. Many schools have changed their requirements just within the last few years post-Covid. So, it's important to have the most up-to-date information. You can generally find information about a school's test optional policy on their admissions website. To give you one example, Cornell's testing policies have changed a lot in recent years. In 2020, Cornell became one of the many test optional schools that sprung up due to the pandemic. However, the school is now reinstating mandatory testing policies, starting with fall 2026 enrollment. Essentially Cornell has decided that, when combined with other college admissions requirements, test scores help them better understand a student's academic potential. To ease this transition, Cornell will be test recommended this year. That means students applying for fall 2025 enrollment are highly encouraged to submit SAT or ACT scores. After that, test scores will once again be mandatory. Now, let's turn our attention to the best test optional colleges. If you're looking for flexibility in your admissions process, you're in luck. Many of the best colleges in the US are test optional schools. In the next section, you'll find our list of colleges that currently have test optional policies. As you explore these test-optional schools, remember that the decision to submit your test scores is entirely yours. If you feel your scores, don't let that discourage you from applying. Conversely, if you're proud of your scores, don't hesitate to share them with the admissions team! Here's our list of the top 35 test optional schools: If you want to apply to one of the best test optional schools in the country, take a look at Princeton admissions. Located in Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton admissions has confirmed they will remain test-optional until at least 2025. The next school on our list of test optional schools is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Unlike a few of its Ivy League admissions brethren, UPenn admissions has decided to remain test-optional. UPenn admissions will be test optional for the 2024-25 college cycle. Located in Durham, North Carolina, Duke University has extended its test optional policy through the 2023-2024 application cycle. Third on our list of test optional schools, Duke is ranked among the top 10 universities in the U.S. This Baltimore, Maryland-based university is test optional for the 2024-2025 admissions cycle. Located in Evanston, Illinois, this next school on our list of test optional schools is Northwestern. Northwestern has been test optional since 2020 and will continue for the upcoming application cycle. One of New York City's many elite colleges, Columbia admissions will continue to be test optional for the 2024-2025 application cycle. Columbia admissions is another one of the few Ivy League admissions is another one of the few Ivy League admissions that have remained test-optional. As previously mentioned, Cornell is currently test optional—however, Cornell is phasing SAT requirements back into its college admissions requirements. For this upcoming year, Cornell considers its policies to be "test-recommended." Next on our test optional schools list is UChicago, which practices what it calls a "No Harm" testing policy. Your test scores, should you choose to submit them, will only be considered if they strengthen your application. Number nine on our list of test optional schools is UC Berkeley. It's not just test optional but "test free," meaning Berkeley's admissions office will not consider any submitted SAT or ACT scores. As a fellow UC school, it's no surprise UCLA is also featured on our list of test-blind colleges. Located in Houston, Texas, Rice University is test-optional for this admission cycle. However, Rice's admissions office recommends that students who can submit their SAT or ACT test scores do so. Next on our list of test optional policy through Fall 2027. Vanderbilt admissions went test optional in 2020, and you can likely expect an update from Vanderbilt admissions on their policies sometime in the next few years. Now let's look at the Notre Dame requirements are dependent on GPA. Located in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the University of Michigan's admissions office has extended its test-optional policy through the 2025 admissions cycle. If you want to apply test-optional to UNC, your GPA must be higher than 2.8. Starting in the 2026-2027 academic year, students with a GPA below 2.8 must submit a test score and meet a minimum SAT and ACT score. Situated in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Carnegie Mellon University is test-optional for the 2025 cycle. However, School of Computer Science applicants are strongly encouraged to submit scores. Next on our list of test optional for the 2024-2025 admissions cycle. You don't need to submit a test score to satisfy the requirements for UVA admissions. For the next admissions cycle, UVA admissions has decided to count themselves amongst their fellow test optional colleges. Like the other UC schools, UC Davis is one of the UC's test-blind colleges through fall 2024. This beautiful La Jolla school is on our list of test optional schools but is actually test-free, or one of the test-blind colleges. This LA school is next on our list of test optional colleges. USC will remain test optional through fall 2025. Like the other UC schools, UC Irvine is test blind. Next let's look at the NYU application. When filling out your NYU application, don't worry-NYU is one of the best test optional colleges in the US. That means you can submit your NYU application without test scores. As a UC School, UC Santa Barbara is not just one of our test optional colleges, but is in fact one of the best-test blind colleges. When applying to UIUC, you do not need to submit any scores to be considered for admission. Located in Madison, Wisconsin, this university is test-optional for this admissions cycle. Following their internal research, Boston College is next on our list of test optional colleges. It describes itself as "truly" test optional. Williamstown, Massachusetts-based college is next on our list of test optional through 2024-2025. This Williamstown, Massachusetts-based college is next on our list of test optional colleges. It describes itself as "truly" test optional. Williamstown, Massachusetts-based college is next on our list of test optional colleges. It describes itself as "truly" test optional. Williamstown, Massachusetts-based college is next on our list of test optional. College, is also on our list of best test optional colleges. However, students who want to submit their scores and have taken multiple tests do have the opportunity to superscore their results. According to Pomona Magazine, this school's status as one of the best test optional colleges will stay in place for the indefinite future. This Pennsylvania-based college is next on our list of best test optional colleges, and maintains its test optional colleges policy for the upcoming application cycle. This renowned women's college in Massachusetts will remain on the list of test optional colleges at least through fall 2025. Unlike many other test optional colleges, Bowdoin has actually been test optional for over 50 years! Bowdoin continues its presence on the list of best test optional colleges and has no intention of stopping. This New York City school describes its test optional policy as "temporary," but through 2027 will remain on our list of best test optional colleges. With a variety of policies and commitments currently in place, let's turn our attention to the future. Though there has been a recent increase in test-optional universities, there's no guarantee that these schools will remain test-optional universities. Admissions at UMich has done its own research and believes that test-optional universities indefinitely. universities are more fair and equitable than schools that require testing, like Dartmouth and other Ivy League admissions. The list of test-optional universities changes year to year. So, it's best to be prepared and always keep an eye on your dream schools like Cornell, it's likely and the cornell, it's likely and the cornell universities changes year to year. that the admissions office will give enough headway on changing policies that it won't catch you off guard. That is, if you've planned on applying to schools that are test-optional universities, they likely won't change policies so fast that if you haven't taken a test you'll be unable to complete the college application requirements. Given the continued prevalence of test-optional universities, it's likely that many colleges and universities will remain test optional. In fact, as of now, the majority of four-year universities have chosen to be test optional. However, some Ivy League admissions have reverted their testing policies back to pre-2020 status—that is, requiring test scores. So, if you want to prepare for admission to some of the best colleges like Harvard, Yale, Stanford, or Brown, it's probably better to plan on taking the SAT or ACT. Even if you don't want to be boxed in by your choice. After all, you don't want to miss out on enrolling in your dream college just because you never took the SAT! Prior to the pandemic, the list of test-optional universities in the U.S., largely due to fears about equity and diversity in testing. In fact, before Covid, there were over 1,000 schools that were test-optional. These schools ranged from public schools like James Madison and George Mason to small liberal arts schools like Bowdoin. The pandemic supercharged the trend, both for practical reasons and as an attempt to make higher education more accessible. Despite its sustained popularity, there can still be some confusion around how test optional policies factor into how the admissions office weighs other college admissions requirements. And, if you're someone who excels at standardized tests, test-optional admissions. There's research that the SAT privileges white, wealthy applicants. Test-optional admissions is therefore an attempt to make college more accessible and equitable for first generation. If someone doesn't have the resources to plan far in advance to take the SAT, to hire a private tutor, to pay to take the test multiple times, it can disadvantage them. Plus, there are other ways to evaluate performance, and some studies have found grades to be a better predictor of collegiate success anyway. However, other research paints standardized tests in a more positive light, showing that test-optional policies can actually be more problematic than beneficial. In the following sections, we'll explore some of the benefits and drawbacks of test-optional policies. Covid-19, many colleges and universities were forced to embark on an experiment. Most colleges that became test optional schools had previously required SATs, relying on the scores to better understand their applicants. Since then, over 80% of colleges have become test optional schools can see the difference removing SAT requirements had on their applicant pool. Generally speaking, they led to a higher number of applicants, and greater diversity. For first generation students, students unfamiliar with college applications isn't totally clear. Where some students start studying for the SAT as early as 9th grade, hire private tutors, and have the money to take the test multiple times to optimize their score, others are going in blind. This kind of disparity means that the SAT privileges students who come from wealth and whose parents went to college. And these students are already starting off on a better foot when it comes to college admissions. By removing some of these SAT and ACT requirements, test optional schools give more students more opportunities to earn an acceptance. Some test optional schools, test-blind colleges may not even let you submit an SAT or ACT score. The University of California schools (the UCs) are a prime example of this: after being sued by a coalition of students and students of color, the UC system decided to not just become a system of test optional schools, but test-blind colleges. On the other hand, test blind colleges can have their drawbacks. If you're a student looking to apply to the UCs, which are some of the best schools in the US, you may wish that your SAT scores could be considered. If you're a student looking to applying to other schools at a similar level as UC Berkeley or UCLA, you likely have already taken the SAT in preparation for the college admissions requirements of other colleges that may not be test optional. That being said, proponents of test-blind colleges maintain that test optional schools do a better job of attracting students from all walks of life. On the other hand, some argue that there are benefits to SAT requirements and ACT requirements that test optional schools lose. The SAT isn't the only part of the college process where wealthier students have a leg up. Unlike practices like hiring outside college counseling, or investing in internships or specialized summer camps, the SAT is something that a student could hypothetically ace regardless of their family's income level. Plus, as test optional schools lose. become more common and schools receive more and more applicants, the chance of admission becomes slimmer and slimmer. Students with means are now using high SAT scores to stand out from the crowd. Low-income students are more likely to take advantage of test optional schools' policies and opt-out of taking the test, whereas wealthy students are given the guidance and resources to take the test regardless. Essentially, even though test optional schools lower the barrier for application, that doesn't mean that it's any easier to gain admission. As explained by Maggie Bigelow in her article on test optional schools, "The glaringly unfair aspect of test-optional guidelines is that wealth students know it's a meaningless distinction; lower-income students to, if they have the time and resources, take the SAT or the ACT. This is true regardless of whether they're applying to test optional schools. So if you're a sophomore or junior reading this free resource, here's our advice: Take a full length practice test online, and start charting out your study plan. Once you have a baseline, ask yourself-what parts of the test do you struggle with the most? Buy a secondhand study book, go to a free class offered by your high school, and continue to take practice tests to get used to the structure. Take the test at least once, and another time if you can. If you're looking for a more formalized paid class, consider looking for a more formalized paid class, consider looking into Method Testing. Some schools remain test optional schools during the pandemic have reinstated some form of SAT requirements and/or ACT requirements. Some schools remain test optional schools during the pandemic have reinstated some form of SAT requirements and/or ACT requirements. to a degree, and are charting new paths in college admissions requirements. While most Ivy League admissions became test optional schools in 2024. In response to the pandemic, Ivy League admissions decided to transition to test optional schools. This would allow students to continue to apply to Ivy League admissions despite the inability to take a test in person. This resulted in a huge spike in the number of applications these test optional schools have decided that, for varying reasons, they will revert to their prepandemic test policies. For the majority of Ivies, there is now some form of test score included in the college application requirement on the horizon. Let's look at some of the Ivies that have been test optional schools and examine their current college application requirements. For the last few years, Harvard has been at the top of the list of colleges waiving SAT and ACT scores. But as of April 2024, Harvard is no longer one of the best test optional schools. Harvard published research that found that though standardized tests are not unbiased assessments of students' skills, other college application requirements like essays and recommendation letters are even more prone to bias. Therefore, test optional colleges miss out on crucial information that could strengthen an applicant's profile. So, for Harvard's class of 2029 (entering Fall 2025), SAT or ACT test scores will be mandatory. Like some other formerly test optional schools, Harvard is remaining a little test-flexible: if students cannot access SAT or ACTs, they are allowed to submit an IB or AP test. However, these cases should act as if Harvard is no longer on the list of test optional," and most students cannot access SAT or ACTs, they are allowed to submit an IB or AP test. you're in luck: Princeton will remain on the list of best test optional colleges up through 2025. Though it is on the list of test optional colleges, Princeton admissions offers guidance for Early Action, and by the December date for Regular Decision. Princeton tops the U.S. News list of best colleges, so it can be exciting to see it on the list of test optional colleges. The Princeton admissions rate rate is around 6%, with recent rates closer to 5%. As more test optional colleges, so it can be exciting to see how elite universities maintain or increase their acceptance rates based on a likely smaller applicant pool. As previously mentioned, Yale is now going to be test-flexible. This means that Yale applicants will be required to submit a test score, but that the score doesn't have to be an SAT or ACT. Students can submit AP or IB scores instead. This past year, Yale had its lowest acceptance rates post-Covid, which decreased yearly. Like other test optional colleges, Yale saw an increase in applicants, but did not increase the number of admitted students. Now that Yale is no longer on the list of best test optional colleges, we will see whether the acceptance rate increases for the class of 2029. For students who decide to submit their SAT scores to Yale, the average composite SAT score for admitted students is 1515, and the 25th percentile is 1470. Another Ivy that remains on the list of best test optional colleges due to Covid-19. Unlike other Ivies, Columbia admissions has decided that it wants to remain on the list of test optional colleges. Columbia's testing policy is based on the idea that "students are dynamic, multi-faceted individuals who cannot be defined by any single factor." Their internal research found that test-optional admissions didn't lead to any fall in academic success, and so Columbia will continue to be one of the best test optional colleges in the U.S. In addition to testing, for student's curriculum, their academic achievement, and their demonstrated intellectual curiosity." Exiting the list of test optional colleges is Brown, which has reinstated a test requirement. Brown's admissions office says that this decision comes after "an extensive review of data." Unlike schools with flexible policies like Yale, Brown's college admissions requirements will now include SAT or ACT scores, just as it and many other schools did prior to 2020. At the time, Brown was the third Ivy League school to leave the ranks of test optional colleges and return to its pre-pandemic policies. Though test optional colleges, Brown's acceptance rate fell from around 6-7%, to around 5% after the pandemic. Now that the school has started to require SATs scores, only time will tell how their acceptance rate will be affected come spring. Half of students admitted to Brown, you can use that benchmark to prepare. UPenn admissions is number two on our list of best test-optional universities-and for now, will stay that way. UPenn admissions will not require SAT score submissions in their college application requires for the 2024-2024 year. However, there's nothing on their score submissions will not require score submissions will not require score submissions in their college application requires that they'll remain on the list of test-optional universities indefinitely. Upenn still offers guidance on taking the SAT/ACT on its website, and offers superscoring is when, if you have taken the SAT multiple times, your highest Reading and highest Math scores are assessed together even if they were from different test sittings. While we included Cornell on the list of colleges waiving SAT and ACT scores, remember that this is only temporary. Though for now it is technically one of the best test-optional universities, Cornell will reinstate mandatory test scores as part of their college admissions requirements for students applying in 2025, who will enroll in Fall 2026. Students applying this cycle are still encouraged to submit SAT or ACT scores if they have them, which is more prompting than most test-optional universities will offer. Cornell's policies have shifted based on a multi-year study conducted by its Task Force on Standardized Testing in Admissions. Based on this report, Cornell believes that when examined alongside other parts of a student's application, test scores create a better picture of who a student is. Dartmouth referenced research to support its choice. According to Dartmouth's president, SAT scores are a valuable part of the overall strength of a student's application when considered holistically. The scores also serve to highlight high-achieving students from less-resourced backgrounds who might be "missed" by policies at test-optional universities. Since we did a deep dive into many of the top test-optional universities and shared our list of colleges waiving SAT and ACT scores, let's examine the other side of the coin. Here are the top 10 schools—many of which were momentarily test-optional university Stanford University Yale University California Institute of Technology Brown University Dartmouth College Georgetown University University University University California Institute of Technology Brown University California Institute of Technology Brown University California Institute of Technology Brown University University University California Institute of Technology Brown University California Institute of Technology Brown University Onter State Stat admissions, and the NYU application are all still test-optional. Though NYU, Notre Dame, Vanderbilt, and UVA admissions may not be as prestigious of the school exiting the list of test-optional universities is Stanford. Though for this upcoming cycle—students who submit their applications in 2024—Stanford will continue to be test-optional, starting in 2025 Stanford will reinstating the policy until next year to give "all students enough lead time to plan and prepare for testing." Like other Ivies who are straying from their test optional policies, Stanford wants to include test scores as a way to get a fuller, more complete picture of each applications holistically: test scores are just another piece of the puzzle. All of these schools, test optional or not, are looking at applications holistically: test scores are just another piece of the puzzle. All of these schools, test optional or not, are looking at applications holistically: test scores are just another piece of the puzzle. test optional schools, will not take any SAT or ACT scores into consideration. Test-blind schools aim to eliminate the influence of standardized test scores on any part of the admissions process. Depending on who you are, test-blind colleges can be a good thing or a bad thing. If you've got a stellar score that you think significantly improves your college application, you may want to steer clear of test-blind colleges might be even better than test-optional schools, since there's no chance that someone else's strong score will give them an edge over you as an applicant. The UC admissions office started reviewing their testing policies as early as 2018, and a poorly timed verdict in February 2020 encouraged that the system keep their testing requirements. However, as Covid hit, the UCs went test optional along with the majority of the other schools in the US. If you're still interested in test optional colleges, here are five more test optional schools that you can consider! Middlebury College: Located in Vermont, Middlebury is test-optional through the 2025-2026 admissions cycle. Northeastern University: According to their website, Northeastern is test-optional "for the foreseeable future." Villanova University: This Pennsylvania school is set to remain test optional, Davidson's admissions office answered with a resounding yes—"and we mean it." The SAT is undoubtedly a big stressor for students. The test itself is challenging, and it can be hard to tell what makes a good or bad SAT score. If you do decide to take the SAT or ACT, we have resources for you. Check out this webinar for tips on how to destress and ace the process. Then take a look at this guide on how to evaluate your SAT score. For juniors preparing for standardized tests, we have this comprehensive guide with everything you need to know—and if you're even younger, read this one. Wondering how much test scores matter, anyway? Read our article on getting into Ivies with a sub-1500 test score. And if you still aren't sure how to navigate this new test optional world, we've got advice for that too. Undoubtedly, the pandemic pushed test-optional policies into the spotlight, and schools today are still wrestling with debates for and against standardized testing. Test-optional means that you can still submit an SAT or ACT score, and it will still be reviewed as part of your application. You will not be penalized if you don't submit a score. However, if a school is test-blind, that means the school does not look at any students' test scores as part of their assessment process. There are reasons both for and against standardized testing. To some, SATs and ACTs only perpetuate racial biases and inequities in the U.S. Alternatively, some argue that because the entire college application process gives students with more resources a leg up, a standardized test like the SAT is relatively meritocratic in comparison. Plus, the SAT is just one part of a holistic college application assessment, and works in congruence with other parts of your application to show the admissions office who you are. In the past year, many Ivy League colleges have reverted to their pre-Covid testing policies. They now require test scores from the SAT or ACT, or at some schools, a score on an AP or IB test. Regardless of how SAT/ACT requirements continue to change in the future, there are a ton of incredible colleges that are test-optional. And, whether you choose to submit a test score or apply to test optional colleges, your scores are only one part of your application. There are many other ways to show the admissions committee what your strengths are and what kind of student you'll be. This article was written by advisor Rachel Kahn. Looking for more admissions support? Click here to schedule a free meeting with one of our Admissions Specialists. During your meeting, our team will discuss your profile and help you find targeted ways to increase your admissions odds at top schools. We'll also answer any questions and discuss how CollegeAdvisor.com can support you in the college application process. Curious about test-optional colleges for 2025-26? This guide provides an up-to-date list of colleges that don't require SAT/ACT scores and spotlights the highest ranking test-optional universities and liberal arts colleges so you keep your college journey on course! According to FairTest's website, more than 2,000 four-year institutions are currently test optional, and an additional 85 institutions are test free. But, before you get too excited about taking a pass altogether on standardized tests, keep in mind that a good number of some of the most sought-after US colleges and universities do require test scores for admissions — and so before skipping the test, you really need to think first about where you most want to apply!Test-Optional Colleges: You can elect to submit your SAT or ACT scores, but they are not required. Submitted scores will be considered as part of their application in line with the school's admissions policy and processes. Test-Free (Test-Blind) Colleges: No need to submit scores ever for admissions as standardized tests play no role in admissions decisions. It's important to keep in mind that some leading institutions continue to require test scores for admissions, including some Ivy League schools that recently reinstated testing requirements. So you'll want to think carefully about where you're applying and find out if any of your prospective schools are on the list of schools requiring test scores. That said, you'll find three Ivy League schools and several other top-ranking US universities continue to offer test-optional admissions! All of this shifting test-policy terrain makes it hard to keep tabs on which schools are currently test optional. Keep reading to find out which schools are currently test-optional, with a spotlight on top-ranking universities and liberal arts colleges, followed by a complete list of schools. In addition, we'll also highlight recent shifts and trends in test policy at high-profile institutions, and provide some crucial tips for your test-taking decision making. SchoolRanking (US News & World Report)Princeton1Duke6 (tie)Northwestern6 (tie)University of California, Los Angeles15University of California, Berkeley17Rice18 (tie)University of Notre Dame18 (tie)University of Southern California27 (tie)* Important Note: Testing policies change frequently. Always double-check the most up-to-date information on each college's official website before applying. SchoolRanking (US News & World Report) Williams College's official website before applying. SchoolRanking (US News & World Report) Williams College's official website before applying. SchoolRanking (US News & World Report) Williams College's official website before applying. SchoolRanking (US News & World Report) Williams College's official website before applying. SchoolRanking (US News & World Report) Williams College's official website before applying. SchoolRanking (US News & World Report) Williams College's official website before applying. 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Dartmouth Yale Brown Harvard Caltech University of Texas at Austin Carnegie Mellon University Johns Hopkins University Stanford UPenn Cornell California California is the only state with a state-imposed ban on testing requirements for their state institutions: Universities have been test-free since 2022 Washington state: In 2021, leaders across all 4-year public universities in Washington state moved to adopt permanent test-optional admissions policies. Colorado: In 2021, Colorado lawmakers gave universities leeway to require test scores, and at that time all public four-year institutions in the state declared test-optional admissions policies. Michigan are, for now at least, test optional. Montana: In 2021, all state universities in Montana adopted test-optional admissions policies. Below you'll find 100 of the most prominent US universities and colleges that are test-optional in 2025-26. Important Note: Testing policies change frequently. Always double-check the most up-to-date information on each college's official website before applying. American University Amherst College Arizona State University Art Center College Bates Colleg University Colby College Colgate University Colorado College Colorado School of Mines Columbia University Davidson College Hampshire College Hamilton College Hampshire College Hampshire College Kenyon College Lehigh University Lewis & Clark College Macalester College Miami University (Ohio) Middlebury College Michigan State University North Carolina State University Pepperdine University Pepperdine University Pepperdine University Reed College Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Rice University Rochester Institute of Technology Rhode Island School of Design Rutgers University Skidmore College Smith College State University Skidmore College State University The College State University Skidmore College State University Skidmore College State University The College State University Skidmore College State University Tufts University of Maine University of Maine University of Michigan University of Minnesota University of Massachusetts University of Michigan University of Minnesota University of Morth Carolina University of Morte Dame University of Minnesota Oregon University of Pennsylvania University of San Francisco University of Virginia University of Southern California University of Virginia Tech Wake Forest University Wellesley College Wesleyan University Williams College Wesleyan University Williams College Williams College Williams College Wesleyan University Williams College Wi you choose to submit a test score, you should expect that admissions officers will look closely at all key academic metrics, like your high school courses, and your overall GPA. Other application components will also be important, such as your extracurricular activities, personal essays, and recommendation letters. What is the difference between a test-optional and test-free (test-blind) admissions policy?Test-optional schools don't require SAT/ACT scores, but you can submit them and schools will consider them along with other components of your application. How schools evaluate them can vary. Test-free (test-blind) schools do not consider or even review SAT/ACT scores, even if submitted, meaning test scores are not allowed to influence the admissions process. Should I take the test if: You're applying to test-required schools, or to test-optional schools where strong scores can boost your application. Your practice test scores suggest you can achieve a competitive result. Should I submit standardized test scores to a test-optional college? It might be best to submit score falls at or above the middle 50% range of admitted students for your target schools You're applying to test-optional merit scholarships that consider SAT/ACT scores It might be best to withhold scores if... Your score is below the middle 50% range and might weaken your application is already strong, and test scores wouldn't add value You're clear that the school is truly test-optional (no hidden advantages for submitting) Will I be at a disadvantage if I don't submit my scores to a test-optional school? It's very hard to know for sure how submitting or not submitting or not submitting or not submitting scores to a test-optional school? It's very hard to know for sure how submitting or not submitting scores to a test-optional school? It's very hard to know for sure how submitting scores to a test-optional school? It's very hard to know for sure how submitting scores to a test-optional school? It's very hard to know for sure how submitting scores to a test-optional school? It's very hard to know for sure how submitting scores to a test-optional school? submitting them. If applying to a test-free school, focus on strengthening other aspects of your application (GPA, essays, extracurriculars). How do I know if my SAT/ACT score will rank well compared to other applicants to a specific school? Check the admissions pages on the school's website for information about their applicants. Many schools will report percentile scores of their applicant pool, alongside other general admissions information for prospective students. You can also look for this information by checking the school's Common Data Set (CDS). Recent-year CDS reports are often accessible with a Google search and viewable online. CDS reports typically provide applicant-pool profile information, including information about percentile scores and also the percentage of applicants who opted to submit their SAT or ACT, how high of a score should I aim for? A good guideline to start with is aiming for a score at or above the 50th percentile (median score) for your reach schools. For your target schools, you can aim higher by trying to achieve a score at or above the 75th percentile. To stand out at a highly selective school, scoring above the 75th percentile is a great goal that can help increase your chances of being a top applicant. Navigating the college search and application process is a pivotal challenge for high schoolers, and testing is one more hurdle. Some good news is that you can find many excellent schools with test-optional policies. However, many students gain some advantage for admissions is very competitive. You may also find some of your top-choice schools require test scores, making it a good strategy for students planning to apply to several high-ranking schools to prepare ahead by taking practice tests and finding other ways to achieve as high a score as possible on either the SAT or ACT. To find out more about how you can navigate your college journey with less stress, less guesswork, and greater confidence, sign up here for a free feedback session with a friendly Crimson Education admissions expert. Your session is a great opportunity to tell us about your challenges and interests and get insights for your best next steps, or learn more about our flexible services and personalized approach. Remember, students working with Crimson are 7x more likely to gain admission to their top-choice schools! So why not get started today!What Makes Crimson Different