

College Exams - SAT/ACT FAQ

The coronavirus pandemic has created uncertainty in the college admissions process and SAT/ACT exams. Disruptions in testing and cancellations are acknowledged by colleges. Over 1,400 colleges in the U.S., including the CSU and UC college systems, have made the decision to be test optional or test blind in response and will NOT need test scores to make admissions decisions. TUSD values the health, safety, and college and career readiness opportunities for all students. This FAQ is to help guide students and families regarding testing as they navigate the admissions process for class of 2021 and subsequent graduating classes. The FAQ will be updated with links and resources as they become available.

Will I be at a disadvantage in the admissions process if I do not take the test?

If the college's admissions policy for testing is test optional or test blind, lack of test scores do NOT disadvantage students in the admissions process. Test optional truly means that a test score is NOT required. Colleges who employ holistic evaluation practices already know that a test score is never the definitive variable that determines admissions. Holistic admission evaluation means that students are evaluated within "the whole picture" that includes grades, local context, extra curricular activities, talents, accomplishments, interests, and other information that makes up the student's narrative. This is even more true when the student's local context excludes opportunities to take an exam due to disruptions. As a result, no student who lacks a test score will be disadvantaged in the admissions evaluation process. We encourage students to visit the individual college admissions websites for more information on their test policy for admissions.

What about the class of 2022... 2023.... ?

More than half of all colleges have pledged to continue to be test optional. However, some will revisit the test policy as they monitor the continued disruptions for access to testing due to the pandemic. Colleges pledge to continue to use holistic evaluation approaches for subsequent classes with a commitment to using equitable evaluation practices. The situation is fluid and we encourage students to visit the individual college admissions websites.

What are the benefits of taking the SAT/ACT if the schools I am applying to are test optional?

Some colleges, including test optional schools, will use SAT or ACT scores to award merit scholarships for incoming students. However, it's important to note merit based aid can be determined by a variety of other factors that include extracurricular activities, academic achievements, AP exams, evidence of college courses taken, and other accomplishments demonstrated by the student. In other words, the test score is usually not the only point of data used to determine merit based aid at colleges who award merit scholarships. Students are encouraged to visit the individual admissions websites of private institutions to get more information on their test requirement policy for freshman admissions.

Should I go out of state to take the ACT/SAT?

It is recommended that students only test if it is safe to do so. Students are evaluated based on their context, the school, district, and greater community. Admissions evaluation for students who reside in California will be evaluated within the context of California. Currently, there are no test centers in California administering the SAT or ACT due to health and safety guidelines in place to address the spread of the coronavirus.

In addition, going out of state to take the ACT/SAT does not guarantee a test administration. Test centers are able to close or cancel the exam administration as late as the day of the exam. The [College Board states](#) that, "Test centers make individual decisions about whether to administer the SAT, and they may close before the administration, right up until test day. We are asking test centers to report closures to College Board as soon as possible in order to help ensure students are informed and to reduce stress and uncertainty ahead of test day."

What is the difference between Test Optional, Test Flexible, and Test Blind?

- **Test optional schools** - Students decide if they want to submit their test scores. If submitted, the school will take SAT or ACT scores into consideration but may focus on other parts of the application like, GPA, college essays, awards and achievements, references, and any extracurricular activities.
- **Test flexible schools** - Students will be allowed to submit scores for the SAT or ACT, OR a different test in their place (such as a SAT Subject Test or AP test).
- **Test blind schools** - Test scores will not be considered in the admission process, even if they are included in the application.

What are the UC/CSU schools saying?

Both UC/CSU colleges have indicated their commitment to equitable evaluation for admissions decisions and have agreed that test scores are not required for admissions for the class of 2021. UC Schools voted to phase out the SAT/ACT altogether this past May in their admissions evaluation process. UC admissions will be test optional for Class of 2021 and 2022. They will move to test blind for classes of 2023 and 2024. Notably, UC Berkeley has decided to be test blind starting for the class of 2021. CSU Schools will not accept scores of any kind for class of 2021 and are evaluating their admissions test policy for class of 2022 and on.

It's also important to note that UC's use a holistic admissions evaluation process that values a variety of data points that includes a student's academic record, local context, community involvement, extracurricular activities, and their unique narratives and talents. For more information on how applicants are reviewed, please visit the [UC's webpage on how applications are reviewed](#).

What about NCAA?

The NCAA announced in August that they will waive the testing requirement for students intending to enroll in Fall of 2021 full time in a D1 and D2 school. Prospective student athletes are encouraged to check the admissions requirements for the individual colleges test requirement. NCAA will continue to monitor the impact of disruption on testing for subsequent classes. The communication released from NCAA is [here](#).

Summary by Class

Class of 2021	Class of 2022	Class of 2023	Class of 2024
UC: Test Optional <small>*9/1 Ruling- LA Times</small>	UC: Test Optional	UC: Test Blind	UC: Test Blind
CSU: Test Blind	CSU: Pending	CSU: Pending	CSU: Pending
Private: Varies but most are test optional	Private: Varies but over half will be test optional/test blind	Private: Pending	Private: Pending

Resources

University of California

- [Exam Requirement Update](#)
- [9/1 Ruling- LA Times](#)
- [Current Ruling](#)

California State University

- [Exam Requirements](#)

NACAC: National Association for College Admission Counseling

- [Test-Optional Colleges & Universities](#)
- [NACAC Search Tool](#)

ACT

- [The ACT Test Amid COVID-19](#)
- [ACT COVID-19 Blog](#)
- [International Test Administrations Cancelled through February 2021](#)

SAT

- [Test Center Capacity Update](#)
- [Covid-19 Updates](#)