

COLLEGE CONNECTION'S GUIDE: HOW TO SOLVE THE "TEST OPTIONAL" CONUNDRUM

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with additional socio-economic equity concerns, more than 80% of four-year colleges in the United States have recently stopped requiring those students, applying for fall 2023 admission to the colleges, to submit their SAT/ACT standardized test scores.

Still, of those applicants seeking fall 2023 admission, while only 43% of the applicants submitted SAT/ACT standardized test scores, 67% of the admitted applicants had submitted SAT/ACT standardized test scores.

In light of the above, especially when coupled with the current trend in college counseling, advising students, on average, to apply to twelve colleges, College Connection urges all students to consider taking the SAT/ACT standardized test one to three times. Thereafter, students should submit their SAT/ACT standardized test scores only to those colleges where the students' SAT/ACT test scores are equivalent to, or higher than, the median SAT/ACT test scores of the college's accepted freshman year class from the previous school year.

Because the standardized test policies of individual domestic colleges, as well as a handful of international colleges, are constantly evolving, College Connection also advises all students, before opting to take the SAT/ACT, or any other type of standardized test, to check the standardized testing policies of the colleges the students wish to apply to.

For example, while a small handful of colleges are test mandatory, requiring their applicants to submit SAT/ACT test scores as part of the admissions process -MIT, Georgetown, etc.- other colleges are currently test-blind, refusing to consider their applicants' standardized test scores as part of the admissions process -all nine campuses of the University of California (until at least the 2025 college application season), California Institute of Technology, Amherst College (until the 2024 college application season), three of Cornell

University's individual colleges -including Cornell's S.C. Johnson College of Business- (until the 2024 college application season), etc.

The vast majority of colleges, however, are test optional, allowing their applicants to submit, or withhold, SAT/ACT test scores as part of the admissions process -all Ivy League colleges, Stanford, Notre Dame, etc. Some colleges are test flexible, allowing their applicants to submit, or withhold, certain other specified standardized test scores -AP (Advanced Placement) test score(s), IB (International Baccalaureate) test score(s), or, at some colleges, -NYU, etc.- the students retain the option of submitting their SAT/ACT test scores. Finally, some colleges -Columbia, etc.- which generally employ a test optional policy with regard to SAT/ACT test scores, mandate that applicants include their International Baccalaureate scores on their college applications.