

What Does Test Optional Really Mean?

Test Optional means that it is not mandatory for students to submit their SAT or ACT scores as part of their college application. However, they will consider SAT and ACT scores if they are submitted.

If you decide not to submit your test scores, the rest of your application, such as your grades, essays, extracurricular activities, and achievements, must be strong enough to be admitted. Remember, you are competing against students that may have opted to submit their test scores.

Consider why you would not want to submit your test scores. Being a test optional college does not mean that the college has relaxed its admission standards. Also, test optional policies differ from college to college.

Questions to consider as to whether you should submit test scores:

- Are test scores needed to be considered for the Honors Program/College?
- Are test scores needed for scholarship/grants consideration?
- Do you need to submit an additional essay or other materials in lieu of test scores?
- Are test scores required if applying to certain selective majors such as nursing or engineering?
- Will you need to take a freshman placement test?
- Is the college only test optional if you have a predetermined GPA?
- If you are considering Division I or II sports you will need to submit your scores to the college and the NCAA. Check with your college to determine if they will need them as well.

If you have strong test scores that are at or above the 50th percentile for the college you are applying to, and a strong application, you might consider submitting your scores. However, if you do not have strong test scores, but the rest of your application is stellar you may consider not submitting your scores. If you do not submit your scores colleges will place more emphasis on the rest of your application.

Remember, colleges want to assess the best of you, be that with or without your test scores.