

STANDARDIZED TESTING REVIEW

THE BASICS

Role of Standardized Testing in College Admissions

When to Take Standardized Tests

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Standardized tests (aka High Stakes tests) are only one piece of the whole puzzle that comprises the college application and must be considered in the proper context. Scores have a role in the admission process, but they alone do not dictate whether a student is accepted or denied from a given college or university. Personal Qualities such as curiosity, academic ability, personal character and integrity as well as the level of involvement in activities and the application itself all play an integral role in the process.

Standardized tests such as the ACT and the SAT are intended to help predict student success at the college level. The Advanced Placement and SAT Subject Tests verify mastery of subject based curriculum. The development and administration of these tests provide both the student and the colleges with helpful data for the college admission process.

Not all colleges and universities agree on the specific standardized testing requirements for admission. Each college sets its own guidelines for students who apply. While there has been a movement among some colleges to decrease the importance of standardized testing, the need to take standardized tests to ensure a wide range of college options still exists. Students must read the guidelines/recommendations for testing for each college of interest carefully.

For Example:

For the Class of 2010, the following colleges currently publish the testing requirements listed below:

University of California:	SAT or ACT with writing & 2 SAT Subject Tests (in 2 different subjects)
Santa Clara University:	SAT or ACT
Colorado University @ Boulder:	SAT or ACT
Georgetown University:	SAT or ACT (writing is not required)& 3 SAT Subject Tests
New York University:	SAT or ACT & 2 SAT Subject Tests

OR

****Beginning with this current admission cycle (Fall 2010), NYU now offers additional testing options for students to choose from.**

SAT & 2 non language SAT Subject Tests

OR

ACT (with Writing)

OR

SAT & 2 AP Exam Scores

OR

3 SAT Subject Tests (Literature/Humanities, Math/Science, Non-Language of the Student's choice)

OR

3 AP Exam Scores (1-Literature/Humanities, 1-Math/Science, 1-Non Language of the Student's choice)

For more information about colleges and universities that do not require standardized test scores as part of the application process, go to www.fairtest.org.

When To Take Standardized Tests

For a student at SI, the testing journey begins with standardized test practice in October of both sophomore and junior years. As sophomores, students take both the PSAT (practice SAT) in October and then the PLAN (practice ACT) in January and then the PSAT (practice SAT reasoning test) again Junior year. This allows students the opportunity to practice and experience both types of tests in a standardized testing atmosphere with the knowledge that the scores will not be reported to colleges or included on the official high school transcript.

The PLAN and PSAT score reports (and test experience) are also helpful for students as to assess individual strengths and weaknesses on each test, ultimately providing relevant information to choose whether or not to pursue formal test preparation.

The “practice” test scores—PLAN & PSAT—do not figure into the college admissions testing requirements. Only the ACT or SAT taken during junior and senior years will be used for college admissions.

In the spring of junior year, students begin registering for and taking standardized tests. Juniors are encouraged to complete one full round of testing in the spring which may mean taking the SAT reasoning test, 2 – 3 SAT subject tests and the ACT with writing. Of course this is not the strategy for all students, nor does every student need to take so many tests. This is a general guideline based on the colleges our students typically apply to.

When creating a test schedule, students should always review their spring calendar. All obligations including academic, co-curricular and personal commitments should be considered. It’s essential to ensure that all students seek balance between the testing process and current commitments and avoid realizing after test registration that there is another unavoidable commitment.

This section reviews each test mentioned above and provides basic information about each test .