



*Ensuring that by 2025,  
60% of Jackson County residents will have  
a post-secondary degree or valuable credential*

## 8 Things to Know About How Colleges Use Admission Tests

### **Colleges use admission test scores**

differently because each college has its own admission processes and policies. So how do colleges use SAT and ACT scores, and how important are test scores? Here are the facts you need to know.

### **1. Most Four-Year Colleges Use Test Scores in Their Admission Decisions**

Scores help colleges compare students from different high schools. Your scores show your strengths and readiness for college work. But remember, scores are just one part of your college application, along with grades, course rigor and recommendations.

### **2. Test Scores Are Not the Most Important Factor**

When they use scores in admission decisions, different colleges weight the scores differently. But no matter which college you're applying to, test scores are not the most important factor. Colleges give the most weight to your grades and the rigor of your classes.

### **3. Most Colleges Publish Student Test-Score Information**

Some colleges publish the average scores of their students, and others show ranges. If you're interested in a particular college, you can see how your scores compare. But keep in mind that most colleges admit students with a wide range of scores; there are always some students who score above and some below the published scores. Think of these scores as a guide, not a cutoff.

### **4. Admission Tests Let Colleges Find You**

When you sign up for an admission test, you get the chance to hear from colleges that have an interest in you based on a combination of your test scores, grades, academic interests and other characteristics. The PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests and ACT offer opportunities for you to indicate your desire to have your name shared with interested colleges.

### **5. Colleges May Use Scores to Award Scholarships**

Most scholarship money — money you do not have to pay back — comes from colleges. Some colleges use your test scores, alone or in

combination with other characteristics and achievements, to award their funds. Some colleges may even automatically award you a scholarship if you earn a certain score.

Other organizations and private companies that award scholarships may also require your test scores as part of their scholarship applications.

### **6. Scores May Determine Placement in College Classes**

Admission tests evaluate the reading, writing and math skills you'll need in college. So some colleges use scores to place students in classes that are at the right level for them. Scores can also be used to identify students who may benefit from specific advisors or academic support in college.

### **7. Most Four-Year Colleges Require Scores, and Some Two-Year Colleges Recommend Them**

Nearly all four-year colleges require you to submit SAT or ACT scores — you can't apply without them. Some four-year colleges and open-admission colleges, including community colleges, don't require scores but may use them for placement or scholarships.

### **8. Colleges Consider Multiple Scores in Different Ways**

You decide who sees your scores, because you're in charge of sending them. If you take a test more than once, you can often choose to send only your best scores. But each college sets its own policy for how it uses multiple scores:

- Some colleges require all your scores.
- Some colleges look at your highest combined scores from one test date.
- Some colleges accept your highest section scores from any day you tested.

### **Get More Information**

Every admission policy is different. Use trusted sources to do research before you apply. You can use [College Search](#) to find a college's SAT score-use policy and score ranges — just visit the Applying area of any college's profile. Or check out a college's official website to learn about its score-use policy and score ranges.

*Source: [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org)*