

# TEST OPTIONAL: HOW WE GOT HERE

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- Institutions initially began going test-optional a few years ago due to a combination of factors
  - **COVID-19 pandemic** played a significant role
  - Pandemic exacerbated **growing criticism of standardized tests**
    - Viewed as **promoting economic inequality and racial bias** without measuring anything important
    - Students with **limited resources** could not **afford tutors or test preparation classes** putting them at a disadvantage unrelated to skill or ability
- **Over 1,900 U.S. colleges and universities** no longer require applicants to submit standardized test scores, with only **47% of applicants submitting SAT or ACT scores in 2022-23** through the common app, compared to 78% between 2019 and 2022

# TEST OPTIONAL: WHAT HAPPENS NOW

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- The shift to test-optional college applications is **still in place at 80% of colleges and universities**
  - Many affirm that standardized tests promote societal inequities and test-optional policies provide the ability to achieve to students from all backgrounds
- Some schools, like Yale, Dartmouth, and Brown are **reinstating test requirements starting in fall 2025**
  - They argue that standardized tests can help identify promising applicants (not exclude them) and are **predictive of academic performance** in college
- The decision is influenced by each college's **interpretation of how test requirements impact student access and success**
  - Schools must **balance the potential benefit** of these tests **against the barriers they may create** for underrepresented students



# Freshman Admission Standards

## COMPLETELY OPTIONAL

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

- Texas A&M University does not require SAT or ACT scores as part of the freshman application.

### TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

- Test scores not required for admission but encouraged for those seeking scholarships and/or TSI exemption.

## OPTIONAL UNDER SPECIFIED CONDITIONS

### PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

- Automatic Admission Requirements/Test Optional:
- Automatic admission includes completion of the required courses and any one of the following:
  - Rank in the top 50% of graduating class or
  - Cumulative GPA of 2.8 or higher on a 4.0 scale or
  - SAT of 1060 or higher or ACT of 21 or higher

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY CORPUS CHRISTI

- 1st Quarter Guaranteed admission; Test scores optional; primary review of unweighted GPA and class rank (determine quartile).
- 2nd Quarter Guaranteed admission; Test scores optional; primary review of unweighted GPA and class rank (determine quartile).
- 3rd Quarter Modified holistic review (test scores optional; review considers combination of success indicators including test scores, unweighted GPA, high school class rank). Minimum of 2.0 unweighted GPA required.
- 4th Quarter Modified holistic review (test scores optional; review considers combination of success indicators including test scores, unweighted GPA, high school class rank). Minimum of 2.0 unweighted GPA required.

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY TEXARKANA

- Required to meet ONE of the following:
  - Rank in top 30 percent of their graduating class
  - Have a composite ACT score of 21 or better
  - Have a minimum combined SAT (taken prior to March 2016) of 980
  - Have a minimum combined SAT (taken March 2016 or later) of 1060
  - Have a minimum cumulative high school GPA of 2.75 (on a 4.0 scale)

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY KINGSVILLE

- Required to meet ONE of the following:
  - Rank in top 25 percent of graduating class
  - Have a composite ACT score of 19 or better
  - Have a minimum combined SAT of 1000
  - Have a minimum cumulative core high school GPA of 2.70 (on a 4.0 scale)\*

\*Core GPA includes all High School Math, English, Science, Social Studies, and foreign language courses.

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SAN ANTONIO

- Students who graduated or will graduate from an accredited U.S. high school must meet one of the following requirements to be eligible for regular admission:
  - Class Rank: Top 35%
  - SAT Composite Score: No Minimum Test Scores Required
  - ACT Composite Score: No Minimum Test Scores Required
  - GPA  $\geq$  3.0
  - SAT Composite Score: No Minimum Test Scores Required
  - ACT Composite Score: No Minimum Test Scores Required
  - GPA: No Minimum
  - SAT Composite Score (Old/New): 1020/1100 or higher
  - ACT Composite Score: 22 or higher

### TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

- Rank first in the top 40% of HS class, SAT/ACT scores, optional. The lower 60% must have a 900 SAT (CR+M) or 980 New SAT Total, or a 19 ACT.

### WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

- Top 35% OR Cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or higher OR 21 composite ACT / 1070 composite SAT

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY COMMERCE

- Top 30% or SAT combined math and evidence-based reading/writing score of 1060 or ACT composite score of 21 or greater.



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# Test Optional Admission

*Cohorts Fall 2021-Fall 2022*



# 2021-2022

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	Count	1st Year Retention	2nd Year Retention	Percentage	1st Sem GPA	1st Year GPA
No Test Score	2,519	96.30%	90.40%	90.40%	2.99	3.01
Test Score	2,2011	98.40%	95%	95%	3.32	3.31
<i>Used In Admission</i>	14,115	98.30%	94.69%	94.69%	3.36	3.33
<i>Not Used in Admission</i>	7,896	98.52%	95.83%	95.83%	3.27	3.26
Grand Total	24,530	98.19%	94.63%	94.63%	3.29	3.28



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# “No Test Score” Disaggregated

GV or MA	182
TEAM	264
Gateway	162
Top 10%	1,390
Others	534

*\*A small number of top 10% students chose to attend GV or MA.*

*\*96% first Year retention, 92% 2nd year retention*



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# 2021 As a 2 Year Cohort

2021

	Count of UIN	1st Year Retention	Percentage	2nd Year Retention	Percentage	1st Sem GPA	1st Year GPA	2 Year GPA
No Test Score	1,455	1,419	97.53%	1,331	93.80%	3.02	3.03	3.21
Test Score	10,889	10,715	98.40%	10,359	96.68%	3.31	3.29	3.36
<i>Used In Admission</i>	5,344	5,265	98.52%	5,075	96.39%	3.38	3.35	3.41
<i>Not Used in Admission</i>	5,545	5,450	98.29%	5,284	96.95%	3.23	3.23	3.32
Grand Total	12,344	12,134	98.30%	11,690	96.34%	3.27	3.26	3.35





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# 2022 As a 1 Year Cohort

2022					
	Count of UIN	1st Year Retention	Percentage	1st Sem GPA	1st Year GPA
No Test Score	1064	1008	94.74%	2.94	2.98
Test Score	11122	10945	98.41%	3.34	3.32
<i>Used In Admission</i>	8771	8616	98.23%	3.34	3.32
<i>Not Used in Admission</i>	2351	2329	99.06%	3.35	3.34
Grand Total	12186	11953	98.09%	3.30	3.29





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# Current Observations

- Being Test Optional has had no negative impact on overall first-year GPAs or retention rates to date.
- Students admitted in spite of their Test Scores perform similarly to students admitted based on their Test Scores.
- Students admitted without test scores are primarily top 10% students.
- Fall 2021 admits without test scores have nearly reached GPA parity with their peers by the end of their 2nd year.



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# Recommendations

- Maintain test optional for now to evaluate effects on graduation rates.
- Continue to work on improving metrics for evaluating students outside of test scores.
- Use the data collected each year to inform whether to continue with test optional practices.

