

2021 Guidance on Standardized Testing (AP, ACT, SAT, etc.)

AKEB USA shares the following facts, tips, strategies and resources for students and families in our Jamat affected by the significant changes with standardized tests

EXAM FACTS

ACT/SAT

- o SAT Optional Essay section will be discontinued starting June, except for states that require it for the SAT School Day program
- o Testing sites are still at limited capacity in across the U.S.
- o Many colleges will remain 'test optional' for the 2021-2022 cycle

AP Exams

- o Tests will be administered this year in school, at home or through a hybrid option of in school and at home
- o Exams will return to their normal time duration (exams were reduced to 45-minutes in 2020)
- o Select subjects such as language or music theory will be in-person

IB Exams

- o Two pathways will be considered - written examinations administered safely in school, or an alternative route using a combination of internal assessment coursework and teacher-predicted grades
- o Diploma/Certificate exams were canceled in 2020

SAT Subject Tests

- o SAT Subject Tests are being discontinued effective immediately for U.S.-based students
- o Students who previously completed a Subject Test could check with college of interest if the test result will be accepted

WHAT DOES A COLLEGE MEAN WHEN IT SAYS...

Test optional:

The school lets you decide if you want to submit test scores. If score is submitted, the school will consider it, but may focus more on other parts of the application.

Test flexible:

The school allows you to submit test scores for the SAT or ACT, OR a different test entirely (e.g., SAT Subject Test, AP test).

Test blind:

The school will not consider any scores, even if they are included in the application.



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TIPS AND STRATEGIES

Scenario 1: Student has taken the SAT/ACT and scored well

- o You can proceed to apply as normal
- o Don't neglect other parts of your application just because you are submitting test scores

Scenario 2: Student has taken the SAT/ACT, but did not score in the competitive range for the college(s) to which they are applying

- o If there is a significant discrepancy between your test score and that of the incoming class of the desired college(s), (i.e. test score falls below 25th percentile of school's average), then omit test scores at your own discretion and focus on enhancing other aspects of your application

Scenario 3: Student has not yet taken the SAT/ACT

- o If possible, take the test if you feel confident that you can perform successfully on the test (for those applying for Fall 2022 enrollment, this should be no later than October 2021)
- o If testing is not an option, focus on essays and enhancing other aspects of your application

Overall, you may consider submitting test scores if...

- o Your test score can function as a "meaningful differentiator"
- o You feel comfortable taking the test, or feel strongly that you can obtain a score within or above the average range for colleges to which you are applying

GRADE-SPECIFIC ADVICE

11th/12th grade - see above for what applies to you, since it is likely that impacts of COVID-19 on testing policies will persist for now; focus on maintaining grades and engaging in meaningful extracurriculars during this time

9th/10th grade - focus on earning/maintaining grades and joining meaningful extracurriculars, work on establishing relationships with teachers and plan to prepare for these exams when the time is appropriate

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Books at your local library or favorite bookseller: *The Official ACT Prep Guide* and *The Official SAT Study Guide*; also consider Princeton Review, Barron's, etc.
- Quizlet, Magoosh and YouTube have free content and strategy tips
- Free ACT practice/diagnostic tests [here](#), and sample questions for [English](#), [Math](#), [Reading](#), [Science](#), and [Writing](#)
- Free SAT practice/diagnostic tests [here](#) and [here](#), and sample questions [here](#)

