

ACT versus SAT exam for high school students

The ACT, better known as American College Testing, is a standardized collegiate examination upheld by the US schools and colleges since 1959. It is similar to the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Although the ACT is not as well-known as the SAT, it is almost as widespread; as of 2008, nearly all four-year colleges and universities in the United States accept the ACT test as it reveals the student's level of performance and his preparation to enter the college. Though it is necessary to clear the ACT examination to take admission, the grade of its usage in every school and college as a yardstick for admission is at different level.

The ACT test consists of examinations in four subjects i.e.. English, mathematics, science and reading. However a fifth subject is recently added in 2005 which is the essay writing test. But this test is not required in all schools to take admission. The examination is multiple-choice questions based. The paper is set based on testing standards developed by national governing organizations such as the American Educational Research Foundation, as well as national and state standards for education, such as those established per the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Exam content is also decided by the textbooks and national surveys of teachers and other educators conducted during the period.

Like the SAT, the ACT test is taken only during the pre-set time periods during the year which are usually four to six times per year. The number of times the examination is conducted depends on the state where the exam will be taken. The exam needs to be pre-scheduled and is usually conducted on Saturdays. However the students who face a religious problem can take the exam on Sundays, as special cases. Accommodations can also be made for students with disabilities. The time limit of examination for all four subjects together is roughly 3.5 hours, which includes two 15-minute breaks. However the students taking exam of five subjects, which includes the essay writing exam are given time of above four hours for giving their test. Students who take the test can send their score reports to up to four different colleges or universities.