

**REQUEST TO CONTINUE SUSPENSION OF THE STANDARDIZED TEST SCORE
REQUIREMENT FOR FIRST-TIME-IN-ANY-COLLEGE-APPLICANTS (FTIAC)
REQUIRED BY 2.34.09.020**

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors continue the suspension of the requirement in **BOG Statute 2.34.09.020** that each applicant for admission to WSU submits test results from the American College Test (ACT) and/or Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) for a period of three (3) years. This suspension would begin for all FTIAC Fall 2023 students. The application cycle for this cohort begins on August 1, 2022. Although the SAT and ACT are able to administer college entrance exams students experiencing the most challenges with access or are not able to test are disproportionately low-income, first-generation, and students of color. During the Fall 2021 admissions cycle, 45% of enrolled WSU first-year students applied using the test optional pathway. Of the 15,352 application received, 47% were test optional applications. Currently, 49% of the 15,912 applicants for Fall 2022 have submitted test optional applications. Applications for Fall 2022 are up 7% compared to Fall 2021.

Test optional Fall 2021 enrolled students performed and persisted at similar rates to test informed students:

- Test informed students enrolled for Winter term at a 94.8% return rate. Those retained attempted an average of 29.1 credits and earned an average of 26.3 credits. Test informed students averaged a cumulative 3.19 GPA.
- Test optional students enrolled for Winter term at a 91.2% return rate. Those retained attempted an average of 28.3 credits and earned an average of 24.4 credits. Test Optional students averaged a cumulative 2.91 GPA.

Test-Optional Consideration for 2023-2028 Applicants

Most Michigan public universities have decided to continue a test-optional pathway for the Fall 2023 FTIAC application cycle. Nationally, test-optional admissions will continue for 2023 and beyond with some institutions such as Harvard, temporarily suspending its ACT and SAT requirement through 2026 and others including Yale, Penn, and the UC System, continuing a test blind policy through 2024. Test-optional policies allow latitude for students to apply without submitting their SAT or ACT scores. Rather than determining their admission based on grades and test scores, a holistic review process will be used, and the admission decision will be based on evaluation of other factors and materials submitted by applicants including, but not limited to:

- Academic Evaluations from High School Counselors and Teachers
- Short Answer Essay Prompts
- Leadership, extra-curricular activities, and work experience

The current test-optional policy involves a holistic review process focusing on academic performance, grades, and courses, allowing students to represent future contributions to the campus community. The holistic file review process was designed by the Office of Undergraduate Admissions in collaboration with Students Success and feedback from the Faculty Senate Curriculum and Instruction Committee regarding the academic evaluation forms submitted by

counselors and teachers. The holistic review process includes assessing academic performance as evidenced on the student's high school transcript; non-cognitive variables such as a student's positive self-concept, realistic self-appraisal, preference for long-range goals, successful leadership experience, demonstrated community service, and availability of a strong support person. Also, academic evaluations submitted from teachers and/or high school counselors are reviewed. In addition, the professional admission staff evaluates the degree to which a student demonstrates 20 cognitive and non-cognitive factors, including academic ability, analytical/logical thinking, oral and written communication, integrity, judgment, self-confidence, and social-emotional maturity; and review short essay answers where students can share how they have overcome challenges, the difference an educational champion has made in their life and what it means to be a WSU Warrior.

Placement testing and substantive academic advising will be used to determine appropriate college-level course work for optional test students.

Continuing to offer a test-optional admission path will be a necessary and valuable admissions tool to meet our enrollment goals and to remain competitive with our peer and near peer institutions in Michigan. With 49% of the FTIAC applications for the 2021-2022 admission, submitted by test-optional applicants, we will be at a distinct disadvantage and will be an outlier among Michigan public universities if we cease to offer a test optional pathway for prospective students. Given the continued disproportionate impact on first-generation, low-income, and students of color, WSU must be able to fulfill our mission of providing access to higher education through a test-optional pathway.