

Test-Optional and Standardized Testing FAQ

What is test-optional?

When a college or university is “test-optional,” it usually means the institution does not require the SAT or ACT from applicants in order to be considered for admission. Not all test-optional policies are the same across universities, however, so make sure you’re researching each one. Information provided below is on Northeastern’s test-optional policy for the upcoming year.

Is Northeastern test-optional?

Yes. As of 2021, Northeastern has implemented a test-optional policy that extends through the admissions cycle for students applying to start in the fall of 2026. Prospective students who apply for entry in fall 2023, 2024, 2025, or 2026, can choose include SAT or ACT scores in their application or not. They will indicate that choice through a question in their application. Students who choose to apply test-optional will not be penalized or disadvantaged for applying without testing.

How will Northeastern evaluate my application without standardized testing?

Northeastern evaluates each application holistically, focusing on the rigor of your coursework and academic performance in the classroom, in addition to considering your leadership, extracurricular involvement, personal qualities, interest in experiential learning, and fit for Northeastern.

Standardized testing is not reviewed by the Admissions Committee during our evaluation process. For applicants who choose to submit standardized testing, we will introduce testing into the discussion during the selection process. Standardized testing will never be introduced into the discussion for applicants who choose to apply “test-optional.”

How do I decide whether to submit standardized testing or not?

The choice to submit standardized testing is completely up to you as the applicant. You should put your best foot forward when applying to Northeastern, by showcasing your application in the best or most positive way possible.

One piece of context to consider is our middle 50% range for admitted students. For students who applied and were admitted to Northeastern in Fall 2022, 50% of the admitted students scored between 1470 and 1550 on the SAT, or 33 and 35 on the ACT.

Does Northeastern superscore?

Yes. Northeastern will superscore your SAT and ACT. For the SAT, we will add together your highest Evidence-based Reading & Writing section and Mathematics section, from across multiple test dates, to create a new overall total SAT score. For the ACT, we will average together your highest English, Math, Reading, and Science sections, from across multiple test dates, to create a new overall Composite score.

I am applying from an international high school. I thought Northeastern was “test-free” and would not review results from the SAT or ACT even if I submitted them?

From Fall 2008 to Fall 2020, Northeastern was test-free for all applicants who applied from a high school which was located outside of the United States. Beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year, our test-optional standardized testing policy applies to all prospective students regardless of where you went to high school. All students will have the choice of whether or not to submit the SAT or ACT for consideration as part of Northeastern’s admissions process. Non-native English-speaking applicants must continue to submit official results from an approved English Language Test or request a waiver through the Application Status Check.