

---

May 27, 2008

## 2 Colleges End Entrance Exam Requirement

By [TAMAR LEWIN](#)

[Smith College](#), a women's college in Northampton, Mass., and [Wake Forest University](#) in Winston-Salem, N.C., will no longer require prospective students to submit SAT or ACT scores as part of their applications.

At both institutions, the policies will take effect with the class entering in fall 2009.

The number of colleges and universities where such tests are now optional — mostly small liberal-arts colleges — has been growing steadily as more institutions have become concerned about the validity of standardized tests in predicting academic success, and the degree to which test performance correlates with household income, parental education and race.

Some schools that have made standardized tests optional have found that they have attracted a more diverse student body, with no decline in academic ability.

“By making the SAT and ACT optional, we hope to broaden the applicant pool and increase access at Wake Forest for groups of students who are currently underrepresented at selective universities,” said Martha Allman, Wake Forest's director of admissions. Wake Forest will announce its change on Tuesday; Smith announced it on May 16.

While students will still have the option of submitting standardized test scores — and in fact, the majority of applicants still do so at many test-optional colleges — the most important criteria for admission will be high school curriculum and classroom performance, writing ability, extracurricular activities and evidence of character and talent.

Wake Forest, with 4,500 undergraduates, is ranked 30th among national universities by U.S. News & World Report, and is the highest-ranked on that list to have dropped its testing requirements. Smith, the nation's largest undergraduate women's college, with 2,600 students, received 3,771 applications this year, the most in its 137-year history.

Generally, only small colleges and universities with the resources to pay attention to recommendations, essays and extracurricular activities, as well as to a student's grades and test scores, have been able to eliminate their testing requirements.

But some state universities, too, now admit most of their freshman class without regard to standardized test scores.

At the [University of Texas](#), for example, most students are admitted under a state policy guaranteeing admissions for those in the top 10 percent of their high school class.

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)