

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE**  
COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS  
(Final; Action)

AD.23.02 Continuation of a Test Optional Policy for Admission for Non-Illinois Applicants

**BACKGROUND**

On June 17, 2020, the Senate Executive Committee approved, on behalf of the Senate, a test optional policy (optional reporting of SAT/ACT scores) for the Fall 2021 admission cycle (SC.20.35). On March 8, 2021, the Senate approved the Admissions Committee recommendation to extend the test optional policy for the 2022 and 2023 admissions cycles (AD.21.03).

On January 22, 2021, HB0226 was introduced in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Illinois General Assembly. The bill provided that a public institution of higher education may not require applicants who are residents of Illinois to submit standardized college admissions test scores to the institution as part of the admissions process and that the submission of standardized test scores to the institution shall be at the option of the applicant effective January 1, 2022. The bill was passed by both chambers and signed by the Governor on July 9, 2021, becoming Public Act 102-0054.

Undergraduate Admissions and the colleges have been successful in implementing a test optional admission policy. While a comprehensive evaluation of data and outcome measures (academic profile, diversity, student success, etc.) will continue to be undertaken during the years ahead, there has been no evidence to suggest that the test optional policy had a negative impact on students' academic preparation. The Fall 2021 cohort (the first admitted under our test optional policy) has a 93.3% retention rate to Fall 2022. This is comparable to an average retention rate of 93.2% from 2017-2020. Given Public Act 102-0054 is now state law and mandates test optional policy for Illinois residents, it makes sense to have a consistent policy and for the test optional policy to also apply to non-Illinois applicants.

**CURRENT TESTING POLICY**

ACT/SAT scores are optional for all first year and transfer applicants, including international students, homeschooled students, and recruited student-athletes. Recruited student-athletes are still required to satisfy all initial eligibility requirements set forth by the NCAA Eligibility Center. Students who do not report ACT/SAT scores and have not completed at least three full years of secondary education in an approved country where English is the official language, are required to submit TOEFL iBT, IELTS, or Duolingo English Test scores regardless of citizenship or residency.

**IMPACT ON DIVERSITY**

The pandemic accelerated discussions related to fair and equitable access to standardized testing in college admissions. Barriers exist to underrepresented minorities and lower socioeconomic classes with regard to the review, awareness and cost associated with testing. A test optional policy increases the pool of candidates to the University of Illinois that enhance our diversity and talents not represented in standardized tests.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Given the passage of Public Act 102-0054, data collection, and impact on diversity, the Senate Committee on Admissions recommends the continuation of a test optional policy for admission of all applicants.

ADMISSIONS

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