

Introduction

As competition for the recruitment of international students increases, more and more universities from the US and around the world are reassessing their admissions standards. Taking into consideration that the traditional college examinations might not be the best way to assess the academic quality of international students, many universities are looking at other sources of information to make admissions decisions.

As we try to attract international students from new sources, we believe that a new policy regarding standardized assessments for international students would give us the flexibility to attract qualified students without compromising ACU's academic standards.

New Policy

To be considered for admission to an undergraduate degree program at ACU, a prospective international student must submit the official results of at least one international standardized assessment.

ACU Approved Assessments:

SAT, ACT, ibt TOEFL, IELTS, International Baccalaureate, Advance Placement, British Advanced Levels, Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education.

The director of admissions may:

- Consider other standardized national college entrance examinations or national high school exit assessments to fulfill this requirement.
- Require the student to submit an SAT, ACT, TOEFL, and/or IELTS score before making an admissions decision even if the student has submitted another assessment.
- Grant conditional admission and require the student to send additional academic information or to take a specific academic action before the first day of classes or during the first semester.
- Grant conditional admission and require the student to take one to three semesters of *Intensive English Classes (ESL)* at ACU before starting with regular undergraduate classes.

Notes

- The student is still required to submit all other documents necessary for admissions: online application, application fee, high school transcripts, and college transcripts if applicable.
- Submitting any of these examinations does not guarantee university admissions. The decision will be made by the director of admissions using all available information.
- We would still require at least one standardized assessment for class placement.
- The student would still need to submit an ACT or SAT to be considered for an academic scholarship.
- Changes to the catalog would reflect the flexibility of this new policy (Appendix B).

Appendix A: Consultant Recommendations

Ian Little

International Consulting
Hobsons

Because there isn't a lot of research available it is hard to judge the reasons for academic success rates of foreign students at American universities. It is even harder to judge what admission variables will predict success though studies done at the University of Maryland and Indiana University, suggest that self-confidence and support services are predictors of first year success for international students. So, the question becomes, what do we need to see from a foreign student in order to grant them an acceptance?

Arguably, the only two standards that matter are their ability to demonstrate their own proficiency in the classroom and with the English language. The SAT is an exam that isn't available in the largest student market, China. There is debate in the United States about whether the SAT and ACT are good predictors for domestic students. How then can it be a good predictor for students outside of the United States who may not have access to the same preparation tools/strategies as US students and are not likely to have the same level of guidance within their secondary schools?

Recommendation: *ACU should only require the SAT/ACT for students who are interested in scholarships and financial aid.*

The exams cannot be tied as predictors of academic success for foreign students. This change will increase the number of applications from foreign students and the number of full-paying students as well. It will not decrease the number of students who request or are eligible for aid.

Appendix B: Proposed catalog changes

Freshman Admission

To be considered for admission to an undergraduate degree program at ACU, a prospective student must see that the director of admissions receives the following:

1. Completed application form accompanied by a non-refundable processing fee. ~~Applicants who do not have a Social Security Number should secure one before submitting an application.~~
2. Official transcripts of all previous academic work. Students are required to submit official transcripts from the high school from which they graduated and any colleges they have attended. An official transcript is delivered to the university ~~via Docufide, SEND.edu, or~~ in a sealed envelope, marked as official, and contains a date of graduation if applicable. The director of admissions can consider freshman applications from students who have not graduated from high school but have passed the General Educational Development (GED) equivalency test and from persons 21 years of age or older who present strong evidence of ability to succeed in college.
3. SAT or ACT scores (not required of some transfer ~~and International~~ students, see Transfer Admission, ~~see International Admission~~)...

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International Student Admission

Jorge Daniel Garcia, Director of International and Multicultural Enrollment

Office of Admissions

Hunter Welcome Center 241

ACU Box 29000, Abilene, Texas 79699-9000 USA

Phone: 325-674-4917

Fax: 325-674-2710

Email: international@admissions.acu.edu

Web: acu.edu/admissions/international

International students applying for admission to Abilene Christian University are given the same consideration ~~as domestic students, except that they might substitute the SAT and ACT requirements, at the discretion of the ACU Director of Admissions, with other international standardized assessments. Also, international students must show evidence of their ability to understand and use English sufficiently well to succeed in their work at ACU.~~

The Center for International ~~and Intercultural~~ Education issues the I-20 form and Certificate of Eligibility to international students admitted to the university.

International applicants must send an official transcript in English from the high school of graduation and each university previously attended. To ensure evaluation, the transfer applicant should provide a catalog and syllabus in English. ~~Documents should be mailed by the registrar to ACU at the above address.~~