

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our Subscriber Agreement and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit www.djreprints.com.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/dartmouth-reinstates-sat-act-requirement-admissions-standardized-tests-3ed5fb42>

OPINION REVIEW & OUTLOOK [Follow](#)

Dartmouth Sees the Value of the SAT

The Ivy league college follows the evidence and reinstates test scores in admissions.

By [The Editorial Board](#) [Follow](#)

Feb. 5, 2024 6:37 pm ET



Baker-Berry Library on the campus of Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. PHOTO: BING GUAN/BLOOMBERG NEWS

What do you know: Standards make a comeback in the Ivy League, as Dartmouth College says it is reinstating standardized tests as an admissions requirement. Like many of its peers, the college had made the SAT and ACT optional in 2020.

“The evidence supporting our reactivation of a required testing policy is clear,” the college said Monday. “We believe a standardized testing requirement will improve—not detract from—our ability to bring the most promising and diverse students to our campus.”

On commission from President Sian Leah Beilock, Dartmouth faculty studied the role of standardized tests in admissions and produced a report finding them to

be an “essential method by which Admissions can identify applicants who will succeed at Dartmouth.” Test scores are more useful than a high-school GPA, they found.

The report found that test scores “better position Admissions to identify high-achieving less-advantaged applicants.” Without test scores, admissions officers must “place more weight on other factors that have been shown to be biased toward higher-income students,” such as “guidance counselor recommendations and non-academic ratings.”

Dartmouth considers scores in the context of the socioeconomic status of a student’s high school or community. Some lower-income students who didn’t report scores because they believed them too low might have benefited from sending the scores.

The faculty researchers also found that a test-optional policy does “not necessarily increase the proportion of less-advantaged students in the applicant pool.” Colleges made the SAT and ACT optional in an effort to appear more equitable, but they likely did the opposite. Students who face socioeconomic disadvantages need more opportunities to demonstrate academic ability.

The University of California also commissioned a 2020 report on test scores in admissions but ignored its own advice that they were useful, non-discriminatory measures. Dartmouth is so far the only Ivy League school to make the tests mandatory again, though Yale says it will issue a long-term policy this winter and Princeton’s website says the admissions office “continue[s] to assess” the role of test scores. They would be wise to follow the Big Green.

Appeared in the February 6, 2024, print edition as ‘Dartmouth Sees the Value of the SAT’.