



Greetings OLP students and parents/guardians,

On behalf of the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, our counseling team wanted to provide you with a guide as we consider the new landscape of navigating college admissions and standardized testing during the time of COVID-19. The following resources and recommendations are designed to provide you with a guide to commonly asked questions and information about strategies for supporting your daughter. We encourage each family to consider these resources in light of their own circumstances to make a decision that is best for them.

Providing an assessment-based benchmark of a student's baseline knowledge relative to the national norms has merit. It provides us with an understanding of how a student is performing relative to national peers. It provides us with insight into areas that need additional academic scaffolding and support. It provides us with indicators that the teaching practices are meeting institutional standards.

In light of this, OLP has partnered with [Compass Prep](#), a highly regarded, third party, standardized test prep company, to provide our juniors and sophomores with an opportunity to take a practice SAT in a distanced, secure test environment that can provide a comparable metric for assessing a student's academic performance. Our counseling team will use this baseline as a way to provide greater narrative and insight to colleges, once our 2022 and 2023 students are engaged in the admissions process.

Additionally, OLP is scheduled to provide an in-person opportunity for sophomores and juniors to take the official College Board paper version of the PSAT on the OLP campus on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. This will only be possible if COVID-19 restrictions do not prevent our administering the exam. Students will need to be wearing masks and we will have them physically distanced throughout the testing period.

A key consideration associated with students taking the official paper version of the PSAT is that it allows for those students to be considered for the National Merit Scholars program, which has financial and merit-based implications. Again, a family's decision to have their daughter take the paper PSAT brings with it the same considerations of safety and exposure that have caused some families to elect not to have their children take the SAT and ACT. Also, the SAT and ACT exams have been consistently cancelled during the fall of 2020, due to COVID-19 considerations. However, the October 10th testing, through Compass Prep, is a certainty that provides OLP and our families with a testing baseline.



Standardized Testing Recommendations for OLP students

This document is intended to be a guide for OLP students and families as they navigate the changing standardized testing landscape due to COVID-19. Please continue to visit this document for our latest resources on testing. The recommendations offered by the counseling team are informed by best practices shared by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), Inside Higher Education and other prominent voices in the college counseling community.

Grade level recommendations:

Class of 2021 Testing Considerations

As stated in a recent [NACAC publication](#), “Due to the cancellation of SAT and ACT testing dates, more than 1,450 US colleges and universities announced they are moving to a test-optional policy, and more will surely follow. By going test-optional, institutions are making a definitive statement that they will not need test scores to make admission decisions this year. Despite the change in policies, high school students and their parents are asking, “Does test optional really mean test optional?” The answer, simply put, is: YES. Colleges seek to make it easier to apply in a year in which COVID-19 has limited students’ access to testing centers. Together, we strongly endorse a student-centered, holistic approach to admission that will not disadvantage any student without a test score.”

The vast majority of [test-optional](#) colleges state on their website something to the effect of “Students who do not submit **SAT/ACT scores** will still be considered for **merit scholarships**.” Many colleges have indicated they will be flexible if a student was unable to test before early application deadlines. Students should prioritize registering for the SAT/ACT before registering for SAT Subject Tests. The UC system defines test-optional as:

- The student chooses whether or not to submit SAT/ACT scores with her application.
- If the student is unable or chooses not to submit test scores, her application will still receive full consideration.

The NCAA has instituted a COVID-19 automatic waiver for 2021-22 enrollment. Students who initially enroll full time in a collegiate institution during 2021-22 will receive an automatic initial-eligibility waiver in the academic certification process that provides the highest level of relief for which they are eligible, per the criteria outlined [here](#).



FAQ for senior students ([Compass Prep](#)):

1. Q: Should I still try and take an ACT or SAT test?

A: “This is a personal decision to be made with your parents to discern if this is right for you. If you and your parents feel it is safe to take an in-person test, you may certainly elect to do so. However, do not feel extra pressure to do so.”

2. Q: Aren't high scores better than no scores?

A: “We would not characterize high scores solely as an advantage. If scores are submitted they are considered as part of the holistic review of a student's educational portfolio. At highly selective schools where high scores are generally consistent for all applicants, it is equalized. Median scores here are high 700s for submitters. It can be pretty hard to distinguish yourself with high scores in that setting.”

3. Q: Does not submitting scores hurt you?

A: “While we certainly do look at testing for those who have submitted and it can impact an application unfavorably, non-submission does not bring disadvantage.”

Class of 2022 Testing Considerations

OLP has partnered with [Compass Prep](#), an organization that supports students with standardized testing preparation. On Saturday, October 10, 2020 Compass Prep will provide an online practice SAT to students in grades 10 and 11 via an online, distanced platform. Families will be emailed information on the sign-up process for the online practice SAT in the coming weeks.

In addition to taking the online practice SAT offered by Compass, 11th grade students will be given the opportunity to take the College Board PSAT/NMSQT on Tuesday, January 26th (COVID-19 pending). Juniors should spend the fall semester engaging in test preparation for the SAT/ACT. Students can access free online test prep for the SAT through [Khan Academy](#) and for the ACT through [ACT Academy](#). We strongly discourage rising juniors to register for the August-October SAT/ ACT test dates in order to provide seats for senior students. The Class of 2022 will have ample time to test from November 2020 to the spring/summer/ fall 2021.

SAT Subject Tests are no longer required by any U.S. colleges and are no longer highly recommended when applying to UC campuses.



Class of 2023 Testing Considerations

OLP has partnered with [Compass Prep](#), an organization that supports students with standardized testing preparation. On Saturday, October 10, 2020 Compass Prep will provide an online practice SAT to students in grades 10 and 11 via an online, distanced platform. Families will be emailed information on the sign-up process for the online practice SAT in the coming weeks.

In addition to taking the online practice SAT offered by Compass, 10th grade students will be given the opportunity to take the College Board PSAT/NMSQT on Tuesday, January 26th (COVID-19 pending). We recommend students take their first official SAT and/or ACT in their junior year.

Sophomores should not register for August-October 2020 SAT, ACT, or SAT Subject Test test dates to provide seats for seniors.

Class of 2024 Testing Considerations

We recommend students take their first SAT and/or ACT in their junior year. Freshmen should not register for August-October 2020 SAT, ACT or SAT Subject Test test dates to provide seats for seniors.

AP Students

Students are now able to view their 2019-20 AP Scores in their College Board account. Seniors should not send official AP score reports to colleges. They will have the opportunity to self-report their scores in their applications. Students can search AP credit policies by colleges [here](#).

Resources:

[NACAC publication on test-optional](#)

[Admission Testing Update by Compass Prep](#)

[Collegewise Blog Post](#)

[NCAA COVID response FAQ](#)

NACAC UPDATE (8.27.20):

*“At present, nearly 1,600 colleges and universities nationwide—55% of all four-year colleges—have waived standardized testing requirements for 2020–21. We must consider how public institutions that continue to maintain test requirements stand in relation to students and families, as they appear to send the signal that college admission exams **take priority** over students’ health, even when the majority of colleges have recognized that the exams are not essential for admission this year. Indeed, high schools have begun to prohibit institutions still requiring tests from engaging with their students through school channels, a vital communications element in any college’s recruitment process.”*

