



BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

Using Scores to Place Students in First-Year Courses

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Bryn Mawr developed a **clear communication plan** to ensure students and counselors were aware that scores were going to be collected post-admission and explained how scores would be used.
- ✓ Test scores collected post-admission are used primarily for **math and science course placement**.
- ✓ Bryn Mawr is carefully **evaluating their testing policies** to ensure students admitted without test scores can be successful.

Institutional Profile

Overview	Admissions	Enrollment & Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small, private women's college • Located in Bryn Mawr, Pa., near Philadelphia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate enrollment: 1,400 • 88% out-of-state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of applicants: 3,594 • % admitted: 31% • % admitted who enrolled: 36%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Fall 2022

Policy and Practice: Admission

At outset of 2020, the year the pandemic started, Bryn Mawr College was already piloting a test-optional admissions policy as a way to encourage interest and applications from underrepresented and first-generation college students. Thus, the decision to adopt a test-optional policy prior to the pandemic led them to feel more prepared to make the transition in admissions. At Bryn Mawr, test scores are not required for domestic students to apply. Bryn Mawr wants every student to be able to put their best foot forward when applying, and therefore decide for themselves if that means including test scores.

For domestic students who do not submit scores, Bryn Mawr follows a holistic approach to evaluation, using other factors in the admissions decision. However, until recently, international students were required to submit test scores. In 2023, Bryn Mawr launched a test-optional pilot for international students. Similar to their approach for domestic students applying without scores, Bryn Mawr is gathering student success data prior to making a permanent decision on a test-optional policy for international students.

Still, Bryn Mawr has nearly half of all students submitting scores for consideration in admissions. Students who are proud of their scores are encouraged to send them when applying. With such encouragement, **they have seen an approximate 10%–12% increase in students submitting test scores for admissions post-pandemic.**

Policy and Practice: Post-Admission

Once admitted to Bryn Mawr, test-optional admits are required to submit official scores by June 1 so they can be used to place students in first-year science and math courses. Bryn Mawr remains clear about their desire to receive test scores regardless of how a student applies. Students and counselors receive routine communication about scores being required after a decision is rendered. Information is posted clearly on the institution's website and the rationale for the requirement is included in conversations with students, families, and counselors.

Despite widespread popularity of test-optional policies at colleges nationwide, the admissions team at Bryn Mawr fielded concerns, mostly from faculty, about students enrolling with less preparation in science and math. Similarly, faculty have expressed worries about high school grade inflation, an issue they hope to glean more insight into with scores required post-admission.

Not all institutions require scores of students applying test optional, but given Bryn Mawr's policy, enrollment officials knew a clear and compelling communication plan was needed to spur students to action. Notification of this requirement is included in the student's acceptance letter, ensuring there are no surprises or delays later. Early and Regular Decision admits are required to send official scores by March 1 and June 1, respectively. Failure to submit scores by stated deadlines or at all following repeated reminders sent to the student and parent(s) will route the student to a required placement exam prior to start of the semester.

Upon receipt, the Operations Team loads all official scores into the institution's Student Information System, a process that facilitates the Registrar's efforts to assist departments with course placement.