



COLORADO COLLEGE

Using Test Scores for Aggregate Reporting and Building Retention Models

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Colorado College used data from the **Admissions Research Consortium** to develop and refine their testing policy and how they communicate about testing to students and counselors.
- ✓ Test scores collected post-admission are used to do aggregate **data analysis, build retention models**, and to be able to **accurately report the average test scores of enrolling students**.
- ✓ Colorado College prioritizes **extensive staff training** to ensure test scores are used and interpreted appropriately. College Board's **Landscape**[®] tool has helped their team better understand test scores in context.

Institutional Profile

Overview	Admissions	Enrollment & Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small, private liberal arts• Located in Colorado Springs, Colo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undergraduate enrollment: 2,200• 78% out-of-state	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of applicants: 7,846• % admitted: 16%• % admitted who enrolled: 42%

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

Policy and Practice: Admission

Colorado College has always seen testing as informative, but never as a sole determining factor in an admissions decision. Prior to the pandemic, Colorado College had a “test flexible” policy, where applicants could submit scores from a range of exams for consideration, not just SAT or ACT. The institution decided to move to test optional a year prior to the pandemic, and thus was already carefully considering how tests were used in their process and how they were communicating the value of test scores.

With the pandemic and widespread move to test optional, and with increased questions coming from students and parents, Colorado College looked at data from the Admissions Research Consortium* and further clarified their policies and procedures.

“The Admissions Research Consortium has really helped us in better analyzing and categorizing our policies and how that fits into the larger picture of test optional. We are articulating and clarifying our policy the best we can.”
–Matt Bonser, Director of Admission, Colorado College

* The Admissions Research Consortium (ARC) aims to help colleges understand how the impacts of the pandemic are shaping their incoming classes, and how these impacts might continue to affect college performance outcomes in the future. ARC is a multiyear, collaborative research initiative with 80 participating colleges and associations. Read ARC research findings here: <https://research.collegeboard.org/reports/college-access/evidence-admissions-research-consortium>

As a result, Colorado College has adopted what they call a “do no harm” testing policy: If a student submits test scores that are not to their advantage, they train admission readers to focus on other aspects of the application and do their best to ignore the score.

Colorado College uses Landscape, a free comprehensive tool that provides consistent high school and neighborhood information, which allows them to see test scores in context. This tool enables admission reviewers to evaluate test scores within the context of a student’s high school record and to better identify applicants from more underrepresented environments who would be successful at their college.

Colorado College admission staff are trained on whether and how to utilize test scores, if submitted. Additionally, they work to build trust among students and counselors by explaining the application reader process and what information is visible for applicants who apply without test scores.

Video Highlights



Colorado College posted a short video on their website aimed at helping students better understand their testing policy and how to decide if they should submit test scores as part of their application.

The video includes a detailed explanation of their philosophy on test scores:

- How they view test scores in the admissions process.
- Advice on deciding whether to submit scores for admission.
- Explanation on why they collect scores at the time of enrollment and how scores are used.

International Students

Colorado College does not require the TOEFL or the SAT/ACT for admission, a practice that gives the admission team the flexibility to review international students and make admissions decisions within context for a given student. It can be incredibly helpful for some students to submit scores or other validators to demonstrate that they will be able to do well as a student on campus. This is particularly true for students from schools or areas where the admission team may be less familiar.

Policy and Practice: Post-Admission

When students confirm their intent to enroll, their enrollment portal checklist requests they submit test scores or a form attesting that they don’t have scores. There is no incentive or penalty for students who don’t submit scores.

Colorado College primarily utilizes test scores collected from students, post-admission, for aggregate reporting and models for retention. Notably, all received scores are included in the reported middle 50%, whether or not they were submitted for admission. Because of this, the mid-50% of test scores has remained relatively stable since adopting a test-optional admissions policy.