



# CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY

## Using Test Scores for Pre-health Student Support

### Key Takeaways

- ✓ Because “test optional” means something different at every school, Creighton has focused on explaining what it means **within the context of their institution.**
- ✓ As a school with many students interested in pre-health professions, Creighton uses test scores and **placement exams for math and science course placement** and academic support.
- ✓ Creighton relies on scores to **understand which students need support** and notes that test optional hinders those efforts, particularly for pre-health students. The admissions office works closely with academic departments to craft language encouraging pre-health students to submit test scores at enrollment.

### Institutional Profile

Overview	Admissions	Enrollment & Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Jesuit institution</li> <li>• Main campus located in Omaha, Neb.</li> <li>• New healthcare-focused campus in Phoenix, Ariz.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergraduate enrollment: 4,300</li> <li>• 70% out-of-state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of applicants: 7,977</li> <li>• % admitted: 76%</li> <li>• % admitted who enrolled: 17%</li> </ul>

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

### Policy and Practice: Admission

Creighton adopted a test-optional policy prior to the pandemic in 2019. With the universal shift to test optional, they worked to clarify their test policy language to help students and families understand what test optional means at Creighton. Their language assures students, families, and counselors that students really do have a choice in this process.

**“We’ve heard from counselors and students that test optional doesn’t mean the same thing from school to school, so saying “test optional” isn’t enough. You have to explain what test optional means in the context of your institution.”** – Sarah Richardson, Assistant Vice Provost for Enrollment Management

For Creighton, the move to test optional has opened the door for students who may feel confident about their high school record but less confident in their test scores. However, there are some challenges they continue to navigate. They acknowledge that when a student has a

borderline high school record and doesn't submit test scores, it can be challenging to determine if the student will be successful on campus and, if admitted, they might benefit from additional academic onboarding or supports. With widespread test-optional policies, the university says it is unclear if this new normal is really easier for students.

Test scores are still required for some programs and scholarships, including some endowed scholarships and applicants to the medical school's pre-professional programs.

Creighton also relies heavily on student assessments to identify and recruit prospective students. To help high achieving students see themselves at Creighton, they explained how they need to tell a compelling narrative that having test data helps them to do that effectively. Test scores remain a succinct way for institutions to communicate one aspect of their academic profile.

## **Policy and Practice: Post-Admission**

Score submission compliance is not uniform across the university, yet over half of test-optional admits submit scores at the point of enrollment as the institutions makes their policy regarding score use clear: Test scores are used in conjunction with the math placement exam to determine first-year math courses. This is noteworthy since roughly 55% of Creighton's incoming class has an interest in health-related occupations. In the past, the Department of Chemistry used ACT/SAT math scores to predict student readiness for, and placement in, freshman chemistry courses, which most pre-health students must take. While a large proportion of incoming freshmen submit test scores post-admission, the department benefits from higher submission rates because it helps them place students in the chemistry class or math class that they are most likely to be successful in. As such, Creighton's enrollment leaders work closely with the department to develop language to encourage their test-optional students to submit test scores before they enroll.