

Nothing Fair about Fair Test Junk Science

By [Junk Science Mom](#)



[Truth or Scare](#) readers will recall my two recent posts debunking [media efforts](#) to demonize the SAT with [reckless and false claims](#) that the test is biased.

One name seemed to come up pretty frequently during my research: the [National Center for Fair and Open Testing](#) also referred to as Fair Test (FT). At first glance, it appears to be an organization run by well-meaning (if not misguided, IMHO) education experts. FT is dedicated to eliminating standardized testing for college admissions and their primary calling card is their list of schools they claim don't require standardized testing for admission. This list, according to their count, stands at over 830 schools. That's an interesting number and suggests that FT might be making some headway in changing educational standards for entering college.

But as with every other junk science push, you can never judge a book by its cover, or in this case, a political organization's carefully crafted racket by its website. Check out this statement from the FT website:

"FairTest finds that over 830 four-year colleges do not use the SAT I or ACT to admit substantial numbers of bachelor degree applicants."

The establishment media love to play numbers games and unfortunately, FT plays fast and loose with their numbers. First, there are roughly 41 institutions on the FT list that have multiple campuses which are all counted as individual colleges. Right off the bat, the FT list is exposed as a sham. Among the schools on the list are DeVry and ITT Technical Institute. Considering the "more than 90" DeVry campuses and "over 100" ITT Technical Institute locations around the country, those two institutions alone comprise more than 22% of the bogus FT total. Add in the other multiple-campus schools and the FT list shrinks much farther.

The FT list also includes a ton of other schools that focus on vocational or specialized training rather than a traditional four-year college program. The FT list is filled with such schools including religious seminaries and rabbinical schools; photography and interior design schools; culinary institutes, art schools and other institutions offering studies in other such vocational pursuits. The deeper you drill down into the FT list of colleges, the more apparent it becomes that they're lying to kids who are thinking about college and to their parents.

Then there are the admission standards themselves. The [ITT Tech website](#) says applicants are required to submit a recent ACT or SAT test or "pass an admissions test." As for [DeVry](#), students who don't submit an ACT or SAT score must "Attain appropriate scores on DeVry University administered placement examinations." I don't know about you but having to pass an admissions test to attend any of the nearly 200 campuses of these two schools sure sounds like standardized testing to me.

For college-bound high school students, the facts are pretty simple; if you want to go to a selective college or university – that is, a college that doesn't accept everyone who applies – chances are you're going to have to take an ACT or SAT. Virtually all selective colleges require the use of standardized testing and for any organization to claim otherwise is simply false. Even many "credit card" schools have their own admissions test and many vocational schools will have entirely different admissions criteria based on the skill set taught at the institution. What FT is trying to get away with is clumsy sleight of hand to goose the numbers of schools they claim do not require ACTs or SATs.

You get what you give in life and education is no different. If you want a high-quality education from a well-respected university, you might want to use FT's list to find out some schools to avoid rather than apply to. Lowering standards obviously has a direct correlation

with lowering quality in education. What does FT have to say about their list of schools?

"This list includes colleges and universities that deemphasize the use of standardized tests by making admissions decisions about substantial numbers of applicants who recently graduated from U.S. high schools without using the SAT or ACT."

The key words here are "substantial numbers of applicants." The word 'substantial' means whatever FT wants and it has little to do with reality. Also, the flip side of the FT assertion is that virtually all schools on their list DO require standardized tests for some, if not most, of their applicants.

This outfit pays so little attention to the facts, they have established a whole raft of categories into which a school may fall based on the bogus standards established by FT. In fact, the descriptions of these categories are so loosely worded that a school falling under any of the categories could, and most of the time actually does, require standardized testing for admitting students. Just look at this preposterous list:

Key	
1	SAT/ACT used only for placement and/or academic advising
2	SAT/ACT required only from out-of-state applicants
3	SAT/ACT considered only when minimum GPA and/or class rank is not met
4	SAT/ACT required for some programs
5	SAT/ACT not required if submit SAT Subject Test, Advancement Placement, Int'l Baccalaureate or other exams
6	Must submit COMPASS, CPAT, TABE, WAIS, Stanford Achievement Test, ASSET and/or college entrance exam if not submitting SAT/ACT scores
7	Distance Education School
8	Religious Affiliation
9	Admission/Eligibility Index calculated with 3.5 GPA and combined SAT Critical Reading plus Math score of 400.

FT claims that they have a list of schools that don't require standardized tests for admission (Read: ACT or SAT) but even a cursory look at this list shows that in many cases, prospective students still have to take some other test for admission – SAT subject Tests, AP tests, International Baccalaureate, COMPASS, CPAT, Standard Achievement Test, individual college admissions tests and more.

Then there's the specious category of the ACT or SAT being required for "some programs." What does that even mean? Does it mean that applicants for a degree in basket weaving don't need a test score for admission but applicants for everything else do? We don't know and that is exactly what FT and every other junk science practitioner counts on – confusion and ignorance.

Let's take a look at some of these individual categories – category 3 for starters – which notes, "SAT/ACT considered only when minimum GPA and/or class rank is not met."

George Mason University (GMU) is listed by FT as a category 3 school. But what FT hides from students and families is that the usual admission process at GMU includes SAT/ACT scores. There is a "score optional" consideration process, but there are rigorous criteria and exceptions, and even if students meet the minimum GPA and/or class rank (among the many other requirements) and qualify for a score optional review, it does not guarantee admission:

There are two options by which you may be considered for admission to George Mason University. In most instances, students will choose the traditional method, which includes submission of standardized (SAT or ACT) test scores. Score optional consideration is an alternative for students who believe that their test scores do not adequately reflect their level of academic achievement and/or predict their potential. Please read the following information carefully before choosing to apply as a score optional candidate.

Score Optional Consideration

Score optional review provides an opportunity for applicants to be considered for admission without submitting or in disregard of standardized test scores. Admission to Mason remains a highly competitive process, and score optional candidates will each be considered on their own merits. **Qualifying for score optional review does NOT guarantee admission to Mason.**

Qualifying Criteria

In general, successful score optional candidates will submit academic credentials that exhibit the following:

- A minimum cumulative high school grade point average of 3.50 on a 4.00 scale (grades 9-11).
- Evidence of strong performance in a challenging academic curriculum as demonstrated by having taken a robust college preparatory selection of courses.
- An actual or estimated class rank in the top 20 percent of your high school class.
- Strong leadership and motivation, as demonstrated in your extracurricular, work, or service experiences.

Because grade point average, class rank, and curricular options vary widely between high schools, please use these guidelines to determine, in the context of your school, whether the score optional process is appropriate for you.

Specific Requirements For All Applicants

- Ensure that your guidance counselor submits the [Secondary School Report \(PDF\)](#) and ask that the sections "rank in class" or "alternative class rank" be completed depending on your school's ranking policy.
- You must submit a "Personal Statement" of 150-500 words (maximum) that highlights your leadership achievements or significant service contributions to your high school or community. Students who apply online must submit the statement online when prompted during the application process. Only students who submit paper applications may

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Additional Requirements for Score Optional Students

- Applicants may submit a **maximum** of three letters of recommendation. For traditional applicants, recommendations are encouraged but not required. Score optional applicants must submit at least one recommendation from a teacher in an academic subject who can attest to your academic abilities, in addition to the Secondary School Report Form noted above.
- Students whose native language is not English may be asked to submit results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). If this is needed, the admissions office will contact you.

Applicants Described Below Must Select the Traditional Review Process and are Required to Submit Standardized Test Scores:

- Applicants who wish to be considered for the Honors Program in General Education
- Applicants who wish to be considered for the University Scholars Scholarship and Program. (Note: Score optional candidates are eligible to be considered for all other scholarships.)
- Applicants who are applying to the following majors: civil and infrastructure engineering, computer engineering, computer science, electrical engineering, and systems engineering.
- Applicants who are home-schooled students
- Applicants who are seeking to become a member of one of Mason's NCAA intercollegiate athletic teams
- Students who intend to attend the university on an F1 or J1 Visa.

ality Statement

Then there are schools that should fall under a certain category but FairTest fails to list them properly. College of the Southwest in Hobbs, NM (which comes up as [University of the Southwest](#) in Google) is a Christian college but [is only listed under numbers one and three in FT's key](#) (and not number 8, which is "religious affiliation.")

Finally, there are schools that are placed under several categories, which often do not make sense when combined. The [University of Kansas](#) is listed under two, three and four. So, according to FT, the school "only" requires out of state applicants to submit ACT/SAT scores (category 2), but then states they're required for "some programs" (category 3), and if a certain

GPA level isn't met (category 4). The scenario is so convoluted it is meaningless, which is the environment in which junk science thrives.

For any child or parent confused by the college application process, this just makes it more confusing and ratchets up the anxiety level. After breaking down the FT list of schools they claim don't use standardized testing for admissions, we see the truth. The facts show that a miniscule percentage of colleges and universities – a far cry from the claim of more than 830 schools – don't require the ACT or SAT.

And for what purpose might FT engage in such a campaign of disinformation? So they can bamboozle the media (which isn't that hard if you're pushing left-wing ideology) to promote the political agenda of lowering education standards by using false and misleading information.

Clearly, this is a group that is more concerned with promoting the political agenda of equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity and has absolutely nothing to do with promoting higher education. In fact, one could be forgiven for wondering if they're more interested in wrecking higher education standards than promoting them.

The FT list of schools is so filled with lies, errors, confusion, and misinformation that it's impossible to take them or their message seriously, yet the establishment media flock to this front group anytime there's a college admissions story to write. Writing a story about higher education and quoting this group in it is roughly equivalent to doing a story on survivors of a World War II concentration camp and quoting a Holocaust Denier – there's simply nothing credible about this organization.

This is just scratching the surface mind you. In my follow up posts, I'll focus on the FT staff and their finances, both of which are pretty eye-opening. If these people are education experts, then I'm a brain surgeon. So far I've seen nothing to suggest this group is on the up-and-up and after reading my follow-ups, I think you'll agree.