

To Send or Not to Send?

Test scores in 2020

Introduction

In light of the rising test-optional movement of the 2020-2021 application cycle, many students are wondering – if they were able, safely, to sit for a standardized test – if it’s worth it to send a score. So, we built this handy flowchart to guide you through how to think about this and arrive at the answer that’s right for you and your situation.

And, we should note: if you are a senior who has not been able to sit for a standardized test (like most students), please know that colleges mean it when they say they are *test optional*. They even banded together to sign [this statement](#) affirming as much. If you’re one of the many who doesn’t have the choice to send a score because you couldn’t test, you are not alone, and you will not be penalized. This document is for the handful of students who were able to safely test, and who are weighing whether they should send those scores or not.

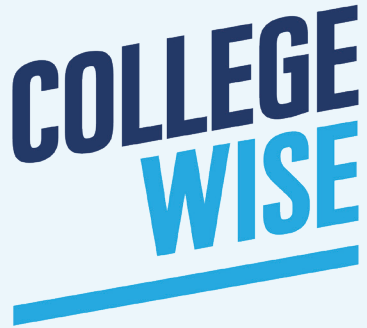
Additionally, if you are proud of your score and it well represents your efforts to attain it, don’t hesitate to send your score. We preach authenticity in the application process at Collegewise, and so if you feel great about it, send it. This document was created for those student who are conflicted. And no matter what you decide, make sure to read through our post [here](#) on how much to fixate on this one decision (spoiler: not a lot).

How to use this document

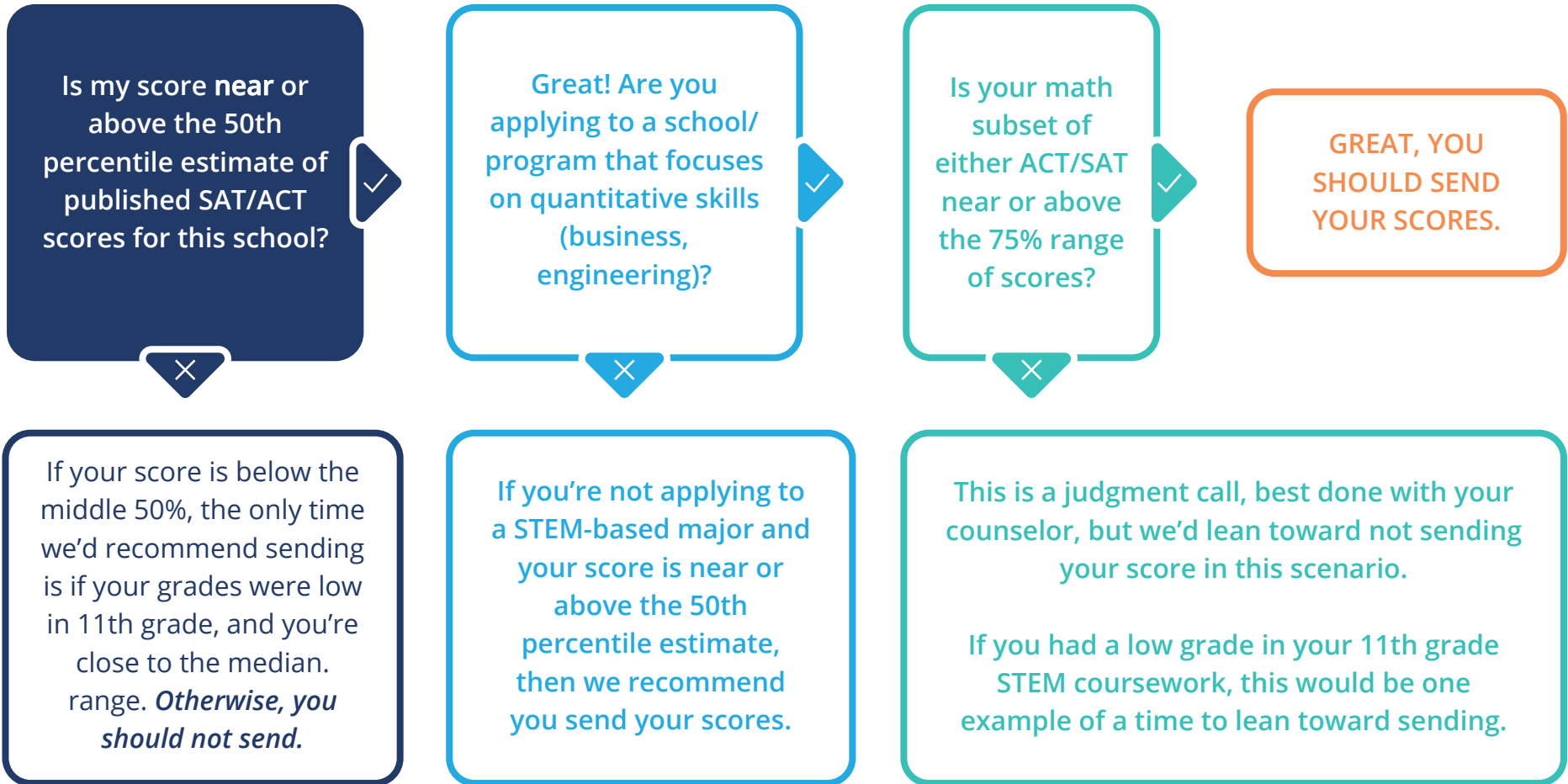
First, as you work through this exercise, you’ll want to consider each of your colleges *separately* (since, it’s very likely you might submit to one, but not another). Second, you’ll want to make sure you’re looking at schools that are *test optional*, and not *test blind*. Test blind means they will not in any circumstance consider testing this year (the [UC system](#) and [Caltech](#) are notable examples). [Fairtest](#) has more information on these policies, and a full list of test-optional and test-blind colleges.

Here’s the best way to find the data we reference below: look at College Board’s [Big Future](#) page for each school (within the “applying” tab), and/or search “median score + college name.” When we say “mid-range” below, at least for the sake of this flow chart, we’re aiming for the 50th percentile, which you can (somewhat imprecisely) estimate as the average of the 25th and 75th percentiles (which are the figures schools typically report).

We recommend consulting with your college counselor before making any big decisions with respect to the application process, but this chart will help contextualize your considerations and allow you to make a data-driven decision.



To Send or Not To Send — *A Handy Flowchart!*



Notes

1. If you are applying into a college where all majors are housed within one college (ie, Dartmouth) *and* you are applying for a quantitative major, you can look at the middle-50% and above. But, if you are applying to a specific school (a business school, or an engineering school), that's when you should look at the upper 75% band.
2. Many schools allow you to **self-report** your test scores on their application, meaning you do not need to pay to submit official score reports this year. You can find a list of most schools allowing for that this year [here](#).

Sample Scenarios

Student A has a 1400 (700 CR/700 M) on the SAT with mostly As and one B- in their junior year math class, applying to engineering. Here's what we'd recommend for three sample schools to which they are applying:

- Santa Clara University [lists](#) their mid-range critical reading of the SAT as 630-700, and the mid-range of their math at 650-740. This is borderline, but because of the lower math grade, we'd **recommend sending**.
- Purdue [lists](#) their mid-range critical reading of the SAT 590-690, and the mid-range of their math at 600-750. We'd **recommend sending**.
- Dartmouth lists their mid-range critical reading as 710-770, and the mid-range of their math at 730-790. We would **not recommend sending**.

Student B has a 26 on the ACT with all As in junior year, applying as a political science major. Here's what we'd recommend for three sample schools to which they are applying:

- Temple University [lists](#) a mid-range ACT of 24-30. We'd **recommend sending**.
- SUNY Purchase [lists](#) a mid-range ACT of 23-30. We'd **recommend sending**.
- Ithaca [lists](#) a mid-range ACT of 26-30. We would **not recommend sending**.