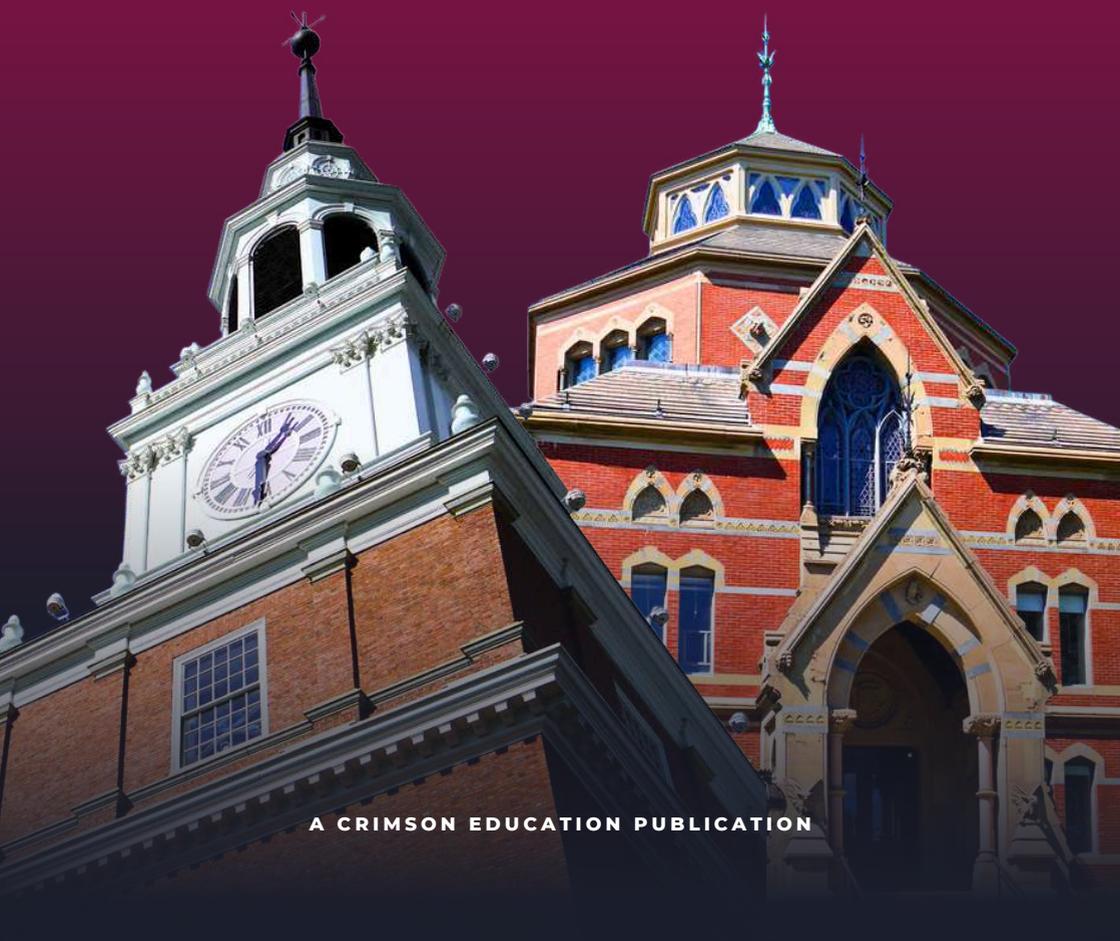




# **SAT & ACT**

# **The Ultimate Guide**

**Mastering the US Admissions  
Standardised Tests**



**A CRIMSON EDUCATION PUBLICATION**

# 01. INTRODUCTION

Navigating the path to admission at a top US university involves several critical components, with standardised testing being part of the academics. The SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) and ACT (American College Testing) are the primary standardised tests used by US universities and colleges to assess applicants' academic readiness. These tests are integral to the US application process, offering a standardised measure to compare the academic potential of students and ensuring a level playing field for students from different schools, regions/countries, and educational systems.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many top US universities adopted test-optional policies due to the unprecedented challenges faced by students and schools. However, as the situation stabilises, institutions such as Stanford and Harvard are reinstating the requirement for standardised tests. This shift underscores the importance of these exams in providing a comprehensive evaluation of an applicant's academic potential and preparedness for university.

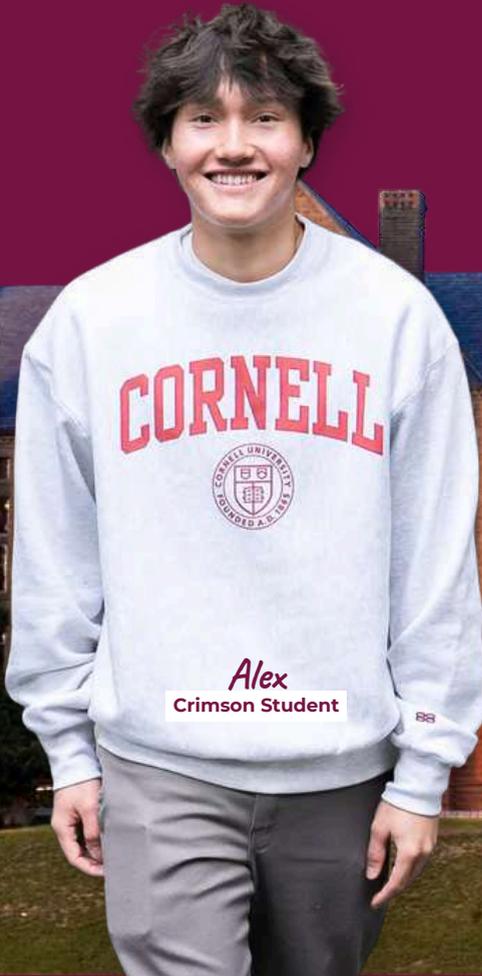
Given the renewed emphasis on standardised testing, it is crucial for future applicants to be well-prepared for the SAT and ACT. This eBook serves as the ultimate resource for prospective students, offering everything they need to know about these tests. From understanding the structure and content of each exam to learning strategic insights and test-taking tips, this comprehensive guide will equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel.

Crimson Education, the world's leader in university consultancy, is proud to present this eBook. With years of experience and a proven track record of helping students gain admission to top US universities, Crimson Education is uniquely positioned to provide expert guidance on standardised testing. This eBook is designed to demystify the SAT and ACT, offering students the insights and strategies needed to maximise their scores and enhance their university applications.



## 02. The Holistic US Application Process

Before we delve into each standardised test, it's crucial to grasp the distinctive, holistic application process that distinguishes US universities. Top US institutions seek students who embody a blend of intellectual vitality, leadership, initiative, and creativity. Unlike some other systems, US admissions consider not only academic achievements but also extracurricular activities, personal essays, recommendation letters, and interviews. This holistic approach aims to gauge an applicant's potential to contribute meaningfully to campus life, engage in diverse activities, and demonstrate a well-rounded personality beyond just academic prowess.



*Alex*  
Crimson Student

30%

- **Essays**

Essays are an opportunity for students to showcase their personality, experiences, and aspirations. Top universities look for students who can write thoughtfully and reflectively about themselves.

- **Interviews**

Some top universities also conduct personal interviews with applicants. These interviews allow the university to get to know the student better and assess their fit with the institution.

- **Letters of Recommendation**

Letters of recommendation from teachers, counsellors, and other mentors can provide valuable insights into a student's character and potential. Top universities look for students who have strong recommendations from people who know them well.

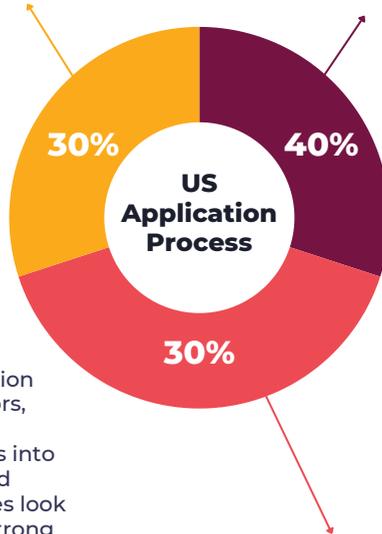
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- **Academics**

Top universities seek students who have consistently demonstrated academic excellence through outstanding high school grades, top school ranking positions, and participation in advanced courses, such as AP, A-Levels, or IB classes.

- **Standardised Tests (SAT/ACT)**

Standardised tests, like the SAT and ACT, are used to help measure a student's aptitude for college-level studies. While top universities typically have high average SAT and ACT scores among their admitted students, many of these institutions have transitioned to test-optional policies in recent years.



30%

- **Extracurricular & Leadership Activities**

Top universities seek students who are actively engaged in their communities. This is demonstrated through a diverse range of extracurricular activities, as defined above. They value students who demonstrate initiative, teamwork, and a commitment to making a positive impact. This could include involvement in sports teams, clubs, community service projects, or other endeavours that align with their personal aspirations.



# 03. The Standardised Tests

## SAT & ACT - Overview

The SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) and ACT (American College Testing) are the two standardised tests accepted and widely used throughout the United States to evaluate students' preparedness for higher education, serving as a critical benchmark for university admissions committees in assessing applicants:

### Academic Readiness

These tests assess students' readiness for university-level academic work, focusing on English language skills and mathematical reasoning. Strong performance indicates mastery of fundamental academic content, potentially allowing students to skip introductory courses and advance directly to higher-level subjects at university.



### Standardised Comparison

By providing a uniform measure of academic achievement, SAT and ACT scores allow universities to fairly evaluate applicants from diverse educational backgrounds, regions, and countries.

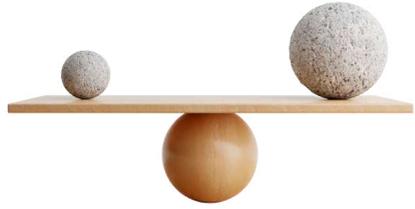
### Scholarship Consideration

Many institutions use SAT and ACT scores as criteria for awarding merit-based scholarships, making strong performance advantageous beyond admission.



## Equal Consideration

Universities typically consider both exams equally, meaning students have the flexibility to choose the test that best aligns with their strengths and preparation.



## Weight of SAT/ACT vs. School Grades

Although the SAT/ACT are considered part of the academic criteria for US admissions, they carry less weight compared to the student's high school grades, which play a more significant role in determining the student's academic level. However, an excellent SAT or ACT score can provide additional context about the candidate's current academic abilities or personal background, particularly in challenging scenarios they may have faced, which admissions officers may consider when assessing how they've overcome obstacles.

Pedro

Crimson Student



Columbia University

# 3.1 Structure and Sections

## + The New Digital SAT

In March 2024, the College Board transitioned the SAT to a fully digital format for all test takers. This digital format consists of two sections: Reading & Writing (64 minutes) and Math (70 minutes). Each section is further divided into two modules of equal length. Here's a breakdown of the key elements:

### ► Reading & Writing (64 minutes):

- **Focus:** This section assesses your reading comprehension, writing skills, and analysis of written arguments.
- **Structure:** Divided into two 32-minute modules, it presents a variety of reading passages followed by multiple-choice questions.
- **Question Types:** Expect to encounter questions that test your ability to:

- Understand the main ideas and details within passages.
- Analyse the author's purpose and identify different viewpoints.
- Evaluate evidence used to support arguments.
- Identify and use context clues to understand vocabulary.
- Revise and edit written text for clarity and correctness.

### ► Math (70 minutes):

- **Focus:** This section evaluates your problem-solving abilities and understanding of mathematical concepts.
- **Structure:** Similar to Reading & Writing, Math is divided into two 35-minute modules. It features a mix of question types.
- **Question Types:** Be prepared for questions that involve:

- Algebra (equations, inequalities, functions)
- Geometry (area, volume, shapes)
- Data analysis (statistics, probability)
- Problem-solving using various mathematical approaches (some may require calculator use)



Component	Time Allotted (minutes)	Number of Questions/Tasks
Reading and Writing	64 (two 32-minute modules)	54
Math	70 (two 35-minute modules)	44
Total	134	98

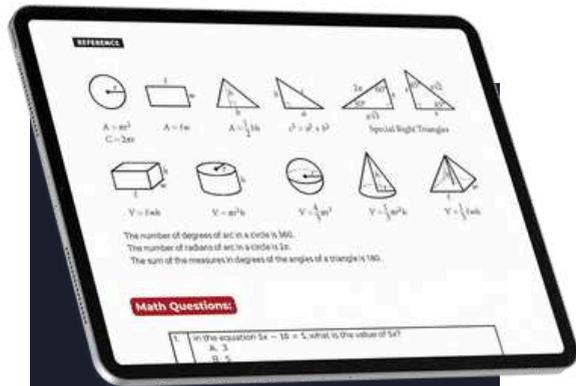
Source: College Board

Unlike the traditional single test, the digital SAT employs adaptive modules. The first module presents a mix of easy, medium, and hard questions. Your performance on this module determines the difficulty level of the second module, ensuring an appropriate challenge tailored to your abilities.

The digital format eliminates the need for bubbling answer sheets, potentially reducing errors. Additionally, calculators are available throughout the entire Math section, offering flexibility during problem-solving.

**Scoring: 400 to 1600 (total score), with each section scored on a scale of 200 to 800.**

Your overall digital SAT score is the sum of your two section scores (Reading & Writing + Math).



**Try Our Digital SAT Practice Test!**

Experience the real feel of the Digital SAT with our comprehensive practice test. Our test is designed to mirror the actual exam format, helping you get comfortable with the digital interface and time management. Click here to access it for free!

**Try Now!**



## + The ACT

The ACT consists of four mandatory sections: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. Each section focuses on a specific skill set:

### ► English (45 minutes):

- **Focus:** This section evaluates your written English proficiency through grammar, mechanics, and rhetoric skills.
- **Structure:** The English section presents a series of passages followed by multiple-choice questions.
- **Question Types:** Be prepared for questions that test your ability to:

- Identify and correct grammatical errors.
- Improve sentence structure and clarity.
- Analyse the author's word choice and style.
- Recognize effective rhetorical devices.
- Understand the overall meaning and purpose of the passage.

### ► Math (60 minutes):

- **Focus:** This section assesses your problem-solving abilities and understanding of mathematical concepts.
- **Structure:** The Math section features a variety of question formats, including multiple choice and some requiring calculations.
- **Question Types:** Expect to encounter questions that involve:

- Algebra (equations, inequalities, functions)
- Geometry (area, volume, shapes)
- Data analysis (statistics, probability)
- Pre-calculus concepts (trigonometry, matrices)

### ► Reading (35 minutes):

- **Focus:** This section evaluates your reading comprehension and reasoning skills based on various passage types.
- **Structure:** The Reading section presents a variety of passages followed by multiple-choice questions.
- **Question Types:** Be prepared for questions that test your ability to:

- Understand the main ideas and details within passages.
- Analyse the author's purpose and identify different viewpoints.
- Identify supporting evidence and evaluate arguments.
- Draw inferences and make logical conclusions.
- Analyse the vocabulary used in the passage.



### ► Science (35 minutes):

- **Focus:** This section assesses your scientific reasoning skills through data interpretation, scientific research evaluation, and experiments.
- **Structure:** The Science section presents scientific passages, graphs, and charts followed by multiple-choice questions.
- **Question Types:** Be prepared for questions that test your ability to:

- ✚ Analyse and interpret data from graphs, charts, and tables.
- ✚ Understand scientific concepts and principles.
- ✚ Evaluate the design and methodology of scientific experiments.
- ✚ Draw conclusions based on scientific evidence.
- ✚ Identify and avoid scientific fallacies.

### ► Optional Writing Test (40 minutes):

- **Focus:** This optional section assesses your writing skills through a single essay prompt.
- **Structure:** The Writing test requires you to write an essay in response to a specific prompt.
- **Evaluation:** The section receives a separate score from the main ACT score and is not factored into the composite score. However, some colleges may require it for admission.



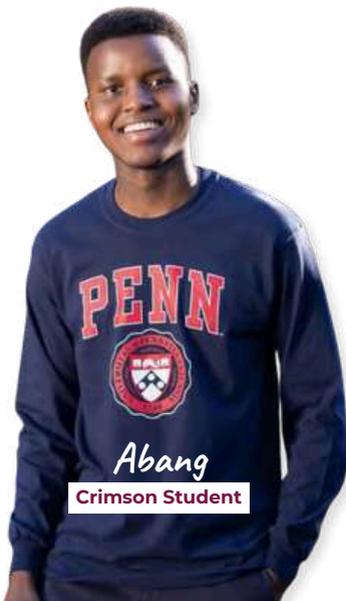
Test	Questions	Minutes per Test
English	75	45
Mathematics	60	60
Reading	40	35
Science	40	35
Writing (optional)	1 essay	40

Source: ACT.org

## Scoring: 1 to 36 (each section and the composite score)

The composite score and each test score (English, mathematics, reading, science) range from 1 (low) to 36 (high). The composite score is the average of the student's four test scores, rounded to the nearest whole number. Fractions less than one-half are rounded down; fractions one-half or more are rounded up.

If taken, the optional ACT essay score will appear on your score report on a scale from 2 to 12.



## We Also Have an ACT Practice Test!

Prepare for the ACT with our realistic practice test. Just like our Digital SAT practice test, this ACT test is designed to replicate the actual exam format, helping you get comfortable with timing and question types. Click here to access it for free!



[Try Now!](#)

## Major Changes to the ACT Exam

**In July 2024**, the ACT announced significant updates to the ACT exam aimed at providing students with more choice and flexibility.

- **Optional Science Section:**

Starting in spring 2025 for national online tests and in spring 2026 for school-day testing, the ACT will make the science section optional. The core test will include English, Reading, and Math, which will together form the college-reportable composite score ranging from 1 to 36. Students can choose to take the ACT with or without the science section, similar to the already optional writing section. This allows students to focus on their strengths and showcase their abilities in the best possible way.

- **Shorter Test Duration:**

The ACT test will be shortened from three hours to two hours. To achieve this, the reading and English sections will feature shorter passages and fewer questions—44 fewer questions in total. This change aims to make the testing experience more manageable, allowing students to perform their best without the fatigue that often accompanies longer exams.

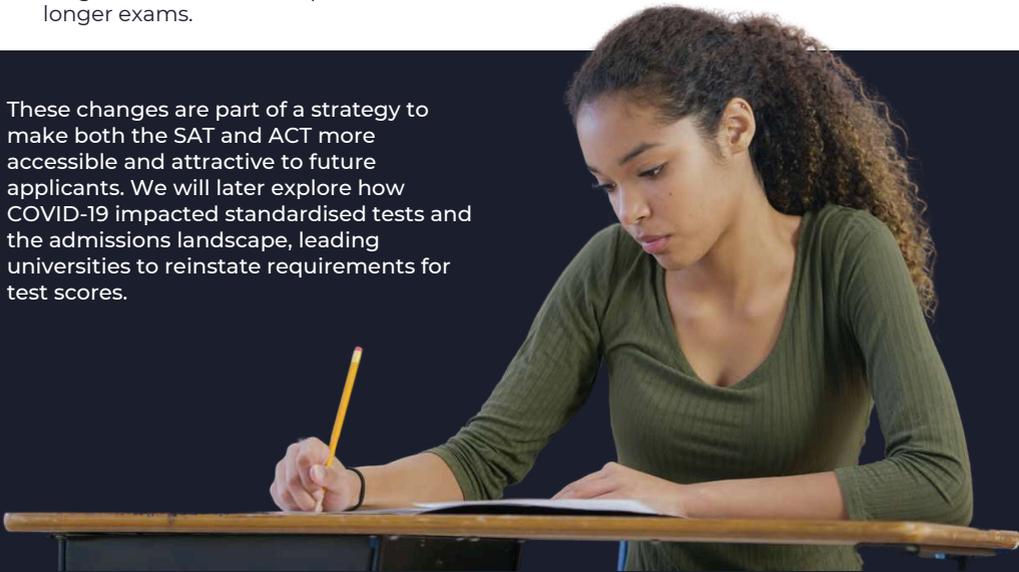
- **Cost and Accessibility:**

According to CNN, the cost of taking the ACT will decrease, making it more accessible to a broader range of students. Additionally, students will have the option to take the exam digitally or with paper and pencil (available only in the US).

### Implementation Timeline

- **Spring 2025:** Online testing begins in the U.S. with the new format. Since only the online format is available outside the U.S., it is expected that the new format will start at the same time internationally.
- **Spring 2026:** School-day testing will adopt the new format.

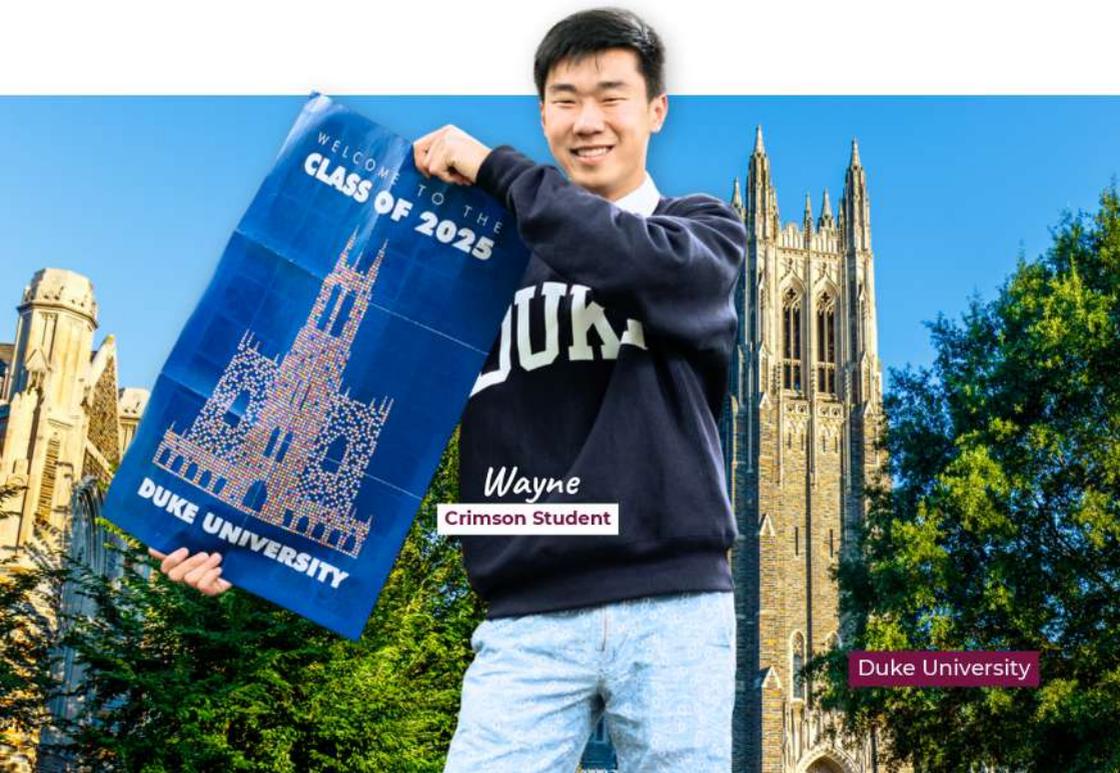
These changes are part of a strategy to make both the SAT and ACT more accessible and attractive to future applicants. We will later explore how COVID-19 impacted standardised tests and the admissions landscape, leading universities to reinstate requirements for test scores.



**Here are some comparisons between the SAT and ACT to help determine which test is more suitable for you.**

	SAT	ACT	NEW ACT*
<b>Scoring Scale</b>	400 - 1600	1 - 36	1 - 36
<b>Number of Questions</b>	98 questions	215 questions	148 questions for the mandatory sections
<b>Length of Assessment</b>	2h 14 minutes	2h 55min without essay 3h 35min with essay	2h for the mandatory sections
<b>Sections</b>	Reading and Writing (RW) - 2 modules Math - 2 modules	Mandatory: English, Math, Reading Optional: Writing	Mandatory: English, Math, Reading Optional : Science, Writing
<b>Test Dates (International)</b>	March, May, June, August, October, December	February, April, June, July, September, October, December	February, April, June, July, September, October, December
<b>Where to take and format</b>	At a test centre with your own laptop (Windows or MacOS), iPads, school-owned computers or Chromebook	The digital version is on a specific test centre computer; paper-and-pencil is US only. Both at an official ACT centre.	The digital version is on a specific test centre computer; paper-and-pencil is US only. Both at an official ACT centre.

\*ACT has announced changes to its test format: online testing in the U.S. will begin in Spring 2025, with international adoption expected simultaneously. School-day testing will follow suit by Spring 2026.



*Wayne*  
Crimson Student

## 3.2 Superscoring

Superscoring is a practice used by many universities to consider a student's highest section scores across multiple SAT and ACT test dates.

Instead of solely relying on the highest total score from a single test date, superscoring involves combining a student's best section scores from different test dates to create a new, higher total score.

For example, if you took the SAT multiple times, universities would consider your highest Math score from one test date and your highest Reading and Writing score from another. For instance, you might have scored 650 in Math from one test and 700 in Reading and Writing from another, resulting in a superscore of 1350 (650 + 700).

Similarly, with the ACT, universities would use your highest scores across different subject areas from multiple test attempts. For instance, if you scored 33 in English, 30 in Math (from a different attempt), 24 in Science, and 32 in Reading, universities would consider these higher subject scores to calculate your composite score.

This practice allows students to highlight their top performances in each section across various test dates, potentially improving their overall SAT or ACT score and enhancing their chances of admission to their preferred university. However, it's important to note that not all universities practise superscoring, so students should check each institution's policies regarding score reporting.



# 3.3 The Impact of the COVID-19 on Standardised Tests

## + The Test-Optional Policy

Starting in 2020, widespread school closures and restrictions on public gatherings severely limited students' ability to take standardised tests like the SAT and ACT during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognising these challenges, many universities temporarily shifted to test-optional, test-blind or test-flexible policies to ensure equitable access to higher education opportunities.

- **Test Optional:** A student will NOT be penalised for not submitting scores, but another student with strong test scores can and should submit them to strengthen their overall application.
- **Test Blind:** A test-blind university does NOT consider any test scores at all as part of a student's application—even if they submit a perfect score.
- **Test Flexible:** The university has imposed certain conditions under which a student may need to submit test scores, such as requiring AP scores or specific GPA requirements.

## + Recent Trends - Top US Universities Reinstate SAT/ACT Requirements

One consequence of the implementation of test-optional policies by many US universities was a notable increase in the number of applicants to competitive institutions from 2020 to 2024, as students were encouraged to apply without submitting standardised test scores.

This surge in applications has coincided with historically low admission rates at many institutions, reflecting heightened competition among candidates. As universities face a larger pool of applicants vying for limited spots, admission rates have declined to unprecedented lows, underscoring the challenges faced by prospective students despite the flexibility offered by test-optional policies.

What was noticed during this period was that universities have become even more rigorous with criteria such as academics, extracurricular activities, personal essays, and recommendations, especially with school grades and curriculum rigour since they were one of the few indicators of the candidate's academic level.

Starting in the application cycle of 2024-2025, many top US universities, such as [Harvard](#), [Stanford](#), [Yale](#), [Brown](#), [Dartmouth](#), and [Cornell](#), have announced their decision to reinstate standardised testing requirements. Schools like [MIT](#) and [Georgia Tech](#) started even earlier, in 2023-2024.



One of the main reasons given in most of the universities' announcements for reverting to SAT and ACT scores is the correlation between higher test scores and success in the first year of college. According to a [study by Opportunity Insights](#), students who have achieved high scores on standardised tests have been shown to be more prepared for college courses and achieve higher grades than those who applied without submitting test scores.

Another significant reason is that, according to these institutions, SAT/ACT scores help evaluate applicants within their context. With many applicants having similar school grades, universities argue that SAT/ACT scores can differentiate applicants, especially those from less-resourced backgrounds, indicating strong academic potential.

"We hypothesize that this stems from applicants not fully understanding how test scores are used in context. Scores are considered as only one factor and are viewed within the applicant's background, neighborhood, and high school. As a result, applicants may not realize that their score is impressive and could enhance their admission chances," said Bruce Sacerdote, a researcher at Opportunity Insights, in an [interview](#) with Yale News. According to the [article](#), the new comments from Yale's admissions office are in line with Sacerdote's research, affirming that a score below Yale's median can actually be useful in identifying applicants who stand out within their high school or personal environment.

As we have observed the recent trend of many top US universities reinstating SAT/ACT requirements, [click here](#) to learn which universities remain test-optional, test-blind, test-flexible, or have reinstated requirements for standardised tests.



*Paige*  
Crimson Student

# 3.4 Analysing Standardised Testing Trends: Admission Rates and the Impact of Test Scores

Having noticed that we are observing a recent trend of top US universities reinstating the requirements for the SAT and ACT, it's important to state that standardised tests have maintained an important role in student success for top US university admissions.

In a study conducted by Crimson Education using our students accepted to the top 20 US and Ivy League universities for the 2023/2024 admissions cycle, we found that for the majority of these institutions, standardised tests might still play an important role in their admissions. Among Ivy League admissions, **58% of Crimson students admitted to at least one Ivy League university** submitted a score for the SAT or ACT in their

application. The average SAT score for these students was 1510, and the average ACT score was 35.

**For the top 20 US universities, this rate was even higher: 65% of our applicants who received an offer sent their standardised test scores to support their application** (excluding MIT, which already required test score submissions this cycle; and UCLA and UC Berkeley, which are test blind). The average SAT score for these students was 1500, and the average ACT score was 34.



University	Percentage of Students Accepted with SAT or ACT Scores	Average SAT Score - Crimson Students Accepted	Average ACT Score - Crimson Students Accepted
Princeton University	62%	1500	35
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	100%	1520	35
Harvard University	70%	1520	35
Stanford University	50%	1530	35
Yale University	54%	1500	35
University of Pennsylvania	66%	1500	34
California Institute of Technology	67%	1580	0
Duke University	69%	1520	34
Brown University	59%	1530	35
Johns Hopkins University	68%	1500	36
Northwestern University	82%	1480	35
Columbia University	43%	1500	35
Cornell University	57%	1510	35
University of Chicago	71%	1515	34
University of California, Berkeley	63%	1490	34
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	71%	1510	36
Rice University	72%	1520	35
Dartmouth College	50%	1530	35
Vanderbilt University	61%	1510	35
University of Notre Dame	100%	1400	32

These numbers indicate that, besides the fact that most of these universities were test optional (excluding MIT, which already required test score submissions this cycle; and UCLA and UC Berkeley, which are test blind), standardised test scores were still valued by the majority of the top universities even when they were optional.

Considering the statements made by the universities, we can assume that having an additional academic criterion

to fully evaluate their candidates might have helped the schools in differentiating and selecting their candidates, as well as predicting their academic success on campus.

Crimson Education's experts were key in anticipating and predicting the importance of standardised tests even within these specific scenarios, ensuring our students had the best chances of admission compared to others. Below are our students' admission rates:

University	General Admit Rate	Crimson Admit Rate		Times Better
Harvard	3.59%	13%		3.6x
Princeton	~3.8%	16%		4.2x
Yale	3.7%	16%		4.3x
Columbia	3.8%	25.8%		6.8x
UPenn	~5.3%	23.8%		4.5x
Brown	5.2%	20.9%		4x
Cornell	~7.5%	24%		3.2x
Dartmouth	5.3%	19.5%		3.7x
MIT	4.52%	11.5%		2.5x
Stanford	~3.8%	17.6%		4.7x
Duke	5.1%	25.6%		5x
Johns Hopkins	~6.2%	30.2%		4.9x
Northwestern	~7.5%	21.5%		2.9x
UChicago	~4.9%	22.2%		4.5x
UC Berkeley	~10.8%	26%		2.4x
UCLA	~8.7%	28%		3.2x

## 04. What Is a Good SAT and ACT Score for Top Universities?

When counselling students, a common question we encounter is whether their SAT or ACT scores meet the standards of their target universities. While there's no quick answer to this inquiry — especially without reviewing the entire application — there are several ways we can gauge the quality of the SAT or ACT score.

So what exactly constitutes a "good" SAT score? And how does this differ between different universities?

The definition of a good SAT or ACT score can vary depending on the competitiveness of the universities the student is applying to. Generally, a good score is one that places the student in the competitive range for their dream universities and reflects well on their academic abilities, typically falling around the 75th percentile.

To determine what constitutes a good SAT score, we'll examine the average SAT and ACT scores of admitted students at various top universities.



University	Percentage of Students Accepted with SAT or ACT Scores	Average SAT Score - Accepted Crimson Students	Average ACT Score - Accepted Crimson Students
Princeton University	62%	1500	35
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	100%	1520	35
Harvard University	70%	1520	35
Stanford University	50%	1530	35
Yale University	54%	1500	35
University of Pennsylvania	66%	1500	34
California Institute of Technology	67%	1580	0
Duke University	69%	1520	34
Brown University	59%	1530	35
Johns Hopkins University	68%	1500	36
Northwestern University	82%	1480	35
Columbia University	43%	1500	35
Cornell University	57%	1510	35
University of Chicago	71%	1515	34
University of California, Berkeley	63%	1490	34
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)	71%	1510	36
Rice University	72%	1520	35
Dartmouth College	50%	1530	35
Vanderbilt University	61%	1510	35
University of Notre Dame	100%	1400	32

University	25th Percentile Score	75th Percentile Score
University of Virginia	1400	1540
Washington University at St. Louis	1500	1570
Georgetown University	1390	1530
Average of all SAT scores	1453.6	1551.2

Based on most recent Common Data Set reporting or similar reporting or estimates, as available.

Students admitted to top 25 universities have an SAT score of around

**1450-1550**

Based on this data, a good SAT score at top universities is around at least 1500.

Students admitted to top 25 universities have an ACT score of between

**32 and 36**

overall. Based on this data, a good SAT score when applying to top universities is 34 or above.



Ziyan

Crimson Student

Johns Hopkins

# 05. Tips to Stand Out: How to Improve Your SAT and ACT Scores

As you have learned, achieving a standout score on the SAT or ACT can significantly enhance your university application. With the right approach, strategic preparation, and targeted study techniques, you can maximise your potential and achieve your desired score. Here are key strategies and insights to guide you through this crucial phase of your academic journey.

## Understand the Differences Between SAT and ACT

When deciding between the SAT and ACT, it's crucial to choose the exam that aligns best with your strengths. The SAT and ACT differ significantly in format, timing, and content areas. For example, the SAT includes an adaptive digital format that adjusts question difficulty based on your performance, with fewer questions and more time. In contrast, the ACT incorporates a Science section alongside its English, Math, and Reading sections. Therefore, understanding these differences will help you select the test that allows you to showcase your abilities most effectively.



## Create a Personalised Study Plan

Develop a structured study plan tailored to your schedule and learning preferences. Start by taking a diagnostic test to identify your strengths and weaknesses. Dedicate specific time each day or week to practice tests, review sessions, and targeted study of challenging topics. Set achievable goals and track your progress to stay motivated and focused.

## Utilise Practice Resources

Take advantage of official SAT and ACT practice materials available online, in test preparation books, and on reputable websites. These resources include sample questions, practice tests, scoring guides, and additional practice questions that simulate the actual testing experience. Online forums, communities, and mobile apps designed for SAT and ACT preparation provide valuable insights from experienced test-takers and educators, helping you refine your test-taking strategies and reinforce learning on the go.



## Develop Effective Study Habits

Establish a consistent study routine that incorporates active learning techniques such as summarising key concepts, creating flashcards, and self-quizzing. Focus on mastering fundamental concepts in English, Math, Reading, and Science (for the ACT) to build a solid foundation. Practice time management strategies during study sessions and practice tests to improve efficiency and simulate real exam conditions.

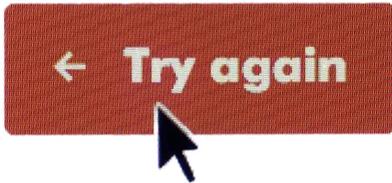
## Stay Updated on Test Changes

Stay informed about any updates or changes to the SAT and ACT exams, including modifications to content, scoring, or test-taking strategies. Subscribe to official newsletters, follow updates on testing websites, and consult with educators or tutors who specialise in SAT and ACT preparation. Being aware of these changes ensures you are preparing effectively with up-to-date information.



## Manage Test Anxiety

Develop strategies to manage test anxiety and optimise your performance on exam day. Practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing and visualisation to reduce stress. Maintain a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and sufficient sleep in the days leading up to the exam. Arrive at the testing centre early to familiarise yourself with the environment and review test-day procedures.



## Consider Retaking the Exam

If your initial SAT or ACT score is lower than expected or does not meet your university admissions goals, consider retaking the exam. Many students find that subsequent attempts lead to higher scores as they become more familiar with the test format and types of questions asked. Additionally, retaking the test can leverage superscoring policies, where universities consider your best section scores across different test dates to potentially increase your overall score.

## Celebrate Your Achievements

Acknowledge and celebrate your achievements throughout your SAT and ACT preparation journey. Set realistic goals, track your progress, and recognise milestones achieved along the way. Maintaining a positive mindset and staying motivated are essential for success in achieving your target scores and gaining admission to your desired universities.



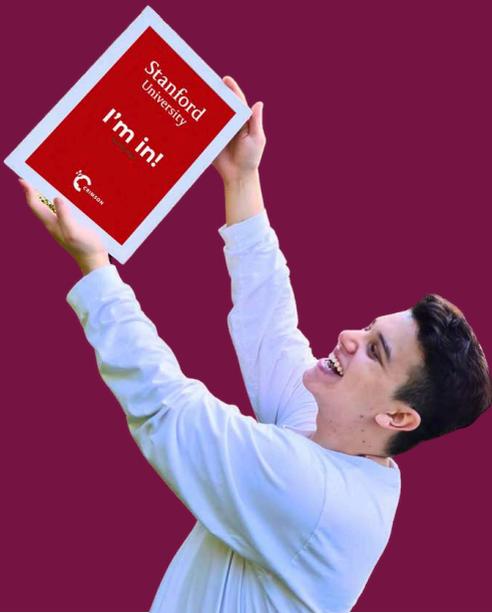
## Optimise Test Prep with Expert Tutors

Collaborating with expert tutors can significantly enhance your SAT and ACT preparation. They offer personalised guidance based on diagnostic assessments of your strengths, weaknesses, and learning style. Tutors tailor study plans to focus on improving specific areas and teach effective test-taking strategies crucial for optimising your performance. They also provide access to resources and practice materials that may not be available through self-study alone.



## Crimson Student's Unique Position

Crimson's Tutoring Services are designed to build students' confidence in applying crucial subject knowledge and test-taking skills for the SAT or ACT Tests or specific tutoring curriculum for the IB, AP and A-Levels. Our services provide thorough coverage of question types, strategies, and ample practice opportunities to improve the student's specific skills and knowledge necessary to excel academically.



### ► Personalised Approach

Personalised one-on-one teaching with tutors from Crimson's global network is the cornerstone of our service.

### ► Expert Tutors

Our tutors are highly qualified, having attended top universities and achieved top scores on the SAT/ACT exams or for the IB, AP and A-Levels curriculum. This ensures that they provide valuable insights and expertise to students.

### ► Adaptive Strategies

Our tutors excel in recognizing different question types, imparting the necessary knowledge and techniques needed to answer them effectively, and sharing useful tips and tricks for success.

## 06. Final Thoughts

### **Congratulations on completing "SAT & ACT - The Ultimate Guide"!**

By now, you've gained valuable insights and strategies to excel in these crucial exams and enhance your university application. Remember, success on the SAT and ACT isn't just about studying hard; it's about studying smart and strategically.

Throughout this guide, you've learned to navigate the nuances of each exam, understand their formats, and identify effective study techniques tailored to your strengths and goals. From creating personalised study plans to leveraging expert tutoring and utilising official practice materials, you've equipped yourself with the tools necessary to achieve your desired scores.

As you continue on your journey towards university admission, consider the comprehensive support that Crimson Education offers beyond test preparation. Our expert advisors specialise in guiding students through every aspect of the admissions process, from strategic preparation and school selection to crafting compelling personal statements and application strategies.

Remember, your SAT and ACT scores are just one part of your application. Keep reading to find out how Crimson Education can play a pivotal role in your successful admissions journey.



# About Crimson Education

Crimson Education is the world's leading admissions consultancy. From admissions strategies to research opportunities to a global high school, we offer the most comprehensive scope of admissions services available in the world. We employ over 900 full-time staff in over 20 countries and work with all students, no matter where they live.

Every one of Crimson's students are uniquely matched to experts who will best-fit their needs. This includes Exam Tutors, Extracurricular Mentors, Essay Prep Specialists, and Application Strategists. Our approach cultivates a highly personalised service that leaves no stone unturned in the application process.

All our experts come from the same top universities our students apply to, including Yale, Columbia, Stanford, MIT, Oxford, Cambridge, and many more. This highly individualised approach has resulted in our students gaining admission to the Ivy League, Oxbridge and other top universities at up to 5x the general applicant rate.

Our commitment to our students goes beyond the college admission process. We facilitate internships, ambassadorships, and career opportunities that stretch every student's lifetime. We are dedicated to providing students with the opportunities they need to perform masterfully on the international stage, utilising the education system of the 22nd century to build the leaders of tomorrow.

## This is the Crimson Effect:



The power to transform lives through world-class education



# Our Results

Every year, we are amazed by what our students accomplish. In fact, many of our students receive not just one, but two or three offers to the world's best universities. They are faced with the wonderful dilemma of needing to choose between several highly competitive universities!

In general, Crimson students are 4.5x more likely to gain admission to a top university than those who apply alone. Those who worked with us for four or more years are 9x more likely to gain admission to their target university compared to those who joined us later in the application cycle. Check out our statistics below

**1000+**

Offers to Ivy League Universities

**6,360+**

Offers to the US Top 50 universities

**2,090+**

Offers to the US Top 20 universities

**293**

Offers to Oxford and Cambridge

**2,370+**

Offers to the UK Top 10 universities

## Crimson Student Admissions Rates Compared to General Applicant Rates (2024)

University	General Admit Rate	Crimson Admit Rate	Times Better
Harvard	3.59%	13%	3.6x
Princeton	~3.8%	16%	4.2x
Yale	3.7%	16%	4.3x
Columbia	3.8%	25.8%	6.8x
UPenn	~5.3%	23.8%	4.5x
Brown	5.2%	20.9%	4x
Cornell	~7.5%	24%	3.2x
Dartmouth	5.3%	19.5%	3.7x
MIT	4.52%	11.5%	2.5x
Stanford	~3.8%	17.6%	4.7x
Duke	5.1%	25.6%	5x
Johns Hopkins	~6.2%	30.2%	4.9x
Northwestern	~7.5%	21.5%	2.9x
UChicago	~4.9%	22.2%	4.5x
UC Berkeley	~10.8%	26%	2.4x
UCLA	~8.7%	28%	3.2x

# How do Crimson students compare to international averages?

**4.3x**

More likely to gain acceptance to the Ivy League compared to the average general applicant.

**1.3-3x**

More likely to get accepted into Oxford or Cambridge compared to the average general applicant

## IVY LEAGUE

**20%**

The average acceptance rate of Crimson students who applied to the Ivy League

VS.

**~4.7%**

compared to the average acceptance rate of general applicants who applied to the Ivy League

## US TOP 20

**21%**

The average acceptance rate of Crimson students who applied to the US Top 20

VS.

**~5.6%**

compared to the average acceptance rate of general applicants who applied to the US Top 20



# What Sets Us Apart

We understand that choosing the right education is one of the most important decisions a student and their family will ever make. That's why Crimson is committed to providing you with the best support and guidance you need to succeed.

There are three distinct qualities that set us apart from every other admissions consultancy in the world. These include:

**Personalised Approach:** We take the time to understand each student's individual needs and goals, then develop a personalised and comprehensive plan to help them achieve them.

**Global Network of Experts:** Our team of experienced experts includes former admissions officers, strategists, and mentors from the world's top universities.

**Advanced Education Technologies:** We create and invest in education technologies that help students reach their full potential and increase their chances of admission to top universities.



# 01. Our Services

Crimson's services encompass everything from comprehensive university admissions support to research, college preparatory and academic programmes to help students maximise their potential and achieve their goals for higher education and beyond.

## University Admissions Support

### US, UK, Canada, and EU Universities

Crimson is the world's leading US, UK, EU and postgraduate admissions consultancy. Our student's disproportionately high rate of success is due to our unique model which teams students with Ivy/Oxbridge & other top university graduate experts who work with them one-on-one to perfect every part of their application.



#### University Selection Strategy

Identifying your best-fit universities and building an application list based on your interests, priorities, goals and qualifications.



#### Interview Preparation

Conducting mock interviews with multiple Crimson mentors to prepare and build confidence for any question or scenario.



#### Test Preparation

One-on-one online tutoring for the US's standardised tests, the UK's entrance exams and everything in between.



#### Teacher Recommendations

Help with identifying which teachers to approach and how to ensure their letter highlights everything it should.



#### Extracurricular Capstone Mentoring

Optimising current extracurricular projects and identifying opportunities for new capstone projects and leadership, both in and outside of school to ensure passion and impact are demonstrated in your application.



#### Former Admissions Officer Review

Detailed feedback from Former Admissions Officers from schools like Cambridge, Oxford, Stanford, the Ivy League, UChicago & more.



#### Essay Development

Continued revision & guidance on essays that deliver core ideas in the most impactful manner, to best supplement other aspects of the application.



#### Athletic Recruitment

Assistance with navigating the recruitment process for student-athletes, from coach outreach to recruitment video production to NCAA compliance to scholarship negotiations.



#### Financial Application Support

Comprehensive guidance on financing options, including merit scholarships and need-based admissions.

## Our Subsidiaries

At Crimson, we pride ourselves on being a one-stop shop for all students. Whenever a student or their family has a need, we are able to meet those needs expeditiously and at a very high standard. Our subsidiaries work to meet our students' needs, no matter where they are in their admissions journey.

### ✓ Indigo Research

A competitive high school research program that provides high school students with 1:1 mentorship from top professors and PhDs to transform your academic passion into publishable research.



### ✓ Crimson Global Academy (CGA)

Crimson Global Academy (CGA) is an internationally accredited, world-class online private school delivering live, real-time learning to students all over the world. Designed to challenge, students graduate with the International GCSE and International A-Level qualifications which are globally recognised for their academic rigour, flexibility, and breadth of learning.

It is a transformative schooling experience that aims to serve as many students as possible through its global networks, diverse extracurriculars, and access to cutting-edge educational technologies.

### ✓ Delta Institute

Delta Institute offers work experience programs with top global companies at the pinnacle of their respective industries. We offer students first-hand experiences in career pathways they are interested in, which helps them develop an experience-driven understanding of what their potential future career would look like.



Time	Class
09:00am - 10:00am	Pre-IGCSE (P1) 01
10:00am - 11:00am	IGCSE Chemistry (P1) 01
11:00am - 12:00pm	IGCSE Chemistry (P1) 02
12:00pm - 13:00pm	IGCSE Chemistry (P1) 03
13:00pm - 14:00pm	IGCSE Chemistry (P1) 04

### ✓ **Crimson Rise**

A strategy service for students ages 11-14. Rise includes tracks for hard-hitting uni admissions preparation, earlier-stage skills development, and interest exploration.



### ✓ **Medview: Medical School Consultation Bundles (UK, AUS, NZ)**

This includes consulting, test prep, interview/core paper/revision prep, and experiences prep for students applying to medical programs in the UK, Australia, and New Zealand.



### ✓ **Revision Village**

Dedicated to providing the highest quality IB Maths resources in the world, Revision Village is an award-winning education website that has helped over 1.3 million IB students prepare for their IB Maths Exams. Over 50% of the resources created by Revision Village are made free for all users worldwide.



### ✓ **Admit Yogi**

Created by students at Stanford, AdmitYogi is a lower-cost service that lets students access successful application profiles from students who got into top universities. This service aims to provide students with insights on what highly selective universities are looking for including essays, awards, activities, demographic data, GPA, and more!



### ✓ **Crimson Athletics**

The Crimson Athletics department provides 3 services that target admissions strategy for student athletes:

- Athletic Strategy Consulting
- Athletic Campaigning
- Athletic Recruitment Video



### ✓ **SummerApply**

Students often struggle to figure out where the world's best, most reputable summer programs are. SummerApply compiles all of these programs into one catalogue- from Pre-Med Academies by Harvard to internships with Uber, students can easily research and apply to summer programs that are unique and will help them stand out from the crowd.



## 02. Global Network of Experts

As a policy, all Crimson Strategists, Mentors, and Tutors must have graduated from a Top 30 university in the world. From world-leading university alumni to PhDs, Former Admissions Officers to multi-degree academics, every student's team will guide their students through the entire application journey.



**Alisha M.**

 **University of Illinois, UCLA**

Alisha has a BS in Community Health with a concentration in Health Planning and Administration from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Master's in Health Policy and Management from UCLA. Most notably, her students have received admissions to Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, NYU, USC, and UCLA.



**Abbigail C.**

 **Oxford, LSE**

Abbigail graduated from Oxford University with a BA in English Language and Literature. She then completed her Master's in International Social and Public Policy at London School of Economics (LSE). Most notably, she has helped students secure offers to Oxford, Cambridge, LSE, UCL, Imperial, King's, and many other top Russell Group Universities.



**Heitor S.**

 **Swarthmore College, Stanford**

Heitor graduated from Swarthmore College with a BA in Political Science and Educational Studies with a Minor in French. He is currently completing a PhD in International Comparative Education at Stanford (2025). Most notably, he's helped students gain acceptances to Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Stanford, Princeton, Columbia, and UCLA.



**Beatrix S.**

 **University of Texas at Austin, Columbia**

Beatrix graduated with honours from the University of Texas at Austin with a Bachelor's in Business and Corporate Communications. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Social Work at Columbia. Most notably, her students have received acceptances to Duke, UChicago, UT Austin, and UCLA.



## Christine L.

 **Brown University, Oxford**

Christine graduated from Brown with a BA in East Asian Studies and International Relations. She then graduated from Oxford with an MPhil in Modern Chinese Studies. Christine is based out of Seoul, South Korea, and mentors students looking to attend universities in the US and UK.



## George B.

 **Harvard, UCL**

George graduated from Harvard with an AB in Sociology and African American Studies. He then completed an MSc in Public Policy with a concentration in LGBTQ+ Health at University College London. Most notably, he has helped students gain acceptances to Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, UPenn, Yale, Cornell, and UChicago.



## Natalie S.

 **UC Berkeley, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology**

Natalie received a Bachelor's degree from UC Berkeley and a Master's in Social Science from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Most notably, she has helped students gain admission to schools including UPenn, Cornell, and UChicago.



## Pandora L.

 **Cambridge University, University of the Arts London, Royal College of Art, UCL**

Pandora graduated from Cambridge with an MA in History, an MA in Painting from UAL, a Master of Research from RCA, and PGCE from UCL, and is currently completing a PhD at Cambridge in Architecture. Most notably, her students have received acceptances to Cambridge, Oxford, Durham, Imperial, and UCL.



## Carolina L.

 **Duke University**

Carol graduated from Duke University with a double major in Psychology and French and a Minor in Education. Most notably, she has helped her students gain acceptances to all Ivy League schools, Stanford, and Duke.



## Brenda H.

 **University of Michigan, Cornell**

Brenda graduated from University of Michigan with a double major in Psychology and Economics. She then went on to receive her Master's in Management in Marketing at Cornell University. Brenda's students have received acceptances to Columbia, Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins, UCs, Penn, NYU, and USC.

# The Crimson Team

The Crimson team will coordinate and communicate internally to ensure the student is receiving the best, most personalized support possible. Each contributor will help the student with different aspects of the preparation and applications.

For our University Admissions Consulting service, every Crimson student's team features the following:

## Strategist

As the leading expert in every student's team, the Crimson Strategist is responsible for developing a personalised strategy that highlights the student's unique strengths, achievements, and goals. Equipped with a deep understanding of university admissions requirements and a proven track record of success, the Crimson Strategist will help the student stand out from the competition and increase their chances of being accepted into the world's top universities.

During formal strategy consulting sessions, the Strategist will:

- Support the student by developing a comprehensive preparation plan for their university admissions, including individual targets and milestones for their academic and personal goals, and a strategic timeline for completing the application process.
- Develop a compelling personal narrative to maximise chances of acceptance.
- Help the student select universities based on their goals, preferences, likelihood of acceptance, and personal narrative.
- Monitor the student's grades and test scores, and ensure extracurricular activities are aligned with the student's passions and aspirations.

## Student Success Managers

Students receive ongoing support from the Student Success Team via multiple contact methods to ensure the quality of their program and experience. This includes:

- Ensuring that they are on track to meet all of their admissions milestones and deadlines
- Keeping their parents informed of all key steps and accomplishments
- Monitoring their performance
- Making relevant changes as needed
- Allocating or replacing members of their team
- Responding to requests and inquiries from Crimson parents and students

## Application Mentor

The Application Mentor will review the student's profile and help the student prepare for all their Admissions Essays and Interviews during the application year. This includes:

- Brainstorming, planning, and revising the student's university admissions essays to ensure they play a crucial role in the student's application
- Preparing the student for university interviews, providing invaluable advice on how to approach each questions and guide the student through practice interviews.

If the student and their family decides to purchase additional Crimson services, the student can receive guidance from more specific experts, such as an In-Depth Extracurricular & Leadership (ECL) Mentor; Financial Aid and Scholarship Mentor, Academic and Test Tutor, Former Admissions Officer Reviewer, among others.

# 03. Advanced Technologies

To meet the standards of our outstanding students, Crimson has developed and improved high-level education technologies that facilitate access to a diverse range of experts and resources from around the world, adapt to individual learning needs, and promote a more inclusive and personalized educational experience.

## ✓ The Crimson App

The Crimson App is an exclusive learning management system that helps students achieve their admission goals through customized learning plans, progress tracking, and vast resources. Data on student performance is collected and reviewed to ensure informed decision-making.

- **Student-Mentor Matching**

Students are paired with best-fit mentors based on psychometric, expertise, interest, and performance data.

- **Roadmap**

Easily keep track of upcoming tasks and activities, to best optimise your time.

- **Applications**

Manage the school list and track the application process easily.

- **Exclusive Resources**

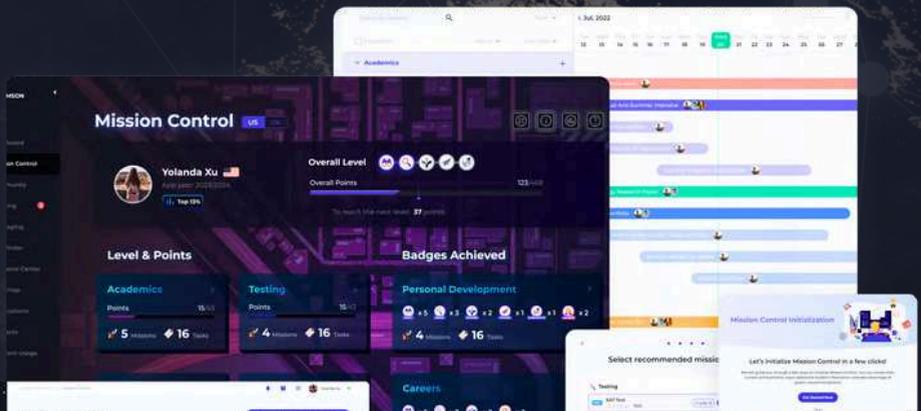
We provide access to exclusive video content and interviews with world-renowned business leaders and entrepreneurs.

## ✓ Pathfinder

Contained within the Crimson app, Pathfinder is a master list of everything a student can do during high school to increase their chances of admission to top US universities. Pathfinder includes over 280 goals, each with an assigned point value based on how much admissions officers will value that achievement. As students complete goals and accrue points, they move up through 'levels' in Pathfinder, which correlate with increasingly competitive universities.

## ✓ Launchpad

We offer a unique and engaging community for students from around the world to learn, grow, and connect. Access premium content, including webinars and expert presentations, join groups with students who share your passions, and participate in community events like Crimson Shark Tank and online MUN competitions. Plus, connect directly with Crimson alumni at top schools to find mentors, project partners, and more.



# Starting Your Journey With CRIMSON

## 01

### Discovering the educational goals

In our free initial consultation with the Academic Advisor, we will get to know the student's interests, goals, and strengths.

While the Academic Advisor is there to understand the student's academic goals and aspirations, the family can ask as many questions as they like in return!

## 02

### Identifying the strengths and weaknesses

Now that we've discussed the student's goals and aspirations, it's time to evaluate the student's odds of admission to their initial preferred university choices.

Based on the student's profile, a personalised program tailored to their individual strengths and weaknesses is built.

#### Examples:

- ✓ Extracurricular Mentoring
- ✓ Application Strategy
- ✓ Test Prep
- ✓ Essay Prep
- ✓ Best-fit University Selection

YOU ALONE



YOU WITH CRIMSON



## 04

### Success!

It's time to take action! With the Crimson team by the student's side, they can start their journey to acceptance at the best universities in the world!

## 03

### Generating the unique game plan

At Crimson, we don't believe in the adage that 'one size fits all.'

Instead, we design a personalised programme tailored to each student's individual strengths and weaknesses. Every student's journey at Crimson looks unique.

Following the consultation, we will develop a customised Crimson programme for the student, taking into account their academic goals and budget.

Once the student is satisfied with their individually crafted programme, their educational journey begins!





10 YEARS OF STUDENT SUCCESS

# Ready to Get Started?

[Talk to Us](#)

[CRIMSONEDUCATION.ORG](https://www.crimsoneducation.org)