College Resources – Applications, Scholarships/Funding, ACT Prep

Academic Common Market - Study in a specialized field at an out-of-state college and pay in-state tuition rates. https://www.sreb.org/academic-common-market

Common App Application https://www.commonapp.org/

The Common Black College Application https://commonblackcollegeapp.com/

Federal Student Aid (FASFA) https://studentaid.gov/

The CollegeCounts Scholarship – Funding for those attending college in Alabama based on financial need https://treasury.alabama.gov/collegecounts-scholarship/

The Coca-Cola Scholars Program Scholarship https://tinyurl.com/CocaColaSch

Junior League of Montgomery https://www.jlmontgomery.org/fundraisers/college-career-night

State Board of Education https://www.alabamaachieves.org/communication/news-releases/

ACT Prep https://www.sylvanlearning.com/test-prep/act/ Sylvan Montgomery 334.262.0043

RRA Website https://riverregionacademy.com/ under myRRA – Documents & Links

- College Resources
- Ultimate Guide to Applying for College

ACT Test & Registration Dates

ACT testing provided at ASU, Evangel Christian Academy, and Faulkner University
(register early to get your site preference – sites can and do fill up fast)

ACT Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline
December 13, 2025	November 7	November 24
February 14, 2026	January 9	January 23
April 11, 2026	March 6	March 24
June 13, 2026	May 8	May 29
July 11, 2026	June 5	June 24

Free College Application Week 2025
Monday, October 6 – Friday, October 10*

Participating Alabama Four-Year Schools

- Alabama A&M University
- Alabama Aviation College
- Alabama State University
- Athens State University
- Auburn University
- Auburn University at Montgomery
- Huntingdon College
- Jacksonville State University
- Miles College
- Samford University
- South University
- Spring Hill College
- Stillman College
- Talladega College
- Troy University
- Tuskegee University
- University of Alabama
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- University of Alabama in Huntsville
- University of Mobile
- University of Montevallo
- University of North Alabama
- University of South Alabama
- University of West Alabama

Participating Alabama Community & Junior Colleges / Technical Schools

- Alabama Community College System
- Bevill State Community College
- Bishop State Community College
- Calhoun Community College
- Central Alabama Community College
- Costal Alabama Community College
- Drake State Community & Technical College
- Enterprise State Community College
- Gadsden State Community College
- Jefferson State Community College
- Lawson State Community College
- Lurleen B. Wallace Community College
- Northeast Alabama Community College
- Northwest Shoals Community College
- Reid State Technical College
- Shelton State Community College
- Southern Union State Community College
- Trenholm State Community College
- Wallace Community College-Dothan
- Wallace Community College - Hanceville
- Wallace Community College - Selma

Out-of-State Schools Participating

Florida
- Florida Southern College
- University of West Florida

Georgia
- Brenau University
- Fort Valley State University
- Georgia Gwinnett College
- Georgia Southwestern State University
- Mercer University

Louisiana
- University of New Orleans

Mississippi
- Mississippi College
- Mississippi University for Women

South Carolina
- Allen University
- South Carolina State University

Tennessee
- Lipscomb University
- Maryville College
- Nashville Auto Diesel College
- Sewanee - University of the South
- Union University

** Based on the ALSDE official list issued October 1, 2025.*

Common Application Participating Schools in Alabama

https://www.commonapp.org

- Auburn University
- Auburn University at Montgomery
- Samford Alabama
- Spring Hill College
- Talladega College
- Tuskegee University
- University of Alabama
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- University of Alabama in Huntsville
- University of South Alabama

HBCU Common Application Participating Schools – In State & Out of State

https://commonblackcollegeapp.com

- **Alabama A&M University (AL)**
- **Alabama State University (AL)**
- Albany State University (GA)
- Alcorn State University (MS)
- Allen University (SC)
- American Baptist College (TN)
- Arkansas Baptist College (AR)
- Benedict College (SC)
- Bennett College (NC)
- Bethune-Cookman University (FL)
- Bluefield State College (WV)
- Central State University (OH)
- Charles R. Drew University (CA)
- Cheyney University (PA)
- Claflin University (SC)
- Clark Atlanta University (GA)
- Clinton College (SC)
- Coppin State University (MD)
- Delaware State University (DE)
- Dillard University (LA)
- Edward Waters College (FL)
- Elizabeth City State University (NC)
- Fayetteville State University (NC)
- Fisk University (TN)
- Florida Memorial University (FL)
- Fort Valley State University (GA)
- Grambling State University (LA)
- Harris-Stowe State University (MO)
- Huston-Tillotson University (TX)
- Jarvis Christian College (TX)
- Jackson State University (MS)
- Johnson C. Smith University (NC)
- Kentucky State University (KY)
- Lane College (TN)
- Lincoln University (MO)
- Lincoln University (PA)
- LeMoyne Owen College (TN)
- Lincoln University (PA)
- Livingstone College (NC)
- Mississippi Valley State University (MS)
- **Miles College (AL)**
- Morehouse College (GA)
- Morris Brown College (GA)
- Morgan State University (MD)
- Norfolk State University (VA)
- North Carolina Central University (NC)
- Paine College (GA)
- Paul Quinn College (TX)
- Philander Smith College (AR)
- Rust College (MS)
- Saint Augustine's University (NC)
- **Selma University (AL)**
- Shaw University (NC)
- South Carolina State University (SC)
- Southern Univ. and A&M College (LA)
- Southern Univ. (Baton Rouge) (LA)
- Southern Univ. (New Orleans) (LA)
- **Stillman College (AL)**
- **Talladega College (AL)**
- Tennessee State University (TN)
- Texas College (TX)
- Tougaloo College (MS)
- Univ. of Arkansas Pine Bluff (AR)
- Univ. of Md. Eastern Shore (MD)
- Univ. of The Virgin Islands
- Virginia State University (VA)
- Virginia Union University (VA)
- Voorhees College (SC)
- West Va. State University (WV)
- Wilberforce University (OH)
- Winston Salem State University (NC)
- Wiley College (TX)

Academic Common Market

Study in a specialized field at an out-of-state college and pay in-state tuition rates.

https://www.sreb.org | https://acm.ache.edu

Looking for a college degree not offered by a public institution in your home state? The Academic Common Market may be able to help. Many students qualify for in-state tuition to study at out-of-state institutions.

Not all colleges participate, not all programs are offered, and not every offered program is available to students in all states.

What is the Academic Common Market?

- The Academic Common Market is a tuition-savings program for college students in 15 SREB states who want to pursue degrees that are not offered by public institutions in their home state. Students can enroll in out-of-state institutions and pay the institution's in-state tuition rates for more than 2,200 undergraduate and graduate programs.
- The ACM is not competitive or merit-based, but applicants must meet state residency and college admission requirements.
- The ACM reduces the unnecessary duplication of academic programs among participating states, recognizing that it is impractical for any institution or single state to develop or maintain degree programs in every field of knowledge.
- The ACM supports existing degree programs that have the capacity to serve additional students by providing access across state lines for programs not available in a student's home state.
- Doctoral-level programs for a first professional degree are not eligible.

Is the Academic Common Market for you?

1. Do you live in one of the 15 participating SREB states? (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia)
2. Is the out-of-state degree eligible for residents of your home state? Search from more than 2,200 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in 15 states.

3. Have you been admitted to the college that offers the program? Apply through the institution's regular application process. Once you are admitted to the college and you have your acceptance letter that clearly states regular admission to the specific program, you are ready to apply to the Academic Common Market.
4. Have you applied to the ACM through your home state? Contact your state's ACM coordinator. Complete the ACM application process to be certified as a resident of your home state. This process varies from state to state, but generally involves several signatures. SREB does not manage or track ACM applications.

Margaret Cabble
Coordinator of Strategic Programs | Alabama Commission on Higher Education
100 N Union Street
Montgomery, AL
Phone: 334-242-2423 | Margaret.Cabble@ache.edu

Academic Common Market Application | https://acm.ache.edu

In brief, the Academic Common Market (ACM) makes it possible for Alabama citizens to pay in-state rates for certain academic programs that are not available at any Alabama public college or university.

The Requirements:

1. Be a resident of Alabama
2. Be accepted into the eligible program
3. Complete the admission process at the ACM member institution

Required Documents:

1. A wallet-sized photograph
2. Proof of acceptance to the ACM sanctioned degree program.
3. Two proofs of being an Alabama resident
    a. Driver's license or non-driver's license ID card
    b. State income tax form (If you are a dependent student, please submit your parent's Alabama State income Tax Form listing you as a dependent.). Please redact of black out SSI numbers or other sensitive information. Make sure dependent name is visible.
4. If. Not a United States citizen, then include a copy of Form I-551 (the "Green Card").

ACT ENHANCEMENTS 2025:
Supporting Your Path to College Success

ACT is committed to evolving with students' needs, making testing more accessible and supportive of your college journey.

Beginning in **April 2025**, students who choose to take the ACT **online** will see an updated format that's shorter and lets you choose whether to include the science section, allowing for greater flexibility while maintaining the accuracy and reliability colleges rely on. These changes will also apply to the **paper-pencil test** starting in **September 2025**. The Composite score will now focus on English, math, and reading, while science scores will be reported separately for those who take it.

Why are these changes happening?

ACT is committed to continuous improvement, alignment to assessment industry best practices, and innovation to make the ACT test primed for student success and college admission.

These updates ensure colleges can continue making informed admission and scholarship decisions, making your results even more relevant as students take the next steps toward higher education.

New test length and time:

(Current length and time in parentheses).

Test	Number of Questions	Minutes Per Test
English	50 (75)	35 (45)
Mathematics	45 (60)	50 (60)
Reading	36 (40)	40 (35)
Science (Optional)	40 (40)	40 (35)
Writing (Optional)	1 (1)	40 (40)

What's Changing

- Reduced the number of questions overall (44 fewer)
- Reduced the test length. Students can receive their college-reportable Composite score after 125 minutes of testing rather than up to 195.
- More time per question
- Reduced the number of answer choices in math questions from five to four.
- Students can now choose to take the ACT National test WITH or WITHOUT the science section. State and district customers will chose whether to include the science section with the ACT test for their students.

What's Not Changing

- The ACT scale will remain 1-36 with no changes to ACT benchmarks or state-specific achievement standards.
- Scores from tests taken prior to the rollout of the new Composite score will not change.
- Ability to predict success in first-year college credit-bearing courses will not change.
- Both paper-and-pencil course will continue to be available.

ACT FAQ's

When do the enhancements take effect?

April 2025	September 2025	Spring 2026
ACT National Online Test Only	• ACT National Paper Test • Updated Composite Score for ALL ACT Tests	State & District Spring 2026 Testing

Will ACT still provide a Superscore? *Yes*

Are examinees who request accommodations with National testing receiving these same benefits?
Yes. The enhancements will become available based on the timeline regardless of accommodation status.

What if students still want to take the science section?
ACT is committed to providing a high-quality science section for anyone who chooses to take it.

Who should take the science section?
Students planning to major in science or a STEM field or take science courses in college should consider taking the science section since those who have math and science scores will still receive a STEM score.

How long will it take students to complete the ACT test?
That depends. On the ACT, students have the flexibility to choose whether to take science or writing, and whether to take the test using pencil and paper or online. If students take just the English, math and reading subjects, the testing time, not including the short breaks between sections, is two hours and five minutes. The tests will go like this:

- English: 35-minute section with 50 questions (around 42 seconds per item)
- Math: 50-minute section with 45 items (around one minute and seven seconds per item)
- Reading: 40-minute section with 36 items (around one minute and seven seconds per item)

Is the ACT Composite score changing?
Yes. The new ACT Composite score will be calculated using your English, math, and reading scores.

Will students need to prepare differently for the test?
New test prep options, including a full-length practice test, will be available by early 2025. Current practice tests and available ACT test prep materials are still great for preparing because there has been no significant change in the types of knowledge and skills measured by the ACT test with the enhancements.

How will ACT Superscoring work?
Starting in April 2025, students who choose to take the online ACT test will have their ACT Superscore calculated using the new method incorporating English, math, and reading. For everyone else, this change will happen in September 2025. We'll still show your highest scores for each subject with the test date, but the Composite score will be based on the new English, math and reading calculation.

Will the changes be for both the online test and the paper-and-pencil test?
Yes. The enhancements will roll out with the ONLINE test for April, June and July 2025. Beginning in September 2025, the paper-and-pencil test will reflect the enhancements. School and district sponsored testing will include the enhancements in the Spring of 2026.

ACT vs. SAT: How to Decide Which Test to Take

U.S. News & World Report / By Josh Moody, Reporter / February 25, 2019
https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/act-vs-sat-how-to-decide-which-test-to-take

WHEN IT COMES TO THE ACT vs. the SAT, both exams are universally accepted by U.S. colleges, which often prompts students to ask: Which test should I take?

The answer to that question lies in understanding the differences between the two tests.

Both college admissions exams are wildly popular. In the class of 2018, a reported 2.1 million test-takers completed the SAT and 1.9 million students took the ACT. It is unclear how many students took both, but experts say it is common practice for a test-taker to tackle both exams.

"More and more students in the last five to 10 years are taking both," says Joe Korfmacher, a former counselor at a New York high school and current director of college counseling at a New York office of Collegewise, an admissions consulting company.

The idea behind both exams is similar: to demonstrate college readiness. But despite similar aims, the tests vary in structure and timing as well as the content matter and scoring.

For example, the SAT test takes three hours, though with an optional 50-minute essay, the time adds up to almost four hours total. The ACT lasts two hours and 55 minutes, though a 40-minute optional writing test stretches it to a little more than three-and-a-half hours.

The SAT features 154 questions vs. 215 for the ACT. According to the College Board, which administers the SAT, test-takers have more time on the SAT with 1 minute and 10 seconds per question, compared with 49 seconds on the ACT.

The scoring for each test also differs. For the SAT, total scores range from 400-1600; for the ACT, the composite score runs from 1-36. Those ranges do not include the optional essays, which are scored separately from each exam.

The cost of the exams also varies. The SAT costs $47.50 for the test only and $64.50 if the optional essay is included. The ACT costs $50.50 for only the exam and $67 if the optional writing test is included. Additional fees may apply for other options, such as late registration. Students may also be able to take the SAT or ACT for free thanks to state support or fee waivers.

Both exams are offered by nonprofit organizations. For the SAT, that's the College Board, which also offers Advanced Placement courses and other testing services. The ACT organization is more limited in scope, focusing largely on its namesake test.

1:33

ACT OR SAT: CHOOSING WHICH TEST TO TAKE

Students hoping to find the easier testing option are out of luck.

"These are high-stakes tests; neither of them is going to be easy," says Mai Jumamil, director of college prep programs at Kaplan Test Prep, a New York-based company.

Korfmacher seconds that opinion: "I can definitely say, with certainty, that there's not an easier test."

To help students make their decision, experts suggest they begin with a practice test and see which exam is best suited for them.

"Your actual ability, how well you do percentile-wise on these tests, is really hard to determine unless you sit down and take a full-length official practice test from both the SAT and ACT," says Chris Lele, senior GRE/SAT curriculum manager for Magoosh, a California-based test prep company. "I think in general it makes sense to put all of your time and resources into the test that you're going to do better on percentile-wise. I think the complication is when you do around the same."

The two exams may have appeal to different types of students, says Jumamil, who is based out of a Kaplan office in California. Students with a strong English background "may flourish on the ACT," which puts more emphasis on verbal skills, she says, while for students who are strong in math, "the SAT may reflect that much better."

Broken down by test components, the SAT has a reading test that takes 65 minutes, a 35-minute writing and language test and an 80-minute math section. The ACT is comprised of a 35-minute reading test, 45-minute English test, 60-minute math section and 35-minute science test. The SAT does not include an independent science section but incorporates science questions throughout the exam.

Elizabeth Levine, an independent educational consultant and founder of Signature College Counseling in New York, advises students to take both college admissions tests. Ideally, she says, they take both tests by the fall of their junior year and then prepare at length to retake their preferred exam.

DECIDING TO TAKE OR SKIP THE OPTIONAL ESSAY

Experts have different views on whether or not a student should take the optional essay.
"We're actually advising our students not to do the (optional) writing section," Korfmacher says, explaining that many colleges no longer require or recommend it.

But Levine encourages her students to take it: "The last thing you want to do is not take the optional writing section and find out that the school you're applying to requires or recommends it."

To Lele, it depends. "Unless you really struggle with writing, it's probably a good idea to take the essay so that can be an extra data point that colleges have to assess you by," he says.
Recent data show that the majority of students complete the optional essay for each exam. More than 1.4 million test-takers from the class of 2018 opted for the SAT essay, according to College Board data. For the ACT, 903,603 students from the class of 2018 took the essay.

SAT SCORE	ACT EQUIVALENT	SAT SCORE	ACT EQUIVALENT
1600-1570	36	1120-1100	22
1560-1530	35	1090-1060	21
1520-1490	34	1050-1030	20
1480-1450	33	1020-990	19
1440-1420	32	980-960	18
1410-1390	31	950-920	17
1380-1360	30	910-880	16
1350-1330	29	870-830	15
1320-1300	28	820-780	14
1290-1260	27	770-730	13
1250-1230	26	720-690	12
1220-1200	25	680-650	11
1190-1160	24	640-620	10
1150-1130	23	610-590	9

SAT VS. ACT SCORE CONVERSION

For students who are interested in comparing scores on the SAT and ACT, both the College Board and the ACT organization provide conversion charts to show how these composite scores stack up. The table below offers a breakdown of these data. According to figures from both organizations, the average SAT test score for 2018 high school graduates is 1068, and the average ACT score is 20.8.

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL ON THE ACT OR SAT

Regardless of which test students decide to take, the goal is the same: earning a score that shows college readiness.

To help students be successful, experts offer strategic test-prep tips. Some are simple, such as bring a snack on test day and take breaks when offered. Others require much more time and deliberation on the part of the student, such as identifying and working on weak spots in testing.

One best practice recommended by test-prep experts is to study well ahead of the date for the SAT or ACT once a student has decided which one to take.

"You really need to give yourself enough time to work out the areas you struggle in," Lele says.

ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

(Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-02(8) and (8)(a))

GRADUATING CLASS OF 2026
GRADUATING CLASS OF 2027

COURSE REQUIREMENTS		
English Language Arts	**Four credits to include:**	**Credits**
	English 9	1
	English 10	1
	English 11	1
	English 12	1
	English Language Arts-credit eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	
	English Language Arts Total Credits	4
Mathematics	**Three credits to include:**	**Credits**
	Algebra I or its equivalent/substitute	1
	Geometry or its equivalent/substitute	1
	Algebra II w/Trigonometry or Algebra II, or its equivalent/substitute	1
	One credit from:	
	Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics or mathematics-credit eligible courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	1
	Mathematics Total Credits	4
Science	**Two credits to include:**	**Credits**
	Biology	1
	A physical science (Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science)	1
	Two credits from:	
	Alabama Course of Study: Science or science-credit eligible courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	2
	Science Total Credits	4
Social Studies	**Four credits to include:**	**Credits**
	World History	1
	United States History I	1
	United States History II	1
	United States Government	0.5
	Economics	0.5
	Social Studies-credit eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	
Civics Exam Requirement	Students are required to earn a passing score on the *Civics Exam*	
	Social Studies Total Credits	4
Physical Education	Beginning Kinesiology or Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC)	1
Career Preparedness		1
Health Education		0.5
Arts Education and/or Career and Technical Education (CTE) and/or World Languages		3
Electives		2.5
	Total Credits	24

** Distance Learning: Effective for students entering the ninth grade in the 2009-2010 school year, Alabama students will be required to complete one online/technology enhanced course or experience prior to graduation. Exceptions through Individualized Education Plans will be allowed.*

*** Effective with the graduating Class of 2022, the following requirements shall be fulfilled on behalf of the graduating senior as part of the graduating senior's transition into postsecondary education, training, or the workforce: Submit to the United States Department of Education a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Certify a non-participation waiver, in writing, to the superintendent of the local education agency if the graduating senior chooses not to complete and submit FAFSA.*

**** Effective with the graduating Class of 2026, the Alabama High School Diploma: General Education Pathway shall be issued to students who earn the required credits and earn one or more of the college and career readiness indicators approved by the Alabama State Board of Education.*

March 1, 2024

ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

(Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-02(8) and (8)(a))

GRADUATING CLASS OF 2028 AND BEYOND

COURSE REQUIREMENTS		
English Language Arts	**Four credits to include:**	**Credits**
	English 9	1
	English 10	1
	English 11	1
	English 12	1
	English Language Arts credit-eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	
	English Language Arts Total Credits	4
Mathematics	**Three credits to include:**	**Credits**
	Algebra I or its equivalent/substitute	1
	Geometry or its equivalent/substitute	1
	Algebra II w/Trigonometry or Algebra II, or its equivalent/substitute	1
	One credit from:	
	Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics or mathematics credit-eligible courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	1
	Mathematics Total Credits	4
Science	**Two credits to include:**	**Credits**
	Biology	1
	A physical science (Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science)	1
	Two credits from:	
	Alabama Course of Study: Science or science credit-eligible courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	2
	Science Total Credits	4
Social Studies	**Four credits to include:**	**Credits**
	World History	1
	United States History I	1
	United States History II	1
	United States Government	0.5
	Economics	0.5
	Social Studies credit-eligible options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.	
Civics Exam Requirement	Students are required to earn a passing score on the *Civics Exam*	
	Social Studies Total Credits	4
Physical Education	Beginning Kinesiology or Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC)	1
Career Preparedness	Students are required to complete an accompanying financial literacy examination as part of this course.	1
Health Education		0.5
Arts Education and/or Career and Technical Education (CTE) and/or World Languages		3
Electives		2.5
	Total Credits	24

** Distance Learning: Effective for students entering the ninth grade in the 2009-2010 school year, Alabama students will be required to complete one online/technology enhanced course or experience prior to graduation. Exceptions through Individualized Education Plans will be allowed.*

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March 1, 2024