

Studying in the USA

Each year, the EducationUSA Advising Centre, located in the US Consulate General in Sydney, provides information and support to students interested in studying in the United States.

With Term 1 2007 underway, students may have questions about applying to American universities for September 2008.

Standardized Tests for Undergraduate Admissions in the United States

The first stage in the application process to an American university is to sit for a standardized test. These are usually among the prerequisites for admission. They are often taken in Year 11, which allows time to re-sit if desired. The scores are forwarded to the university of the student's choice, either at the time of testing or subsequently when applications are filed. Students should research the universities they are interested in to see which admission tests are required.

1. The SAT Reasoning Test

The best-known of these admission tests is the SAT Reasoning Test. It consists of three sections:

- Mathematics: Basic geometry and algebra II.
- Critical reading: Reading comprehension and sentence-completion.
- Writing: Multiple choice questions, which test grammar, and a short essay.

Most of the questions on the SAT are multiple-choice questions with five answer choices. The test takes three hours and 45 minutes to complete.

Each section is scored out of 800, for a total score of 2400. The average scores for 2005/06 were -

- Mathematics: 518/800
- Critical reading: 503/800
- Writing: 497/800

2. SAT Subject Tests

The SAT Subject Tests (also known as SAT II's) are one-hour multiple-choice tests. They are usually only required for the more selective universities. These results supplement those of the SAT Reasoning Test. They may be taken to comply with specific entrance requirements. For example, a student hoping to study sciences might sit for SAT Subject Tests in chemistry, biology and mathematics. There are twenty SAT Subject Tests available.

The SATs are administered six times a year at Macquarie University. Please note that you cannot take the SAT and SAT Subject tests on the same date.

The cost for taking the SAT 1 for the 2006-07 testing cycle is US \$63.50. Students can purchase SAT revision materials at the EducationUSA Advising Centre. SAT Test prep materials range between AUD\$35-\$55.

SAT International Test Dates/Deadlines for 2007

- May 5 – Register by April 3
- June 2 – Register by April 27
- October 6 – Registration date to be confirmed

- November 3 – Registration date to be confirmed
- December 1 – Registration date to be confirmed

To Register for the SAT

Go to: www.collegeboard.com and register online.

3. The American College Test (ACT)

The ACT is an alternate to the SAT. It consists of four subject tests: English, mathematics, reading, and science, plus an optional writing test in the form of an essay. The math component of the ACT includes trigonometry, a topic that is not included in the SAT Reasoning Test. Some universities require an ACT which includes a writing test.

The ACT was devised to measure students' competence in completed coursework, while the SAT evaluates mathematical and verbal reasoning abilities.

The basic registration fee for the ACT is USD\$49.00, and an additional USD\$14.00 for the writing test. This can be paid by a personal cheque in US dollars or by a US dollar international money order, available from Australia Post. Payment is made on the day of the test.

ACT International Test Dates/Deadlines for 2007

- April 14 – No deadline for registration. Test begins at 8:00am

This test is available in Canberra and is not available in Sydney at this time.

To Register for the ACT

Contact: Judy Freudenberger, EducationUSA Adviser,
US Embassy, Canberra
e-mail: freuds@bigpond.net.au.

Background on the ACT can be found at: www.act.org.

Further information available at the EducationUSA Advising Centre

Hard-copy information on the SAT and ACT, study materials, extensive information on the American university system, plus publications from a wide range of US schools, is available at the Education USA Advising Centre at the US Consulate General located at the MLC Centre in Martin Place in Sydney.

Contact details

Students and parents are welcomed to make an appointment to come into the Consulate and meet with an adviser. You need a confirmed appointment to visit the Centre. Hours are:

Monday: 10:30am-2.00pm
Wednesday: 1.00pm-4:00pm
Friday: 1.00pm-4.00pm.

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