The Condition of College and Career Readiness

This report looks at the progress of the 2016 ACT®-tested graduating class relative to college and career readiness. This year's report shows that **64%** of students in the 2016 US graduating class took the ACT test, up from 59% in 2015 and 49% in 2011. The increased number of test takers over the past several years enhances the breadth and depth of the data pool, providing a comprehensive picture of the current graduating class in the context of college readiness, as well as offering a glimpse at the emerging educational pipeline.

As a research-based nonprofit organization, ACT is committed to providing information and solutions to support the following:

- **Holistic view of readiness.** The 2014 ACT report, *Broadening the Definition of College and Career Readiness: A Holistic Approach*, shows academic readiness is only one of four critical domains in determining an individual's readiness for success in college and career. Cross-cutting capabilities, behavioral skills, and the ability to navigate future pathways are also important factors to measure and address. Together, these elements define a clear picture of student readiness for postsecondary education.
- **Providing meaningful data for better decisions.** ACT is focused on providing better data to students, parents, schools, districts, and states so that all can make more informed decisions to improve outcomes. We accomplish this goal by taking a holistic view and using consistent and reliable historical information so that individuals and institutions have a better context to make critical decisions about the journey they have undertaken.

The Condition of College & Career Readiness 2016

Georgia Key Findings

Performance

- There were 58,073 ACT test takers in 2016, compared to 54,653 in the graduating class of 2015—a 5.9% increase.
  - Since 2012, the number of ACT test takers has increased by more than 10,000 students, from 47,169 in 2012 to 58,072 in 2016.
- In Georgia, the percent of students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks increased in ALL subject areas:
  - English: Up 1% from 2015—from 64% to 65% in 2016
    - Increased by 2,770 students
  - Mathematics: Up 2% from 2015—from 38% to 40%
    - Increased by 2,461 students
  - Reading: Up 1% from 2015—from 46% to 47%
    - Increased by 2,154 students
  - Science: Stayed the same at 36%
    - Increased by 1,231 students
  - ACT Composite score: Up from 21.0 to 21.1
  - The number of students meeting all four Benchmarks increased by 3.8%—from 26% to 27%.
    - Increased by 1,470 students
- Relative to ACT Composite score and subject level scores, Georgia saw the following:
  - Georgia's two largest minority groups, African Americans and Hispanics, have increased in size, even as their Composite scores have increased.
    - African Americans' score increased from 17.6 in 2012 to 18.0 in 2016, while the number of test takers grew by 2,215 during the same period.
    - Hispanics' score increased from 19.9 in 2012 to 20.2 in 2016, while the number of test takers grew by 1,683 during the same period.

STEM

- Georgia's graduates who took advanced levels of science show higher levels of achievement:
  - Students who took advanced science courses of biology, chemistry, and physics had an average ACT science score of 23.2. The national ACT science for students that took the same sequence is 23.0.
- STEM Benchmark
  - Georgia's average ACT STEM score has eclipsed the national STEM score for the first time in five years, increasing 0.2 point.
  - The percent of students meeting the STEM Benchmark remained the same from 2015–16 at 19%, compared to the national rate of 20%.

Career Readiness

- This year, for the first time, ACT has provided an indicator of career readiness based on ACT Composite scores. Table 3.4 in the state ACT Profile Report details how ACT-tested Georgia graduates are progressing toward the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate™ (ACT NCRC®).
- Progress toward career readiness is based on research linking ACT Composite scores to ACT NCRC levels. The ACT Composite cut score for each ACT NCRC level corresponds to a 50% chance of obtaining that level. If a student's ACT Composite score surpassed the cut score for an ACT NCRC level, they are categorized as making progress towards the next higher ACT NCRC level. Attainment of ACT NCRC levels indicates workplace employability skills that are critical to job success.
- In Georgia, 72% of ACT tested graduates are considered making progress towards at least a gold ACT NCRC level. This compares to 68% nationally.

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Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- Testing patterns
  - Over the past five years, there has been dramatic growth in participation among African American and Hispanic students; however, they are more likely to take their first and only test as seniors, limiting their postsecondary access and opportunities for intervention.
  - 75.1% of White students who tested at least twice and who first tested in their junior year increased their score by 1.3 points and scored 1.2 points higher than 11th-grade White students who tested only once.
  - 61.3% of Hispanic students who tested at least twice and who first tested in their junior year increased their score by 1.0 point and scored 1.1 points higher than 11th-grade Hispanic students who tested only once.
  - 55.4% of African American students who tested at least twice and who first tested in their junior year increased their score by 0.9 point and scored 0.4 point higher than 11th-grade African American students who tested only once.
- Below are the top five colleges and universities to which Georgia graduates sent their ACT scores:
  1. Kennesaw State University
  2. University of Georgia
  3. Georgia Southern University
  4. Georgia State University
  5. University of West Georgia
- Auburn University is the out-of-state school that receives the most scores from Georgia students.
- Fee Waiver Usage
  - In Georgia, there were 30,506 fee waivers issued and 23,413 of those were used. This equates to a 76.7% usage rate. The national rate was 74.5%.
  - ACT provides students fee waivers to provide more access and opportunity for students.
- ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS) opt-in rate
  - EOS is a service that allows students to receive free exposure, for recruiting purposes, to scholarship agencies and colleges/universities. Nationally, 73.1% opt into this service.
  - In Georgia, 76.4% opted into this service.
- The "Get Your Name in the Game" initiative offers colleges and scholarship agencies unprecedented access to the names of underserved students participating in EOS.
  - Eleven of Georgia's colleges and universities took advantage of this initiative, accessing 1,561,688 student names.

Pipeline

- The largest planned educational majors are Health Sciences and Technologies, Undecided, and Business.
- Only 5% of ACT-tested Georgia graduates expressed an interest in pursuing education as a major or career. Those students earned an average ACT Composite score of 19.7—lower than the state average of 21.2. In comparison, 6% expressed an interest in pursuing visual and performing arts.

ACT Footprint

ACT Aspire® Summative	ACT Aspire Periodic	ACT Engage®	ACT QualityCore®	PreACT™	ACT WorkKeys®
22,770	4,211	313	–	1,421*	15,601

* PreACT refers to preorders for FY17.

These are the number of each of these assessments delivered in the state and not reflective of the 2016 ACT-tested graduating class.

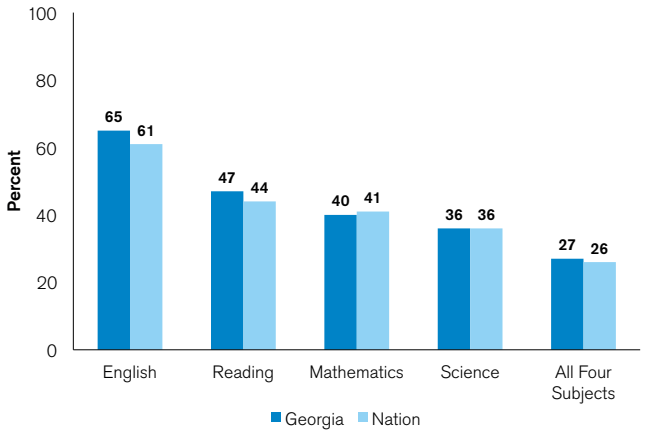
Special State Talking Points

- 2015–16 ACT College And Career Readiness Campaign honorees
  - Student—Matthew Barrett, Alpharetta High School
  - Student—Kha Tran, DeKalb School of the Arts

Your State College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

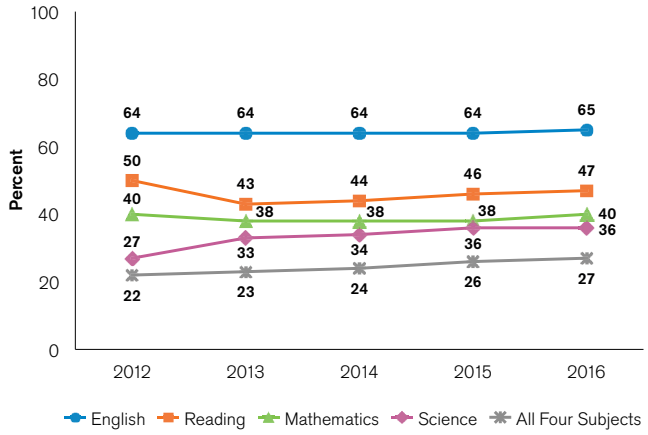
Georgia

Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks by Subject



Note: Percents in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks*



* ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in reading and science were revised in 2013.

Student Data Trends

- Between 2012 and 2016, the number of students taking the ACT in Georgia increased by 23.1%.

Student Condition Data Interest Trends: 2012–2016, State vs. Nation

Outcome	Cohort	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percent Tested	Georgia	52%	51%	53%	58%	60%
	Nation	52%	54%	57%	59%	64%
N Tested	Georgia	47,169	48,505	50,697	54,653	58,073
	Nation	1,666,017	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342
Average English Score	Georgia	20.1	20.2	20.3	20.6	20.7
	Nation	20.5	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1
Average Reading Score	Georgia	21	21.2	21.4	21.6	21.8
	Nation	21.3	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3
Average Mathematics Score	Georgia	20.6	20.3	20.5	20.5	20.6
	Nation	21.1	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6
Average Science Score	Georgia	20.5	20.5	20.7	20.9	21
	Nation	20.9	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8
Average Composite Score	Georgia	20.7	20.7	20.8	21	21.1
	Nation	21.1	20.9	21	21	20.8

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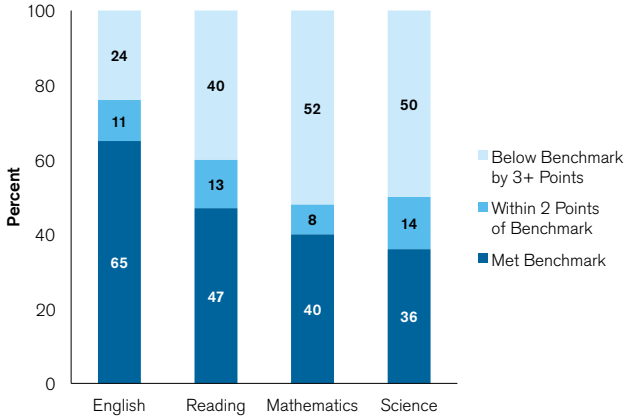
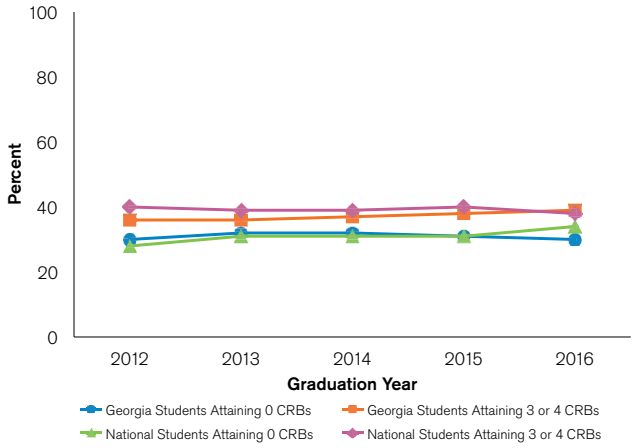
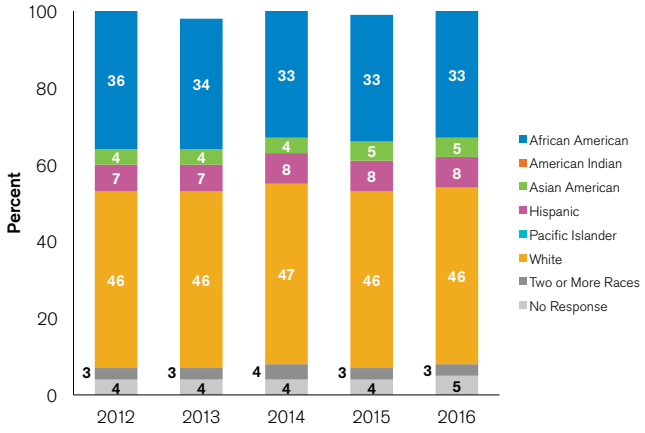
Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



Trends in Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (CRBs) Attained

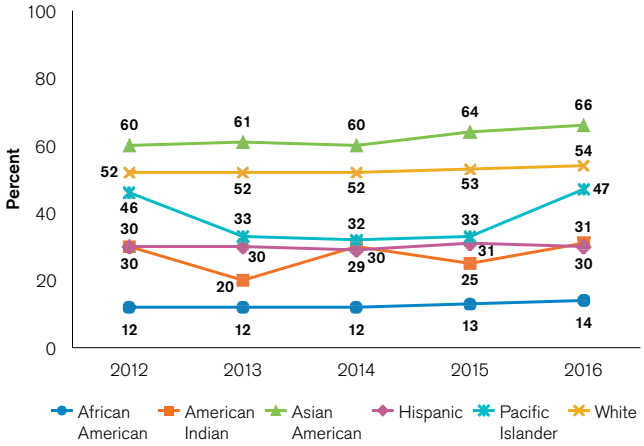


Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Race/Ethnicity

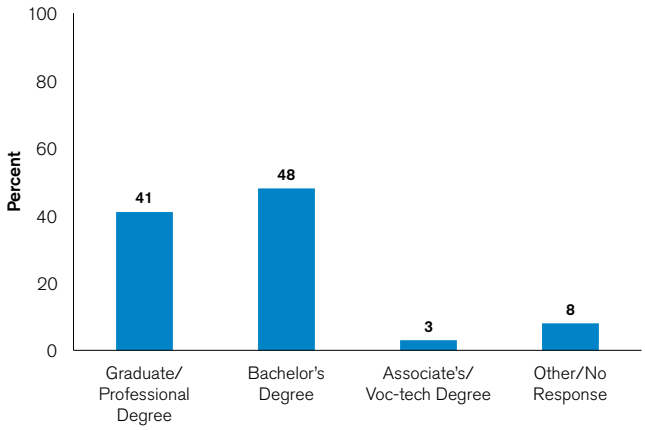


Note: Values less than 0.5% will not appear.

Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Educational Aspirations



There is good news in that 92% of Georgia's 2016 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 91% of Georgia's 2015 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 77% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 7,330 of the 2015 ACT-tested graduates from Georgia would have enrolled in postsecondary education.

What You Need to Know

At ACT, we are inspired every day to make a positive difference. Here are a few ways we are making an impact each day in the lives of students, teachers, education, policy makers, and workforce leaders.

The ACT®

- Enhancements to ACT Score Reports starting in September 2016
- Introduction of ACT Kaplan Online Prep Live in September 2016
- New Score Reports

Pre ACT™

- Affordable cost—$12 per student tested for schools, districts, and states
- Flexible administration—Schools, districts, and/or states may administer on any date between September 1, 2016 and June 1, 2017
- Structured test environment—Similar to what the student will experience when taking the ACT test

Online Prep Live

ACT® KAPLAN

- A virtual classroom experience that delivers all the benefits of ACT Online Prep, plus an interactive teaching experience
- Live learning experiences available at no cost to students who register for the ACT using a fee waiver
- Recorded sessions available on demand to provide maximum flexibility to students

ACT® Aspire®

- New Performance Level Descriptors coming in August 2016
- More than 5 million ACT Aspire online assessments administered to US students since January 2016, a major milestone for the program and up by more than 130% compared to the previous year
- New Score Reports

ACT® Engage®

- Helps schools face the challenge of preparing students for success after high school. Read the latest white paper, *Identifying Skills to Succeed in School, at Work, and in the "Real World."*
- New Score Reports

ACT® WorkKeys®

- Updated versions of the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (ACT NCRC) assessments and credential coming in summer 2017
- Fully updated ACT WorkKeys curriculum and test prep available in summer 2017 to support the updated ACT NCRC assessments
- Will include a new test delivery platform that will introduce features and functionality important to ACT WorkKeys customers

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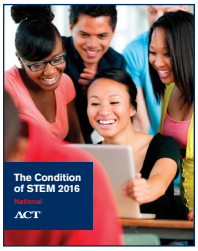
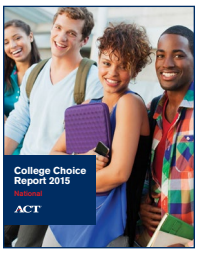
Key ACT Research



The Condition of STEM 2016—Releasing November 2016
This report provides national and state data about the 2016 graduating class in the context of STEM-related fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) to determine student interest levels in specific STEM fields and, more importantly, readiness in math and science of those interested in STEM careers.



College Choice Report 2015
This report follows the ACT-tested high school graduating class of 2015, focusing on specific testing behaviors that may expand college opportunities available to students. This is an important topic for enrollment managers and admissions officers to consider, as students' participation in these testing behaviors have implications for colleges' chances to recruit, advise, and place these prospective students.

Recommendations

1. **Create an assessment model that measures a variety of skill domains and competencies required for college and career success.**
   Historically, college and career readiness assessments have focused only on academic skills. ACT research has clearly established areas of competency important for college and career readiness success. While our research shows that ACT solutions independently measure key components of college AND career readiness, we and others have begun to realize that no single solution can measure the full breadth of this readiness, nor should it. Simply put, the ACT alone is not enough to measure the full breadth of career readiness. A more holistic assessment model, incorporating multiple domains and specific skills associated with career clusters or occupations, will typically be most appropriate for describing and evaluating student readiness for college and career.

2. **Optimize opportunities to influence awareness and engagement of underserved learners.**
   Initiatives designed to aid underserved learners are only as effective as they are visible. We must inform advocates and ALL underserved learners about the available and effective programs designed for this purpose. For example, in the 2015–2016 academic year, approximately 730,000 students registered to take the ACT using fee waivers valued at more than $36 million. Yet, not all eligible students took advantage of this offer. Similarly, institutions must use data to inform intervention strategies if they are going to help underserved students be prepared for postsecondary success.

3. **Take the guesswork out of STEM.**
   It is critically important to align STEM initiatives to capitalize on performance, measured interest, and expressed interest. Essential to this effort is expanding and nurturing interest in STEM, which will impact the emerging pipeline of STEM majors, teachers, and workers. This requires capturing a wider range of students and employing concrete measures to inform intervention and programming. To do so, states and districts must look for partnering opportunities from K–12 to postsecondary education to the workplace.

4. **Focus on the implementation of fewer, higher, clearer, standards in K–12 classrooms to raise the bar for all students.**
   No matter the adopted standards, proper implementation must focus on the most critical component for increasing readiness—effective, high-quality teaching. This requires investment in postsecondary teaching programs, professional development, and state-level collaboration among K–12 and higher education.

5. **Don't over test students.**
   When states, schools, and districts build an assessment strategy that recognizes the limits and promise of test scores, they will reduce the likelihood of over testing. Used ethically and appropriately, assessments can inform decisions at individual and institutional levels. Misunderstood, misused, or abused, assessments cause confusion, can be perceived as punitive, or result in ill-conceived strategies. To quote ACT founder E.F. Lindquist, "Assessment is valuable to the extent it bridges teaching and learning."