

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

Wisconsin Key Findings

Performance

- Wisconsin began testing all 11th-grade students with the ACT Plus Writing in spring 2015. The data in this report are the first to include the results from that initial statewide administration.
- In 2015, 41,738 students were included in the graduating class profile report. In 2016, 66,564 students were included. This represents an increase of more than 42% in the number of test takers.
- Due to Wisconsin's adoption of statewide ACT testing, nearly 20,000 additional Wisconsin students were provided access and opportunity to college and career readiness through the ACT.
- American Indian student participation increased by 114% from 235 in the year prior to statewide testing to 556 students in the graduating class of 2016.
- Colleges and universities received almost twice as many Wisconsin student ACT score reports after statewide testing was implemented, jumping to 180,777 in the 2016 graduating class cohort from 101,446 in 2015.
- Wisconsin's mean ACT Composite score decreased 1.7 points to 20.5, which is close to the national mean ACT Composite score of 20.8.
- Among the 18 states that administered the ACT to all students in 2015, this Wisconsin graduating class cohort ranks 4th in average ACT Composite score.
- An additional 282 students met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, compared to the year prior to statewide testing.

STEM

- Coursework rigor and selection has an impact on ACT scores.
 - ~ 12% of this graduating class reported taking fewer than three years of math courses, and only 6% of these were college ready.
 - ~ 16% of the cohort reported taking a course sequence of algebra I, algebra II, and geometry; 15% of these students were college ready.
 - ~ In comparison, 59% of the students who took math beyond algebra I, algebra II, and geometry were college ready.
- Wisconsin's average ACT STEM score of 20.8 closely matched the national average of 20.9.

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 Wisconsin 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 Wisconsin, 67% of ACT tested graduates are considered making progress towards at least a gold ACT NCRC level. This compares to 68% nationally.

Behaviors that Impact Access and Opportunity

- Testing patterns
 - ~ Wisconsin initiatives have changed behavior in the state, creating postsecondary access and opportunity for learners. In comparison to the class of 2008, the percent of White, Hispanic, and African American students taking their first and only test as a senior has dropped:
 - White—27% to 1.2%
 - Hispanic—34% to 2.5%
 - African American—67% to 3.8%
- Wisconsin graduates indicate that they prefer to attend postsecondary institutions within Wisconsin. Below are the top five Wisconsin colleges students indicated they were interested in attending:
 - ~ University of Wisconsin—Madison
 - ~ University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee
 - ~ University of Wisconsin—Whitewater
 - ~ University of Wisconsin—La Crosse
 - ~ University of Wisconsin—Oshkosh
- Most Wisconsin students opt in to the ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS), which facilitates communication with colleges, universities, and scholarship organizations. Nationally, 73.1% opt in to EOS. In Wisconsin, the opt in rate was 68.7%.
- Fee Waiver Usage
 - ~ In Wisconsin, there were 4,237 fee waivers issued and 3,098 of those were used. This equates to a 73.1% usage rate. The national rate was 74.5%.
 - ~ 43.7%, or 498, of all unused fee waivers were issued to African American students.
 - ~ ACT provides students fee waivers to provide more access and opportunity for students.
- Compared to the year prior to statewide testing, more than four times as many students were given the opportunity to take the ACT with extended time. Students who test with extended time are students who tested with ACT-approved accommodations and typically have either a 504 plan or IEP in place at their school.

Pipeline

- Aspirations matter. Students in Wisconsin who aspire to a higher level of postsecondary education achieve higher ACT Composite scores:
 - ~ Graduates who aspire to a graduate degree earned an average Composite score of 23.9.
 - ~ Graduates who aspire to a bachelor's degree earned an average Composite score of 20.9.
 - ~ Graduates who aspire to an associate's degree earned an average Composite score of 16.8.
- 70% of ACT-tested students indicated a desire to earn at least a four-year degree.
- 14% indicated a desire to earn a vocational/technical or two-year degree.
- Below are the top five planned educational majors for the 2016 Wisconsin graduating class:
 - ~ Health Sciences and Technologies
 - ~ Business
 - ~ Social Sciences and Law
 - ~ Engineering
 - ~ Arts: Visual and Performing

ACT Footprint

ACT Aspire® Summative	ACT Aspire® Periodic	ACT Engage®	ACT QualityCore®	PreACT™	ACT WorkKeys®
672,409	77,994	1,185	—	25*	184,781

* 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.

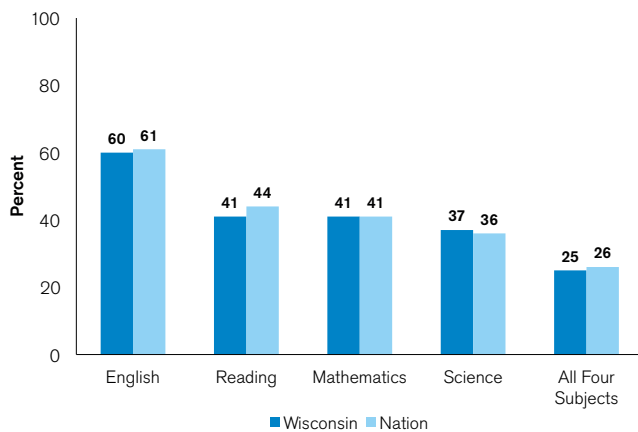
Special State Talking Points

- Wisconsin has an active ACT State Council, with representatives from K–12 education, postsecondary institutions, the Department of Public Instruction, and the Department of Workforce Development.
- In 2016, 332 educators, administrators, postsecondary enrollment managers, and business professionals attended the annual Wisconsin ACT State Organization conference.

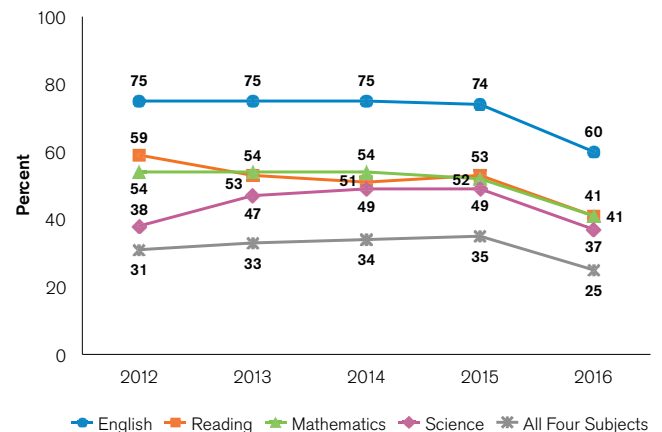
Your State College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Wisconsin

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



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



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

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

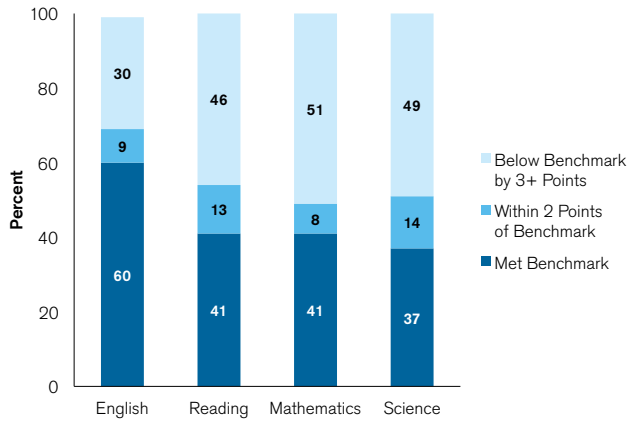
Student Data Trends

- Between 2012 and 2016, the number of students taking the ACT in Wisconsin increased by 39.9%.

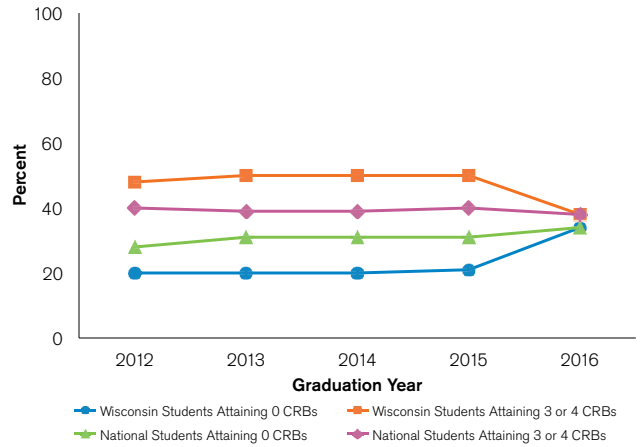
Student Condition Data Interest Trends: 2012–2016, State vs. Nation

Outcome	Cohort	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percent Tested	Wisconsin	71%	71%	73%	73%	100%
	Nation	52%	54%	57%	59%	64%
N Tested	Wisconsin	47,588	46,574	46,870	46,738	66,564
	Nation	1,666,017	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342
Average English Score	Wisconsin	21.5	21.5	21.6	21.6	19.7
	Nation	20.5	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1
Average Reading Score	Wisconsin	22.1	22.3	22.4	22.5	20.7
	Nation	21.3	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3
Average Mathematics Score	Wisconsin	22	22	22	22	20.4
	Nation	21.1	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6
Average Science Score	Wisconsin	22.1	22.2	22.3	22.3	20.7
	Nation	20.9	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8
Average Composite Score	Wisconsin	22.1	22.1	22.2	22.2	20.5
	Nation	21.1	20.9	21	21	20.8

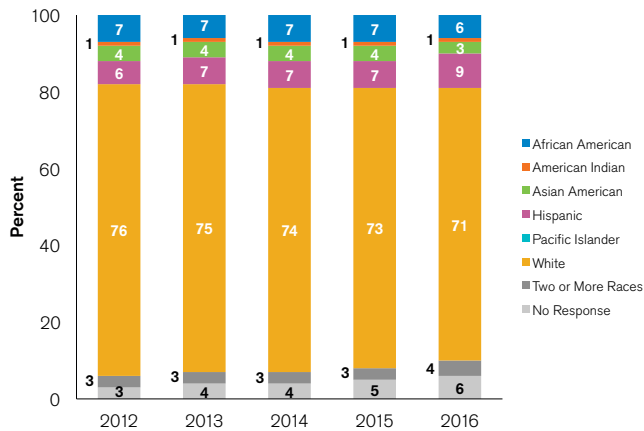
Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



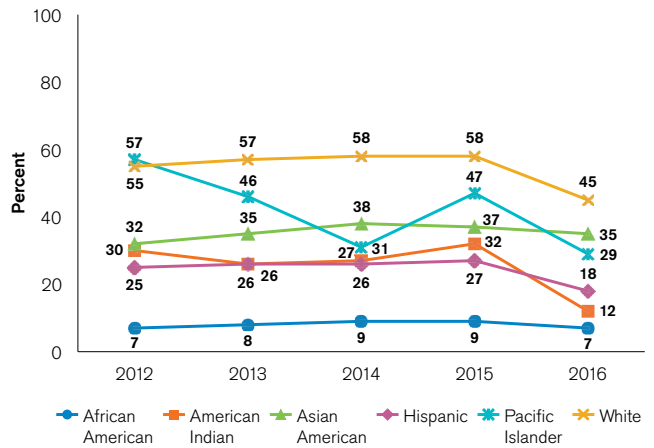
Trends in Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (CRBs) Attained



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

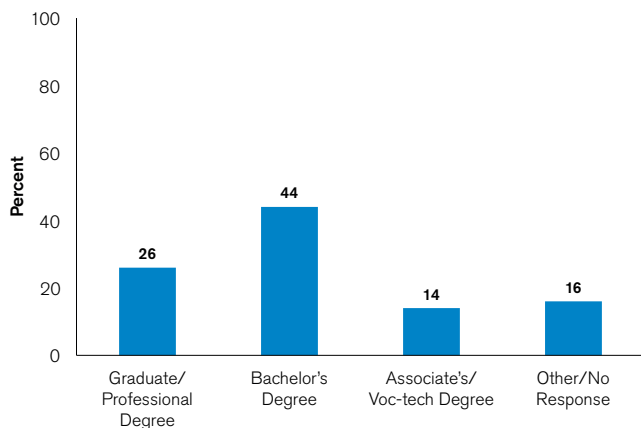


Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



Note: Values less than 0.5% will not appear.

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



There is good news in that 84% of Wisconsin's 2016 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 91% of Wisconsin's 2015 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 72% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 8,778 of the 2015 ACT-tested graduates from Wisconsin 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

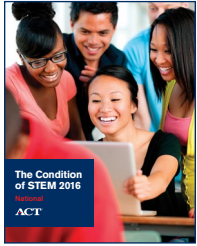
ACT[®] Engage[®]

- 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

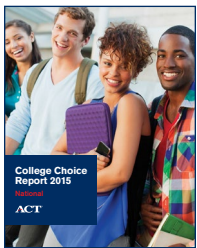
Key ACT Research



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."