

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

Utah Key Findings

Performance

- In Utah, 41,446 students from the 2016 graduating class took the ACT. This represents an all-time record number of students tested (since 2012) and a slight increase over 2015 of 817 students.
- The 2016 Utah graduating class results reflect the following as far as percentages of students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks:
 - ~ 59% met the English Benchmark; same as 2015
 - ~ 35% met the mathematics Benchmark; increase from 34% in 2015
 - ~ 42% met the reading Benchmark; decrease from 44% in 2015
 - ~ 33% met the science Benchmark; decrease from 34% in 2015
 - ~ 23% met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks; same as 2015.
- Relative to ACT Composite score and subject level scores, Utah saw the following:
 - ~ The average ACT Composite score remained stable from 2015 at 20.2, while the national composite score decreased 0.2 from 21.0 to 20.8.
 - ~ The Utah English score increased by 0.1 from 19.4 to 19.5, while the national score decreased 0.3 from 20.4 to 20.1. The Utah reading score remained stable at 20.9, while the national reading score decreased by 0.1 from 21.4 to 21.3.
- Numbers of students and average ACT scores by common course patterns:
 - ~ 25,048 students reported taking four years of English and had an average ACT English score of 20.0.
 - ~ 18,959 students reported taking four or more years of social science and had an average ACT reading score of 22.5.

STEM

- 14,105 students reported taking general science, biology, chemistry, and physics and had an average ACT science score of 22.0.
- 12,569 students reported taking four or more years of math and had an average ACT mathematics score of 22.6.
- In Utah, the average ACT STEM score is 20.2, while the national average STEM score is 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 Utah 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 Utah, 65% 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
 - ~ The percent of Utah ACT-tested graduates who took the exam only one time, 57%, is at the national average of 57%.
 - ~ Over the last five years, the racial/ethnic makeup of the ACT-tested population in Utah has seen slight changes. The number of Hispanic/Latino students taking the ACT has continued to increase from 4,171 students in 2012 to 6,120 in 2016.
- Below are the top five colleges and universities to which Utah graduates sent their ACT scores:
 1. University of Utah
 2. Utah State University
 3. Utah Valley University
 4. Brigham Young University
 5. Weber State University
- Arizona State University is the out-of-state school that receives the most scores from Utah students.
- ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS) opt-in rate
 - ~ 66.4% of Utah students who registered for the ACT opted to participate in EOS for recruitment and scholarship opportunities across the country, compared to 73.1% nationally.
- “Get Your Name in the Game” information
 - ~ The “Get Your Name in the Game” campaign provides underserved students with opportunities to find colleges that would be a good fit and helps them realize postsecondary education is attainable. Dixie State University, Utah Valley University, and Westminster College accessed 264,263 underserved students’ names using this initiative.
- Fee waiver usage
 - ~ 2,663 fee waivers were issued in Utah during 2015–16. Of these, 73% were used for testing—slightly lower than the national average of 74.5%.
 - ~ ACT offers fee waivers to provide more access and opportunity for students.

Pipeline

- The top five educational majors reported by the 2016 Utah graduating class are:
 - ~ Health Sciences and Technologies—7,133; average Composite score of 20.9
 - ~ Arts: Visual and Performing—3,501; average Composite score of 20.4
 - ~ Business—2,783; average Composite score of 20.8
 - ~ Engineering—2,600; average Composite score of 22.9
 - ~ Social Sciences and Law—2,519; average Composite score of 20.8
- 4,434 students indicated “Undecided” as their planned educational major; these students had an average Composite score of 21.5.
- Utah students’ postsecondary degree aspirations
 - ~ 2,582 students aspire to earn an associate’s degree; average Composite score of 16.2
 - ~ 16,222 students aspire to earn a four-year degree; average Composite score of 20.2
 - ~ 5,803 students aspire to earn a graduate degree; average Composite score of 23.0

ACT Footprint

ACT Aspire® Summative	ACT Aspire® Periodic	ACT Engage®	ACT QualityCore®	PreACT™	ACT WorkKeys®
11,187	278	441	–	–*	1,347

* 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.

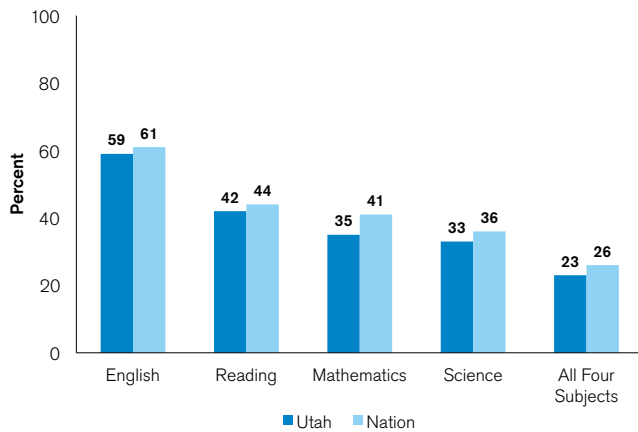
Special State Talking Points

- ACT conducted College and Career Readiness Workshops in Utah at Westminster College and Brigham Young University.
- The Utah ACT State Organization conducted its annual conference with 144 in attendance.
- In 2016, ACT honored exemplars in 41 states as part of the ACT College and Career Readiness campaign.
 - ~ In Utah, student Jake Lyman from Ski View High School was honored.

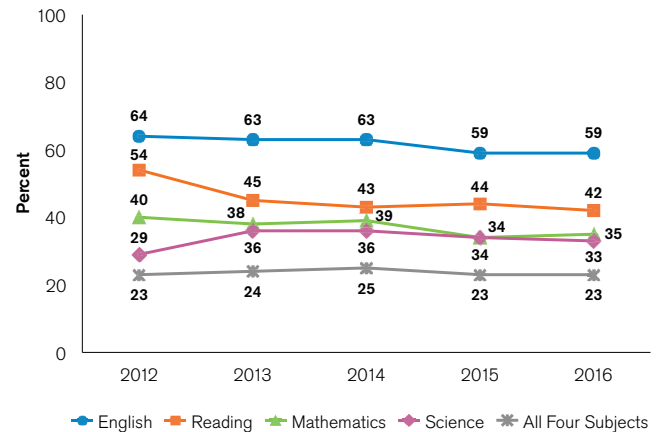
Your State College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Utah

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.

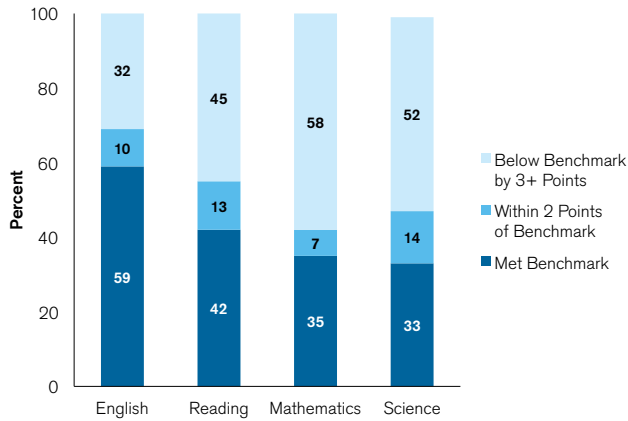
Student Data Trends

- Between 2012 and 2016, the number of students taking the ACT in Utah increased by 26.2%.

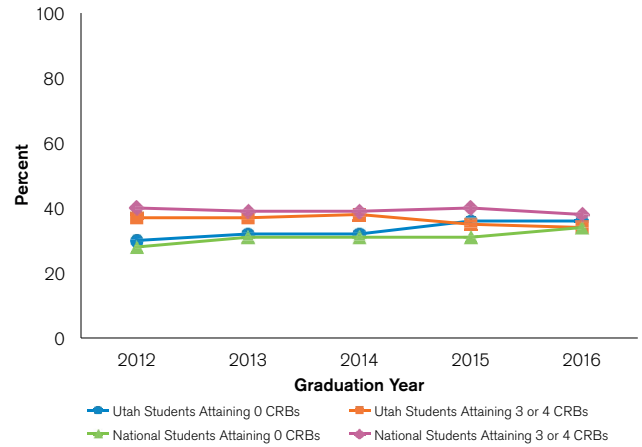
Student Condition Data Interest Trends: 2012–2016, State vs. Nation

Outcome	Cohort	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percent Tested	Utah	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Nation	52%	54%	57%	59%	64%
N Tested	Utah	32,835	34,514	35,074	40,629	41,446
	Nation	1,666,017	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342
Average English Score	Utah	20	19.9	20	19.4	19.5
	Nation	20.5	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1
Average Reading Score	Utah	21.3	21.3	21.3	20.9	20.9
	Nation	21.3	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3
Average Mathematics Score	Utah	20.3	20.2	20.3	19.8	19.7
	Nation	21.1	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6
Average Science Score	Utah	20.8	20.8	20.9	20.4	20.3
	Nation	20.9	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8
Average Composite Score	Utah	20.7	20.7	20.8	20.2	20.2
	Nation	21.1	20.9	21	21	20.8

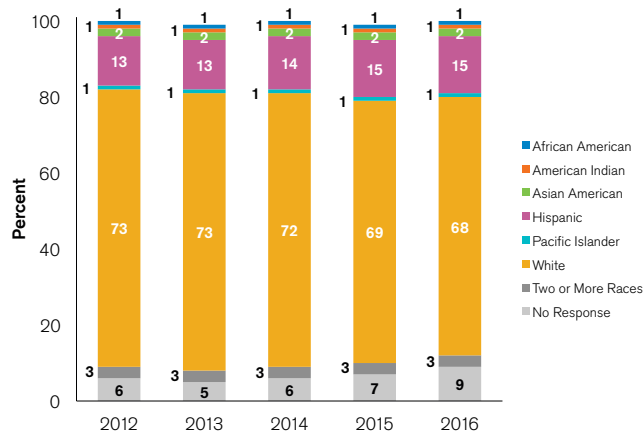
Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



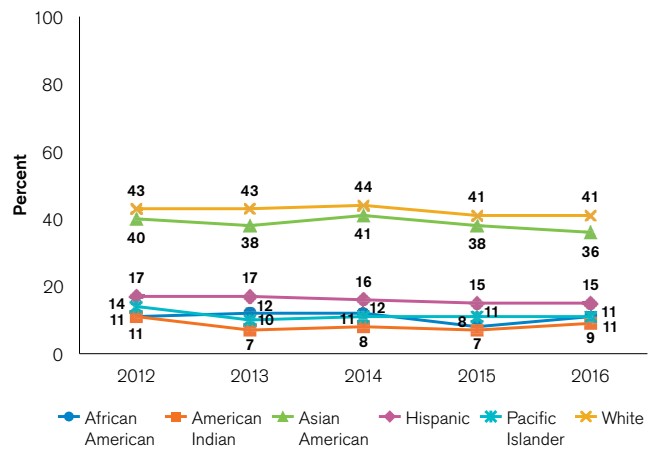
Trends in Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (CRBs) Attained



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

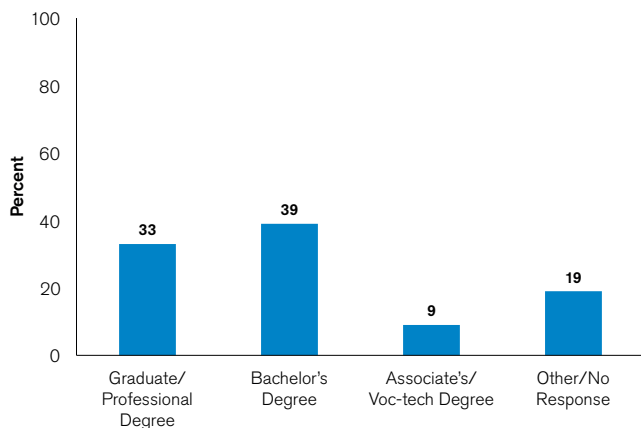


Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



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 81% of Utah's 2016 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 82% of Utah's 2015 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 36% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 18,768 of the 2015 ACT-tested graduates from Utah 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

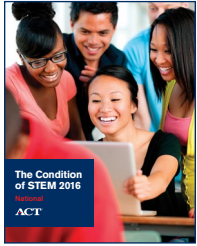
ACT[®] Engage[®]

- 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

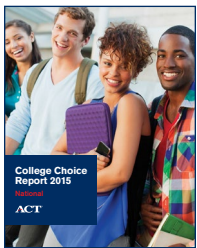
Key ACT Research



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."