

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

Oklahoma Key Findings

Performance

- In 2016, 32,854 Oklahoma high school graduates took the ACT. This represents an increase of 2,010 from the previous year—a 6.5% increase and an increase of 12.0% since 2012.
- Although the ACT Composite score and number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks met are lower across the board, this is a normal occurrence when states and districts test all of their students. This should be seen as setting a new baseline of performance and recognition of a complete picture of college and career readiness in the district or state. ACT historical data has shown that districts/states trend upward year after year once setting this new baseline.
- Even with the increase of test takers, the percentage of students meeting all four Benchmarks only decreased by 1 point from 22% to 21%.
- Native American students:
 - ~ The percentage of Native American students tested increased from 7% to 8%, but the Composite score only dropped 0.1 points.
 - ~ The 19.1 Composite average of Oklahoma Native American students was higher than the national average of this same group (17.7). This is notable in that Native Americans represent 8% of the Oklahoma ACT-tested population compared to 1% nationally. This is true with all subject level scores as well as the STEM score.

STEM

- For students taking a core curriculum, the percentages of Oklahoma students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks in content-specific curriculum are close to the corresponding national groups in all areas but mathematics. In this area, Oklahoma lags 10 percentage points behind the national percentage with 34% met vs. 44% nationally.
 - ~ 21% of Oklahoma students reported taking the Algebra 1/Algebra 2/geometry course sequence and had an average ACT mathematics score of 16.9, suggesting that this sizeable group of students without a fourth year of math might be contributing to the gap between Oklahoma and the national population.
- STEM preparation of Oklahoma students:
 - ~ The average STEM score decreased from 20.5 to 20.3 in 2016, and the percentage of students meeting the STEM Benchmark dropped to 13%.
 - ~ Among students meeting the STEM Benchmark:
 - the average ACT mathematics score stayed the same at 27.8
 - the average ACT science score increased from 28.4 to 28.6

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 Oklahoma 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 Oklahoma, 69% 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

- Over the last ten years, Oklahoma has made progress in shifting the behavior of students. Smaller percentages of Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American, and African American students are taking their first and only test as seniors (limiting their postsecondary access as well as opportunity for intervention).
- The fastest growing racial/ethnic group testing with the ACT over the last 5 years is Hispanic/Latino. This group has increased by 45.2% from 2012 to 2016.
- The percentage of Native Americans has fallen in this same timeframe by 9.2%.
- Below are the top five colleges and universities to which Oklahoma graduates sent their ACT scores:
 1. Oklahoma State University
 2. University of Oklahoma
 3. University of Central Oklahoma
 4. Northeastern State University
 5. University of Tulsa
- Only two out-of-state schools are in the top 30 colleges and universities receiving scores from Oklahoma students:
 - ~ University of Arkansas
 - ~ Baylor University
- 78.3% of Oklahoma students opt in to the ACT Educational Opportunity Service (EOS), which is 5.2% higher than the national average. Participating in EOS exposes students to numerous academic and scholarship opportunities they might not have otherwise found on their own. ACT research has shown that college enrollment rates increase for those that opt in to EOS, regardless of academic achievement levels.
- Since ACT began its “Get Your Name in the Game” campaign in 2015 for underserved learners, 14 Oklahoma colleges and universities have accessed more than 2.7 million student names for outreach and recruitment into targeted postsecondary programs.
- Fee Waiver Usage
 - ~ In Oklahoma, there were 14,042 fee waivers issued and 10,398 of those were used. This equates to a 74.0% usage rate. The national rate was 74.5%.
 - ~ 28.2%, or 354, of fee waivers issued to Native Americans went unused.
 - ~ ACT provides students fee waivers to provide more access and opportunity for students.

Pipeline

- The most popular planned majors among 2016 Oklahoma graduates are Health Sciences and Technologies, Undecided, and Engineering.
- The fastest-growing occupations in Oklahoma are:
 - ~ Personal care aides
 - ~ Genetic counselors
 - ~ Home health aides
 - ~ Geographers
 - ~ Diagnostic medical sonographers
- Aspirations matter. Students in Oklahoma who aspire to a higher level of postsecondary education achieve higher ACT Composite scores:
 - ~ Graduates who aspire to a graduate degree earn an average Composite score of 23.2.
 - ~ Graduates who aspire to a bachelor’s degree earn an average Composite score of 20.0.
 - ~ Graduates who aspire to an associate’s degree earn an average Composite score of 16.9.
- Nearly one-fifth (19%) of all Oklahoma ACT-tested students are undecided about their college major. Of these students:
 - ~ The average Composite score is 20.7.
 - ~ The ACT Interest Inventory and World-of-Work Map included on the ACT, PreACT™ and ACT Profile® provide an excellent opportunity to counsel students in selecting a college major aligned to their unique likes and interests.

ACT Footprint

ACT Aspire® Summative	ACT Aspire® Periodic	ACT Engage®	ACT QualityCore®	PreACT™	ACT WorkKeys®
24,003	42,934	2019	–	170*	52,590

* 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.

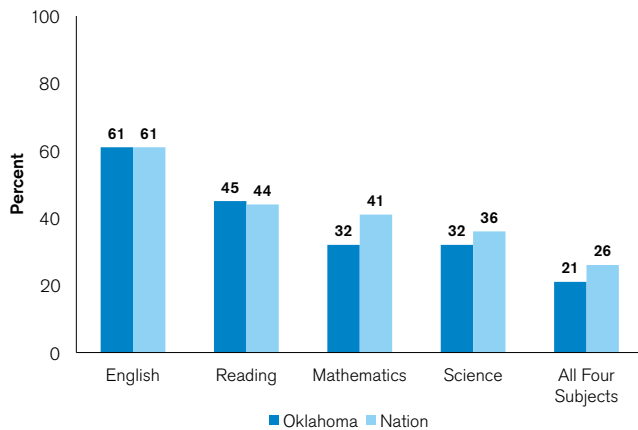
Special State Talking Points

- ACT partnered with the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to conduct eight Student Preparation Workshops in fall 2015 to assist students as they prepared for college and the ACT.

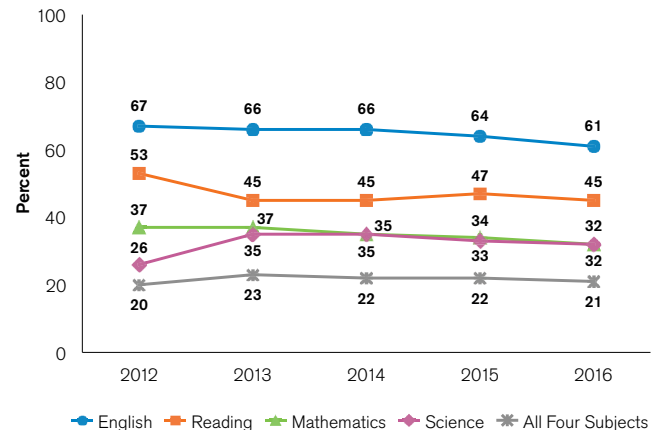
Your State College and Career Readiness Attainment, Participation, and Opportunity

Oklahoma

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.

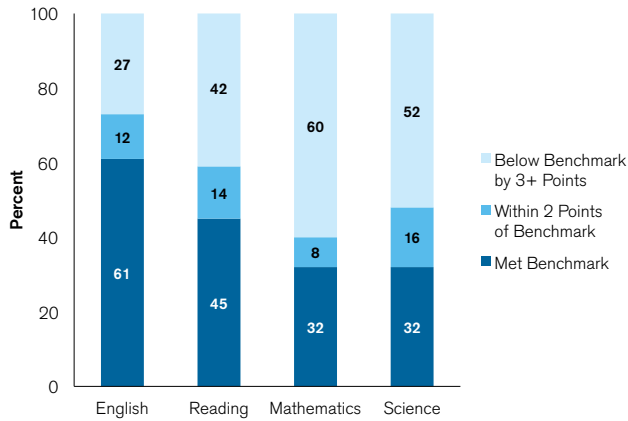
Student Data Trends

- Between 2012 and 2016, the number of students taking the ACT in Oklahoma increased by 12%.

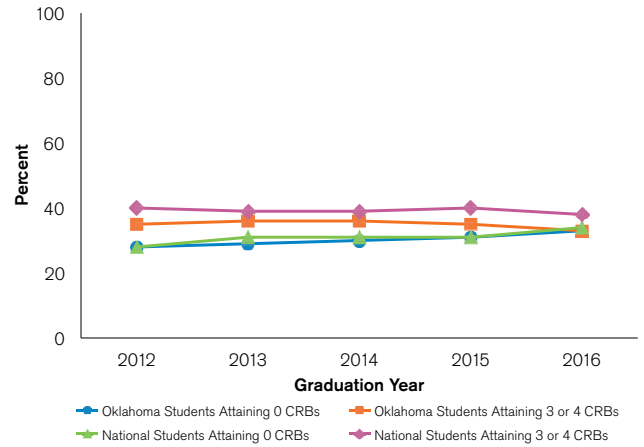
Student Condition Data Interest Trends: 2012–2016, State vs. Nation

Outcome	Cohort	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percent Tested	Oklahoma	80%	75%	75%	80%	82%
	Nation	52%	54%	57%	59%	64%
N Tested	Oklahoma	29,342	28,988	28,682	30,844	32,854
	Nation	1,666,017	1,799,243	1,845,787	1,924,436	2,090,342
Average English Score	Oklahoma	20.4	20.4	20.3	20.1	19.8
	Nation	20.5	20.2	20.3	20.4	20.1
Average Reading Score	Oklahoma	21.3	21.4	21.5	21.5	21.3
	Nation	21.3	21.1	21.3	21.4	21.3
Average Mathematics Score	Oklahoma	20.1	20.1	19.9	19.8	19.5
	Nation	21.1	20.9	20.9	20.8	20.6
Average Science Score	Oklahoma	20.6	20.8	20.8	20.7	20.5
	Nation	20.9	20.7	20.8	20.9	20.8
Average Composite Score	Oklahoma	20.7	20.8	20.7	20.7	20.4
	Nation	21.1	20.9	21	21	20.8

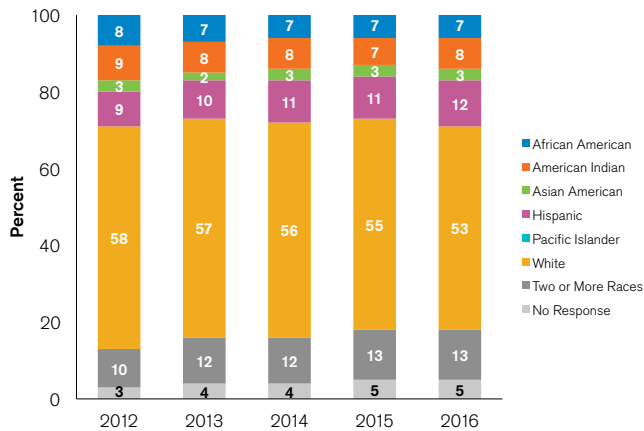
Percent of 2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates by ACT College Readiness Benchmark Attainment and Subject



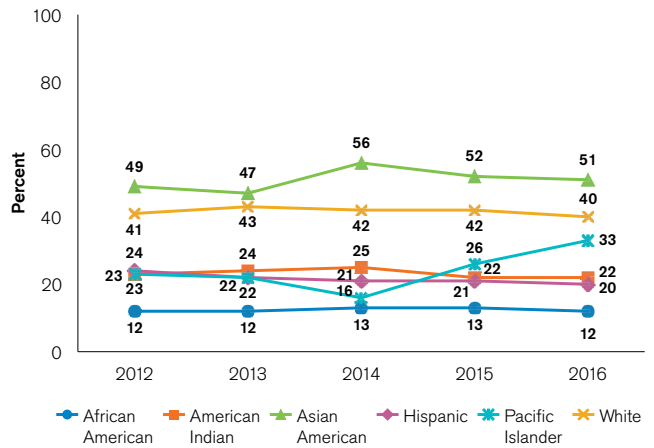
Trends in Percent of ACT-Tested High School Graduates by Number of ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (CRBs) Attained



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

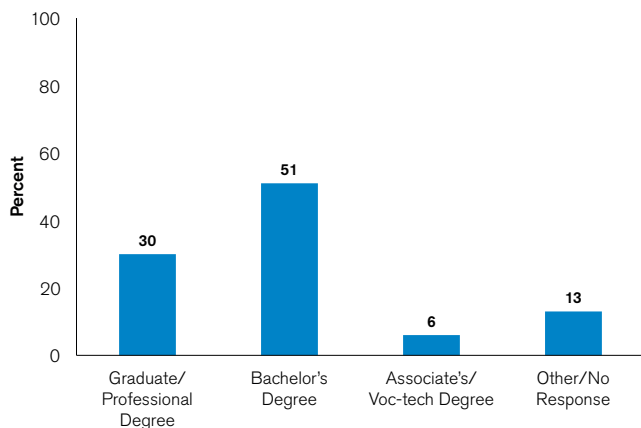


Percent of 2012–2016 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Meeting Three or More Benchmarks by Race/Ethnicity



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 87% of Oklahoma's 2016 ACT-tested graduates aspired to postsecondary education. Interestingly enough, 89% of Oklahoma's 2015 ACT-tested graduating class aspired to enroll in postsecondary education, compared to 67% who actually did enroll. If we fully closed the aspirational gap, an additional 6,798 of the 2015 ACT-tested graduates from Oklahoma 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

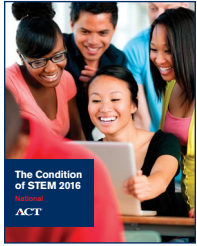
ACT[®] Engage[®]

- 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

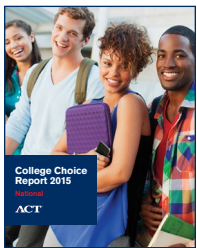
Key ACT Research



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."