

What to Do with a Low ACT Score

Getting a low ACT score can be really frustrating, but it is NOT a reflection of your intelligence or ability as a student, and you still have options when it comes to college. Here are some things to do if your ACT score is lower than you would like.

Look for colleges that accept students regardless of ACT score.

Community colleges like JCTC are open to everyone, but you have 4-year college options too. WKU and ECU accept students if they have a 2.5 GPA regardless of ACT score. Murray State and Morehead State will accept students with at least a 15 ACT score, but they will have to take some extra classes. Also, if a college has a certain average ACT score listed on their website and your score is lower, you can still apply. The listed ACT is just an average, not a requirement.

Apply for scholarships that are not related to ACT score.

While there are scholarships that take ACT score into account, there are numerous scholarships that focus on GPA, community service, leadership, or special skills and talents. There are also a number of scholarships available for people of different races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, religions, and backgrounds. Even if a scholarship asks for your ACT score, it may just be a small part of the scholarship and you can still apply.

Retake the ACT as many times as possible.

About 57% of people who take the ACT do better the second time they take it, so it is definitely a good idea to retake the test. If your scores decrease, you can still report your earlier higher scores to colleges. Every Kentucky student gets to take the ACT once for free as a junior, and if your counselor says you are eligible for a fee waiver, you can take it two more times for free. Make sure to send your scores to your top 4 colleges every time.

Study before you retake the ACT.

There are a lot of ways to study for the ACT that are free. The Louisville Free Public Library has free ACT prep classes and free online ACT prep software (<http://www.lfpl.org/MyLibraryU/act.htm>), and you can also check ACT prep books out of the library. Free ACT practice questions and tips are also available from <https://www.number2.com/>. Reading books and newspapers is another easy way to study for the English and Reading sections of the test since it helps you improve your vocabulary and knowledge of grammar.