

How do we calculate “competitiveness?”

Colleges look at many factors when they consider applications for admission. The College Admissions Tool will help you see how your academic performance and experiences compare to admission standards at colleges in Colorado. In other words, it will give you an *estimation* of your admissibility.

It is very important to know that this Tool will give you a sense of all the things colleges may consider in admission – **it is not a guarantee of admission or denial to any college!**

We use four main areas to help you understand how competitive you may be for admission at each college:

- Grade Point Average
- ACT or SAT Test Scores
- Your High School Coursework (you will self-evaluate)
- Other Considerations, such as community service, leadership and work experience, your essay (if required), and so forth (you will self- evaluate)

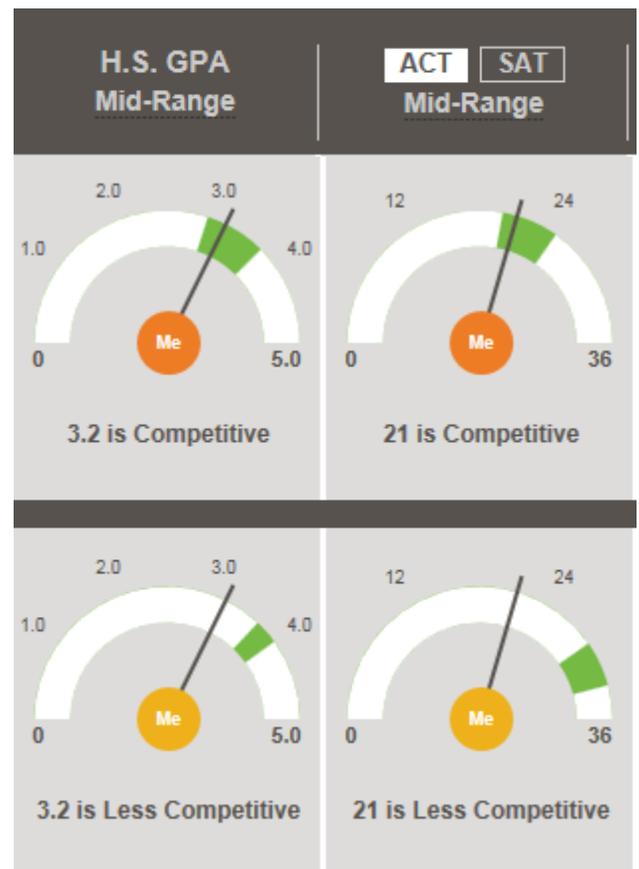
As you use the Tool and enter your performance information, you will receive points that will be used to calculate an overall scorecard for each college you select to favorite.

Grade Point Average and ACT/SAT Scores

On the **Matching College List**, the dials (samples at right) will give you a feel for how your Grade Point Average and ACT or SAT composite test scores compare against the academic scores of students admitted to each college in the past.

You’ll see that a “Mid-Range” is used to help explain the average GPA and test scores of students admitted to each college. A mid-range means that 50% of the students admitted by the college in the past had a GPA or test score in that range. This also means that 25% of students admitted at that college had a GPA/score below that range, and 25% of students had a GPA/score above that range. The green bar on the dial provides a visual of the college’s mid-range.

In the example at the right, this student has a 3.2 GPA and a 21 composite score on the ACT. You can see for the school at the top, the student is listed as “Competitive” for both the GPA and ACT, but for the bottom school, “Less Competitive.”



The Tool will calculate competitiveness for GPA and test scores as follows:

- If your score is below the green range, you are “less competitive” and receive 1 point
- If your score fits within the green range, you are “competitive” and receive 2 points
- If your score is above the green range, you are “highly competitive” and receive 3 points

Totaling points for all four main areas in the Tool will help you determine your overall competitiveness at the colleges you are considering. For example, while you may have a “less competitive” test score, a “highly competitive” GPA or other factors may help your overall point score to be “competitive.” To see how this works, be sure to continue on and complete all areas of the Tool!

High School Course Work

To be competitive for admission to a four-year college in Colorado, you must take a certain number of academic classes in core subject areas. These are called “Higher Education Admissions Requirements (HEAR).” In addition, colleges will evaluate how difficult the classes you selected are and whether you continued to take challenging courses throughout high school.

ENGLISH
?

Years completed by graduation

Projected

Years completed so far

Regular

AP

Honors

IB

CE

On the **My Coursework** tab, you can chart your intentions for these core subject areas and academic electives. Select how many years in total you plan to take in each subject area (“projected” years) and how many of those years you have completed so far. You may select years taken in a subject for regular-level courses, Advanced Placement (AP), Honors, International Baccalaureate (IB) and Concurrent Enrollment (CE).

In the example at left for English, this student plans to take a total of 2 years of English, and has already completed 1-1/2 years; 1 years of regular coursework and ½ year of AP.

Next, you will self-evaluate your competitiveness in the My Progress area of the Tool.

In the **My Progress** tab, along with the level of course noted above each year, the years you have already completed are shown in solid green, the additional years you plan to complete are shown in hashed green, and any remaining years that the college expects *above* your plans is shown in gray.

In the example at the right, you can see how the two years that this student plans to take in English are displayed; one year in solid green of regular coursework, with a ½ year segment of AP, and the dashed ½ year not yet taken.



Most importantly, you can see that since 4 years of English are required under HEAR, 2 full years appear in grey. To be admitted to a four-year college, this student needs to take another 2 years of English (plus complete the half year planned but not yet taken).

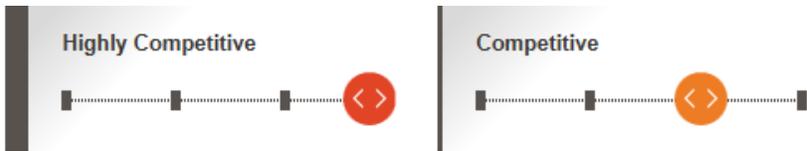
Compare your plans to what a college requires by looking at how many gray boxes you see in the six core subjects and academic electives. Rate yourself honestly by moving the circle from left to right.

How would you rank the student in the

Rate Yourself: High School Coursework

Highly Competitive

Competitive



example just based on their English coursework planned? If this student wishes to attend a four-year college in Colorado, 2 years does not meet the requirement for English, so this student would rank themselves as “Less Competitive.” If the student plans to take more than 4 years of English, then the student would rank themselves as “Highly Competitive”. Account for AP, IB, Honors and concurrent enrollment courses to determine your competitiveness level (the more of these you have successfully completed, the more competitive you should rank yourself).

Important Note: If you plan to attend a four-year college and have gray boxes in one or more required subject areas, be sure to talk with your high school counselor or advisor to help you schedule in required coursework.

Based on your self evaluation, you will receive the following points for coursework:

- Less Competitive = 1 point
- Competitive = 2 points
- Highly Competitive = 3 points

Additional Considerations

Finally, colleges also want to know lots of other things about you – and what is important to one college may not be as important to another. We asked colleges to tell us what is Very Important, Important, and Considered as they review a student’s application for admission.

On the My Progress tab, you will find the college’s responses; one example is at the right.

In the checkboxes, mark those that you feel are strengths. It should be pretty easy to mark GPA and test scores since you already know whether you are competitive, less or highly competitive in those areas. Be honest with the rest of your selections, then rate yourself at the bottom of the section.

Based on your self evaluation, you will receive the following points for additional considerations:

- Less Competitive = 1 point
- Competitive = 2 points
- Highly Competitive = 3 points

VERY IMPORTANT

SAT Test Scores

ACT Test Scores

Class Rank

IMPORTANT

Positive Trend in Course Grades

CONSIDERED

Coursework Rigor and Mix

Senior Year Course Schedule

Educator Recommendations

Essay

Personal Recommendations

Personal Statement

Service in Military

Specific Talents/Abilities

Geographical Residence

State Residency

Interview with Admissions

Translating your points to your Scorecard

As noted above, colleges apply different levels of importance to various ways to look at your performance. In general, however, GPA and test scores are a pretty strong indication of whether you will be successful in college-level courses. Also very important is whether you took enough challenging courses.

Because of this, the Tool applies overall greater weight to the points you received for GPA and test scores than other criteria as follows (out of 100%):

- GPA: 30%
- Test Scores: 30%
- Coursework: 25%
- Additional Considerations: 15%

Once you have completed your self-evaluation on coursework and additional consideration and the system adds in your points for your GPA and test scores, your points in each category are multiplied by the weights above and then totaled. This is your total.

The system adds together the weights for each of the areas -this is the weights total.

My Scorecard

Finally, your total and the weights total are averaged to calculate your potential overall competitiveness across the four main areas. You can see the results of your work on the **My Scorecard** tab.

GPA	ACT	Coursework Self-Evaluated	Additional Considerations Self-Evaluated	AVERAGE
Less Competitive	Less Competitive	Highly Competitive	Highly Competitive	Less Competitive to Competitive

So, for the student in the example above, the GPA and ACT scores, if improved, would likely move this student from the average shown to Competitive or even Highly Competitive. Again, this is not an official decision on admission – it is an informed estimate. Only the college admission office can provide a final admission decision.

My Plan

You can evaluate and plan what you need to do to improve to meet college standards in the **My Plan** tab.

Academic Goals	
 edit GPA	Increase GPA by 0.55 to be very competitive
 edit Coursework	Additional Coursework: 2.5 English

Have fun with the College Admissions Tool and be sure to talk with your counselor or advisor to schedule courses you need to take. And, you can review the **Resources Center** in the Tool for links to helpful information on college and job planning and more.