

Why Exclude Test Scores from Admission Criteria?

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Abstract: Test-optional and test-blind college admission policies are often justified on the grounds that standardized test scores are invalid measures of applicants' abilities and biased against disadvantaged students. This justification contradicts standard economic reasoning, which holds that even imperfect information has non-negative value. In an experiment, we find that participants making admission decisions frequently exclude invalid or biased test scores from admission criteria. The exclusion is driven primarily by concerns about procedural fairness and doubts about the scores' usefulness. However, as participants gain experience in admission decisions, exclusion becomes less prevalent, suggesting that experience helps them better appreciate the scores' value.