

GUIDE

College Explorer user guide



Introduction

The [College Explorer](#) is a powerful tool for students in grades 6–10 to use with guidance counselors, teachers, parents, or guardians to plan for their academic future. Built from research linking MAP® Growth™ scores to ACT® and SAT® scores, along with information about colleges, universities, and areas of study, the College Explorer helps students explore possible post-secondary pathways. It answers the question, “What might be possible?”

There are three ways to use the College Explorer:

- **What colleges match my scores?** Are you looking to explore your options? Use this tab to explore colleges and other post-secondary schools around the country that align with your score profile.
- **Am I on track for my target college?** Do you have a target school in mind? Use this tab to search for a specific college to find out if your score profile aligns with your dream school.
- **What majors fit my scores?** Do you have an idea of what you want to study in college? Use this tab to search by college major to find out how well your score profile aligns with that area of study.

How do I use the college explorer tool?

Page 1: What colleges match my scores?

Enter your MAP Growth information

1. Select test season and grade
2. Enter your MAP Growth Math and MAP Growth Reading scores
3. Review the information in the three boxes that appear:
 - The first box shows your current MAP Growth scores.
 - The second box shows your projected 11th-grade MAP Growth scores.
 - The last box shows your projected 11th-grade ACT and SAT scores.

Use the filters to select location and school type

1. Identify the location and type of school that interests you based on:
 - State
 - School level (two-year, four-year, or less-than-two-year)
 - Public or private status
 - Typical acceptance rate of the school (lower acceptance rates indicate more competitive schools)
 - If the school requires minimum ACT or SAT scores for admission
2. Look at the national map, which dynamically updates to show you schools that align with your score profile and match your filters. Note that using fewer filters will generally produce a longer list of schools.

3. Select a school from the list on the right to see additional information about the school, including:

- Acceptance rate
- Average annual cost
- Graduation rate
- Median earnings after graduation

Example

A student took MAP Growth Math and Reading tests in the fall of ninth grade. They scored 250 on Math and 260 on Reading. Their projected spring 11th-grade MAP Growth scores are 258 in Math and 268 in Reading. Their projected spring 11th-grade ACT score is 30, and their projected SAT score is 1370.

Enter MAP Growth score details to see projections.

Test Season	Grade	MAP Growth Math Score	MAP Growth Reading Score
Fall	9	250	260

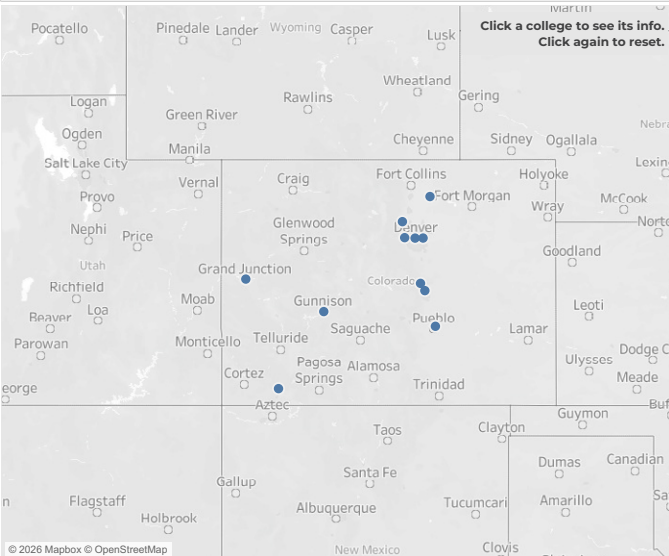
How these projections work

Your current MAP Growth Scores 250 Math 260 Reading	Project to 11th grade MAP Growth	Projected MAP Growth scores in 11th grade 258 Math 268 Reading	Estimate ACT/SAT scores in 11th grade	Projected test scores you can expect 30 ACT 1,370 SAT
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The student then chooses to explore four-year public colleges in Colorado, with no restriction on admission rate, that use test score data in admissions decisions.

Matching Post-secondary Schools
See the schools that match your MAP Growth Scores.

State Colorado	School Level 4-year	Public/Private Public	Acceptance Rate All	Has Minimum Test Scores Has Test Score Data
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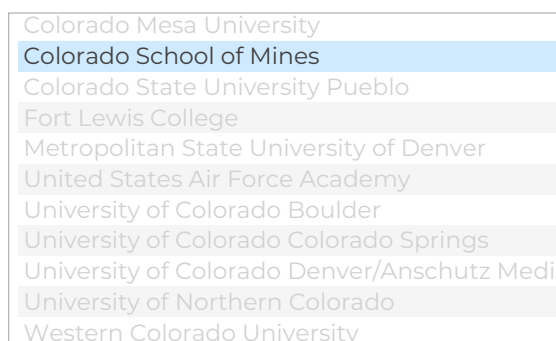


Click a college to see its info.
Click again to reset.

Colorado Mesa University Colorado School of Mines Colorado State University Pueblo Fort Lewis College Metropolitan State University of Denver United States Air Force Academy University of Colorado Boulder University of Colorado Colorado Springs University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medi.. University of Northern Colorado Western Colorado University
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Some schools may not appear due to inconsistencies in how schools report data.

The student sees Colorado School of Mines on the list and selects it from the drop-down menu on the right-hand side of the map.



- Colorado Mesa University
- Colorado School of Mines**
- Colorado State University Pueblo
- Fort Lewis College
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- United States Air Force Academy
- University of Colorado Boulder
- University of Colorado Colorado Springs
- University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medi..
- University of Northern Colorado
- Western Colorado University

After selecting Colorado School of Mines, information about the school is shown below the map.

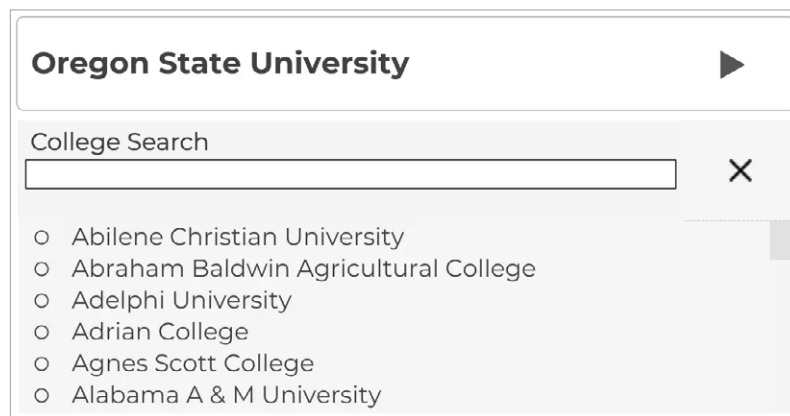
Colorado School of Mines			
4-year Public in Golden, CO			
Admission Rate	Average Annual Cost of Attendance	Graduation Rate	Median Earnings After Graduation
61%	\$40,560	83%	\$100,252

This tool uses projections based on assumptions about average growth over time. College admissions decisions consider many factors beyond test scores. The College Explorer is intended for exploration and planning and should not be interpreted as an estimate of a student's likelihood of admission.

Page 2: Am I on track for my target college?

Select your target college

1. Click the downward arrow in the box below the text, "Select a specific school."
A text box and dropdown menu will appear.
2. Type in the name of your school of choice. For example, type Oregon State University and then hit "Enter."
3. Select the school you want from the list.
4. Click the right-facing arrow to close the school-selection box and proceed to the next step.



Oregon State University ▶

College Search

✕

- Abilene Christian University
- Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
- Adelphi University
- Adrian College
- Agnes Scott College
- Alabama A & M University

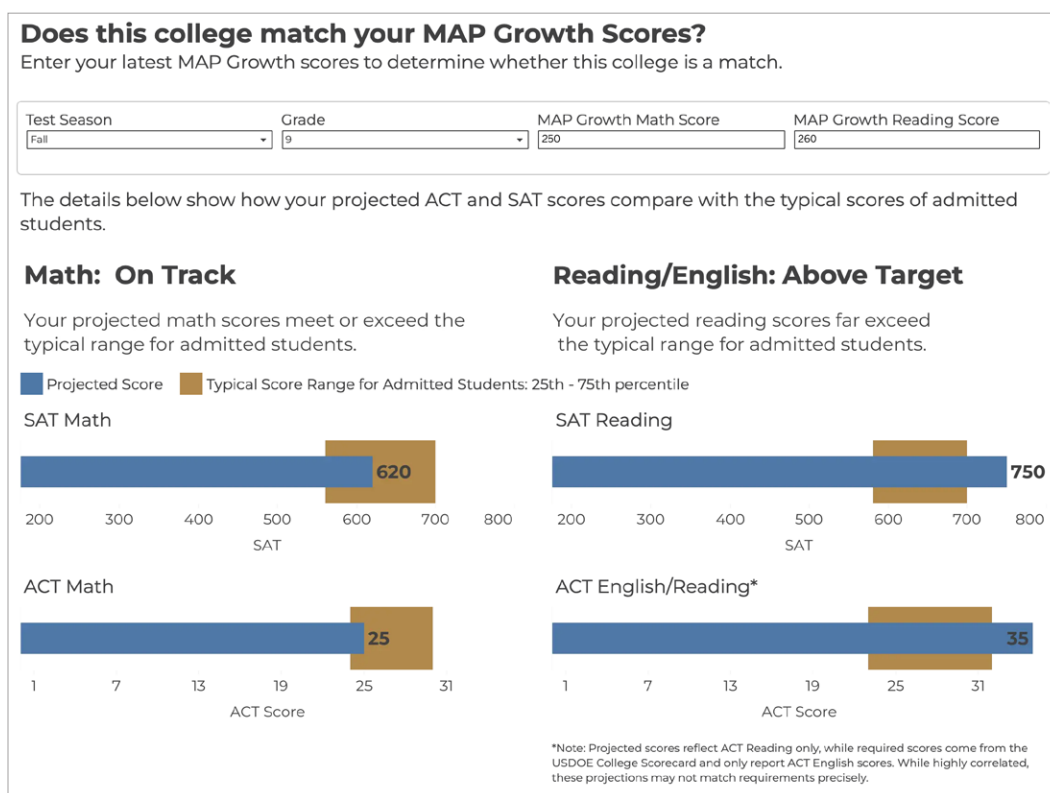
Enter your MAP Growth information

If you already entered your MAP Growth score information on the previous page, it will carry over to this page. If not,

1. Select test season and grade.
2. Enter your MAP Growth Math and MAP Growth Reading scores.
3. Look at the four graphs:
 - SAT and ACT Math projections are on the left.
 - SAT and ACT Reading/English projections are on the right.

Examine how well your score profile aligns with your target school

1. The blue bar shows your projected score.
2. The tan band shows the typical score range for first-time students enrolled at the selected school (25th to 75th percentile).
3. Above the graphs you will see a message indicating how well your score profile aligns with the selected school. In the example below, the student is “On Track” for Math and “Above Target” for Reading/English.



Learn more about your target school

There is additional information about your target school at the bottom of the page.

Oregon State University 4-year Public in Corvallis, OR..	
Admission Rate	Graduation Rate
77% of applicants admitted	72%
Average Annual Cost	Median Earnings after Graduation
\$31,653	\$71,799
Math Scores	Reading/English Scores
SAT: 560 - 700 ACT: 24 - 32 25th percentile - 75th percentile scores of admitted students	SAT: 580 - 700 ACT English: 23 - 32 25th percentile - 75th percentile scores of admitted students
This tool uses projections based on assumptions about average growth over time. College admissions decisions consider many factors beyond test scores. The College Explorer is intended for exploration and planning and should not be interpreted as an estimate of a student's likelihood of admission.	

Page 3: What majors fit my scores?

Select your major from the dropdown list of areas of study

1. Click the text box under “Search for a major.”
2. Use the dropdown list to identify the area of study that most closely matches your desired major. For example, if you are interested in pre-med, select “Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences.”

What majors fit my scores?
Select a field of study to compare your projected ACT and SAT scores with the typical scores associated with students entering that major.

Search for a major

Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences

Undecided

Agriculture Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences

Architecture and Related Services

Area Ethnic Cultural and Gender Studies

Biological and Biomedical Sciences

Business Management Marketing and Related Support Services

Communication Journalism and Related Programs

Computer and Information Sciences and Support Services

Construction Trades General

Education

Engineering

Engineering Technologies/Technicians

English Language and Literature/Letters

Family and Consumer Sciences/Human Sciences

Foreign Languages and Literatures General

Health Professions and Related Clinical Sciences

History General

Legal Studies General

Liberal Arts and Sciences General Studies and Humanities

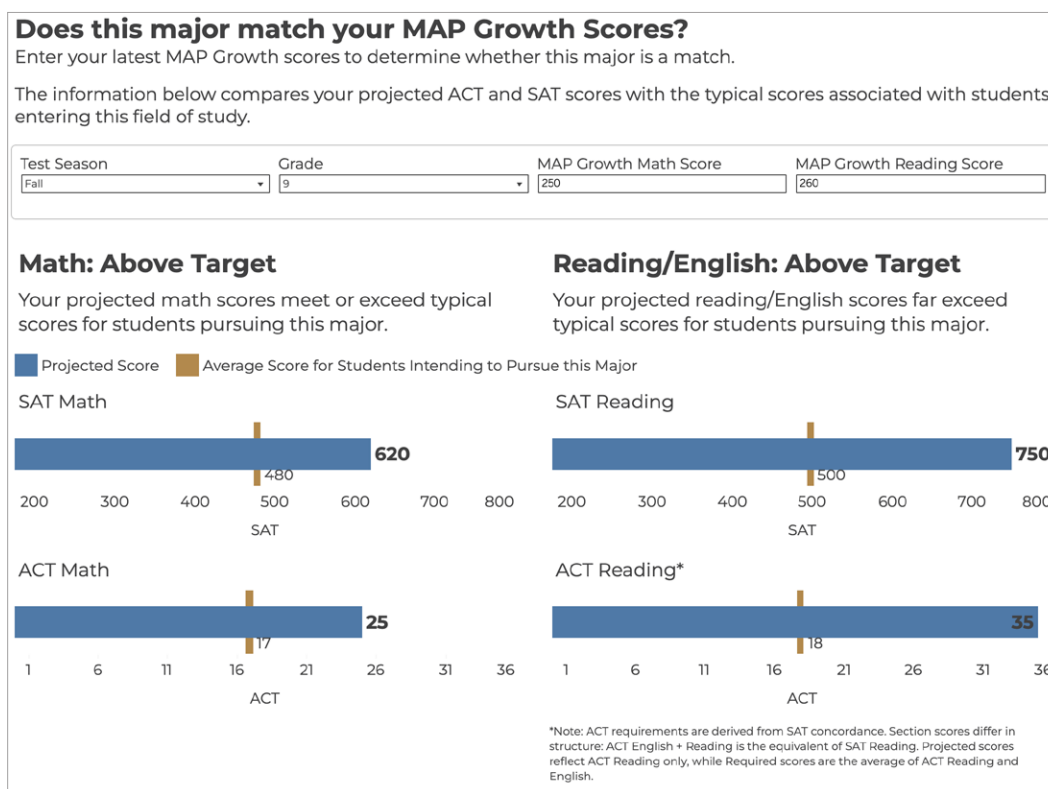
Library Science/Librarianship

Enter your MAP Growth information (if it has not already carried over)

1. Select test season and grade.
2. Enter your MAP Growth Math and MAP Growth Reading scores.
3. Look at the four graphs:
 - SAT and ACT Math projections are on the left.
 - SAT and ACT Reading projections are on the right.

Examine how well your score profile aligns with your selected major

1. The blue bar shows your projected score.
2. The tan line shows the average score for students intending to pursue this major.
3. Above the graphs you will see a message indicating how well your score profile aligns with the selected major, on average, in schools across the country. In the example below, the student is “On Track” for math and “On Track” for reading/English.



How does the College Explorer work?

The College Explorer tool helps students understand what future ACT or SAT scores might be possible based on their current MAP Growth performance. The tool combines research linking MAP Growth scores to ACT and SAT scores with NWEA® research on how students typically grow over time. Using these relationships, the College Explorer tool projects students' MAP Growth performance through grade 11 and translates those projected scores into estimated 11th-grade ACT and SAT outcomes.

This allows students to explore how their current performance and potential future growth may relate to college readiness, target colleges, and areas of study. Rather than serving as a grade-level benchmark or a determination of whether a student is currently “on track,” the College Explorer is designed to illustrate possible future pathways.

The tool also includes ACT and SAT score information for colleges, universities, and areas of study from the [US Department of Education's College Scorecard](#). By comparing projected 11th-grade scores with scores associated with individual schools or areas of study, students can explore which options may align with their score profile.

The College Explorer tool also provides information about individual institutions, including degree completion rates, cost, and earnings. More information about how these measures are calculated is available in the College Scorecard technical documentation for [institution-level data](#) and [field of study data](#). These projections are based on assumptions about typical growth over time and should not be interpreted as predictions of college admission.

Why do some colleges seem to be missing?

Some schools do not report the information needed by the College Explorer, such as test scores, graduation rates, or cost information, in the US Department of Education's College Scorecard. Schools without the necessary information may not appear in the tool.

How is “within reach” or “below target” estimated?

To estimate “within reach” **for SAT**, we used published [College Board student-level growth estimates](#) data on reasonable score growth from 11th to 12th grade. These data (on page 30 of the report) list a range of predicted scores based on a student's 11th-grade SAT score. The ranges are wider for students at the lower end of the distribution, and smaller for students at the top of the distribution. If the highest plausible SAT score published by the College Board falls within the 25th to 75th percentile of scores typical for students attending a college, the student is considered “within reach” for that college.

To estimate “within reach” **for ACT**, we used a simpler formula. [ACT indicates](#) that a score increase of one point is a reasonable expectation for students between two administrations one year apart. Therefore, any score within one point of the typical score range is deemed “Within Reach.”

Definitions

Admission rate or acceptance rate: The proportion of first-time students submitting an application to this school that were accepted for admission. An application is considered submitted only after all required portions of the application are complete. Applicants who do not submit a complete application are not included in the calculation of this rate. Institutions that have an open admissions policy do not report on their acceptance rate, but are considered to have a 100 percent acceptance rate for the purposes of searching in this tool.

Average annual cost: The average annual cost is the average net price for students who receive federal financial aid (e.g., Pell grants, federal loans) for one academic year of study. Net price is calculated by adding the advertised price for tuition, fees, books, supplies, and the average living costs at the school (on-campus, off-campus not with family, and off-campus with family) and subtracting the average grant and/or scholarship aid (e.g., Pell grants, school-based grants, merit scholarships). Net price is calculated as the average over all full-time, first-time students who receive federal financial aid and may not reflect a specific student's annual costs. For public schools, this is only the average cost for in-state students. Negative cost values indicate that the average grant/scholarship aid exceeded the cost of attendance.

Graduation rate: The graduation rate for degree-granting schools is the proportion of entering students who graduated at this school within eight years of entry, regardless of their full-time/part-time status or prior post-secondary experience. Graduation is measured eight years after entry, irrespective of the award sought or award obtained.

Math scores and reading/English scores: Tests scores shown in the box are ACT and SAT scores in a range that covers the middle 50 percent (between the 25th and 75th percentiles) of first-time students enrolled at the school in the fall. Twenty-five percent of first-time students scored below this range, and 25 percent of first-time students scored above this range. Scores from students who were admitted, but did not enroll, are not included. Not all schools require test scores for admission.

Median earnings after graduation: Median earnings are calculated for individuals who were federally aided, were working, and were not enrolled in school as of the measurement point. Earnings were measured based on wages and deferred compensation reported via IRS form W-2 plus positive self-employment earnings reported via Schedule SE. Individuals with \$1 or more of earnings were considered to be working and were included in the median earnings calculation. Anyone with an in-school deferment for at least 30 days during the measurement year was considered enrolled in school and was excluded from the median earnings calculation. Individuals who died were also excluded from the earnings cohort.



NWEA, a division of HMH, supports educators worldwide by providing responsive, evidence-based assessment solutions that illuminate learning needs and fuel student growth. For more than 40 years, NWEA has developed innovative pre-K-12 assessments, including its flagship assessment, MAP Growth, and professional learning that helps educators strengthen their practice and improve student outcomes. As part of its commitment to bring valuable insights to the education community, NWEA engages in research examining issues that shine a light on inequities and other barriers to academic opportunities. Visit [NWEA.org](https://nwea.org) to find out how NWEA partners to help all kids learn.

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