

Searching for Students When Testing Patterns Have Changed

Admissions offices have been forced to rethink how they work due to COVID-19. From online open houses, to virtual financial aid consultations, nearly everything has changed. The theme of change continues to your Search efforts as well. But there is good news, 2021 Search volume is strong so you can find highly qualified students for recruitment, but you may need to search a little differently. Here are our suggestions to help you ensure you are talking with the right students to help your campus meet enrollment goals.

Tactic 1: Search Often

Test patterns have changed in recent years and COVID-19 is impacting SAT administrations by pushing additional testing to Fall 2020. In order to find the students you need in the class of 2021, you'll want to search for students more frequently so you're adding new students as they enter the database through our weekly indexing process. Additionally, you'll want to search later into Fall 2020 so you can find as many qualified 2021 students as possible.

Tactic 2: Search using all test sources

The College Board Search database is much more than SAT test-takers. In fact, the largest percentage of the database builds from students taking the PSAT/NMSQT. Millions of students go on to take AP exams and SAT exams as well. In order to find the students you want to be recruiting, you can search for students now using each of these exams. Using PSAT and AP as a proxy for SAT scores is a great way to build your class right now.

Tactic 3: Understand Search Filters

There are a few commonly overused filters used in Search that may cause an institution to miss out on qualified students. These include:

- CB Exams (use PSAT, AP, and SAT)
- GPA (include students who didn't respond to this question)
- Email and Mailing Address (use "or" instead)
- College Plans & Preferences (avoid using these except for special circumstances)

Knowing which filters to use can be a challenge, however we are here to assist you, reach out your College Board contact for assistance.

Tactic 4: Optimize your Search Markets

The name source you use really matters when it comes to Search, especially when you consider which tests are most commonly taken in each area of the country or in each state.

For a Search Consultation, visit [cb.org/CBsearchconsultation](https://collegeboard.org/CBsearchconsultation)

As most campuses tighten budgets, you cannot afford to be licensing the same names twice. College Board names are always de-duplicated from previous orders, and we have nationwide strong coverage in the class of 2021. It's likely that if you get Search names from more than one source in the same market you are getting duplicates and wasting precious budget. College Board has the most comprehensive coverage of likely college-bound students, making College Board Search the best first source.

Tactic 5: Know Who is Likely to Test this Fall

There will more senior names in the fall than is typical due to delayed SAT testing. While most students are already in the Search database due to PSAT or AP testing, there will be more students in the fall added with SAT scores. You'll want to take this SAT testing into account as you plan your Search efforts.

In addition to an increase in total SAT test taking this fall, these exams will likely include a highly diverse group of test takers.

If you typically search for Seniors early in the fall, we encourage you to extend your Searches into November and December to include as many students as possible who are testing later due to spring SAT cancellations.

Bonus Tactic: Interest in My College

Consider using the Interest in My College (IMC) feature within Search. IMC helps you find students who are already interested in your campus.

- These students behave more like inquires and can help you start conversations with students who are further down your funnel
- IMC students have significantly higher yield rates than traditional Search
- This feature helps you pinpoint students who are “raising their hand” for you, which can allow you expand into markets where you typically haven't found students

Visit [cb.org/CBsearchconsultation](https://collegeboard.org/CBsearchconsultation) or contact collegeboardsearch@collegeboard.org to request a consultation for help building orders or changing your Search strategy.