

Admissions Testing and Decisions at Webber Academy Grades One to Six

Webber Academy prepares students “to thrive in university and beyond”. As such, when screening applicants, the school is seeking children who are demonstrating levels of potential, performance, and character that likely match this end. Experience has shown that students who do not meet certain standards in these areas are not likely to be successful at our school, even though there may have been past successes in other less intense learning environments.

While a student’s character tends to be judged more subjectively (through teacher references, visits to our school, etc.), Webber Academy does use a variety of objective means to assess the potential and current performance of a student. The following is information on admissions tests administered to our prospective applicants for ***entrance into Grades One to Six***. Webber Academy uses two norm-referenced, standardized instruments with all of these applicants; they are the *Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT)* and the *Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)*.

What are Percentile Rankings?

Percentile Rankings show the relative standing of a student in comparison with other students of the same age and/or grade within a normative group. For example, if a student obtains a *percentile ranking* of 84, it means that they obtained a mark equal to or superior than 84% of the students in the normative sample. *Percentile Rankings are NOT raw or absolute scores*. A score of 45% is not a “failing mark”, but rather an indication of ranking or placement within a group. For example, obtaining a “class average” on an exam, whatever that average may be, would be equivalent to a *percentile ranking* of 50.

All of the standardized test scores that are used by Webber Academy in making admissions decisions may be expressed in terms of *percentile ranking*. While a certain level of score will be identified below as being preferred, no particular score is in any way a guarantee for admission. Test scores are but one part of the admissions application, with no prescribed weight being given to any of the factors considered.

Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test (CCAT)

The *CCAT* is designed to assess the pattern and level of students’ development in reasoning and problem solving with verbal, quantitative, and spatial symbols. These reasoning skills are closely related to school learning ability (their *potential for learning*). Three scores are reported. The *Verbal Score* measures a student’s understanding of the structure of language, relationships between words, and the ability to use language for reasoning tasks including inference, application and classification. The *Non-Verbal Score* measures a student’s ability to make inferences and evaluations independent of language. The *Quantitative Score* assesses the student’s abilities for reasoning and problem solving using numerical and mathematical concepts and frameworks.

For our purposes at Webber Academy, and from our experience, we find that in order for a student to be successful in our programme, they should be scoring minimally at or around the 75th percentile in all areas (Verbal, Non-Verbal, and Quantitative). We prefer a profile where all abilities are equally well developed.

Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)

The *CTBS* assesses levels of academic knowledge, or *current academic performance*, in a variety of subject areas. The exact areas assessed do vary across the grade level of the applicant. For applicants seeking to enter Grades 1 and 2, a battery consisting of measures of vocabulary, reading skills, and listening skills will be administered. For applicants seeking to enter Grades 3 to 6, the battery is expanded to include mathematics and further depth of assessment with English language skills (reading comprehension, written expression).

A child’s *CTBS* scores can be directly compare to their *CCAT* scores; highly similar results are common, and are much preferred. ***Large discrepancies between the levels of a child’s potential for learning and their current academic performance can suggest that the student may not be well suited for the programme offered at Webber Academy.***

Similar to CCAT results, we find that in order for a student to be successful in our programme, they should possess CTBS scores that are minimally at or around the 75th percentile in all areas. Again, a profile indicating that all areas measured are equally well developed is preferred.

School Grades

A student's most current progress report (report card) in their present school setting is required for review. In order for students to be successful at Webber Academy, including not becoming overwhelmed with content and pacing of the curriculum, grades should be typically as follows:

- ❖ "Honour Roll" level
- ❖ 80% or above, or B+ and above average
- ❖ "Above Average" to "Excellent" range
- ❖ Top 25% of the class, or top/first quartile

Other Acceptable Assessments

There are many other measures for assessment of a child's academic *potential* and *performance*. Most of these measures can be administered by a chartered psychologist, and some may have been administered individually or in a group within the school setting. Other measures whose scores may be considered for admissions decisions include, but are not limited to:

Measures of Cognitive Ability (Potential)

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Third or Fourth Editions (WISC-III, WISC IV)
Wechsler Preschool/Primary Scale of Intelligence – Third Edition (WPPSI-III)
Woodcock Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities – Third Edition (WJIII-COG)
Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale – Fourth or Fifth Editions (SB-IV, SB-V)
Otis-Lennon School Abilities Test, Seventh Edition (OLSAT)

Measures of Academic Performance

Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – Second Edition (WIATT-II)
Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement – Third Edition (WJIII-ACH)
Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement – 1998 Update (K-TEA/NU)
Stanford Achievement Test Series, Ninth Edition (Stanford 9)
Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Eighth Edition (MET8)

As with tests that Webber Academy uses, we seek scores on any and all of the above measures that fall at or above the 75th percentile. Students presenting scores from the aforementioned tests or others will be considered individually on a case by case basis.

What if my child doesn't achieve the desired scores?

Children who score below the desired percentile ranking of 75 on any of the aforementioned tests may not be appropriate candidates for Webber Academy. In some rare, exceptional cases, further assessment of the child's abilities by a chartered psychologist may be warranted for the child to be considered further for admission. Results of such assessments provided will be considered individually on a case by case basis. ***However, please note that a child's inability to qualify for admission to Webber Academy is not an indication that the child has problems with their learning. A child who receives scores on standardized testing below the desired 75th percentile does not necessarily have problems with their learning.*** Many students who do not qualify for Webber Academy will prove to be successful in a regular school setting. Percentile ranks below the 75th percentile are not a failure on the part of the child. A student with a percentile ranking of 60 is still performing at a level better than 60% of other students their age – a highly commendable result.