

Admissions Testing and Decisions at Webber Academy Grades Seven to Twelve

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 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 Seven to Twelve*. Webber Academy is a member of the Secondary School Admission Test Board (SSATB), and uses testing results from the SSAT (Secondary School Admission Test) for the purposes of admission.

Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT)

The *SSAT* is a standardized test, designed to assess the pattern and level of students’ development in reasoning and problem solving with verbal and quantitative symbols. These reasoning skills are closely related to school learning ability (their *potential for learning*). Three areas are assessed and three scores are reported. The *Verbal Section* measures a student’s verbal aptitude, as well as a student’s ability to identify logical relationships between words and concepts. The *Quantitative Section* assesses the student’s abilities as they pertain to mathematical concepts, computation, routine mathematical manipulations and problem solving. The *Reading Comprehension Section* is designed to measure a student’s ability to understand and assimilate what has been read. In addition to these sections, candidates are to complete a 25-minute writing sample.

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 80th percentile in all areas (Verbal, Quantitative, and Reading Comprehension). We prefer a profile where all abilities are equally well developed.

How do I register my child to write the SSAT?

Parents ***must register their child*** to write the SSAT at one of the Calgary testing centres. This may be accomplished by registering directly with the SSATB, on-line at www.ssat.org. Webber Academy testing dates are as follows:

- Saturday, October 11, 2008
- Saturday, February 7, 2009
- Saturday, April 18, 2009

Please note that ***a student must be registered with the SSAT Board in order to write the exam***; we are unable to accommodate unregistered students on Testing Day.

Other testing dates in Calgary are available; please consult the testing schedule on www.ssat.org. If your child is unable to write the exam on any of the testing dates in Calgary, and you are seeking admission to Webber Academy, *other arrangements may be made for one-on-one testing conducted within our school, using another standardized exam*. See reverse for details.

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.

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 20% 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)
Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test – Form K
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)
Canadian Test of Basic Skills – Form K, 1998 Edition

As with tests that Webber Academy uses, we seek scores on any and all of the above measures that fall at or above the 80th 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 80 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 80th 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 80th 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.

Further Questions?

For further information on the SSAT, as well as information regarding practice exams and exam structure, please visit the SSATB website: www.ssat.org .