UNDERSTANDING THE ACADEMIC INDEX

Disclaimer

*The following statements **reasonably approximate** the Ivy Group's Academic Index for athletic admissions. The information provided is based on informal conversations with Ivy admissions representatives as well as published institutional research. However, at their best, the guidelines below offer a useful representation—and not an exact codification—of admissions criteria that are **not available to the general public.***

Overview

In 1985, the Council of Ivy Group Presidents created the Academic Index "to monitor the academic qualifications of recruited athletes." This measure insured uniformity of admissions practices across the Ivy Group, underscored the importance of academics at those institutions, and addressed a perceived deterioration of standards in certain programs, especially male revenue sports. This formula has governed Ivy athletic admissions thereafter with only minor modifications.

The Academic Index (AI) involves four computations: (1) the individual applicant, (2) the entire campus, (3) each team, and (4) all recruited athletes. ***Every applicant to every Ivy League institution is assigned an AI in order to insure close academic compatibility among admitted athletes and non-athletes in each freshman class and at every Ivy League college.***

1. Individual AI

An Individual AI combines equally class rank, best combined SAT Reasoning Test (only Critical Reading and Mathematics) scores, and the two (three if required) highest SAT Subject Test scores. The highest possible AI is 240; a perfect 80 for each of the three criteria. This student would be first in class and have a score of 800 on each section of the Reasoning Test and every Subject test. ***(See AI Worksheet—Individual.)***

A recruited athlete must have a minimum AI of 171 in order to be admitted to an Ivy League school. (A student in the middle of MKA's class with SAT Reasoning and Subject test scores around 600 would just meet the minimum.) There have been a few 'hardship' exceptions to this guideline historically, either for students from unusual educational backgrounds or for unusually noncompetitive teams at particular colleges. (Dartmouth in basketball; Columbia in football.)

2. Campus AI

The Campus AI is the average of all students on campus. This varies slightly from college to college, but probably no more than ten points across the entire group. Harvard, Yale, and Princeton are thought to have the highest Campus AI at approximately 220; Cornell, because of its three "sponsored" state schools, is generally considered to be the lowest around 210.

3. Team AI

The Team AI in a particular sport (the average of every Individual AI of each admitted athlete) must, in general, be within one standard deviation of the Campus AI. Every athlete admitted with a low Individual AI must be offset with another with a higher Individual AI. Ivy admissions offices establish guidelines for coaches trying to build a team that meets their athletic needs, the college's academic profile, and the Ivy Group's academic index. To accomplish this complex balance, every team has an annual 'quota' and every athlete within that group is assigned to one of four bands based on his or her Individual AI.

Band 4 athletes are the most easily admitted, because their academic profile is at or above the Campus AI. ***Band 3*** athletes, those one standard deviation or less below the Campus AI, are also in a relatively good position. ***Band 2*** athletes are between one and two standard deviations below the Campus AI, so anyone admitted in this band must be balanced by a high Band 3 or Band 4 athlete. Admission of a low Band 2 athlete is more difficult. ***Band 1*** athletes, more than two standard deviations below the Campus AI but with an Individual AI of 171 or above, are the most difficult admits. ***(See AI Worksheet—Team.)***

A football example illustrates the Team AI concept. Every Ivy League college may admit a maximum of 30 football players each year, for a four-year total of 120. Among that 30, only two or three Band 1 athletes are admitted. (These are almost always 'franchise' players who are projected to have an immediate impact and potential All-Ivy or All-American status.) Twelve to fifteen Band 2 athletes are admissible and this group represents the next most talented group, all assured of playing time in short order. The remaining twelve to fifteen football players are Band 3 and Band 4, the higher in Band 3 and Band 4 the better. Only rarely does a coach discover a football player with Band 1 performance capability and Band 4 academic qualifications.

4. Athletic AI

The Athletic AI for all athletes in all sports must be within one standard deviation of the Campus AI. This allows each college some flexibility by allowing a few key revenue sports to have a Team AI lower than one standard deviation but be collectively offset by others with a Team AI less than one standard deviation away from the Campus AI (fencing, golf, squash, tennis, for example). But the aggregate Athletic AI, to repeat, cannot be more than one standard deviation lower than the Campus AI.

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ACADEMIC INDEX (AI) WORKSHEET

INDIVIDUAL AI

Class Rank Conversion (CRC)

Estimate Class Rank using MKA GPA distributions at .33 intervals. 5 points added for overall school reputation and up to 5 more points added for rigor of academic program.

20	50	80

SAT Reasoning Test (Critical Reading and Mathematics)

First two digits of CR score added to first two digits of Mathematics score. Sum divided by two.

20	50	80

SAT Subject Tests (2 or 3 depending upon college requirement)

If two, first two digits of first test score added to first two digits of second test score. Sum divided by two. If three, first two digits of each of three tests added together and divided by three.

20	50	80

TOTAL INDIVIDUAL ACADEMIC INDEX (AI)

Sum of CRC, SAT Reasoning, and SAT Subject Tests

60	150	171	240

CAMPUS AI

Each Ivy League institution has a different (and closely guarded) AI computed by averaging the Individual AI of every student on campus. The following estimates are approximations extrapolated from observed overall strength of the respective applicant pools.

220	216	210
Harvard	Dartmouth	Columbia
Yale	Brown	Cornell
Princeton	Penn	

TEAM AI

Must be within one standard deviation (10-15 points) of the Campus AI for that institution. Individual AI determines Band for each athlete within Team AI. (See reverse.)