

Graduate Management Admission Test

What is the GMAT?

Graduate Management Admission Test. This standardized test is required for admission at over 1000 business schools worldwide. According to the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), the makers of the test, "The GMAT is specifically designed to measure the verbal, quantitative, and writing skills of applicants for graduate study in business. It does not, however, presuppose any specific knowledge of business or other specific content areas, nor does it measure achievement in any particular subject areas." The GMAT is given in English, and consists of the following four separately timed sections:

- **Analytical Writing Assessment** 2 essays, 30 minutes each; one essay asks for an analysis of an issue, the other asks for an analysis of an argument.
- **Quantitative Section** 37 multiple-choice questions, 75 minutes; two question types: Problem Solving and Data Sufficiency.
- **Verbal Section** 41 multiple-choice questions, 75 minutes; three question types: Reading Comprehension, Critical Reasoning, and Sentence Correction.

An optional break of 5 minutes is allowed between each section.

Test Structure

Analytical Writing Assessment	
Question Type	Number of Questions
Essay Writing	2 essays
Time Allotted: Two 30-minute sections. Total: 60 minutes	
Verbal	
Question Type	Number of Questions
Reading Comprehension, Critical Reading, Sentence Correction	41
Time Allotted: 75 minutes	
Quantitative	
Question Type	Number of Questions
Problem Solving, Data Sufficiency	37
Time Allotted: 75 minutes	

Scoring

The GMAT is a computer-adaptive test, or CAT. This means that unlike a paper-and-pencil test, the next question is always determined on the spot, pulled from a large bank of questions inside the computer. Based on your answers, you will either see more or less difficult questions, which will have an impact on your score. Overall scores on the test range between 200 and 800. The final score is determined by your performance on the Verbal and Quantitative sections, and is accompanied by a percentile rank. The average score is 500.

An Analytical Writing Assessment score is provided separately. Either two independent readers, or one reader and computerized essay-scoring software will score each essay. A third reader is used if the first two are too far apart. Each essay is assigned a score between 0 and 6, with 6 being “Outstanding”, and 0 being “Unscorable”. You will also receive Verbal sub score, ranging from 0 to 60.

How is the GMAT scored?

The Verbal and Quantitative sections are combined to produce a score on a scale from 200 to 800, with 200 being the lowest score and 800 the highest score. The median score is approximately 540. Only 1% of all test takers receive a score of 750 or higher, and almost 60% of all test takers fall into the 400 to 600 scoring range.

Each Analytical Writing Assessment essay is initially scored on a 0 to 6 scale by two readers—one human reader, and one machine reader, the "e-rater." The two scores are averaged to produce a final score for each essay. The final scores of each essay are then averaged together to create an overall score.

What does it cost to take the GMAT?

The current fee to register for the GMAT is \$250 (USD). If a test appointment is cancelled at least seven calendar days prior to the scheduled appointment, a partial refund of \$80 (USD) is issued. The test fee of \$250 includes the release of your score report to up to five business schools. Additional score reports can be requested for an additional cost of \$25 per school. To have your GMAT scores sent to a certain school; contact GMAT Customer Service at (609) 771-7330.

When should I take the GMAT?

Try to take the GMAT about a year prior to your expected entrance into Business School—preferably any time during the summer or early fall. The deadline for taking the GMAT will vary dramatically depending on the admission procedures of each school to which you apply, and the term in which you are planning to enroll.

Keep in mind that you can take the GMAT up to 5 times, but never more than once per calendar month (including a month in which you cancel your score). You'll want to schedule enough time in your planning process to register and re-take the test, and then have the new score submitted to the school before the application deadline. Do this only if you know that your score will increase considerably—especially if you were ill or had family/personal problems.

If you take the GMAT early, you will have your score in hand and can use it to plan your application strategy and to choose and apply to a variety of schools in which you will be competitive. Don't forget to choose a "safe" school where you know you will be accepted, as well as schools that are more of a long-shot. If you take the GMAT early enough, it will allow you to submit your official score along with your application.

When is the GMAT given?

The GMAT is given year round during normal business hours. There is often one week during each month in which the test is not offered.

How important is the GMAT and how is it used?

It is crucial! Although business schools may consider other factors, the vast majority of admission decisions are based on only two criteria: your GMAT score and your GPA.

How many times should I take the GMAT?

Most people are better off preparing thoroughly for the GMAT, taking it one time and getting their top score. You can take the test as often as you like, but many business schools will average your scores. You should call the schools to which you are applying to find out their policy. Then plan your strategy accordingly.

Can I cancel my score?

Yes. When you finish the test, the computer will offer the option of canceling the test or accepting it. If you cancel the test, neither you nor any school will see your score. If you accept the test, the computer will display your score and it will be available to all schools.

At a minimum, you want to take the GMAT a month before the application deadline. It will take anywhere from two to four weeks to get your official score, although you will get an unofficial score immediately after you take the test. You can arrange for your test score to be sent directly to you and up to 5 schools in which you are applying. If you take the test close to an application deadline, you may want to include the unofficial score report with your application.

If a school uses a rolling admissions process, you will want to make sure your application is in early (usually between December and February, depending on the school). Rolling admissions means that applications are reviewed on a first come, first served basis only, and some schools may have already filled their classes before their final deadline.

Because the GMAT is a computer-adaptive test (CAT), you can take the exam at one of the testing centers at almost any time. Each test center has its own schedule of operation, but their available time slots can fill quickly (especially weekends). In some cases, it may be possible to schedule an appointment a day

or two before you actually take the test, or even walk-in, but don't count on it. We recommend booking a time and date at least a month in advance (2 months isn't a bad idea if you are limited in your availability). You may visit www.mba.com for a list of test center locations and specifics on registration.

Take the GMAT when you have prepared and are confident in your ability to do well. Consider taking one of our Power Score GMAT weekend classes or Tutoring Programs to help in your preparation.