



STUDENT RESOURCE:

10 FAQs ABOUT THE GMAT® EXAM

The Graduate Management Admission Test® (GMAT®) is a standardised exam, delivered in English, used in admissions decisions by thousands of graduate business programs around the world. The GMAT exam has been shown to be a valid predictor of academic performance in MBA and other business programs: It provides a uniform gauge of academic skills for admissions professionals, who must choose students from a huge range of academic programs and undergraduate majors worldwide, as well as varying levels of professional experience. As you begin thinking about applying to business school, here are some frequently asked questions about the GMAT exam.

1. What is the format of the GMAT and how long does it take?

The GMAT exam is a computer adaptive test that measures academic potential for graduate business programs such as MBA and Master's degrees. It has three parts:

1. Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA): two 30-minute essays
2. Quantitative Section: 37 multiple-choice questions over 75 minutes
3. Verbal Section: 41 multiple-choice questions over 75 minutes

The exam takes about four hours, including optional rest breaks.

2. Does everyone get the same questions?

No. The GMAT exam is computer adaptive, which means that the difficulty of the test continuously adjusts to the test taker.

The Quantitative and Verbal sections start with moderately difficult questions. In general, the more questions you answer correctly, the harder the test becomes. If you answer incorrectly, your next question will probably be easier. You are not allowed to skip any questions.

3. What if I don't finish the test?

You are penalised if you do not finish, so try to get to as many questions as possible. Some tips:

- Try not to spend too much time struggling with one question. In doing so you risk leaving no time to answer others.
- It is important that you finish the test. Monitor your time and try to manage your progress through the whole exam.
- You can't skip questions but if you are stuck, eliminate as many options as you can and make a best guess.

4. If I'm currently studying and plan to work for a few years before going to business school, should I take the GMAT now or later?

You should consider taking the exam now, while you're used to studying and taking tests, as GMAT scores are valid for five years. Another benefit to taking the test early on is that you have a better chance of being targeted by business schools that are a good match for you. You can create a profile and sign up to be contacted by business schools at mba.com.

5. Do I need a high standard of English or math to take the GMAT exam?

No. The GMAT tests your analytical and reasoning abilities in writing, reading, and quantitative areas.

The Verbal Section includes reading comprehension and critical reasoning, which tests how well you understand and analyse written English, and sentence correction, which asks how you best express an idea. There are no verbal analogies.

For the Quantitative Section, you need to understand fundamental arithmetic, elementary algebra, and commonly known geometry concepts, but the required skill level is relatively low. Calculators are not allowed, so all the problems are solvable with paper and pencil.

The GMAT Exam is:

- Used by more than 4,700 graduate business programs at nearly 1,900 schools around the world
- Accessible year-round at more than 110 test centers worldwide
- Available at a cost of US\$250 that includes sending up to five official score reports to programs you choose

For more information, go to mba.com

The difficulty of the Quantitative and Verbal sections comes from the logic and analytical skills required to answer questions correctly.

6. How far in advance do I need to register to take the test?

Most people register between 30 and 60 days prior to testing. Appointments tend to fill up early for Fridays and weekends, and on dates close to large program deadlines. Aside from giving yourself enough time to prepare, you might also want to give yourself enough time to retest if necessary. You can test only once in any 31-day period.

7. Does it help to prepare for the GMAT exam?

Yes. In order for the test to properly reflect your capabilities, you must be familiar with the exam and the question formats. When you register for the test at mba.com, you can download the free GMATPrep® software, which gives you two full-length tests. You can also purchase study materials such as The Official Guide for GMAT® Review, retired paper tests, and GMAT Focus™ diagnostic tool.

8. Do I need to have a business background to take the test?

No. The GMAT exam is a gauge of your academic potential for business study and does not assume any business knowledge. Students with many different undergraduate majors take the GMAT exam.

9. Should I retake the test to get a better score?

It depends. You might consider retaking the test if your score seems unusually low compared with your academic record or if you did not finish the test. Some people can improve their score as they feel more comfortable taking the test the second time around because they know what to expect in terms of the test centre, the time limits, and the use of the computer. Those retaking the test score, on average, 31 points higher the second time around. However, approximately 25 percent end up with a lower score.

10. Is there a passing score to get into business school?

No. GMAT scores are used in admissions decisions along with undergraduate records, application essays, interviews, recommendation letters, work experience, and other information. Schools accept students with a wide range of GMAT scores – In 2009 the average total GMAT score was 539.

Further information

mba.com

Research graduate study, schedule your GMAT exam, and get access to FREE prep materials and other products.

▶ www.mba.com

BusinessWeek

Find articles, news of b-school life, and rankings of business education.

▶ www.businessweek.com/business-schools

Financial Times

Rankings, b-school news, video lectures, discussion forums, and more.

▶ www.ft.com/BusinessEducation

International accreditation agencies for business education

▶ AACSB - www.bestbizschools.com

▶ Association of MBAs – www.mbaworld.com

▶ EQUIS – www.efmd.org/index.php/accreditation-/equis

Beyond Grey Pinstripes Survey, the Aspen Institute Center for Business Education

A biennial survey of how business schools are preparing their students for the environmental, social, and ethical complexities of modern-day business.

▶ www.BeyondGreyPinstripes.org

GreenBiz

A source for news, opinion, best practices, school features, jobs, and other resources on the greening of mainstream business.

▶ www.greenbiz.com