The Graduate Management Admission Test® (GMAT®)

Official website: www.mba.com

Test Structure & Overview

Format and Timing

The GMAT exam consists of three main parts, the Analytical Writing Assessment, the Quantitative section, and the Verbal section.

You have three and a half hours in which to take the GMAT exam, but plan for a total time of approximately four hours.

Analytical Writing Assessment

The GMAT exam begins with the Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA). The AWA consists of two separate writing tasks—Analysis of an Issue and Analysis of an Argument. You are allowed 30 minutes to complete each one.

Quantitative Section

Following an optional break, you then begin with the Quantitative Section of the GMAT exam. This section contains 37 multiple-choice questions of two question types—Data Sufficiency and Problem Solving. You are allowed a maximum of 75 minutes to complete the entire section.

Verbal Section

After completion of the Quantitative Section (following an optional break), you begin the Verbal Section of the GMAT exam. This section contains 41 multiple choice questions of three question types—Reading Comprehension, Critical Reasoning, and Sentence Correction. You are allowed a maximum of 75 minutes to complete the entire section.

Computer-Adaptive Format

Each of the first two sections consists of an analytical writing task; the remaining two sections (Quantitative and Verbal) consist of multiple-choice questions delivered in a computer-adaptive format. Questions in these sections are dynamically selected as you take the test; the multiple-choice questions will adjust to your ability level, and your test will be unique.

How does it work?

For each multiple-choice section of the GMAT exam, there is a large pool of potential questions ranging from a low to high level of difficulty. Each section of the test starts with a question of moderate difficulty. If you answer the first question correctly, the computer will usually give you a harder question. If you answer the first question incorrectly, your next question will be easier. This process will continue until you complete the section, at which point the computer will have an accurate assessment of your ability level in that subject area.
In a computer-adaptive test, only one question at a time is presented. Because the computer scores each question before selecting the next one, you may not skip, return to, or change your responses to previous questions.

**What If I make a mistake or guess?**

If you answer a question incorrectly by mistake or correctly by randomly guessing, your answers to subsequent questions will lead you back to questions that are at the appropriate level of difficulty for you.

Random guessing can significantly lower your scores. So, if you do not know the answer to a question, you should try to eliminate as many answer choices as possible and then select the answer you think is best. For more testing strategies, see [Test-Taking Strategies](#).

**What if I do not finish?**

Pacing is critical, as there is a severe penalty for not completing. Both the time and number of questions that remain in the section are displayed on the screen during the exam. There are 37 Quantitative questions and 41 Verbal questions. If a question is too time-consuming or if you don’t know the answer, make an educated guess by first eliminating the answers you know to be wrong.

**How is my score determined?**

Your score is determined by:

- the number of questions you answer,
- whether you answer the questions correctly or incorrectly, and
- the level of difficulty and other statistical characteristics of each question.

The questions in an adaptive test are weighted according to their difficulty and other statistical properties, not according to their position in the test.

**Are all questions counted?**

Every test contains trial multiple-choice questions being pretested for use in a real exam. These questions are not identified and appear in different locations within the test. You should, therefore, do your best on all questions. Answers to trial questions are not counted in the scoring of your test.

**What Computer Skills do you Need?**

You need only minimal computer skills to complete the GMAT exam. Familiarize yourself with the mechanics of taking a computer-adaptive test by using the GMAT Tutorials that is included with the free [GMATPrep® Software](#). The tutorials cover such topics as:

- using a mouse
- entering responses
- moving on to the next question
- using the word processor
Before the day of your test, review the testing tools covered in the tutorials. Although you will be able to use a Help function during the test, the time spent doing so will count against the time allotted for completing a test section.

Each of these scores is reported on a fixed scale and will appear on the official GMAT score reports that you and your designated score recipients (programs) receive.

**GMAT® Scores and Score Reports**

The Graduate Management Admission Test® (GMAT®) yields four scores: Verbal, Quantitative, Total, and Analytical Writing Assessment.

Each of these scores is reported on a fixed scale and will appear on the official GMAT score reports that you and your designated score recipients (programs) receive.

**Your Score Report**

Score reports include all your GMAT scores from tests taken in the last five (5) years. The contact and demographic information that was required for you to register for the test will also appear on your score report.

The digital photograph you provided at the test center will be sent with your score report to the score recipients you select, if those recipients have asked to receive such information. In addition, if you provided the following background information during registration or on the day of the test, it may also appear on your score report: telephone number; undergraduate institution, grade point average (GPA), major, and date of graduation; intended graduate study; and the highest level of education attained. This information is self-reported and will be marked as such.

For each of your scores on the GMAT test (Verbal, Quantitative, Total, and Analytical Writing Assessment) you will receive a percentile rank. Each rank indicates the percentage of examinees who scored below you based on the scores of the entire GMAT testing population for the most recent three-year period. Your percentile rank may change from year to year. However, your scaled score never changes.

You have the opportunity to cancel your scores at the test center on the day of your test—immediately after you complete the test, but before you can view your scores. On occasion, GMAC cancels scores because of security breaches, misconduct, or other violations by the test taker. In the interest of full disclosure and to assist schools in making informed decisions, GMAC will provide reason codes on the score report for any score that is canceled.

You can download a sample score report to understand how your GMAT scores compare with all other GMAT test takers from the past three (3) years and also review the reason codes with the accompanying explanation for non-reportable scores.
Total, Verbal, and Quantitative Scores

Total GMAT scores range from 200 to 800. Two-thirds of test takers score between 400 and 600.

The Verbal and Quantitative scores range from 0 to 60. Scores below 9 and above 44 for the Verbal section or below 7 and above 50 for the Quantitative section are rare. Both scores are on a fixed scale and can be compared across all GMAT test administrations. The Verbal and Quantitative scores measure different constructs and cannot be compared to each other.

Please note that, if you do not finish in the allotted time, you will still receive scores as long as you have worked on every section. However, your scores will be calculated based upon the number of questions answered, and your score will decrease significantly with each unanswered question.

Analytical Writing Assessment Score

The Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) score is an average of the ratings given to the Analysis of an Issue and the Analysis of an Argument sections.

Each response is given two independent ratings. Once both essays have been scored, the scores are averaged to provide an overall score. Scores for the AWA range from 0 to 6 in half-point intervals.

Writing scores are computed separately from the multiple-choice scores and have no effect on the Verbal, Quantitative, or Total scores.

How AWA Is Scored

Each of your essays in the AWA section will be given two independent ratings, one of which may be performed by an automated essay-scoring engine. The automated essay-scoring engine is an electronic system that evaluates more than 50 structural and linguistic features, including organization of ideas, syntactic variety, and topical analysis.

If the two ratings differ by more than one point, another evaluation by an expert reader is required to resolve the discrepancy and determine the final score.

College and university faculty members trained as readers for the AWA will consider the following:

- the overall quality of your ideas about the issue and argument presented
- your overall ability to organize, develop, and express those ideas
- the relevant supporting reasons and examples you used
- your ability to control the elements of standard written English

In considering the elements of standard written English, readers are trained to be sensitive and fair in evaluating the responses of examinees whose first language is not English.
If you have reason to believe that your scores for the Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) portion of the GMAT test are not accurate, you may request that your essays be rescored using the Essay Rescore Request Form.

When are GMAT® Scores Available?

When you schedule your GMAT appointment you will be asked to indicate if you wish to access your Official Score Report online or in the mail. Please note that you must respond to both essay prompts and work on each multiple-choice section of the test in order to obtain an Official Score Report.

Unofficial scores from the Verbal and Quantitative multiple-choice sections, along with the Total score, are available immediately after you complete the test. The Unofficial Score Report will also contain an authorization number.

If you chose to receive your Official Score Report online, you will generally receive an email within 20 calendar days of testing, with a link to access your Official Score Report online. After clicking the link you must enter the authorization number from the Unofficial Score Report to view the Official Score Report. You may view, download, or print your Official Score Report, which includes the AWA score.

If you opted to receive your Official Score Report by mail, it will be sent to you approximately 20 calendar days after testing. Please note that it may take longer than 20 calendar days for the Official Score Report to reach you due to variances in delivery time.

Programs that you select to receive your scores while at the test center will receive your Official Score Report approximately 20 calendar days after testing. If you send your scores to programs by ordering an Additional Score Report (ASR) after your testing experience, those programs will receive your scores in approximately seven (7) calendar days after your score has become reportable.

Retaking the GMAT® Exam

Sometimes it is necessary or desirable to take the GMAT test more than once. For example, a graduate management program may request more recent scores than you have on record. However, unless your scores seem unusually low compared with other indicators of your preparation for graduate management study, or unless there are other reasons to believe that you did not do your best on a test for which scores have been reported, taking the GMAT test again may not be helpful.

Statistically, retesting is unlikely to result in a substantial increase in your scores; in fact, your scores may decrease. If you repeat the test, any scores for tests you have taken in the past five years will still be reported to the graduate management programs you designate as score recipients. If you repeat the test and want to resend your scores to programs that previously received your scores, you must reselect the programs at the time you take the test or order an Additional Score Report after your exam with the appropriate fee. Any repeated GMAT testing is subject to the GMAT retest policy.
Free GMATPrep® Test Preparation Software

GMATPrep test-preparation software is available to help you prepare for the Computer-Adaptive GMAT® exam.

This tool is free to registered users of mba.com!

The GMATPrep software uses the same technology used by the official GMAT exam. With this software, you can simulate the actual test experience.

GMATPrep software features:

- A 15-question practice section for each type of GMAT question, with answers and explanations for each question
- 2 full-length computer adaptive practice tests with answers (detailed explanations of answers are not included)
- Accurate computing of Verbal and Quantitative scores, which you can use to judge how prepared you are for the actual GMAT exam
- A comprehensive math review
- Real-time scoring

When you register for the GMAT test, you may also choose to have a free CD-ROM version of the GMATPrep software mailed to you. It takes two weeks for delivery within the United States and four weeks for delivery to other locations.

DOWNLOAD GMATPREP NOW

GMATPrep™ "Virus" Is a False Positive

Several users trying to install or run GMATPrep software have gotten a message saying the HTMLViewer.exe file is infected with a virus. The GMATPrep file has been tested thoroughly against virus software from most major vendors and been given a clean bill of health.

GMATPrep is not showing up on software from some major vendors, including Norton. Here’s the status of GMATPrep false positives by anti-viral software program:

McAfee. If your virus definitions are up to date, you should not experience any problems with GMATPrep. False positives from several weeks ago were fixed with the newest version.

AVG. AVG has been contacted, but the false positives are still appearing. You can set up the software to ignore GMATPrep when it scans for viruses. Here’s what you should do:

1. Configure the AVG software to prevent it from scanning the GMATPrep file during installation.
o Open the AVG program. From the Tools menu, choose Advanced settings and then choose PUP exceptions. Click the Add exception button.
  o Locate GMATPrepSetup.exe as the file you want to exclude from the virus scan.
  o Click the Add button to save the setting.

2. Install the GMATPrep software.

3. Exclude the GMATPrep directory from being scanned when you run the application.
  o Open the AVG program. From the Tools menu, choose Advanced settings.
  o In the left pane, select Resident Shield and choose Exceptions.
  o Click the Add path button and locate the directory you want to exclude from the virus scan, normally Program Files\GMATPrep.
  o Click the OK button to save the setting.

Norman and Panda Norman and Panda have been contacted, but as of April 24, 2009, no response has been received.