



GRADUATE SCHOOL TESTS

OVERVIEW OF TESTS

GRE | Graduate Record Exam

The GRE is the most widely used graduate exam and is considered the most accurate test to gauge a student's readiness for post-baccalaureate studies. More than 700,000 students take the four-hour exam every year. Published by ETS (Educational Testing Service)

The general test divides up into three sections:

- Verbal reasoning, which includes reading comprehension
- Quantitative reasoning, or math and problem-solving
- Analytical writing, which includes two essays

The average score is 130—170. A 75th percentile score (157 on Verbal and 160 on Quantitative) is pretty good, scoring better than most of the other test-takers. A 90th percentile score (162 on Verbal and 166 on Quantitative) is excellent and will be competitive for most programs

GRE analytical writing scores would be considered low (0.0-3.0), average (3.5-4.0), high (4.5-5.0), or excellent (5.5-6.0). If your GRE Writing score is a 4.5 or above, you're in good shape for most graduate programs, compared to all other GRE takers.

The general test is computer-adapted, meaning the questions get more difficult if you are doing well. You can take the general test at any time during the year, and there are plenty of study resources available. It's recommended that you spend two to three months preparing.

You can also take a subject test in biology, chemistry, literature in English, math, physics and psychology. Subject tests (available April, September, October) measure your knowledge in that particular area of study.

Cost: \$200 General Test. \$150 Subject Tests.

GMAT | Graduate Management Admission Test

The GMAT is growing in popularity as more people decide to earn a master's in business administration, or MBA. About 6,000 business schools use this four-hour test for admissions, and about 250,000 people take the test each year. Published by Wiley.

Set aside the recommended two to three months to prepare (similar to the prep time for the GRE).

The GMAT consists of an analytical writing assignment, which includes two essays, and multiple-choice sections on:

- Integrated reasoning
- Data sufficiency and problem-solving
- Reading comprehension, critical reasoning and sentence correction

The multiple-choice sections have an added twist. More than one answer is possible, and if you miss even one, the whole question is wrong.

Most test-takers score between 400 and 600 on a 200-800 scale, but the average mark at the top business schools is 714.

Cost: \$250

TEST PREP MATERIALS

Test Guide

<https://www.test-guide.com/grad-school-admissions/>

Go Grad

<https://www.gograd.org/exam-prep/>

Amazon Grad Test Guides

<https://www.amazon.com/Best-Sellers-Books-Graduate-Test-Guides/zgbs/books/11684>



LSAT | Law School Admission Test

If you are headed to law school, you will almost certainly need the LSAT. Most pre-law students take the four-hour exam between the end of their junior year and early fall of their senior year. Published by LSAC (Law School Admission Council)

At least three months of prep is recommended to give you a shot against the other 100,000 people who take the test each year looking to enter law school. The average score on a 120-180 scale is a 151.

The LSAT has four multiple-choice sections and a writing section. The essay is not actually graded, but it is sent with your final scores to the schools you are applying to.

Cost: \$190.

MCAT | Medical College Admission Test

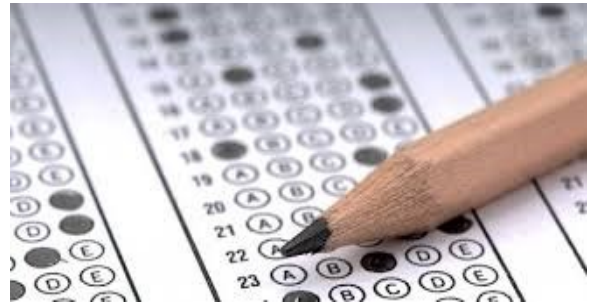
The longest of the tests, the MCAT clocks in at more than seven hours. It also has the longest recommended study period: four to five months. Published by AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges).

About 60,000 prospective doctors take the MCAT each year. The exam has four sections:

- Critical analysis and reasoning
- Chemical and physical sciences
- Biological sciences
- Psychological and social sciences

Each section is worth up to 132 points. Scores for the four sections are combined to create a total score. The test score range for the MCAT is 472 to 528. The midpoint is 500. A good MCAT score is 127 out of 132 in any one section, or 508 out of 528 for all 4 sections.

Cost: \$315



TEST PREPARATION

Studying for the GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT and other graduate school entrance exams requires time, planning, and organization. Test takers are advised to be disciplined about their preparation, set aside the necessary time, plan ahead, and organize your resources.

It is advisable to prepare for your graduate school entrance exam by focusing on two general components of each test:

- Content, subject matter
- Types of questions, test format

Both components are critical and your preparation in both areas is necessary. It is just as important to feel confident about how to take test as it is to feel confident about the subject matter. Once you are versed in the subject matter and you are familiar with the test format, the best preparation is to practice taking the test.

It is not advisable to take the actual test several times, wherein your score will be official. Instead, test-takers should use practice tests.

The resources available for graduate school test preparation include the following study materials and services:

- Graduate Admission Test Publisher Website (GRE, GMAT, LSAT, MCAT)
- Graduate Test Prep Classes (Kaplan, Princeton Review, Magoosh, Manhattan, Exam Pal)
- Graduate School Test Prep Study Guides (Kaplan, Princeton Review, Petersons)

Many of the graduate admission test websites have online stores where a student can purchase study tools. Aside from test prep books, the websites also offer free digital options for students that help prepare them for the test, but are not as comprehensive as the official books they sell.

The GRE's test prep book, *The Official Guide to the GRE*, is \$40 on its website, and it provides hundreds of test questions, explanations for answers and test-taking strategies. Its online option, PowerPrep, is free and gives you the experience of taking the real, computer-delivered GRE General Test.

The GMAT Official Guide Bundle provides more than 1,500 practice questions from previous exams and costs \$71.95 on MBA's website, which also offers the GMAT Official Starter Kit and Practice Exams 1 & 2 for free online.

One of the featured LSAT test prep books is *The Official LSAT SuperPrep*, which is available for purchase on Amazon for \$23.80. Their website offers free LSAT prep materials.

The MCAT website offers an array of free online test prep handbooks that act as guides for preparing for the MCAT, but the Complete Official MCAT Prep Bundle costs \$268, which includes over 2,200 unique practice questions.