



Which Exam is Right for You?

Applicants to graduate school complete the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), which tests verbal, quantitative, and analytical abilities. The Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) is taken by prospective business school students also measures verbal, quantitative, and analytical skills. The GMAT is published by the Graduate Management Admission Council, which oversees graduate programs in business. Recently some business schools have started to accept the GRE as well as the GMAT (students may take either), but be sure to check the

requirements of each program. Prospective law students take the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), which measures reading, writing, and logical reasoning. Finally, students who hope to attend medical school take the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT).

How to Prepare for Standardized Exams

Most standardized graduate-school tests are designed to identify potential success or capacities for success, rather than measure specific knowledge or achievement. While some subject knowledge is essential (the Medical College Admission Test, for instance, evaluates fluency in the sciences), most standardized tests seek to judge a candidate's thinking skills. That said, they really do require knowledge, specifically quantitative (math) skills, vocabulary, reading comprehension skills, and writing skills (the ability to construct an articulate, persuasive, argument). The math is reported as basic knowledge gained at the secondary school level (high school). That doesn't mean that you can expect to coast through the exam effortlessly. Take time to bone up on algebra and geometry at the minimum. Likewise most applicants find that they need to increase their vocabulary. All applicants can benefit from practice taking the exam and learning strategies for each section. While you can study on your own with a few good test prep books (LSAT, MCAT, GRE, GMAT), many applicants find a formal review course very helpful.

Your score on the GRE, GMAT, LSAT, or MCAT is critical to your application. Exceptional standardized test scores can open up new educational opportunities, especially for students with weak applications because of low GPAs. Many grad programs use standardized exams as screens, filtering applicants by score. However, note that although performance on standardized tests is a strong factor in the admissions process, it is not the only element that will net you an acceptance to the graduate school of your dreams. Undergraduate transcripts, recommendation letters and an admissions essay are other considerations.