



Graduate School Test Prep

Heading off to grad school? If you haven't completed the GREs or the GMAT graduate school test, you should probably start preparing!

These aren't always required, but more often than not programs expect to see some standardized test scores. Future lawyers take the LSA and future doctors the MCAT.

The GREs (Graduate Record Exams) are more common. They're designed for all other graduate school programs. The GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) is for MBA students. Scores help admissions committees to determine whether or not you're likely to succeed in grad school.

Undergraduate transcripts, your personal statements, and your letters of recommendation are also important. But these materials are somewhat subjective. Admissions committees can't tell if your undergraduate course work was unusually easy, if you received outside help with your essay, or if your references were exaggerated. Standardized tests are objective and consistent and programs require these scores to make direct comparisons between applicants.

GRE General Test

Are your grad school interests rooted in arts and sciences? Then, you'll probably need to take the GRE General Test. This exam measures quantitative and verbal reasoning, along with writing skills and critical thinking abilities. You can take the test at any computer-based test center in your area. Are you aiming to receive your scores in time for January, February, or March application deadlines? If so, you should plan to take the test in the fall.

The GRE website provides free, downloadable practice tests, sample questions, and test-taking strategies. There are helpful study guides for your preparation. It's a good idea to study with these resources. Test-takers who are familiar with the format tend to fare better. It's also helpful to try a computer-based practice test (rather than simply marking answers in a book.) Test preparation is always more effective when your study methods mirror the actual test format.