

# GMAT Prep: Can You Study for GMAT on Your Own?

Getting your Master in Business Administration will require taking the graduate management admission test (GMAT). Business schools use it to screen aspiring students and assess their probable success in the program.

However, the GMAT is not exactly a walk in the park. Many of those who have successfully passed the exam took prep courses and tutoring, which brings us to the question of whether or not you can prepare for your GMAT by yourself.

**You can study for the GMAT on your own, but it will take an even higher level of discipline, resourcefulness, and dedication than when you're enrolled in a prep program. In addition, as GMAT has multiple coverage and types of tests, you will need to create a suitable schedule and effective strategy to ensure you review properly.**

Curious about how to get ready for GMAT independently? This guide will provide you with essential information and tips to study by yourself and ultimately pass the exam.

## What Is the GMAT Exam for?

GMAT, which stands for graduate management admission test, is an admission requirement for many graduate management programs, most notably in taking an MBA and other management programs. It is designed as a computer-adaptive test (CAT) wherein the order of the questions is tailored based on your previous answers. It is also administered online through a standardized test.

Many graduate business schools worldwide use the GMAT as a significant criterion in their selection process for programs like MBA, Master of Finance, etc. This is because the exam assesses the level of writing, verbal, reading, analytical, problem-solving, and quantitative skills of an applicant, determining if they fit the program's difficulty.

## How Hard Is It to Pass the GMAT Exam?

With about 200,000 takers annually from 114 countries, only 6% pass the exam or get a score of 720 or above. This data alone proves that the GMAT exam is not exactly easy to pass, which is also why those who complete their MBA hold another degree of prestige.

GMAT may be hard, but you're also given multiple opportunities to pass. For example, you can take the exam five times a year. But you shouldn't exceed eight times altogether.

Nonetheless, MBA aspirants target to complete the test once. That's why they don't simply review. Instead, they employ studying techniques that enhance their ability to memorize, understand, and practice the skills involved in the tests.

## How Can I Self-Study for the GMAT?

The option to study GMAT on your own is always on the table. However, it could come with many challenges structure. Unlike prep courses, you will have to outline your schedule and gather learning materials. Consider these steps to start self-studying for the GMAT.

### 1. Know What Topics and Types of Exams Are in GMAT

Your preparation for GMAT or any exam for that matter should begin by identifying what topics are included and skills assessed in the tests.

There are four sections in a GMAT Exam:

1. Analytical Writing Assessment - This measures your ability to communicate complex ideas, construct arguments, and sustain a cohesive discussion through writing.  
**Number of Questions:** 1  
**Time Limit:** 30 minutes  
**Types of questions:** argument analysis  
**Score Range:** 0-6 (in 0.5-point increment)
2. Integrated Reasoning - In this test, your skill in evaluating data and analyzing information presented in multiple forms will be measured.  
**Number of Questions:** 12  
**Time Limit:** 30 minutes  
**Types of questions:** table analysis, multi-score reasoning, graphics interpretation, two-part analysis  
**Score Range:** 1-8 (in 1-point increment)
3. Quantitative Reasoning - This test assesses your ability to use mathematical concepts in problem-solving, analyze data, and derive conclusions.  
**Number of Questions:** 31  
**Time Limit:** 62 minutes  
**Types of questions:** problem-solving, data sufficiency  
**Score Range:** 6-51 (in 1-point increment)
4. Verbal Reasoning - This evaluates your skills and ability to comprehend English written material, correct structural errors, and assess content reasoning.  
**Number of Questions:** 36  
**Time Limit:** 65 minutes  
**Types of questions:** reading comprehension, sentence correction, critical reasoning  
**Score Range:** 6-51 (in 1-point increment)

During the exam, you will be given three options regarding the sequence of the tests.

- Order number 1: Analytical writing assessment, integrated reasoning, quantitative, verbal
- Order number 2: Verbal, quantitative, integrated reasoning, analytical writing assessment
- Order number 3: Quantitative, verbal, integrated reasoning, analytical writing assessment

It is generally recommended that you start with your weakest section. So, for example, if you're having trouble with quantitative than verbal, the third order fits you more. But if you're still in doubt about which option to choose, just stick to the default sequence, which is order number one.

## 2. Get the Official Guide for GMAT Review

If you can't enroll in a GMAT prep course, your best chance of passing the exam is getting the [official guide for GMAT review](#). This resource material contains all the best references you need to study the four sections of the exam. It also has diagnostic and evaluation tools, practice questions, detailed explanations of the answers, formulas, and fundamental concepts. Plus, it was compiled by the organization administering the test.

With over 2,000 real GMAT questions from the past exams, you'll become well-versed with the types of tests and questioning styles.

### Answer Free Practice Tests

If you're not yet ready to purchase the official guide for GMAT review, you can take advantage of free practice tests online. Here are some websites you can check for free GMAT test examples.

1. [mba.com's GMAT Official Starter Kit + Practice Exams 1 & 2 \(Free\)](#)
2. [Manhattan Prep's Free Online Mock Exam](#)
3. [Test-guide's Free GMAT Practice Tests](#)
4. [Princeton Review's Free GMAT Practice Tests and Events](#)
5. [McGraw-Hill Practice Tests for GMAT](#)

## 3. Create a Feasible Study Plan

Those who choose to review for the GMAT on their own usually have a strict work schedule to squeeze in the hours of a prep course. Nonetheless, it's still crucial to create a study plan and project the length of time for the overall review.

If you're working a full-time job, your study plan will depend on the time you can commit to reviewing daily. Consider the following tips when making your schedule and executing your study plan:

1. Make sure you dedicate specific hours to your studying schedule. Two to three hours is a solid range to consider.

2. Following a sporadic schedule with long gaps will be disadvantageous as it may affect your recall, forcing you to start the topic review repeatedly. Instead, try studying 2-3x a during weekdays, then increase the hours during the weekends.
3. Add at least four hours of study during the weekend to maximize your schedule.
4. Prioritize concepts that you find difficult and make flashcards for each one.
5. Don't just practice answering the questions. Develop strong time-management skills as well. So, take timed CAT as frequently as you can.
6. Stick to your schedule and avoid distractions at all times. A common downside of self-preparation for the GMAT is maintaining discipline. Without a structured review, you must push yourself to keep your study plan.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Is GMAT Test Hard?

The GMAT test is generally hard to pass. Scoring 700+ points has been proven to be difficult as the passing rate annually does not go beyond 10%. GMAT is hard due to factors such as test complexity, its timed CAT nature, as well as the level of analysis and reasoning skills required in all four sections.

### Can I Take the GMAT Without Studying?

No, it's highly unusual to pass the GMAT without studying even for a bit. As we've established, the GMAT is not an easy test. Even the smartest passers had to go through weeks of review and preparations to get the passing score. Moreover, you can't rely on your stock knowledge as the skills measured in the GMAT manifest from consistent practice.

### How Long Do I Need to Study for GMAT?

The average number of study weeks to pass the GMAT is between 6 to 10 weeks, depending on how many hours you allocate for studying per week. Those who allot over 15 hours weekly tend to complete the self-preparation for GMAT earlier.

## Summary

Passing your GMAT becomes your first real step to completing your MBA or any graduate management program. Understanding this value will affect how you perceive your preparation. Choosing to review by yourself will only work if you have the proper discipline, plan, and resource materials. Follow the tips mentioned above to ensure that you're studying the right way for GMAT, even if it's simply by yourself.