

Admissions Exams for Graduate Schools

If you are applying to graduate school you will be required to take a standard entrance examination. Few students relish the idea of standardized tests, but they help admissions officials determine who is capable of withstanding the rigors of graduate school.

Standardized Exams

Standardized exams are thought to measure an applicant's potential to succeed in graduate school. A high-grade point average (GPA) indicates success at your college or university. Standardized tests are also the basis for awarding fellowships and other forms of financial assistance.

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?

All applicants can benefit from practice taking the exams. You can study a few good test prep books such as LSAT, MCAT, GRE, and GMAT; you can also find a formal review course to be very helpful in preparing for these tests. Your score on the LSAT, MCAT, GRE, and GMAT 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 graduate programs use standardized exams as screens, filtering applicants by the 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 your acceptance to the graduate school of your dreams. Along with your transcripts, recommendation letters, and an admission essay, all aid in getting you accepted. So do your best in preparing to test well on the exam.