

MBA—Preparing For XAT Tips And Guide

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For over 50 years, XAT (Xavier Admission Test) is considered to be one of the most desired and competitive national-level entrance tests for admission to B-Schools in India conducted by XLRI, Jamshedpur. Over the years, other management institutes in India too have adopted this test for admissions. Currently, over 60 management institutes in India select their students through XAT. Applicants desirous of joining XLRI or any other institutions which also accept XAT test results have to appear for the entrance examination.

Planning for XAT

It is a known fact that XAT is one of the toughest tests for admission of students to premier management institutes and therefore requires extensive planning and preparation.

It is a multiple choice based examination with three sections namely, Analytical Reasoning & Decision Making, Verbal Ability & Logical Reasoning and Data Interpretation & Quantitative Ability along with writing an essay on a chosen topic. Decision making and essay writing are considered as the two unique features of XAT, the rest of the sections are not too different from the other MBA entrance exams like CAT or MAT. Candidates are expected to answer questions from all the three sections and hence should adopt a strategy to maximise scores in each section. Keeping the format of the test in mind, preparation must be based on the same pattern.

1. Section-based Approach : A section-wise preparation is recommended as the best way to crack XAT. Apart from decision making ability and essay writing, the rest of the sections are more or less similar to the other competitive MBA entrance exams.

To assess and evaluate decision making ability, the questions are based on making business decisions in a given situation. Students need to think about the solution in a logical/rational manner, apply analytical skills, find different options and select the best solution/decision while answering the questions. Having a look at the previous years' question papers will give the XAT aspirants a good idea about the kind of possible questions as well as the format.

The topics on the essay writing may be from any background. Some of the topics covered in the previous XAT question papers have been focussed more on social issues. For example, in XAT 2010, the essay topic was "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed", in XAT 2009 it was "The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries" and in XAT 2008, the topic was "Gender imbalance will lead to third world war". For the essay writing, apart from using best written skills, the students should think about the structure and flow of the essay along with the ability to demonstrate their logical and analytical skills.

For the remaining sections, students must focus on strengthening their



fundamentals. The questions attempted should be chosen carefully since there is progressive negative marking involved. Students should ensure that they are able to attempt as many questions as possible to maximise marks in each section.

2. Organised study plan : Organised study plan is important for success in any test and the same applies to XAT. Students should allocate appropriate time to study each section, making the fundamentals clear, practising mock test as many times as possible.

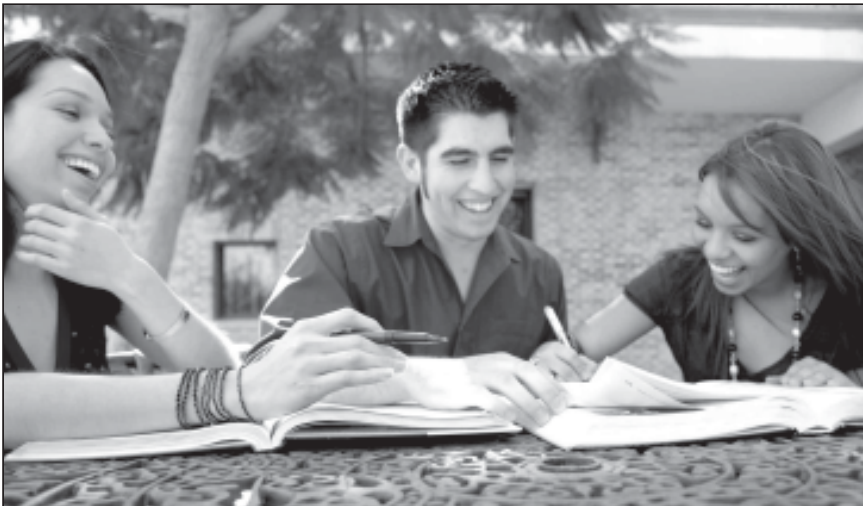
3. Accuracy : Maintaining accuracy is one of the important points to note in this exam, as XAT has negative marking for wrong/inaccurate answers.

4. Developing positive attitude & self-confidence : Attitude makes or breaks a person. If one looks at this exam as something unachievable or very difficult, success is indeed going to be difficult; but, if one learns to look at it from the perspective of self-development and as a positive challenge, the whole mindset towards it changes for the better. Building confidence in self comes by studying and practising for the test as much as possible. The mock test will give the candidate a fair amount of idea about his/her strengths and weaknesses as well as help in building speed, analytical skills, time factor and the all-important confidence level to get through XAT.

Requirements, Procedure and Format of XAT (As per the XAT Bulletin 2010 & XAT website) :

Eligibility for appearing in XAT

Any graduate under 10+2+3 system from a recognised university or a deemed university can appear for XAT. A graduate with less than 50% marks can also apply for XAT. Students, in their final year of graduation, are also eligible to apply. For admission in XLRI-Jamshedpur, students,



who are in their final year of graduation, should complete their final year examination by June 10, 2010. The date of completion of graduation may differ from institute to institute (for other XAT member Institutes).

Mode of Test

XAT is a paper and pencil based test. Students are expected to use only HB pencils for answering the questions.

Test Duration

Duration of XAT is 2 hours and 30 minutes.

Pattern of Test

XAT contains three sections:

- Analytical Reasoning & Decision Making
- Verbal Ability & Logical Reasoning
- Data Interpretation & Quantitative Ability

XAT is a multiple-choice type test. The unique feature of XAT is an essay test of 20 minutes duration, where students are expected to write an essay on a given topic. The number of questions in XAT may vary from year to year. For XAT 2010, which took place in January 2010 the numbers of questions in all the three sections were as follows :

Section	Number of Questions
Analytical Reasoning & Decision Making	30
Verbal Ability & Logical Reasoning	31
Data Interpretation & Quantitative Ability	40
Total	101

Negative Marking

XAT allocates progressive negative marking for wrong answers. In XAT 2010, for first 6 incorrect answers in each section, the mark deducted was 0.2 (one fifth of a mark) and thereafter 0.25 (quarter of a mark) mark was deducted for subsequent wrong answers.

Test Centres

XAT 2010 was conducted across 33 cities in India. They are: Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bangalore, Berhampur, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Cochin, Coimbatore, Cuttack, Dehradun, Delhi, Goa, Gurgaon, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jamshedpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, Noida, Patna, Pune, Raipur, Ranchi, Rourkela, Sambalpur, Thiruvananthapuram, Vadodara and Visakhapatnam.

Registration for XAT

There are three ways in which candidates can register themselves for the XAT exam:

- (a) **Online Registration:** Candidates can register online at www.xlri.edu and click XAT Registration where he/she needs to fill up the XAT online form.
- (b) **Axis Bank Outlet:** Candidates also have the option to buy the XAT bulletin and register themselves from branches of Axis Bank. They will need to provide the information about the nearest Axis Bank Branch, personal details, educational details, work experience etc., in the XAT online form and then download the pay-in slip. This pay-in slip will need to be taken to the bank to buy the XAT bulletin.
- (c) **XAT Office:** For candidates, who want to obtain XAT bulletin from its office, XLRI Jamshedpur directly, will have to first make a demand draft drawn in favour of "XLRI Jamshedpur A/c XAT" payable at Jamshedpur and will need to download the XAT PP form which contains signature and photograph and send it to XLRI, Jamshedpur along with the demand draft.

Comparative Analysis of CAT/MAT/XAT

	CAT	MAT	XAT
Level of the Test	1. CAT-affiliated B-Schools (like IIMs and some other top B-Schools) are ranked a tad higher.	1. MAT-affiliated B-Schools are mostly 2 nd tier group of schools.	1. XAT-affiliated B-Schools are considered to be generally ranked higher compared to MAT.
Test Pattern	2. CAT has a total of 3 sections in the test and the total number of questions is 60-70.	2. MAT has a total of 5 sections in the test and the total number of questions is 200.	2. XAT has 3 sections in the test and the total number of questions may be more than 100.
Test Duration	3. The test duration in CAT is 2 hours and 15 minutes plus an additional 15 minutes for tutorials.	3. The duration of MAT is 2 hours and 30 minutes.	3. The test duration of XAT is 2 hrs 30 minutes.
Mode of Test	4. CAT is a computer-based test.	4. In MAT, students have the option of attempting either a paper-pencil based test or computer-based test.	4. XAT is a paper-pencil based test.
Eligibility Criteria	5. Candidate must hold a Bachelor's Degree, with at least 50% marks or equivalent CGPA.	5. Candidate should be a graduate; those who are in their final year of graduation can also apply for MAT for provisional admission subjected to the completion of their graduation.	5. Candidates who are graduates and those who are in their final year of graduation, can apply. Candidates with less than 50% marks in graduation are also eligible to apply.
Frequency of the Test	6. CAT is conducted once a year.	6. MAT is conducted 4 times in a year—February, May, September and December.	6. XAT is conducted once in a year, during the month of January.

Conclusion

Once students are fully prepared, the next step is to go and give their best performance. Students should consider

XAT like any other competitive exam and give it their 100% effort. Having confidence in themselves and maintaining a relaxed mind will help

them to enjoy the process. Hard work, sincerity and having a strong desire to achieve the goal are the basis of success in XAT. Wishing you all the very best !

Answers To Your Questions

Rajendra Prasad: After completing my B.Tech (EEE) in 2007, I had appeared for MAT in 2007 but could not do well. I appeared again in May 2009 for the same and got composite score of 552 only. I have working experience of less than one year.

On the basis of my MAT score, would I be able to get admission in good MBA colleges? Please advise me as to how much score should I get in MAT in order to apply for A+ college? Should I prepare for other competitive entrance examinations like XAT, NMAT?

Ans: It is a fact that you have not scored the desired percentage in MAT to get into any good B-Schools. In most of the A or B category institutes, you are required to score more than 80 percentile in CAT and for other good B-Schools, you must secure more than 650 or so. In MAT, perhaps you need to plan and prepare for either of the entrance tests examination more systematically through regular practice for over six months. Try to join some coaching institutes which will give you proper guidance as to how to prepare for these examinations. You may appear for any entrance test but in all cases you need good planning and preparation.

Shailesh: I've heard lots of stories of MBAs from the lower rung schools not finding jobs, though promised by the institutes through their achievements. I have just been admitted into one such school. Please tell me whether it is true.

Ans: Dear Shailesh, we are afraid in many cases it may be true. You will have to be prepared but do not be disappointed. You should take your own initiative during your two years course to develop your soft skill, attitude, behaviour suited to the needs of the recruiters apart from knowledge. There are employers outside the system of campus placement to recruit qualified candidates. Moreover, most of MBAs in any case, get jobs not necessarily of their choice. There's nothing to suggest, that things will not change by the time you graduate. Situation is improving, so do not lose hope.

Anuj Yadav: Sir, I am 18 yrs old and want to know which of the two courses out of B.Sc. (Electronics) or B.Sc. (Hardware & Networking), is a good option? Please advise me.

Ans: Whether you choose to study B.Sc. (Electronics) or B.Sc. (Hardware & Networking), depends on your personal

strength and interest. However, in terms of demand in the market, B.Sc. (Electronics) is more in demand and has a better career prospect.

Archana: I have not made it to any of the top B-Schools, but have been accepted by three new B-Schools in and around Mumbai, where I live. How do I choose between them?

Ans: Since you live in Mumbai, visit the Institutes. Ensure that they are having proper physical and academic infrastructure. Look for more information, meet one or two students, find out how many faculties, for instance, have doctorates, industry experience, the quality of visiting faculty, curriculum and the quality of placement records, etc. These are the kind of factors, parameters and weightage that go into the CSR-GHRDC survey/capability scores. You can go through the ranking and rating of CSR-GHRDC Survey results to find out more details.

Aditya: I had appeared for MAT (May 2009) and got 489 as my score. I have got calls from three colleges so far. They are: (a) Bhavan's Institute of Management Studies, Kochi; (b) Mumbai School of Business, Mumbai; and (c) NBS, Delhi. Out of all three, which one will be good for me?

Ans: Out of these three B-Schools, NBS, Delhi has better record and is a more established institute. It has good placement record and ranked amongst good institutes in India. You may go for admission in NBS.

Prasenjit Dey: I am from Kolkata. I have completed B.Sc. in Hotel Management & Tourism in 2009. Despite the fact that I have completed B.Sc. in Hotel Management, I wish to go for MBA degree. Presently, I am preparing for CAT-2010 and other management entrance exams. Like every management student, I have a few doubts and questions about further studies in the management field. I wish to know the parameters on the basis of which I can take decision to go for the best B-School. I also wish to go for dual specialisation.

Ans: Prasenjit, to know about the best B-Schools and the institutes' parameters, please go through the November and December 2009 issues of *Competition Success Review* magazine where the results of B-School Survey 2009 have been published. Top B-Schools normally provide better placement opportunities.

Regarding the colleges offering the dual specialisation, you can visit the websites of the institutes you are interested in and check about their course curriculum. Subjects that you want to specialise in are normally chosen in the second year.

Shruti: I am an average graduate with a background in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics. I have heard that doing MBA requires at least Rs. 5 to 6 lakhs investment. I do not have enough money and I am thinking of taking an education loan of Rs. 4 lakhs. I am also thinking whether I'll be able to repay it easily after finishing the course. Please suggest me, does doing MBA mean getting a good job after the course?

Ans: You do not have to be complacent for being an average graduate. The concept and the objective of MBA is completely different. MBA programme is designed to prepare professional managers at young age and it will largely depend upon your ability and interest to learn and practise principles of management. Many students like you have done extremely well. The success depends on as to how you prepare yourself during the two years of programme. MBA course focuses on your overall development not only in the field of knowledge but also aptitude, attitude and behaviour to enable you to adjust with time and people. This will lead to improved performance in your day to day role and responsibility. Recruiters do not look for knowledge alone but other attributes as mentioned above and that you have to learn in two years of MBA programme. Do not go for an institute which is demanding Rs. 6 lakhs. They are no way better than less expensive ones. Perhaps Rs. 4 lakhs budget for two years is reasonable and many good institutes are within this range. Please read results of CSR-GHRDC B-School Survey 2009 and you will find many good institutes within the same fees range.

Please feel free to ask your questions on:
mpghrdc@yahoo.co.in or
csrheadoffice@gmail.com

Centre for Management Education and Research division of Global HRD Centre through their research and studies of CSR-GHRDC B-School Survey provides the readers with answers to their questions.

This is an extended service to provide information for the benefit of the stakeholders of B-Schools particularly recruiters, institutes and students.

By GHRDC Team