

MBA Preparation: How to Prepare for MBA Entrance Exams 2026



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How to prepare for MBA entrance exams - Know syllabus, pattern, book and preparation strategy of top MBA entrance exams in India. Get key tips and tricks to crack MBA entrance exams 2026 such as CAT, XAT, CMAT, MAT, SNAP, ATMA, NMAT, IBSAT. Read more on Shiksha

How to prepare for MBA entrance exams 2026 - The season of exam preparation for 2027 batch will kick in soon. Know syllabus, pattern, best books and preparation strategy to **crack top MBA entrance exams** such as CAT, XAT, CMAT, MAT, SNAP, ATMA, NMAT, IBSAT, etc.



MBA preparation journey usually starts from the final year of graduation. Maximum percentage of the aspirants start **MBA entrance exam preparation** as soon as they step



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into the third year of their bachelor's degree programme as one needs a good number of months to **prepare for MBA entrance exam**.

What is an MBA entrance exam? It is a common admission test for admission to [MBA](#) programmes. All the exams test candidates for English comprehension, logical reasoning and quantitative aptitude - skills essential to succeed as a manager/entrepreneur. A management aspirant often prepares for more than one MBA entrance exam so that, they have multiple options for MBA admission. In this article, we have shared key insights and tips on **how to prepare for MBA entrance exam**. First of all, let's take a look at MBA entrance exams in India.

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MBA Entrance Exam 2026-2027

There are over **50 MBA entrance exams in India**, out of which, some are national-level, some are state-level and some are university/institute level exams. The **most popular** national-level **MBA entrance exams** are **CAT, MAT, XAT, CMAT, XAT, ATMA, NMAT and GMAT**. Some of the most popular state-level MBA entrance exams are [KMAT](#), [Karnataka PGCET](#), [TSICET](#), [TANCET](#), [MAH CET](#), [APICET](#) and [Kerala KMAT](#). Some of the popular university/institute level entrance exams are **SNAP, IBSAT and MICAT**. Given below are the top MBA entrance exams that aspirants from across the country appear for in a large number:



MBA Entrance Exam	Full Form	Description
CAT	Common Admission Test	CAT is conducted annually by the IIMs for admission to over 1,300 MBA colleges in India.
MAT	Management Admission Test	MAT is conducted by the All India Management Association and is accepted by over 700 MBA colleges in India. It is conducted in four phases - February, May, September and December
XAT	Xavier's Aptitude Test	XAT is conducted by XLRI Jamshedpur and is accepted by over 800 MBA colleges in India.
CMAT	Common Management Admission Test	CMAT is conducted by the National Testing Agency and the score is accepted by over 1,300 MBA colleges in India.



<p>ATMA</p>	<p>AIMS Test for Management Admission</p>	<p>ATMA is conducted by the Association of Indian Management Schools for admission to over 700 MBA colleges in India. It is conducted multiple times a year in February, May, August and December.</p>
<p>NMAT</p>	<p>NMAT by GMAC</p>	<p>NMAT is conducted by Graduate Management Admission Council and the score is accepted by 114 MBA colleges in India.</p> <p>NMAT is an adaptive test and candidates get three attempts in a particular session.</p>
<p>GMAT</p>	<p>Graduate Management Aptitude Test</p>	<p>GMAT is conducted by Graduate Management Admission Council and the score is accepted by about 100 MBA colleges in India.</p>
<p>SNAP</p>	<p>Symbiosis National Aptitude Test</p>	<p>SNAP is conducted by Symbiosis International (deemed to be) University for admission to 16 constituent institutes.</p>

IBSAT	IBS Aptitude Test	IBSAT is conducted by IBS Hyderabad for admission to its constituent institutes.
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Also Read:

- [Top MBA Entrance Exams in India 2026](#)
- [MBA admission 2026: Top Colleges, Application Process, Fees and Deadlines](#)

MBA Entrance Exam Dates 2026-2027

Check the table below for tentative dates of CAT, XAT, SNAP, CMAT and other MBA entrance exams.

MBA entrance exam	MBA entrance exam date
CAT 2026	November 29, 2026
SNAP 2026	December 2026 (3 sessions)
NMAT 2026	October to November, 2026
XAT 2027	January 3, 2027
CMAT 2027	Third week of January 2027
MAT 2026	February, May, September, December
ATMA 2026	February, May, June, July
GMAT 2026	Candidate can choose the exam date



When to Start MBA Exam Preparation?

All the MBA entrance exams have Logical Reasoning, Data Interpretation, Quantitative Ability and Verbal Ability. These four subjects are mandatory to prepare if you wish to crack any MBA exam. Preparing all these four subjects require a good amount of time (some exams have GK as 5th subject). It is recommended that candidates should dedicate at least 6-9 months to MBA entrance exam preparation, irrespective of the exam they choose.

MBA entrance exams like CAT, SNAP, CMAT and XAT are conducted between November and January, so ideal time to start preparing for these exams is in May-June. Most of the MBA aspirants plan to appear for multiple entrance exams, which means they have to prepare for multiple exams simultaneously.

MBA Entrance Exam Pattern

All MBA entrance exams are conducted in Computer Based Mode. Only MAT offers the option to take the test in Paper Based Mode too. The pattern of entrances is usually the same with limited number of questions to be solved in a limited time duration. Some exams have 60- 100 questions whereas some exams have up to 150-200 questions. The exam duration is typically 2 to 3 hours. Given below are the highlights of **MBA exam pattern** of top exams:

MBA Entrance Exams	Exam Duration and No. of questions	Exam Mode	Subjects	Marking Scheme
CAT Exam Pattern	2 hours, 68 questions	Computer Based Test	VARC DILR Quantitative Aptitude	+3 for correct attempt -1 for incorrect attempt



<p>MAT Exam Pattern</p>	<p>2 hours, 150 questions</p>	<p>Computer Based Test Paper Based Test Internet Based Test</p>	<p>Language Comprehension Data Analysis & Sufficiency Mathematical Skills Intelligence & Critical Reasoning Economic and Business Environment</p>	<p>+1 for each correct entry -0.25 for each incorrect entry</p>
<p>XAT Exam Pattern</p>	<p>3 hours, 95 questions</p>	<p>Computer Based Test</p>	<p>Decision Making Verbal & Logical Ability Quantitative Aptitude-Data Interpretation GK</p>	<p>+1 mark for correct answer - 0.25 marks for incorrect answer - 0.10 marks for more than 8 un-attempted questions No negative marking in GK section</p>



CMAT Exam Pattern	3 hours, 100 questions	Computer Based Test	Quantitative Techniques & Data Interpretation Logical Reasoning Language Comprehension General Awareness Innovation and Entrepreneurship	+4 marks for correct answer --1 mark for incorrect answer
ATMA Exam Pattern	3 hours, 180 questions	Internet Based Test	Analytical Reasoning Skills Verbal Skills Quantitative Skills	+1 mark for each correct answer -0.25 for every wrong answer
NMAT Exam Pattern	2 hours, 108 questions	Computer Based Test Internet Based Test	Language Skills Logical Reasoning Quantitative Skills	+3 for correct attempt No negative marking



<p>SNAP Exam Pattern</p>	<p>1 hour, 60 questions</p>	<p>Computer Based Test</p>	<p>General English Analytical and Logical Reasoning Quantitative Aptitude, Data Interpretation-Data Sufficiency</p>	<p>+1 for each correct attempt No negative marking</p>
<p>IBSAT Exam Pattern</p>	<p>2 hours, 140</p>	<p>Internet Based Test</p>	<p>Quantitative Aptitude Verbal Ability Data Adequacy & Data Interpretation Reading Comprehension</p>	<p>+1 for correct attempt No negative marking</p>

MBA Entrance Exam Syllabus

The main subjects of MBA entrance exam syllabus are **Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension, Logical Reasoning, Data Interpretation, Quantitative Aptitude and General Awareness**. XAT has a unique section called Decision Making and CMAT has a unique section called Innovation & Entrepreneurship. Given below is brief description of MBA entrance exam syllabus:

Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension (VARC): This section of MBA entrance exam syllabus includes English Grammar, [Verbal Ability](#), [Reading Comprehension](#), [Parajumbles](#), Cloze Test, Sentence Correction, Fill in the Blanks, Vocabulary, Synonyms, Antonyms, Odd One Out, Sentence Completion, etc.

Logical Reasoning (LR): This section of MBA entrance exam of syllabus includes Blood Relations, Seating Arrangement, Series, Verbal Reasoning, Non-Verbal Reasoning, Syllogism, Sets and Series, [Number Systems](#), etc.



Data Interpretation (DI): This section of MBA entrance exam of syllabus includes Tables, Graphs, Pie Charts, [Venn Diagram](#), etc. This section is usually clubbed with Quantitative Aptitude or Reasoning in many exams.

Quantitative Aptitude (QA): This section of MBA entrance exam of syllabus includes [Mensuration](#), Arithmetic, Geometry, Trigonometry, Algebra, [Square Roots & Cube Roots](#), Time Speed and Distance, Time and Work, HCM-LCM, Simple Interest and Compound Interest, [Probability](#), Mixtures & Alligations, [Percentage](#), Profit, Loss and Discount, etc.

General Awareness (GA): This section of MBA entrance exam of syllabus includes current affairs and static GK. Topics to study for General Awareness are Business, Economy, Politics, Governance, Awards, Books, Personalities, World, Science & Technology, Entertainment, Art & Culture, etc.

MBA Entrance Exam Syllabus

CAT Syllabus	CMAT Syllabus	NMAT Syllabus
MAT Syllabus	SNAP Syllabus	IBSAT Syllabus
XAT Syllabus	ATMA Syllabus	IIFT Syllabus

How to Prepare for MBA Entrance Exam: Tips and Tricks

MBA preparation 2026 requires subject wise detailed study and practice of sample questions. The preparation strategy should be based on the entrance exams a candidate chooses to take. The overall, MBA exam preparation is common to all, but candidates need to have a flexible strategy that can be modified according to the exam pattern of the particular exam. It is very important to practice exam specific mock tests to gain control over each one of them. Given below is the common **preparation strategy that can be applied to all MBA entrance exams:**



MBA Exam Preparation

1. Choose MBA entrance exams
2. Know the exam syllabus
3. Collect books and study material
4. Study topics and solve questions
5. Practice mock tests and sample papers

Steps for MBA exam preparation

MBA Preparation Tips for VARC

VARC include Reading Comprehension, which requires fluency in the language. Those who do not have strong base in English must devote a year to it, as they will have to learn the



fundamentals as well as develop a habit of reading. For RC preparation, candidates will need to read from a variety of genres as the passages can be asked from any field (including psychoanalysis).

Start reading books, novels and newspapers daily to improve reading comprehension.

This will also help you to improve your vocabulary and grammar. For fundamentals, take help from *High School Grammar and Composition by Wren and Martin*. Verbal Ability topics can be tackled with the help of sample questions. Practice different types of verbal ability and reading comprehension exercises available in the books recommended for MBA preparation and previous years question papers.

Also Read: [VARC Preparation Tips for MBA Exams](#)

MBA Preparation Tips for DILR

Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning are subjects that do not have formulae or theorems. They are completely based on one's interpretation and analytical skills. So how to prepare for such subjects? The best way to prepare for DI and LR is by practicing a variety of sample questions of easy, moderate and high difficulty level.

For preparing this section, candidates must take help from mentors and guides on tricks and shortcuts for solving questions easily. This section requires eye for detailing so solving puzzles and patterns is also a great way of developing the reasoning skills.

DI includes basic calculations, so the candidates must **memorise Tables up to 20, Square Roots, Cube Roots, Fraction and other such mathematical values** for quick calculation.

While solving DI or LR questions, apply the method of elimination. Remove the two options, which are definitely not the right answer and then focus on the remaining two options. This is a good practice as it saves a lot of time.

Also Read:

- [DI Preparation Tips for MBA Exams](#)
- [LR Preparation Tips for MBA Exams](#)



MBA Preparation Tips for Quantitative Aptitude

The **Quantitative Aptitude section of any MBA entrance exam** is calculation intensive and one cannot crack his section without having conceptual clarity of each topic. So, the first step in Quantitative Aptitude preparation is understanding the basics. The candidates must check the topics included in the syllabus of the entrance exam. List out the formulae and theorems attached to each one of them then begin with understanding the fundamentals of topics one by one. The candidates must remember not to study more than on Quantitative Aptitude topic at a time.

Break down the steps and simplify the process to understand a question. After completing each topic practice a number of questions to understand application of the concept. For each Quantitative Aptitude topic, practice 50-60 sample questions to gain a grip over them.

Also Read: [QA Preparation Tips for MBA Exams](#)

MBA Preparation Tips for General Awareness

Preparation of **General Awareness section of MBA entrance exam** is not too difficult. Since the questions are memory-based, all that the candidate needs to do is make a list of all important dates and events and keep revising it. GK yearbooks are the best source for General Awareness preparation.

Also Read: [MBA preparation tip for GK](#)

MBA Preparation

Get key preparation tips exam wise to make a practical and fruitful plan. Keep in mind that you will need the right books and study material to crack the test with high marks.

CAT Preparation Tips	CMAT Preparation Tips	ATMA Preparation Tips
MAT Preparation Tips	NMAT Preparation Tips	IBSAT Preparation Tips
XAT Preparation Tips	SNAP Preparation Tips	



Best Books for MBA Entrance Exam Preparation 2026

Books for MBA preparation are the most essential part of this journey. Performance in an MBA entrance exam greatly depends upon the books a candidate chooses to study.

Candidates must choose books based on expert recommendation as well as reviews by previous years' exam toppers. A good **MBA preparation book** has two elements – chapter wise explanations and sample questions for practice. We have listed below the most **recommended books for MBA preparation 2026** comprising concepts, explanation, tips, exercises and model questions. Check below:

Best Books for MBA Preparation	Author/Publication
NCERT Mathematics books (Class 6-10)	NCERT
How to Prepare for Quantitative Aptitude for the CAT	Arun Sharma
Quantitative Aptitude for Competitive Examinations	Abhijit Guha
Quantitative Aptitude Quantum CAT	Sarvesh Verma
Quantitative Aptitude for CAT	Nishit Sinha
Quantitative Aptitude	RS Aggarwal
A Modern Approach to Logical Reasoning	RS Agarwal
How to Prepare for Logical Reasoning for CAT	Arun Sharma
How to Prepare for Data Interpretation for CAT	Arun Sharma



Logical Reasoning and Data Interpretation for the CAT	Nishit Sinha
Data Interpretation	Nishit Sinha
CAT Data Interpretation & Logical Reasoning	Gautam Puri
How to Prepare for Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension for the CAT	Arun Sharma and Meenakshi Upadhyay
Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension For The CAT	Nishit Sinha
Word Power Made Easy	Norman Lewis
High School Grammar and Composition	Wren and Martin
30 Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary	Wilfred Funk & Norman Lewis/ Simon & Schuster

Also Read:

- [CAT Books for Preparation](#)
- [CMAT Books for Preparation](#)
- [NMAT Books for Preparation](#)
- [MAT Books for Preparation](#)
- [ATMA Books for Preparation](#)
- [IBSAT Books for Preparation](#)
- [SNAP Books for Preparation](#)



- [XAT Books for Preparation](#)

MBA Entrance Exam Question Papers and Mock Tests

A very important aspect of **MBA preparation** is practice of questions. All the efforts of understanding concepts and formulae will go in vain if there is not enough practice of application of the same. In the above paragraphs, it has already been mentioned that whether it is VARC, DILR or Quantitative Aptitude, one needs to practice enough number of questions to score well in the exams. Practicing mock tests and question papers is important because they help in increasing speed and accuracy of solving the questions. Since, all MBA entrance exams are speed-based, quick calculation is of dire necessity. Shiksha has a repository of previous years' question papers of top MBA exams that you can download for free. Click on the links below for **free Mock Tests by Shiksha**:







Shiksha Mock Tests for MBA

CAT Mock Tests	MAT Mock Tests	XAT Mock Tests
CMAT Mock Tests	SNAP Mock Tests	NMAT Mock Tests

Download Free Sample Paper Question Bank for VARC, DILR and QA

CAT VARC Easy Test	CAT VARC Easy Test-Solutions
CAT VARC Medium Test	CAT VARC Medium Test-Solutions
CAT VARC Difficult Test	CAT VARC Difficult Test-Solutions
CAT DILR Easy Test	CAT DILR Easy Test Solutions
CAT DILR Medium Test	CAT DILR Medium Test Solutions
CAT DILR Difficult Test	CAT DILR Difficult Test Solutions



 CAT Quant Easy Test	 CAT Quant Easy Test Solutions
 CAT Quant Medium Test	 CAT Quant Medium Test Solutions
 CAT Quant Diffiult Test	 CAT Quant Difficult Test Solutions

