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The GRE (Graduate Record Exam)

Procedures for registering, taking and having GRE scores sent are somewhat confusing. This may help.

For a **GRE Bulletin**, go to the NIU Testing Center in Adams Hall, the Prometric Testing Center in Sycamore, or visit www.gre.org

NIU students wanting to take the **GRE General Test** should call the Prometric Testing Center at 815-899-0292 to schedule a time. This should be done at least two weeks in advance. Prometric is located on 1715 DeKalb Ave, Suite 101B in Sycamore (across the street from Burger King, by Energym/Lube Pro).

The General test costs **\$115**. You can pay at Prometric by check, money order, voucher*, or credit card when you arrive, or by credit card if you schedule over the phone. It is possible to just walk in to Prometric, pay, and take the GRE at that time, but you're better off calling to guarantee a spot in one of their 15 testing stations. If you pay in advance and **no-show**, there is **no refund**. A partial refund of **\$60** is available for the General Test if you **cancel** your computer-based appointment no later than 7 days before your appointment. If you call to reschedule for another date, there is a **\$40 rescheduling fee**. You should arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled test time. Prometric only offers computerized testing. If you want to take the paper-and-pencil version, refer to the GRE bulletin for other testing locations.

After taking the computerized test (but before you see your score), you will be asked if you **"accept"** the test. If so, the score becomes a part of your GRE record. If you retake the GRE one or more times, all your scores will be sent to the schools you designate. (You can not pick and choose which scores schools will receive – they get them all). If you take the test and decide not to "accept" it, then it is not officially scored and won't be sent to any schools (and you're out \$115). You can also "accept" the test but decide not to have the scores sent anywhere at that time. **Please Note:** You do not get to see your score and then "accept" or "not accept" it. People who do not accept it do so because they think they did poorly and do not want the scores to become official.

At Prometric, once you've accepted it, you will immediately see your "unofficial" score on the Verbal and Quantitative portions. You will not learn your score on the Analytical Writing section until weeks later when your "official" score arrives at your home. At Prometric, you can designate **four** schools to which you can have the scores sent, at no additional cost. You do not have to know the school codes when you arrive - you can get that information at Prometric. Additional scores cost **\$13** per school. If at a later date you decide to have the scores sent to additional schools, you can do so by visiting the GRE website or completing and mailing a form available in the GRE Bulletin. Scores take **10-15 days** to be sent to you and the schools of your choice.

You can take the GRE a maximum of **five times in 12 months** – but never more than once every 30 days. (So, for example, if you take it on October 1, you won't be able to retake it until November 1).

GRE General Test

There are three sections to complete:

- Verbal (Vocabulary, Sentence Completion, Reading Comprehension)
- Quantitative (College Algebra, Geometry)
- Analytical Writing Assessment (2 essay questions)
- There may be a 4th verbal or quantitative section included for research purposes and not counted in your score

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GRE Subject Tests

There are eight Subject tests. Check to see if the graduate program to which you are applying requires one of the following Subject Tests:

Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology
Physics
Biology
Mathematics

Literature in English
Computer Science
Chemistry
Psychology

Prometric **does not** administer Subject Tests. The Subject test fee is **\$130**. There are numerous college and university testing centers that administer the Subjects Tests, **including NIU**. You must register for a Subject Test through the mail (forms are in the GRE Bulletin) or on-line at: www.gre.org (click on Subject Tests). You can not register at the testing center itself. **Please Note:** The Subject tests are only administered a few times a year, so be sure to register and take the test early enough to assure that you meet the graduate program application deadline.

Preparation

The GRE website provides practice tests and will mail you a CD-ROM preparation program called **Power Prep**, 2-3 weeks prior to your exam date. (You can actually get these without having registered for the test). They are free, and for most people they are sufficient for test preparation. Publishers like Princeton Review and Kaplan also sell test preparation books and CD-ROMs for about **\$30**. These companies and others also offer expensive GRE test preparation courses. Kaplan (www.kaplan.com) and Princeton Review (www.princetonreview.com) classroom courses will run you **\$1,000**, and are offered throughout Chicagoland. They also offer on-line courses.

If you feel the need for classroom preparation, a more affordable alternative would be **NIU's External Programming** department. For information visit:

www3.niu.edu/clasep/test/greclass.html

According to their website:

Cost for the NIU GRE Test Preparation Courses in DeKalb: \$545 (\$495 if registered by a certain deadline); \$395 for **full-time students (\$345 if paid by a certain deadline)**. Materials include computer adaptive CD-ROM (GRE CAT Tutorial, diagnostic exams, practice tests, writing skill builder and refreshments). A typical course runs for 20 hours (five 4-hour lasses)

Whether preparing on-line, with books, CD-ROMs, or in a course, we recommend that you approach the GRE with the **intention of only taking it once**. Retaking the test is expensive and time consuming, and schools will see all your scores. If you prepare well the first time, your first (and only) test score should be a true reflection of your optimal score. Plus, you are more likely to prepare in earnest if you only intend to take it once.

* **Fee Waivers:** The GRE Program makes available a limited number of GRE fee waivers for college seniors and unenrolled college graduates who meet eligibility requirements. Fee waivers may be used for one General Test and/or one Subject Test. To be eligible, you must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien; **and**

1. a college senior receiving financial aid through an undergraduate college in the U.S., a U.S. territory, or Puerto Rico, or a returning unenrolled college graduate who has applied for financial aid; **and either**
2. a dependent college senior whose Institutional Student Information Report (ISIR) shows a parental contribution of not more than \$1,200 for the senior year, **or** a self-supporting college senior whose ISIR shows a contribution of not more than \$1,600 for the senior year, **or** an unenrolled college graduate whose ISIR indicates self-supporting status and a contribution of not more than \$1,600.

To apply for a GRE fee waiver:

- Contact your financial aid office to see if you qualify.
- Once your eligibility is established, the financial aid office will issue you a fee waiver and a copy of your ISIR.
- You must register by mail using either the computer-based or paper-based registration materials.
- If you are registering for more than one test, all registration materials must be received together with the fee waiver and ISIR or your registration form will be returned to you unprocessed.