

How To Prepare For MAT

By Ms. Mekhla Sinha
GHRDC

The Management Aptitude Test (MAT) is like the real test in life, that really needs to be taken seriously, if one wishes to be an MBA graduate from one of the good B-Schools in India. The Management Aptitude Test helps to evaluate critical thinking skills which are typically relevant to management positions, including the ability to make smart business decisions, analyse and solve situational problems, monitor a budget and supervise and communicate effectively with others. The MAT assessment is used to help select management and supervisory personnel, to help identify training needs and to help assess skills and business knowledge for promotion possibilities.

Since 1988, All India Management Aptitude Testing Service (AIMATS), New Delhi conducts a Management Aptitude Test (MAT) on a national basis 4 times a year in the months of February, May, September and December. The Government of India has approved MAT as a National Entrance Test for admission to Master of Business Administration programme (MBA) and equivalent programmes. Institutes offering recognised post-graduate programmes in management and allied fields can participate in MAT. MAT is necessary for admission into the Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM), Post Graduate Diploma in Information Technology & Management (PGDITM) and equivalent programmes offered by All India Management Association (AIMA-CME) or other Management Institutes (MI). Centre for Management Education (CME), the education wing of AIMA, was

established in 1993 as a full-fledged autonomous business school. All management institutes that participate in MAT are either AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) approved or affiliated to universities.

The minimum qualification for appearing in MAT is graduation in any discipline from any recognised University or equivalent recognised degree. A final year student in any undergraduate programme (i.e. B.A, B.Sc., B.Com., B.Tech., etc.) can also appear provisionally. MBA is considered to be a degree that will fetch you an instant and high paying job. Top business schools in India help students get placed with multinational companies at unbelievable salaries of Rs. 6-7 lakh per month. Many of them are placed outside India too. Every year, thousands of graduates prepare for the various MBA entrance tests to get admission into a business school as a passport to a job.

Management Aptitude Test is one of the many entrance exams for admission to MBA. Students of all streams - arts, science, engineering, medicine, and architecture, can pursue a career in Management after clearing MAT entrance exam. If an individual is seeking admission to an MBA institute, it is not enough to apply for Common Admission Test (CAT) and other entrance exams. One must keep one's options open. Clearing MAT exam is not easy, hence one needs to put in a lot of effort.

Though the basic sections of MAT are same as CAT, there are some subtle differences in the test. MAT caters to middle and lower level institutes. A good score in the MAT Entrance Exam is a

pre-requisite for a student to be called for the group discussion and a personal interview conducted to assess the student's personality and demeanour, with the final selection made in three rounds.

Pattern of MAT Test:

MAT is an objective type of test with multiple-choice answers. Candidates have to answer 200 Questions in 150 minutes. Questions are divided into five sections.

Sec. No.	Topic	No of Questions	Suggested Time (Min.)
1.	Language Comprehension	40	30
2.	Mathematical Skills	40	40
3.	Data Analysis and Sufficiency	40	35
4.	Intelligence and Critical Reasoning	40	30
5.	Indian and Global Environment	40	15
Total		200	150

One must remember that very few individuals can do 150 questions in the given time. The candidate must have the ability to pick and choose the questions that must be done. Validity of the MAT score is for that particular session for most Management Institutes, but for AIMA-CME's PGDM & PGDITM programmes, the score is valid for one year.

Preparation for MAT:

It is most imperative that one must start the preparation for MAT as early as possible. The more you practise, the more you learn. Your approach should be to hope for the best and prepare for the worst. MAT Preparation like other good entrance exams' preparation is giving it all you have got and at the same time believing that there is a life beyond MAT also. MAT, traditionally, is a multiple choice based examination covering English language comprehension, Mathematical skills, Data Analysis & Sufficiency, Intelligence & Critical Reasoning and Indian & Global Environment. The enhancement of ability to do well in every section should be your mantra to do well in MAT. Given below is a basic list of guidelines which every MAT aspirant should follow as part of his/her preparation for this important MBA entrance exam:



Mental & Physical Health—Mental and physical fitness is the key to achieving success and satisfaction in anything and everything we set out to do in life. Ensuring balanced diet, proper sleep including short refreshing naps and some doable exercise routines would go a long way in enabling you to take this all important test.

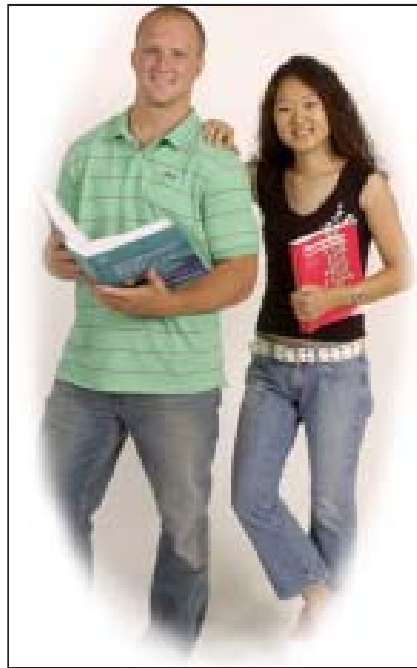
Organised time-table/Study Plan—It is imperative to create a time-table and schedule for oneself each day which will help the individual to follow a specific plan during the day and discipline oneself. It does not matter what time of the day one keeps aside time to study for the exam, the important thing to remember is that one should be mentally fresh and ready to absorb at that point of time.

Assessment of Strengths & Weaknesses : As mentioned above, the entire MAT Test paper is divided into 5 categories namely, English language comprehension, Mathematical skills, Data Analysis & Sufficiency, Intelligence & Critical Reasoning and Indian & Global Environment. Every individual has his/her own set of strengths and weaknesses and therefore it is important to identify them and accordingly prepare for the exam. For example, if one feels that one's weak point is Mathematics, then focus and additional efforts needs to be made in that area. Having formulae on your fingertips, being strong in mental calculations and developing your own short cuts will prove very useful to score speedily in Mathematical and Data Interpretation sections. Reasoning section requires thorough practice in all types of questions. Since there are no fixed formulae to tackle them, the scores depend on how much you are familiar with myriad of questioning patterns.

Important Tools & Resources : Once the ground work has been done, it is crucial to decide on the tools and resources to refer to while preparing for the exam. They are as follows:

Books—There are several good books available in the market, which are at par with International & National standards targeted at preparing for MAT. For Mathematical skills, the best book to refer is the Maths textbook for class X students as that provides a good basis for the preparation.

Coaching Classes—If an aspirant decides to enrol in a preparation course, he or she must resist any impulse to sign up for the first course one learns about. Courses vary greatly and it is imperative to investigate thoroughly before committing to one. Based on one's study skills, test-taking ability and content knowledge, which course will



meet most or all of one's specific needs should be decided carefully. After careful assessment, one may decide to prepare for the test on one's own. But, if not, then your "consumer's" approach to researching courses will assure you of the best course for your needs and financial considerations. The Coaching Classes often share samples of previous years of MAT Examinations which give the students an excellent overview of what they can expect in the coming exams.

Computer Software Programme—These aids can be a good alternative to expensive courses, especially if a student has good test-taking skills, a fairly low anxiety level about standardised tests, and the ability to discipline oneself on a regular basis. In many cases, the organisations which administer tests offer the opportunity to purchase preparation books at the time one signs up for the test. Computer software is available for some tests from publishers of preparation books.

Sectional Approach : A sectional approach is one of the best ways of cracking well in most of the sections of MAT Exam where an individual will need to break down one's study schedule into verticals of each subject along with setting targets of qualifying. Too much to handle will be very overwhelming and will make one lose focus and get discouraged. It is best to concentrate on each section and devote equal time. Even within each section, there is a very clear need for a planned strategy of attempting questions. Unless a clear cut timed strategy for attempting the test is in place, there is every chance that one may miss out on very easy questions

which may be at the end of the section and instead end up solving all the difficult questions that may have been given at the beginning.

Speed & Accuracy : One of the most important factors to consider while preparing for any competitive entrance exams is maintaining a good balance between accuracy & speed. The time given for completing the exam is limited and hence answering the questions accurately keeping in mind the time consideration is the key. Towards the last days of the test, developing a proper test taking strategy is an approach that a MAT aspirant has to develop in order to ensure that he/ she is able to leverage his/her strengths while attempting the tests. Any strategy that one intends to follow necessarily needs to revolve around the time saving measures to answer the maximum number of questions in the allotted time.

General Knowledge & Awareness : One of the sections in the MAT examination is Indian & Global Environment. In order to prepare well for this particular part of the paper, one must devote ample amount of time everyday to update oneself on General Knowledge about economics, politics, national and international issues. Unlike preparing for the other sections like Mathematical Skills and Data Analysis & Sufficiency, general and business awareness requires keeping abreast of happenings through newspapers and other reliable sources of information.

Self Assessment & Evaluation : A continuous process and plan of self-evaluation and self-assessment is critical in order to find out the level of readiness that an individual has for the exams. This many times turns out to be the eye opener for most of the individuals and help them in catching up with areas they are still lagging behind in. This kind of self-assessment can be accomplished through sample papers for the previous years as well as through a series of mock papers available online and in various books.

The "Right" Attitude : As in anything and everything in life, the key to success lies in our attitude towards things and how we orient our minds accordingly. The same rule applies here as well when we prepare ourselves well for something crucial such as the MAT Entrance exam. If one looks at this exam as something unachievable or very difficult, success is indeed going to be difficult to achieve. However, if one learns to look at it from the perspective of self-development and as a positive challenge, the whole mind is set towards changes for the better.