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CMAT guide: 2026 pattern, marking and a plan for the 2027 cycle

CMAT: the 2026 pattern (100 questions, 180 minutes, +4/-1), fee and eligibility, what NTA has not announced for 2027, pacing maths and a 13-week plan.

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CMAT at a glance: the 2027 cycle is not announced

The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts CMAT. As of 6 November 2026, NTA has not published a CMAT 2027 bulletin or registration. Anything below labelled 2026 comes from the CMAT 2026 bulletin, the cycle for admission in 2026-27, and may change for 2027.

- The only 2027 date on record is 7 February 2027, from NTA's exam calendar. NTA says calendar dates are tentative and may change.
- In the 2026 cycle, registration ran from 17 October to 17 November 2025. That is a reference, not a promise for 2027.
- Registration dates, fee, result date and any eligibility change for 2027: not announced. Watch cmat.nta.nic.in.
- The 2026 bulletin states no limit on the number of attempts. Check the 2027 bulletin when it appears.

The 2026 pattern

CMAT 2026 was a computer-based test of 100 questions in 180 minutes, with five sections of 20 questions each. Every question is a multiple-choice question with a single correct option. The bulletin states no sectional time limits.

Section (2026)	Questions	Marks
Quantitative Techniques and Data Interpretation	20	80
Logical Reasoning	20	80
Language Comprehension	20	80
General Awareness	20	80
Innovation & Entrepreneurship	20	80
Total	100	400

Tip. Compared with CAT, the two new faces are General Awareness and Innovation & Entrepreneurship. Together they carry 40 of the 100 questions and 160 of the 400 marks. Both are memory-led, so short daily revision beats a weekend cram.

Marking and what the maths says

The 2026 scheme gives 4 marks for each correct answer and deducts 1 mark for each wrong answer. Unattempted questions get no marks.

CMAT SCORE, 2026 PATTERN

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Score = 4 x Right − 1 x Wrong (out of 400)
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Example. Candidate A attempts 70 questions: 55 right, 15 wrong. Candidate B attempts 55: 50 right, 5 wrong. Who scores more?

1. A: 55 x 4 = 220, minus 15 = 205. Accuracy 55/70 = 78.6%.
2. B: 50 x 4 = 200, minus 5 = 195. Accuracy 50/55 = 90.9%.
3. A leads by 205 - 195 = 10 marks.

Answer: A scores 205 against 195, despite lower accuracy. At +4 / -1, a wrong answer costs a quarter of what a right answer earns, so a decent attempt rate matters.

Example. You are 40% sure of an answer. Attempt it or leave it?

1. Expected gain = 4p - (1 - p) = 5p - 1.
2. Break-even: 5p - 1 = 0, so p = 0.2 (20%).
3. At p = 0.4: 5 x 0.4 - 1 = 1.0 mark expected.

Answer: Attempt. You need only a 20% chance of being right to break even, and 40% gives +1.0 expected mark.

Example. Plan 180 minutes for 100 questions. Is 55, 40, 35, 10 and 20 minutes a workable split, and what does it leave?

1. Quant and DI: 55 / 20 = 2.75 min per question.
2. Logical Reasoning: 40 / 20 = 2.0 min. Language Comprehension: 35 / 20 = 1.75 min.
3. General Awareness: 10 / 20 = 0.5 min. Innovation & Entrepreneurship: 20 / 20 = 1.0 min.
4. Total used = 55 + 40 + 35 + 10 + 20 = 160, leaving 180 - 160 = 20 minutes.

Answer: Yes. It leaves 20 minutes for the questions you flagged. The split is a suggestion, since the bulletin sets no sectional limits.

Section-wise approach

- Quantitative Techniques and Data Interpretation: start with arithmetic you are fast at (percentages, ratios, averages, simple tables). Read a data set's questions before its table.
- Logical Reasoning: solve arrangements and series first. Leave the long multi-condition puzzles for your buffer time.
- Language Comprehension: read two short passages a day and write a one-line summary of each. Keep a list of words you missed.
- General Awareness: keep a one-page log of the last 12 months of business, economy, sports and awards news, and revise it daily. Add static basics such as capitals, currencies and institutions.
- Innovation & Entrepreneurship: learn the vocabulary of start-ups (funding stages, business models, bootstrapping, pivot) and read two start-up case stories a week.

There is no sectional time limit in the 2026 bulletin, so you choose the order. Take your fastest section first to bank marks and confidence.

Eligibility, fee and score use (2026 bulletin)

- A Bachelor's degree in any discipline, and Indian citizenship. There is no age limit.
- Final-year candidates whose result is declared before admissions commence can apply.
- NTA's bulletin states no minimum percentage. Check each institute's own cut-off. No work-experience requirement is listed.
- Score use: accepted by AICTE-approved institutions, university departments, and constituent and affiliated colleges. The 2026 score was tied to admission for 2026-27.

Category (2026 fee)	Fee
General (UR), male	Rs 2,500
General (UR), female	Rs 1,250
Gen-EWS, SC, ST, PwD, PwBD, OBC-NCL (male and female), and third gender	Rs 1,250

Watch out. The 2027 fee has not been announced. Do not budget from the 2026 table without checking the new bulletin.

Mistakes that cost marks at +4 / -1

- Waiting for certainty. Candidate A above scored more with 78.6% accuracy because A attempted 15 more questions. Attempt whenever you are above 20% sure.
- Sinking five minutes into one Quant question. At 30 seconds each, that is the time for 10 General Awareness questions.
- Treating General Awareness as optional. Its 20 questions carry 80 marks, which is 20% of the 400-mark paper.
- Never practising on a screen. The test is computer-based, so build your reading speed and scratch-paper habits on one.
- Studying only your strong section. Five sections of equal weight reward the candidate with no zero.

A 13-week plan towards 7 February

From 6 November 2026 to 7 February 2027 is 93 days, about 13 weeks. NTA's date is tentative; if it moves, shift the plan by the same number of days.

Weeks	Focus
1 to 4	Quant and DI plus Logical Reasoning, about 90 minutes a day. Build speed on easy sets before hard ones.
5 to 8	Add Language Comprehension daily. Start the General Awareness log and a weekly start-up reading habit.
9 to 11	One full 180-minute mock a week with +4 / -1 scoring. Review for attempt rate and accuracy.
12 to 13	Two mocks a week. Revise your GA log and formula notes. Stop new topics.

□ Watch cmat.nta.nic.in for the 2027 bulletin and registration dates.
□ Keep your degree and ID documents ready before the form opens.
□ Confirm the 2027 pattern against the 2026 pattern above.
□ Practise on a screen, since the test is computer-based.

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