MBA ONE STOP · GMAT

GMAT Focus Edition for Indian MBA applicants: sections, scoring and strategy

GMAT Focus Edition for Indian applicants: 64 questions in 135 minutes, 205-805 scoring, validity, retake rules, pacing maths and a 10-week plan.

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GMAT Focus at a glance

The GMAT is run by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC). The Focus Edition is the current version and replaced the classic GMAT. It is computer-adaptive: the questions you see adapt to how you answer. It has three sections that you can take in any order, and no writing assessment.

Item	GMAT Focus Edition
Length	2 hours 15 minutes (135 minutes), 64 questions
Quantitative Reasoning	21 questions, 45 minutes
Verbal Reasoning	23 questions, 45 minutes
Data Insights	20 questions, 45 minutes
Score range	205 to 805 total score
Fee	US$275 at a test centre, US$300 online. No INR price is confirmed on an official page we could open
Booking	Year-round, no fixed window. Appointments can be booked up to 6 months ahead (GMAC's 2023 comparison letter)
Score validity	5 years
Attempts	Up to 5 in a rolling 12-month period. The old 8-attempt lifetime cap was removed
Score sending	After you see your score, you can send it to 5 schools for free

What the three sections ask of you

The facts we hold name the sections but do not list question types, so use GMAC's official practice material for the full list. This is how the three sections map to skills you may already have from CAT.

- Quantitative Reasoning: arithmetic, algebra and word problems. The fundamentals you built for CAT's QA carry over. Practise setting a problem up cleanly before you calculate.
- Verbal Reasoning: reading and argument. Your CAT VARC habits help. Add practice in asking what a passage or an argument does and does not support.
- Data Insights: reading tables, charts and mixed data, then deciding what the data supports. CAT's DILR practice is the closest relative.

Tip. Each section has its own 45-minute clock, so plan your time inside each section. Aim for similar accuracy in all three rather than one great section and one weak one.

Adaptive scoring in plain words

GMAC says the test automatically adapts the questions it presents to you. Its pages describe a total score from 205 to 805. They do not describe a marks-per-question scheme or a negative marking rule.

- Do not count right answers to guess your score. Difficulty changes as you go, so the same number correct can mean different scores.
- A hard question is not proof that you are doing badly. Do not rush the next one out of panic.
- Our sources do not say what happens to unanswered questions. Plan to finish every section.

Example. How long can you spend per question in each section, and over the whole test?

1. Quantitative: 45 / 21 = 2.14 minutes, about 2 min 9 s.
2. Verbal: 45 / 23 = 1.96 minutes, about 1 min 57 s.
3. Data Insights: 45 / 20 = 2.25 minutes, about 2 min 15 s.
4. Whole test: 135 / 64 = 2.11 minutes.

Answer: Roughly 2 minutes a question. Verbal is the tightest at about 1 min 57 s; Data Insights is the most generous at 2 min 15 s.

Example. You spend 4 minutes on one Quant question. How many average questions of time did that cost?

1. Average Quant time per question = 45 / 21 = 2.14 minutes.
2. 4 / 2.14 = 1.87 questions.

Answer: About 1.9 questions. Two such stalls in one section cost nearly four questions' worth of time. At the 3-minute mark, eliminate what you can, answer, and go on.

Fees and retake planning

GMAC publishes its fee in US dollars only. We could not confirm an INR price or the tax treatment, so confirm the rupee total at checkout. We also could not confirm the waiting period between attempts; check mba.com when you book.

Example. You plan to sit twice. What is the fee in US dollars online, and how does it compare with a test-centre route?

1. Online: 2 x 300 = 600.
2. Test centre: 2 x 275 = 550.
3. Difference = 600 - 550 = 50.

Answer: US$600 online against US$550 at a test centre, a gap of US$50. Choose by where you will perform best, not by the gap.

With up to 5 attempts in a rolling 12 months and a 5-year validity, a 2026 score can serve more than one admission cycle. Do not book a retake until your error log shows a fixable cause.

Using the score for Indian programmes

Each Indian school sets its own GMAT policy: whether it accepts the test, the minimum score, the degree requirement and how old a score may be. GMAC itself states no eligibility rule. Open the admissions page of every school on your list, ISB included, and write down its rule.

- XAT 2027: Indian candidates must appear for XAT. NRI, foreign, OCI and PIO candidates may apply through GMAT.
- IIM Mumbai's Executive MBA in Wealth Management accepts a valid CAT, GRE or GMAT score instead of its own IMAT, followed by a personal interview.
- IIM Mumbai's online/blended MBA-BPGP counts a CAT, GMAT or GRE taken since June 2021, or a cleared IMAT.
- GMAC says 7,700+ programmes at 2,400+ business schools accept the GMAT worldwide (a 2023 figure). That is a global number, not an Indian list.

Watch out. A 5-year validity does not mean every school accepts a 5-year-old score. Check each school's own age limit.

Strategy and a 10-week plan

Choose your section order in practice and keep it on test day. If you are slow to warm up, start with your strongest section. If your focus fades late, start with your weakest. Run two full tests in each order and keep the one with the higher total.

Weeks	Focus	Output
1 to 2	Take one full 135-minute test as a diagnostic. Then fix arithmetic and algebra gaps with your CAT notes.	Error log with 3 weakest topics
3 to 5	One 45-minute timed section block a day, rotating Quant, Verbal, Data Insights.	Per-question time under 2 min 15 s
6 to 8	One full test a week. Review every wrong answer and every answer that took over 3 minutes.	Stable section order
9	Two full tests with the section-order trial.	Final order decided
10	Light review, logistics, book the slot.	Booking confirmed

After every full test, sort each miss into one of three causes: a concept gap, a careless slip, or a time problem. Concept gaps need a topic drill. Slips need a slower final check on the last step. Time problems need a firmer cut-off per question. Mixing the three is why scores stall.

- □ Write down each target school's GMAT rule and score-age limit.
- □ Decide test centre or online, and confirm the rupee total at checkout.
- □ Keep your 5 free score sends until you have seen your score.
- □ Do not plan retakes until you check the waiting period on mba.com.

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