MBA ONE STOP · GENERAL

Mock Test Analysis Guide: A 90-Minute Review, Error Log and Percentile Bands

Review a mock in 90 minutes: an error-log template, the accuracy versus attempts trade-off under +3/-1 marking, and what a percentile band means.

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Why the review matters more than the mock

A mock measures you. The review trains you. Two aspirants who score the same can improve at very different rates, because one reads the score and the other finds the five habits that cost the marks.

Take full mocks under real conditions. CAT 2026 is a 120-minute test with three sections of exactly 40 minutes each, no switching between sections, 3 marks for a correct answer and -1 for a wrong MCQ. Non-MCQ questions have no negative marking, and skipped questions score zero. Set your mock to the same rules, or the numbers will mislead you.

Tip. Do the review within 24 hours. After that you remember the score and forget the reasons.

The 90-minute review

Minutes	Step	What you produce
10	Scorecard	Per section: attempted, correct, wrong, skipped, minutes spent
30	Every wrong answer	Re-solve it, then label the error type
15	Skipped but solvable	Find out why you skipped; solve it without a timer
15	Right but slow	Find the faster method; note it in the log
10	Re-solve the three costliest questions cold	Check whether you now get them in under two minutes
10	Error log and next week's actions	Three actions, each tied to a topic or habit

That adds to 90 minutes. Review the right answers you guessed as well; a lucky guess is a hidden error.

Accuracy versus attempts

MCQ SCORE

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3 × correct − 1 × wrong
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ACCURACY

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correct / attempted × 100
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EXPECTED MARKS FROM AN MCQ ATTEMPT

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3p − (1 − p) = 4p − 1, where p is your chance of being right. Break-even p = 25%.
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Example. Three aspirants attempt MCQs in one section. A attempts 20 and gets 14 right. B attempts 14 and gets 12 right. C attempts 26 and gets 15 right. Who scores most? (Illustrative numbers, not a CAT question count.)

1. A: wrong = 6; score = 3 × 14 - 6 = 36; accuracy = 14/20 = 70%.
2. B: wrong = 2; score = 3 × 12 - 2 = 34; accuracy = 12/14 = 85.7%.
3. C: wrong = 11; score = 3 × 15 - 11 = 34; accuracy = 15/26 = 57.7%.

Answer: A scores 36. B has the best accuracy and C the most attempts, but both score 34. Marks peak between the extremes.

Example. Should you guess a question you cannot solve? Work out the expected marks at different odds.

1. Use 4p - 1.
2. p = 1/4 (a pure guess among four options, as an illustration): 4 × 0.25 - 1 = 0.
3. p = 1/3 (one of the four ruled out): 4/3 - 1 = +0.33.
4. p = 1/2 (two of the four ruled out): 4 × 0.5 - 1 = +1.

Answer: Guess only after you can honestly remove at least one option. For non-MCQ questions there is no penalty, so always answer.

Example. In a 40-minute section you spent 14 minutes on three questions you abandoned or got wrong. What did that cost?

1. Time share = 14 / 40 = 35%.
2. Capping each at 2 minutes would have freed 14 - 6 = 8 minutes.
3. At about 2.5 minutes a question, 8 minutes buys 3 more attempts (8 / 2.5 = 3.2).
4. At 70% accuracy, each attempt is worth 3 × 0.7 - 0.3 = 1.8 marks, so 3 attempts add about 5.4 marks.

Answer: 35% of the section's time; about 5 marks on offer from a stricter time ceiling.

The error log template

Keep one sheet for all mocks. One row per question you got wrong, skipped or solved slowly.

Mock and question	Topic	Result, minutes	Error type	Fix	Retest
M7 QA 12	Remainders	Wrong, 3.5	Concept	Re-learn cyclicity of powers	+3 days
M7 DILR 2	Tournament set	Skipped, 0	Selection	Rank sets by anchors before choosing	+10 days
M7 VARC 9	Inference	Wrong, 2	Misread	Underline the qualifier in the stem	+3 days

- Concept: you did not know the idea. Formula: you knew it but could not recall it.
- Calculation: slip in arithmetic. Misread: you answered a different question.
- Time sink: right method, too slow. Selection: you chose the wrong question or set.
- Guess: you attempted with no basis.

Retest each logged question after three days and again after ten. If you miss it a second time, the fix was wrong. Rewrite it.

Reading the numbers across mocks

Do not chase one number. Each week, pick a single metric for each section, such as accuracy above 75%, no question over 2.5 minutes, or a minimum of two sets solved in DILR. Track it across three mocks before you change your strategy.

- Low attempts, high accuracy: you are too careful. Lower your ceiling per question and attempt the easy ones faster.
- High attempts, low accuracy: you are guessing and rushing. Slow down on selection.
- Good scores in one section only: move practice hours to the weaker section.

What a percentile band means

A percentile shows the share of test-takers who scored at or below you. It is relative, not absolute. A rough conversion is percentile = (N - rank) / N × 100, though exam bodies may treat ties differently.

Example. In a mock taken by 1,00,000 candidates you rank 4,000th. What is your approximate percentile, and how many candidates sit inside a 3-point band at that level?

1. (100000 - 4000) / 100000 × 100 = 96.
2. A 3-point band is 3% of 100000 = 3,000 candidates.

Answer: About the 96th percentile. A 3-point band holds about 3,000 candidates, so a few marks can move you across it.

Example. Your last four mock percentiles are 88, 91, 90 and 94. What should you plan around?

1. Average = (88 + 91 + 90 + 94) / 4 = 363 / 4 = 90.75.
2. Range = 94 - 88 = 6 points.

Answer: Plan around a band of roughly 88 to 94, centred near 91, not around the best score.

- A mock percentile compares you with that platform's users, who may differ from the real exam pool. Use your own trend, not the absolute figure.
- Treat a predicted percentile as a band, never a point.
- Each institute sets its own cutoffs and weights, so check the official notice. CAT 2026 results are likely in the first week of January 2027, per the official bulletin.

The weekly cycle

□ Take the mock under real timing and marking, with no pauses.
□ Review it within 24 hours, using the 90-minute routine.
□ Update the error log and pick three actions for the week.
□ Retest the logged questions that are due, at three and ten days.
□ Compare this mock with the last three on one metric per section.
□ Change your strategy only after three mocks show the same pattern.

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