MBA ONE STOP · XAT

XAT 2027 guide: sections, marking, Decision Making and how to prepare

XAT 2027 at a glance: sections, negative marking and the skip rule, dates, fee, Decision Making method, and a plan that sits beside CAT 2026.

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XAT 2027 at a glance

XAT is the Xavier Aptitude Test. XLRI Jamshedpur conducts it on behalf of XAMI, and over 250 institutes recognise the score. Each institute sets its own weights and selection process, so read the institute's own page for how it uses your XAT score.

Item	XAT 2027
Conducted by	XLRI Jamshedpur for XAMI
Exam day	Sunday, 3 January 2027, 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM
Mode	Computer-based, one afternoon slot, with a scientific calculator inside the exam interface
Registration	15 July to 6 December 2026
Admit card	From 20 December 2026 (tentative)
Result	Last week of January 2027; scorecard download 31 January to 30 June 2027
Fee	Rs 2,300, plus Rs 200 for each XLRI programme. NRI, foreign, PIO and OCI applicants applying through GMAT pay Rs 5,000
Duration	180 minutes: 170 for Part 1, then a separate 10-minute GK part

As of 6 November 2026, registration is open and closes in 30 days. Register early; do not wait for the last weekend.

Who can apply

- A recognised Bachelor's degree of at least three years, in any discipline.
- Final-year students can apply if their final exams are completed by 11 June 2027.
- The XAT FAQ states no minimum graduation percentage and no work-experience condition for sitting the test. Check each programme page for its own criteria.
- Only full-time work experience gained after graduation is counted.
- Indian candidates must appear for XAT 2027. NRI, foreign, OCI and PIO candidates may apply through GMAT.

Watch out. Not stated in the sources we checked: how long an XAT score stays valid, how many times you may attempt, and any reserved-category fee concession. The bulletin gives one fee of Rs 2,300. Confirm these three points on xatonline.in before you plan around them.

The sections

The scored part has three sections. The counts below are the bulletin's 'about' figures from the 2026 overview PDF, and they match the table on the XAT 2027 home page. The exact 2027 paper can differ by a question or two.

Section	Questions (about)	Notes
Verbal Ability and Logical Reasoning (VA & LR)	26	Part 1
Decision Making (DM)	21	Part 1
Quantitative Ability and Data Interpretation (QA & DI)	28	Part 1

Section	Questions (about)	Notes
General Knowledge (GK)	20	Separate 10-minute part. No negative marking. Not counted in the percentile. Used only by XLRI

The total is about 95 questions including GK. Part 1 is about 75 questions (26 + 21 + 28) in 170 minutes. XAT states only overall time limits, so you decide how to split the 170 minutes.

Watch out. The essay. Our facts cover the scored sections and the GK part only. They list no essay component, so this note does not state an essay's format, length or role in selection. Read the essay or written-ability section of the XAT 2027 bulletin on xatonline.in before you register. Timed writing practice helps either way (see the plan below).

Marking and the skip rule

Each question carries 1 mark. A wrong answer costs 0.25. You can skip up to 8 questions with no penalty. Each skipped question after the 8th costs 0.1. The GK part has no negative marking.

XAT SCORE, SCORED SECTIONS

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Score = Right − 0.25 x Wrong − 0.1 x max(0, Skipped − 8)
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Example. Illustration: treat the scored part as 75 questions. You attempt 55, get 44 right and 11 wrong. What is your score?

1. Skipped = 75 - 55 = 20.
2. Penalised skips = 20 - 8 = 12, so skip penalty = 12 x 0.1 = 1.2.
3. Wrong-answer penalty = 11 x 0.25 = 2.75.
4. Score = 44 - 2.75 - 1.2 = 40.05.

Answer: 40.05 marks. Your accuracy was 44/55 = 80%.

Example. You are stuck on a Decision Making question but can cut it down to two options. Guess or skip?

1. If you are right with probability p, the expected gain from a guess is p x 1 - (1 - p) x 0.25 = 1.25p - 0.25.
2. At p = 0.5 that is 0.625 - 0.25 = 0.375.
3. A skip is worth 0 while you still have free skips, and -0.1 after the 8th.
4. A guess beats a free skip when 1.25p - 0.25 > 0, so p > 0.2. It beats a penalised skip when 1.25p - 0.25 > -0.1, so p > 0.12.

Answer: Guess. At 50% the expected gain is +0.375 against 0 or -0.1 for a skip. Spend your 8 free skips on questions where p is near 0.2 or lower.

Decision Making: the part CAT does not have

CAT 2026 has three sections: VARC, DILR and QA. XAT adds Decision Making, about 21 questions. Treat it as its own subject and practise it separately.

Whatever the exact mix in a given year, work every decision case with this routine.

1. Read the last line first. What exactly must be decided, and by whom?
2. List the hard constraints: budget, law, deadline, policy, safety.
3. Cross out every option that breaks a stated constraint.
4. Among the survivors, pick the one that fixes the stated problem with the least damage to the people involved.
5. Check that you used only facts the case gives. Do not import a backstory.

Example. A Surat textile unit has 120 machine-hours a week. Order A needs 40 hours and pays Rs 52,000. B needs 50 hours and pays Rs 70,000. C needs 60 hours and pays Rs 66,000. D needs 30 hours and pays Rs 30,000. Orders cannot be split. Which set should it accept?

1. Profit per machine-hour: A 1,300; B 1,400; C 1,100; D 1,000.
2. Take B first (50 h), then A (90 h used). C needs 60 more and would reach 150 h, so it does not fit.
3. D needs 30 more and fits exactly: 90 + 30 = 120 h.
4. Profit = 70,000 + 52,000 + 30,000 = 1,52,000.
5. Check the rivals: B + C = 110 h gives 1,36,000. A + C = 100 h gives 1,18,000. A + B + C is 150 h, over the limit. None beats 1,52,000.

Answer: Accept A, B and D: 120 hours used, Rs 1,52,000 profit.

Tip. In a quantitative case, rank by value per scarce unit, then test the fit. Greedy ranking can fail when the limit is tight, so always check the best two or three combinations by hand.

XAT versus CAT

	CAT 2026	XAT 2027
Date	Sunday, 29 November 2026, three sessions	Sunday, 3 January 2027, one afternoon slot
Duration	120 minutes	180 minutes (170 + 10 for GK)
Sections	VARC, DILR, QA	VA & LR, DM, QA & DI, plus GK
Time limit	Exactly 40 minutes per section, no switching	Overall limit only, no sectional limits
Questions	Count not published on the 2026 pages we checked	About 95, including about 20 GK
Marking	MCQ: +3 right, -1 wrong. Non-MCQ: no negative marks. Unattempted: 0	+1 right, -0.25 wrong. 8 free skips, then -0.1 per skip
Fee	Rs 2,700 (Rs 1,350 for SC, ST, PwBD)	Rs 2,300 (no reserved concession stated)

- CAT trains you to move on when a 40-minute clock ends. XAT hands you 170 minutes to allocate, so the skill is deciding where not to spend time.
- The skip rule changes the maths. CAT never charges you for leaving a question; XAT does after the 8th skip.
- If you sit both, CAT on 29 November and XAT on 3 January are 35 days apart. Use those 35 days for Decision Making, GK and XAT-style full tests.

Example. You plan a 170-minute split for the three scored sections of about 26, 21 and 28 questions. Is 55, 45 and 70 minutes sensible?

1. Total = 55 + 45 + 70 = 170 minutes.
2. VA & LR: 55 / 26 = 2.12 minutes per question.
3. Decision Making: 45 / 21 = 2.14 minutes per question.
4. QA & DI: 70 / 28 = 2.5 minutes per question.

Answer: It fills the 170 minutes exactly and gives data and quant the most time per question. Treat it as a starting split to test in mocks, not an official one.

Plan from now to 3 January

From 6 November 2026 to 3 January 2027 is 58 days. If you also sit CAT on 29 November, you have 35 days after it.

Phase	Dates	What to do
Now to CAT	6 to 29 Nov (23 days)	Keep your CAT routine. Add two Decision Making cases a day (about 20 minutes). Register for XAT before 6 December.

Phase	Dates	What to do
After CAT	30 Nov to 13 Dec (14 days)	Learn the XAT section mix. Take one 170-minute full test a week and review it next morning. Write one timed 250-word argued piece a week as practice.
Final stretch	14 Dec to 2 Jan (20 days)	Two full tests a week with a 10-minute GK drill at the end. Admit card is expected from 20 December (tentative). Keep the last two days for light revision.

- □ If you are in final year, confirm your final exams end by 11 June 2027.
- □ Budget Rs 2,300, plus Rs 200 for each XLRI programme you add.
- □ Read the essay or written-ability section of the bulletin.
- □ Check each target institute's own cut-offs and weights.
- □ Practise with an on-screen scientific calculator, since that is what the interface offers.

Original study notes by MBA One Stop. Exam patterns, dates and fees are from each exam body’s own pages as checked in November 2026; confirm on the official site before you act. Not affiliated with any exam body. https://mbaonestop.com/notes/xat-guide