

Make sure your GMAT showcases your business skills

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Top business schools globally rely on the GMAT exam to determine who has what it takes to succeed both in the MBA classroom and the business arena. UCT's Graduate School of Business helps applicants prepare for this vital test.

There is no other exam that allows prospective MBA (Master of Business Administration) students to showcase the real-life business skills that count both in the classroom and to employers more than the Graduate Management Admission Test or GMAT.

Used as a benchmark by 6,000 graduate business programmes at some 1,700 universities around the world, the GMAT exam has been tweaked over six decades to spotlight those with the acumen to succeed both academically and in business. And according to a survey conducted by Kaplan Test Prep, world leaders in test preparation, the GMAT remains the number one choice for MBA aspirants.

While an MBA or Executive MBA is widely recognised as a ticket to increased earning power and senior roles, the GMAT is the ticket to an MBA.

The GMAT has been systematically fine-tuned since its inception in 1953 by the Graduate Management Admission Council to prune questions deemed too easy and to match standards demanded by business schools and the business world. It is not supposed to be easy. Last year more than half of test takers spent at least 51 hours studying for the exam, according to Businessweek.com.

It is worth preparing for. The UCT Graduate School of Business (GSB) offers a five-day GMAT Preparation Course designed to boost test takers' confidence by not only familiarising students with the content and layout of the computerised test, but also offering a technique and strategy for answering questions and managing time.

"Of the attendees on our GMAT Preparation Courses in 2013 in Cape Town and Johannesburg, over 25% were accepted on the 2014 GSB MBA programme alone," says Jodie Martin, Project Coordinator, GSB.

"If you have the potential to do an MBA, it is well worth putting in the time to prepare for the test," says UCT GSB Director, Professor Walter Baets. "The GMAT score is a solid indicator of an applicant's potential. It is a good predictor of academic success, drawing as it does on skills acquired professionally, academically and through life experience. It certainly plays a role in the GSB's success as it gives us a starting point for evaluating a student's skill set and talents. At GSB we look for a diverse group of people who will not only be academically successful on the programme but who will also have the acumen and confidence to bring value to the classroom."

The GMAT is a three-and-a-half hour computer-based standardised test which tests quantitative (or mathematical), verbal and analytical skills and abilities, as well as looking at integrated reasoning - the ability to evaluate data in new formats from multiple sources. Taken by some 250,000 people a year, it has a computer adaptive element to the quantitative and verbal sections, which means that if questions are answered correctly they will start to get harder.

Research by the Association of MBAs (AMBA) conducted among 1,000 graduates from AMBA-accredited business schools in 75 countries in 2012 showed that the average annual salary of MBA graduates from AMBA-accredited business schools stood at over R1,120,000, which is a seven percent increase on the reported salaries in 2010. But it takes specific skills and abilities to be selected for a reputable MBA programme.

UCT's Graduate School of Business five-day GMAT Preparation Courses will run in Cape Town, Johannesburg and

Durban. For more information and GMAT Preparation Course dates log on to www.gsb.uct.ac.za/s.asp?p=232.

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