

"WHAT TO EXPECT ON THE GRE"

(for the revised GRE offered after August 1, 2011)

Some Specific Items Related to the Graduate Record Exam

WHAT IS THE GRADUATE RECORD EXAM (GRE)?

It is an aptitude assessment designed to measure your potential for success in graduate school. Many graduate admission committees like the GRE because it is a nationally-based test, it is an educational measure different than an academic record, it's convenient for the admissions committee, and there is a long history of its use. It is similar in nature to the SAT. There is an ongoing debate over the validity of its use in the graduate admissions process.

FORMAT OF THE EXAM:

The **general** GRE is offered **only** as a Computer-Based Test unless one has an accommodation for a paper-based test.

Three separate scores are generated from the GRE - VERBAL, QUANTITATIVE, & ANALYTICAL WRITING. Official score reports are received 10 to 15 days after the test date, but unofficial VERBAL & QUANTITATIVE scores are shown to test-takers immediately after completion of the test.

The new score range for the VERBAL and the QUANTITATIVE section is 130 - 170, with one point increments. The GRE is a normative test so looking at your percentile score will give one a sense of one's score relative to other test-takers. The mean score on the VERBAL section is currently a 150 (median is a 151); mean score on the QUANTITATIVE section is a 152 (median is slightly above a 152).

The score scale for Analytical Writing is 0 - 6, with .5 point increments. The current mean is a 3.5. It's a long test ... at least 3 hours 40 minutes of testing time, plus breaks.

One can now move around within a section, and skip questions and return to them. The individual questions are no longer adaptive in difficulty, BUT, the second verbal or second quantitative section *will* be adaptive to your first section. There are no points taken off for incorrect answers.

PREPARING FOR THE GRE:

Each of the three sections offers different challenges and preparation strategies

ANALYTICAL WRITING: two writing analyses ... one of an issue, one of an argument
30 minutes for each analysis. Analytical Writing will be the first section of the GRE.

VERBAL: three question types ... text completion, sentence equivalence, reading comprehension;
Vocabulary knowledge and (quick) reading comprehension are important.
Two sections with 20 questions/section and 30 minutes for each section.

QUANTITATIVE: lots of middle/high school math review, then problem-solving.
An on-screen calculator will now be available, but practicing math operations is still important.
Two sections with 20 questions/section and 35 minutes for each section.

An EXPERIMENTAL section: a third verbal or quantitative section will be mixed in, but you do NOT know that it is experimental and it does NOT count in your score. 30 or 35 minutes for this.

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over ...

REGISTERING FOR THE GRE GENERAL TEST

There are several testing centers in New England. Register on-line at <https://www.ets.org/gre/> (you need a credit card – the cost is now \$205.) The list of center and phone numbers is in the free "GRE Information & Registration Bulletin" or on <http://gre.org> There is a testing center in Portsmouth (approximately eleven miles from UNH-Durham). Their phone number is 433.6800, but the national testing center number is 800.473.2255. In New Hampshire there are also testing centers in Concord and Lebanon, NH & throughout Massachusetts & the U.S. The testing centers might be called *Prometric Testing Centers* or *Sylvan Technology Centers*.

October through February is their busiest time of the testing year. Plan on registering weeks in advance of your desired testing date during the busy season.

As of April 2013, the GRE **Subject Tests** are only offered in the following seven areas: Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology; Biology, Chemistry, Literature in English, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology. Do not confuse the GRE *general* tests with the subject tests! The subject tests are based on the subject matter in that field, they are only offered as a paper-based test, and are only offered three times each year in September, October, & April. A somewhat small number of graduate programs require a subject test. Check with your intended graduate program to see if they require one.

Check our web page for GRE preparation ... there many links to useful web sites, details about the GRE, ideas on preparation, and updates on all of the services that we offer for GRE & graduate school preparation:

<http://www.unh.edu/cfar> see **Graduate School/GRE Preparation**

POWERPREP II is GRE preparation software from Educational Testing Service (ETS). It is available through ETS for free download from their web site at <http://gre.org> (look for Prepare for the Test.) *POWERPREP II* is a useful simulation of the appearance of the actual computer-based GRE

The primary GRE preparation book that we use is "*The Official Guide to the GRE revised General Test*"; published by ETS. The list price is \$38, but it is available through on-line bookstores for much less. This is a collection of two sample tests and many practice questions. There are several useful books & sources for math & vocabulary review.

There is an established process for test-takers with disabilities to request accommodations on the GRE. This can be a lengthy process, so please make an accommodations request well in advance of the test date. Details at

http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/disabilities/

Lots of background is in the 24 page 2016-17 GRE Information & Registration Bulletin ~ http://www.ets.org/s/gre/pdf/gre_info_reg_bulletin.pdf You can contact me with *any* questions about the GRE or graduate school preparation.

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