

GRE Frequently Asked Questions



What is the GRE?

There are two types of GRE Tests: the **GRE General Test**, which includes Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing sections, and the **GRE Subject Tests**, which gauge an examinee's knowledge in one of eight specific subject areas (Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology; Biology; Chemistry; Computer Science; Literature in English; Mathematics; Physics; or Psychology). **All of the following information applies to the GRE General Test.**

The GRE, or Graduate Record Examination General Test, is administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) under the sponsorship of the Graduate Record Examinations Board. The GRE is a computer-based test and consists of three scored sections: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and Analytical Writing.

What skills are measured by each section of the GRE?

The Verbal Reasoning section measures your ability to analyze and evaluate written material and synthesize information obtained from it, analyze relationships among component parts of sentences, and recognize relationships between words and concepts. The Quantitative Reasoning section measures your ability to understand basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis; reason quantitatively; and solve problems in a quantitative setting. The Analytical Writing section measures your ability to articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively; examine claims and accompanying evidence; support ideas with relevant reasons and examples; sustain a well-focused, coherent discussion; and control the elements of standard written English.

*New questions types: Two new question types will be introduced in the computer-based GRE General Test beginning in November 2007. Test takers may encounter one of these new questions in the Verbal Reasoning or Quantitative Reasoning sections. For more information about the new questions, test-takers should refer to the GRE website (www.gre.org).

What do I need to know about taking a computer-based test?

Because the computer scores each question before selecting the next one, you must answer each question when it is presented. For this reason, once you answer a question and move on to another, you cannot go back and change your answer. The computer incorporates both your answer and the requirements of the test design into its selection of your next question. On the analytical writing section, the two writing tasks are delivered on the computer, and you must type your essay responses.

How is the GRE scored?

The Verbal and Quantitative sections are scored on a scale of 200 to 800. When you take the GRE, you will begin each section with a medium-level question and a score of 500. If you answer the question correctly, the computer will raise your score and give you a harder question. If you answer the question incorrectly, your score will decrease and you'll be given an easier question. The process repeats for each question in the section. You will receive your scores for the verbal and quantitative portions after completing the test; however, the analytical writing portion is graded on a separate scale from 0 to 6, and those scores will be mailed to you at a later date. Verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing scores will be sent to up to four institutions that you designate on test day. Scores are sent *approximately* 10 to 15 days after you take the test; however, you should allow additional time for receipt and processing, as some institutions receive scores only twice per month.

What is considered a good score?

The average scores for the GRE are about 470 for Verbal and 570 for Quantitative. Some programs weigh GRE scores very heavily and/or have a minimum score for applicants, while other programs consider GRE scores more of a formality. It is important to note that your GRE scores may be a major factor in determining your eligibility for financial aid.

Where are testing sites located?

There are several testing sites within a few hours of WCU. The closest testing site is Thomson-Prometric Testing in Asheville (31 College Place Building D., Suite 107; phone 828-253-4224). Additional testing sites are posted on the GRE website (www.gre.org) and are available for you to search. When you register online for your test, you will be able to choose your preferred testing location and view that testing center's availabilities. To register online or to search for basic information concerning the test itself, visit www.gre.org.

How much does it cost to take the GRE?

The initial fee for registration is **\$140.00**; however, certain people are eligible to apply for GRE Fee Reduction Vouchers. You must visit your school's Financial Aid Office to find out if you qualify. If you are eligible, your Financial Aid representative will give you a form to complete and to mail to ETS. Once ETS receives the form, they will mail you a voucher; this process usually takes 4-6 weeks, but sometimes it takes longer. You CANNOT register to take the test for a reduced price until you have received the voucher from ETS. If you plan to apply for a GRE Fee Reduction Voucher, plan ahead! GRE Testing Centers can get booked for months in advance of certain testing dates. Be sure to allow enough time to receive your voucher and register for a test date that will allow you to receive your scores in time to meet graduate school admission deadlines.

When will you receive your scores? Can you cancel them? How many schools can you send your scores to?

You can receive your scores for the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning sections immediately following the end of your testing session; however, you will not be able to print a copy of your scores, nor will you be permitted to write your scores on a scratch sheet of paper and take them with you. Once you choose to look at your scores, you cannot cancel them; if you wish to cancel your scores, you must do so before seeing them. Once viewed, your scores will be saved and sent to the schools (up to four) that you requested. Your complete score report (including your score for the analytical writing section) will be mailed to you *approximately* 10 to 15 days after you take the test.

How long is the test?

Expect to be in the testing center approximately four and a half hours. Some people finish more quickly than others. You have the option of taking a ten minute break in the middle of the test, and this is the only break that will not count against the time allotted to finish the test.

Where can I go for more practice?

The official GRE Web site (www.gre.org) is your best source for information and preparation materials. The Office of Professional Examinations Web site (<http://www.wcu.edu/catcenter/OPE/GRE.html>) also provides a list of print and online resources (most of which are free!) for preparing for the GRE.

GRE – Graduate Record Examinations. 28 Sept. 2007. <<http://www.gre.org>>.