



Aptitude Test Guide for Professional School Applicants

Office of Health Professions Advising

Many of the professional schools you will be applying to require an aptitude test as part of the application process. Complete information on these tests can be found online, but this guide will give you some basic information. On the MCAT and DAT you can specify whether your health professions advisor has access to your scores (check advisor release in the “schools attended” section on the MCAT or mark it under the advisor block on the OAT & DAT). It does make the advising process easier if your scores can be accessed by the advising office, and it allows us to track how our students are doing as a whole. Rest assured, your scores are kept confidential.

Timing of the test: For most undergraduates who want to begin professional school in the fall following their graduation, they will take the test during the spring/summer of their junior year.

MCAT=Medical College Admissions Test

The MCAT is the standardized test sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and consists of 3 multiple-choice sections and a writing assessment. The exam has been part of the medical school admissions process for more than 60 years. The MCAT is now a computerized exam and covers physical sciences (general chemistry & physics), biological sciences (biology & organic chemistry), verbal reasoning, and it has a writing sample (two 30 minute essays). The multiple choice sections are each scored on a 15 point scale with the national average being a little over an 8. The written sample is scored on an alphabetical scale with J being the lowest and T being the highest. It takes about a month to receive your scores following the test. Scores are generally good for 3 years.

- Who: Applicants to allopathic, osteopathic, and podiatric schools
- When: Exam is offered on specific dates throughout the year
- Cost: \$210*
- Good score: A 30 and up is most competitive (average 10 in each section)
- More information: <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/start.htm>
- Must read: MCAT Essentials at <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/mcatessentials.pdf>
- <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/preparing/start.htm>

DAT=Dental Admission Test

The DAT is the standardized test sponsored by the American Dental Association (ADA) and has been offered nationally since 1950. This computerized exam measures academic ability, comprehension of scientific information, and perceptual ability. The sections of the exam are: Survey of Natural Sciences (biology, general & organic chemistry), Perceptual Ability Test, Reading Comprehension Test, and Quantitative Reasoning Test. If you wish to retake the exam, you must wait 90 days since your last exam. The sections are scored on a scale from 1-30. Nationally the average score is a 17. Unofficial scores are available immediately following the exam. Scores are generally good for 3 years.

- Who: Applicants to dental schools

- When: Almost any day of the year
- Cost: \$190
- Good score: Generally a score 18-19 and above will be competitive
- More information: <http://ada.org/prof/ed/testing/dat/index.asp>
- Sample questions: http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/dat/dat_test_sampleitems.pdf

OAT=Optometry Admissions Test

The OAT is the standardized exam sponsored by the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO). All optometry programs in the United States and Canada require the OAT. To take the exam, students must submit an application at www.opted.org. The exam has 4 sections: Survey of Natural Sciences (biology, general & organic chemistry), Reading Comprehension, Physics, and Quantitative Reasoning. The OAT is a computerized exam and students are allowed to take it as many times as they wish as long as they have 90 days between each test. Scores range from 200-400 with a 300 being about the national average. Unofficial scores are available immediately following the exam.

- Who: Applicants to optometry programs
- When: Almost any day of the year (schedule 60-90 days in advance)
- Cost: \$199
- Good score: 325 or higher will help you be most competitive
- More information: http://www.opted.org/info_oat.cfm

PCAT=Pharmacy College Admissions Test

The PCAT is the standardized exam sponsored by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP). It is designed to measure general academic ability and scientific knowledge. The exam has 240 multiple choice questions and 2 writing topics. The subtests are: Verbal Ability, Biology, Chemistry, Reading Comprehension, Quantitative Ability, and 2 writing samples. Results are scored from 200-600 and the writing samples are scored 1-5.

- Who: Applicants to pharmacy programs (though not all require it)
- When: Offered on only specific test dates (register early)
- Cost: \$125 for first 3 schools plus \$20 for each additional school*
- Good score: 425 or higher will help you be most competitive (test not required at Purdue)
- More information: <http://www.PCATweb.info>
- Also contact Purdue's School of Pharmacy: <http://www.pharmacy.purdue.edu/>

GRE=Graduate Record Exam

The GRE general test measures verbal reasoning, quantitative skills, critical thinking, and analytical writing skills. The test is computerized and scores range from 200-800 (in 10 point increments) in the verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning sections while the analytical writing score is reported on a 0-6 range. Results are mailed out 10-15 days after the test.

- Who: Veterinary, PT, OT, and many other graduate programs require this test
- When: Almost any day of the year
- Cost: \$140 for first 4 schools and \$15 for each additional school*
- Good score: This varies widely, but national averages are 467 in verbal, 591 in quantitative, and 4.2 in analytical writing—generally you want to be above the national average—can retake once/month but no more than 5/year
- More information: <http://www.gre.org>

*All costs current as of February 2008
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