

GMAT or GRE?

Top graduate programs in the US and Europe require prospective students to submit either a GRE score or a GMAT score. Though the GMAT is mainly used in the business school application process and the GRE is used for other graduate majors, a vast majority of programs allow applicants the option of submitting the results of either exam.

About 90% of US business schools will accept either GMAT or GRE scores. If a school provides you the opportunity to choose between the two exams, pick the one you can master more easily, that is, one in which you can score a higher percentile overall (particularly in the sections that matter more in the program you are applying to). This much is obvious. However, consider the following factors as well to make an informed decision:

Just because schools accept scores from either exam doesn't necessarily mean that they view the exams equally.

Why?

First, business schools feel that the questions on the GMAT, particularly the Quantitative and Integrated Reasoning sections, test skills and knowledge more directly related to what you'll need to know to do well in business school, such as multi-source reasoning and data interpretation. It is a fact that multi-source reasoning and Data Interpretation have direct application in case-based pedagogies.

Second, some schools believe that submitting GMAT scores shows that you're certain (and confident in your decision) about attending business school and committed to that career path. The GRE is used for admissions to a much wider variety of grad school programs from a Master's in English Literature to a PhD in Biotechnology, and many programs in between; submitting GRE scores could make it seem like you are unsure about which grad school program you are interested in and are trying to keep your options open.

Thus, if you are a professional with 4-5 years of work experience, you would be better off taking the GMAT: this would convey your seriousness and maturity to business schools. Note also that if you foresee yourself pursuing a career in consulting and/or finance post-MBA, prospective employers/recruiters might factor in your *GMAT* score (the higher the better, obviously!) in deciding your eligibility.