

# The GRE<sup>®</sup> revised General Test

## eUPDATE



MAY 2010

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### TOP STORY

## THE NEW SCORE SCALE: More Simplicity in Distinguishing Performance Differences Between Candidates

One of the most significant changes incorporated in the launch of the GRE<sup>®</sup> revised General Test is the new score scale for the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning measures. In this article, we'll explain the following score scale changes to help you and your institution prepare for the new scale as early as possible:

- Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores will be reported on a new scale of 130 – 170 instead of the current scale of 200 – 800.
- Scores will be reported in 1-point increments, versus the current 10-point increments.
- The score scale is moving to a 41-point scale from the current 61-point scale.

We'll also explain the reasons behind these score scale changes and how the new scale can help you make admissions decisions — including important tools you can use to compare candidates with scores from the current test, the GRE revised General Test or both tests.

While it's important to know what to expect with the new score scale, it's also important to know that the changes are designed to offer you a clear advantage: more simplicity in distinguishing performance differences between your candidates.

### THE NEW 130 – 170 SCALE: A Notable Difference from the Current Scale

Starting in November 2011, scores from the three measures of the GRE revised General Test will be reported as follows:

- **Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning** scores will be reported on a new **130 – 170 score scale**, in 1-point increments, versus the current scale of 200 – 800 in 10-point increments.

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- **Analytical Writing** scores will continue to be reported on the same 0 – 6 score level, in half-point increments.

The new 130 – 170 scale will indicate that these scores are from the GRE revised General Test. This range was carefully selected to avoid any overlap with scores from existing GRE tests, to further help with the transition. We also recognize that many graduate programs have IT systems set up for 3-digit fields and created a score scale range that works with those systems.

Although the score scale is changing, GRE<sup>®</sup> General Test scores and GRE revised General Test scores will continue to be valid for five years. We'll explain how to compare current test and revised test scores later in this article.

### REPORTING IN 1-POINT INCREMENTS: An Easier Way to Compare Candidates

While the current Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores are reported in 10-point increments, on the revised test these scores will be reported in 1-point increments. By changing the reporting metric in this way, the new scale will produce scores that don't exaggerate small performance differences between examinees.

**Here's why:** Reporting in 10-point increments can create the impression that there are bigger differences in ability than there actually are. Reporting in 1-point increments makes it clearer and much simpler for you to compare candidates.

*"The current GRE 200 – 800 score scale implies that there could be a meaningful difference between two candidates, say at 500 to 510. This difference appears large, but in reality, the difference is only one score point." – Liora Schmelkin, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies at Hofstra University and 2009 – 10 GRE Board Chair*

Now, with the new 1-point increments, small score differences will be less likely to be interpreted as meaningful differences when comparing candidates' performances. And candidates with larger differences will stand out more clearly.

### 41 POINTS: Leading to Even Better Admissions Decisions

The 41-point score scale was selected to balance the changes in content, new question types, the new psychometric model and test length. When combined together, the design features of the GRE revised General Test and the 41-point score scale will truly improve your ability to assess candidates' verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning skills — helping you make more accurate comparisons between candidates and make better admissions decisions for your graduate or business programs.

The new 41-point score scale will help institutions make more meaningful and appropriate comparisons

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between candidates. While at first glance the fewer points available on the 41-point scale appear to provide less differentiation among candidates, we will be making more effective use of the entire score scale than occurs with the current 61-point scale.

For example, when you look at the current distribution, as reported in the annual *GRE<sup>®</sup> Guide to Use of Scores*, the 99th percentile of the Verbal Reasoning measure encompasses 7 score scale points (i.e., 740 – 800). With the new 41-point score scale, each point on the score scale will be more meaningful since candidates will be more spread out across the scale. When evaluating Quantitative Reasoning scores, the new score scale will provide more information as well, particularly at the top of the scale. For example, if you are interested in reviewing the candidates who score in the top 25 percent of the population in terms of quantitative skills, there are currently only 9 score points that cover that group — scores from 720 to 800. With the new scale, we anticipate that there will be approximately 15 score points that cover the top 25 percent of candidates, providing better differentiation between top-scoring candidates.

### WHY THE SCORE SCALE IS CHANGING

Since significant modifications were made to the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning measures on the GRE revised General Test, professional standards (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and National Council on Measurement in Education) require us to change the score scale.

It's important to note that the score scale changes were thoughtfully developed with feedback from the broader graduate community, including the GRE Board and Committees, the Technical Advisory Committee, deans, admissions officers and other admissions decision makers.

### HOW TO MAKE ADMISSIONS DECISIONS WITH THE NEW SCORE SCALE

GRE scores are valid for five years, which means you may get candidates with scores from the current GRE General Test, the GRE revised General Test — and even candidates with scores from both tests. How do you compare them to make admissions decisions? We are creating several important tools to help you, including:

- **A new score concordance table** that will create an easy bridge from current test scores (200 – 800 score scale) to revised test scores (130 – 170 score scale). It's designed to help you compare current scores with new ones, includes percentiles and features printed charts and online tools to allow you the flexibility of using the style that fits you best.

This new table will become available in November 2011 after the statistical analyses required for the conversion to the new 130 – 170 score scale are completed.

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- **A revised score report** that's been enhanced to offer even more information about a candidate. The revised score report will feature scores, percentiles and concordance information when appropriate, directly on the score report, so you will have all the information you need at your fingertips to compare applicants — easily and effectively. This information will also be reported in the electronic data files sent to institutions through SCORELINK<sup>®</sup> Internet Delivery Service and on CD.
- **An updated GRE comparison tool** that will be provided to schools that need to compare GMAT<sup>®</sup> scores to GRE General Test and GRE revised General Test scores. This tool will help you work with all three types of scores when it becomes available in November 2011.

**A note about percentiles:** Percentiles are very beneficial when comparing current and new scores because they're indicative of how well the candidate performed; they are based on three years of GRE General Test performance data. Both the score concordance table and the revised score report include percentiles for easier comparison between candidates.

### THE NEW GRE SCORE REPORT (EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 2011): A Guide

Information provided on the revised score report starting in November 2011:

- **If a candidate has taken the GRE revised General Test**, the revised score report will show scores based on the new 130 – 170 score scale, along with associated percentiles.
- **If a candidate has taken the GRE General Test** prior to August 2011 and submits their scores after November 2011, the revised score report will show the scores originally earned on the 200 – 800 scale, the estimated scores on the new 130 – 170 score scale and the associated percentiles.
- **Candidates who take either the current or the revised test** will continue to have Analytical Writing measure scores based on the 0 – 6 score level along with the associated percentile.

**If a candidate presents scores from both tests**, use the new score as part of your consideration for admissions, since the revised test is more closely aligned with the skills needed in graduate and business school programs.



If you currently do not receive paper score reports in addition to the electronic reports, or if your institution doesn't list both scaled scores and percentiles on your internal admissions paperwork, speak to your processing department to make sure they're prepared for the new scores and can provide you with the information you need.

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### SAMPLE SCORE REPORT, BEGINNING NOVEMBER 2011

New test taker information including email address, telephone number and intended graduate major field.

Special heat-sensitive ink for added security.

## Graduate Institution Score Report

Department Copy

**SMITH, MARY A.**  
Last (Family/Surname) Name, First (Given) Name Middle Initial.

Mary A. Smith  
23 Allen Street  
Jackson, MS 39203  
USA

**Email:** msmith@bdn.edu  
**Phone:** 1-601-974-3212

**Date of Birth:** 02/02/1983    **Gender:** Female  
(MM/DD/YYYY)

**Social Security Number:** 8766  
(Last 4 digits)

**Intended Graduate Major:**

**Code:** 0203  
**Name:** Biology

**Most Recent:**

<b>Test Date:</b> <small>(MM/DD/YYYY)</small>	<b>Registration Number:</b>	<b>Print Date:</b> <small>(MM/DD/YYYY)</small>
12/03/2011	1111111	12/15/2011

**RECIPIENT**

<small>Inst. Code</small> <b>Institution Name</b>	<small>Dept. Code</small> <b>Department Name</b>
1234 ETS UNIVERSITY	0203 BIOLOGY

**GENERAL TEST SCORES**

Test Date MM/DD/YYYY	Verbal Reasoning*				Quantitative Reasoning*				Analytical Writing	
	Prior Format		Current Format		Prior Format		Current Format		Score	% Below
	Scaled Score	Estimated Current Score	Scaled Score	% Below	Scaled Score	Estimated Current Score	Scaled Score	% Below		
12/03/2011	---	---	156	89	---	---	137	85	4.5	63
06/01/2009	590	154	---	84	770	158	---	87	4.5	63

NS = No Score (Indicates that no questions were answered in this section)

\* The GRE Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning score scales changed in August 2011. For tests taken beginning August 2011, scores will be printed in the "Current Format" columns. For tests taken before August 2011, scores on the prior scales and the corresponding estimated scores on the current scales will be printed in the "Prior Format" columns. See the back of this page for more information.

**SUBJECT TEST SCORES**

Test Date MM/DD/YYYY	Test Name / Subscore Name	Scaled Score	% Below	Test Date MM/DD/YYYY	Test Name / Subscore Name	Scaled Score	% Below

Scores on the prior scale for administrations before August 2011.

Estimated scores on the new scale for administrations before August 2011.

Scores on the new scale for administrations in August 2011 or later.

Percentiles based on the most recent three-year period.

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### WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW TO PREPARE FOR THE NEW SCORE SCALE

While the launch of the GRE revised General Test is still more than a year away, there is a lot you can do to get ready before then:

- 1. Tell all of your potential applicants about the changes in the GRE revised General Test** content and score reporting timing to ensure they meet your school's admissions deadlines.
  - Candidates who take the GRE revised General Test between August and October 2011 will start receiving their score reports in November 2011. Throughout November, there will be slightly different reporting time frames. Beginning December 2011, normal score reporting of 10 – 15 days will resume. **Note:** If scores are required before November 2011, tell your candidates to take the GRE General Test before August 1, 2011.
  - If they don't need their scores until after November 2011, encourage them to take the GRE revised General Test.
- 2. If you need to publish admissions criteria for this period now, here's what you should consider:**
  - Tell applicants your normal admissions requirements, based on the current GRE score scale of 200 – 800. In addition, let them know you're accepting applicants with approximately the same GRE percentile performance.
  - Since the percentiles on the current score scale and the new score scale will be based on the same norms group, both your admissions teams and your applicants will be able to manage any combination using percentiles.
- 3. We recognize that each program within an institution presumably has scores and/or percentiles that correlate with success in its individual programs.** Please note that those programs can continue to use scores/percentiles but should consider using slightly broader criteria and supporting documents for candidates who would normally fall outside of your requirements — until you can determine which GRE revised General Test scores are best suited for measuring the skills needed for success in each individual program.

Between now and 2011, we will provide other resources to help you prepare for the new score scale. From our GRE Client Relations Team on the ground and in-depth articles, to helpful videos and informative webinars, we're committed to doing everything we can to help the graduate community get ready for the new score scale — and the many advantages that come with the GRE revised General Test.

We'll continue to feature additional topics in upcoming issues. In the meantime, if you have any questions, contact our Helpline: [GREhelpline@ets.org](mailto:GREhelpline@ets.org). And if you'd like more information on the GRE revised General Test, please go to [www.ets.org/gre/revisedtest](http://www.ets.org/gre/revisedtest).

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