



CAT 2026 Exam Dates, Registration, Syllabus, PYQs

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Common Admission Test (CAT) 2026 Overview

The Common Admission Test (CAT) is a highly competitive and prestigious entrance exam conducted in India for the admissions into various management programs offered by the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and several other top business schools in the country. This exam is conducted once a year, usually in the month of November or December. The exam is known for its high difficulty level, testing candidates' aptitude, problem-solving, critical thinking, and time management skills.

Preparing for CAT requires a comprehensive study plan, regular practice, and thorough understanding of concepts. It is essential to stay updated with the syllabus, practice previous years' question papers and mock tests to do well in the exam. With determination and proper guidance, you can strive for success in the CAT exam.

What is the latest EXAM Pattern for CAT 2026?

From 2014 to 2019, CAT used to be conducted in two slots – Morning and Evening. In each slot, the candidates needed to solve 100 questions in 3 hours or 180 minutes with a time limit of 60 minutes for each of the sections – VARC, DILR and QA.



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Post Covid19, it was changed for the first time in 2020. There were three slots – Morning, Afternoon and Evening. And, the candidates needed to solve 76 questions in 2 hours or 120 minutes. The time limit for each section was 40 minutes. It further was changed in 2021, where the number of questions was reduced from 76 to 66. Since then, it is being conducted in its present form – 3 slots, 120 minutes, 66 questions with sectional time limit of 40 minutes each.

The exam includes two category of questions – MCQ (Multi Choice Questions) and TITA (Type in the answer). In MCQ, the candidates are required to choose one of the 4 options whereas in TITA, they are required to type in their answers. There is a penalty of negative 1 mark for every wrong answer in MCQ category whereas in there is no penalty for typing a wrong answer in TITA category.

The three sections of the CAT EXAM are as follows:

1. Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension (VARC)
2. Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning (DILR)
3. Quantitative Ability (QA)

CAT is highly famous for being unpredictable but the pattern has not been changed since 2021. Hence, we may assume that in 2026 you will get a total of 66 questions that you will have to solve in 120 minutes. The probable pattern for CAT 2026 is as follows -



No of Questions.	66
Total Marks	198 Marks
Verbal Ability and Reading comprehension	24 Questions
Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning	20 Questions
Quantitative Aptitude	22 Questions

The following chart describes the negative marking scheme of CAT

Correct Answer	3 Marks
Incorrect Answer (MCQ Questions)	Yes (1 Mark)
Incorrect Answer (TITA Questions)	No
Unattempted questions	No marks

Once the CAT results are declared, the individual IIMs release their shortlists. They invite the candidates for further rounds which may include Written Ability Test (WAT), Group Discussion (GD), and Personal Interview (PI). The selection criteria may vary for different IIMS.



What are the Eligibility Criteria for CAT 2026?

A candidate must hold a Bachelor's Degree (of at least 3 years after 10+2) of any of the universities incorporated by an act of the central or state legislature in India or other educational institutions established by an act of Parliament or declared to be deemed as a university under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956, or possess an equivalent qualification recognized by the Ministry of HRD, Government of India.

Minimum Marks if the candidate has graduated:

- For General and OBC – at least 50% marks
- For SC, ST and Persons with Disability – at least 45% Marks

Minimum Marks if the candidate is in the final year / is awaiting the final year's result:

Such a candidate must produce a certificate from the principal / head of the department/ registrar / director of the institution/university certifying that the candidate is currently in the final year/is awaiting final results and has obtained at least 50% marks or equivalent (45% in case of the candidate belonging to SC/ST/PwD category) based on latest available grades/marks.

What is the Reservation scheme for CAT 2026?

As per the legal requirements, 15% of the seats are reserved for Scheduled Caste (SC) candidates, 7.5% for Scheduled Tribe (ST) candidates, 27% for Other Backward Classes candidates belonging to the “Non-Creamy” layer (NC-OBC), up to 10% for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) candidates and 5% for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (PwD).



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Which IIM is conducting CAT in 2026?

The Common Admission Test (CAT) in India is conducted by the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs). The responsibility of organizing and administering CAT is rotated among the IIMs on a yearly basis. The conducting body for CAT 2026 is yet to be finalized. The conducting body is responsible for setting the exam pattern, syllabus, and registration process, conducting the test, evaluating results, and publishing the scorecards. The list of conducting bodies from 2016 to 2025 is as follows:

Year	Conducting IIMs
2026	Yet to be finalized
2025	IIM Kozhikode
2024	IIM Calcutta
2023	IIM lucknow
2022	IIM Bangalore
2021	IIM Ahmedabad
2020	IIM Indore
2019	IIM kozhikode
2018	IIM Calcutta
2017	IIM lucknow
2016	IIM Bangalore



What are the important dates for CAT 2026?

Registration Start Date	August 2026 (Tentatively)
Last Date to apply	2nd Week of September 2026 (Tentatively)
Release Date of admit card	Last week of October 2026 (Tentatively)
CAT Exam Date	Last week of November 2026 (Tentatively)
Declaration Result Date	2nd week of January 2027

The official site to apply for and the application fee are as follows

CAT 2026 official website	https://iimcat.ac.in/
CAT 2026 Fees	Other Candidates: INR 2600/- SC/ST/PWD: INR 1300/- (Tentatively)
Quantitative aptitude	Arithmetic, Algebra, Number System, Geometry and Co-ordinate Geometry, Mensuration, Permutation & Combination, Probability, Set Theory etc
Logical Reasoning & Data interpretation	Puzzle Test problems, Seating Arrangement, Blood Relation, Syllogism, Tables, Graphs, Pie Chart etc
Verbal Ability & Reasoning Comprehension	Reading Comprehension, Para Jumbles, Para Summary, Odd One Out, Para Completion



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What are the important dates for CAT 2026?

Arithmetic	Number System	Geometry
Percentage	Basics of Number System	Properties of Angles
Profit & Loss		Properties of Straight line
Ratio & proportion	Decimal & Fraction	Congruency & Similarity of Triangles
Partnership Problem	Surds and Indices	Properties of Triangles
Mixture & Alligation	Square Roots & Cube Roots	Various centre of Triangles
Averages	Simplification Problem	Circle and its properties
Time & work	The concept of no of zeros	Types of Quadrilateral
Chain rule problems	Last Digit / Last two digits	Properties of Quadrilateral
Pipes & cistern	Remainder Theorem	Polygons - Angles and Diagonals
Time, Speed and Distance	Factors & Factorials	Regular Hexagon
Train Problems	The Divisibility Rule	Mensuration - Sphere & Cylinder
Boat & Stream Problems	LCM & HCF	Mensuration - Cone and Prism



Games & Races	Base System	Regular Pyramids - Triangular Base
Simple & Compound Interest	Miscellaneous Problems	Regular Pyramids - Square Base

Algebra	Co ordinate Geometry
Functional & Graph	Cartesian Plane
Domain & Range	Various forms of a Line
Maxima & Minima	Various forms of a Slope
Progressions - AP, GP and HP	Distance Formula
Quadratic Equation	Mid - point Formula
Inequalities	Point anywhere on a Line
logarithm	Area of a Triangle
Sequence and Series	

The official site to apply for and the application fee are as follows

Institutes	Programmes	Website
IIM Ahmedabad	PGP, PGP-FABM, ePGD-ABA (ePost Graduate Diploma in Advanced Business Analytics)	http://www.iima.ac.in/
IIM Amritsar	MBA, MBA-Business Analytics, MBA-HRM, EMBA, M.Sc. in Data Science(MSDSM) jointly offered with IIT Ropar	http://www.iimamritsar.ac.in/
IIM Bangalore	PGP, PGPEM, PGPBA	http://www.iimb.ac.in/

[Aptitude 360.online / Chandigarh](http://www.apptitude360online.com)

 **7888714123**

 [www.apptitude360.online](http://www.apptitude360online.com)



Click on the icons for more information



IIM Bodh Gaya	MBA, MBA (Digital Business Management), MBA (Hospital and Healthcare Management)	http://www.iimbg.ac.in/
IIM Calcutta	MBA	http://www.iimcal.ac.in/
IIM Indore	PGP, PGP-HRM, MSDSM (Master of Science in Data Science and Management)	http://www.iimidr.ac.in/
IIM Jammu	MBA, MBA (Hospital Administration & Healthcare Management), Executive MBA	http://www.iimj.ac.in/
IIM Kashipur	MBA, MBA (Analytics), EMBA, EMBA (Executive Master of Business Administration Analytics)	http://www.iimkashipur.ac.in/
IIM Kozhikode	PGP, PGP-BL, PGP-F, PGP-LSM, EPGP-IL, EPGP Kochi	http://www.iimk.ac.in/
IIM Lucknow	MBA, MBA-ABM, MBA-SM, MBA-E&I, PGPWE	http://www.iiml.ac.in/
IIM Nagpur	MBA, MBA (Executive)	http://www.iimnagpur.ac.in/
IIM Raipur	PGP	http://www.iimraipur.ac.in/
IIM Ranchi	MBA, MBA-HRM, MBA (Business Analytics)	http://www.iimranchi.ac.in/
IIM Rohtak	PGP, EPGDSM, PGPx	http://www.iimrohtak.ac.in/
IIM Sambalpur	MBA, Executive MBA, MBA for Working Professionals	http://www.iimsambalpur.ac.in/
IIM Shillong	PGP, PGPEX, PGP (WE)	http://www.iimshillong.ac.in/
IM Sirmaur	MBA, MBA (Tourism Management), ExMBA (Digital Transformation & Analytics)	http://www.iimsirmaur.ac.in/



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IIM Tiruchirappalli	PGPM, PGPM-HR	http://www.iimtrichy.ac.in/
IIM Udaipur	MBA, MBA-DEM, MBA-GSCM, PGDBAWE	http://www.iimu.ac.in/
IIM Vishakhapatnam	PGP, EMBA, PGPDGM	http://www.iimv.ac.in/

Average / Highest salaries offered by IIMs

IIM Placements 2024: The following list gives you the glimpse of the highest and the average annual salary packages offered to the students at the various IIMs. These salary packages are known as the CTCs (cost to the company). Typically CTCs have various components included – Bonuses (Joining, Retention and Performances), Government taxes, Insurances (Medical & Life), EPFs & Gratuity, Allowances (Travel, Housing & Special), and ESOPS. The take home salary lies somewhere between 2/3rd to 3/4th of the CTC.

Name of IIMs	Highest CTC (INR)	Average CTC (INR)
IIM Ahmedabad	INR 75.20 LPA	INR 27.54 LPA
IIM Bangalore	INR 70.20 LPA	INR 28.98 LPA
IIM Calcutta	INR 68.58 LPA	INR 34 LPA
IIM Lucknow	INR 58.00 LPA	INR 31.03 LPA
IIM kozhikode	INR 52.36 LPA	INR 29.04 LPA
IIM Indore	INR 49.00 LPA	INR 25.01 LPA



IIM Shillong	INR 55.22 LPA	INR23.10 LPA
IIM Rohtak	INR 32.00 LPA	INR 16.06 LPA
IIM Ranchi	INR 26.50 LPA	INR15.02 LPA
IIM Raipur	INR 42.15LPA	INR 17.73 LPA
IIM Tiruchirappalli	INR 34.00 LPA	INR 17.01 LPA
IIM Kashipur	INR28.82 LPA	INR 15.21 LPA
IIM Udaipur	INR 35.47 LPA	INR 17.50 LPA
IIM Nagpur	INR 31.54 LPA	INR 15.21 LPA
IIM Vishakhapatnam	INR 31.60 LPA	INR 15.06 LPA
IIM Bodh Gaya	INR 30.50 LPA	INR 12.36 LPA
IIM Amritsar	INR25.21 LPA	INR 14.63 LPA
IIM Sirmaur	INR 26.50	INR 12.74
IIM Sambhalpur	INR 30.00	INR 12.64
IIM Jammu	INR 32.00	INR 13.53

The median salary can range from INR 18-20 lakhs per annum. These figures may vary slightly from one IIM to another.

List of the other MBA entrance exams in India

In addition to the Common Admission Test (CAT), which is one of the most well-known entrance exams in India, there are several other major entrance exams that are accepted by various business schools across the country.





These exams cater to different universities, institutes, and management programs. Here are some of the other major MBA entrance exams in India:

1. Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT)
2. Common Management Admission Test (CMAT)
3. Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)
4. Symbiosis National Aptitude Test (SNAP)
5. NMAT by GMAC
6. Tata Institute of Social Sciences National Entrance Test (TISSNET)
7. IRMA Social Awareness Test
8. MICAT
9. ATMA (AIMS Test for Management Admissions)
10. MAT (Management Aptitude Test)
11. ICFAI Business School Aptitude Test (IBSAT)

FAQs

1) Percentile and Percent – are they same or different?

Percentile is not same as the percentage. It is an indicator of your performance in comparison to the other test takers. For example, if you have got 99 percentile – it indicates that you are ahead of 99 percent of CAT test takers in a given year.

2) What is the full form of CAT?

It is “Combined Admission Test” for admissions in IIMs and other reputed management institutions.



3) Which mode the CAT is conducted in - Online or Offline?

Since 2009, CAT is a CBT Computer Based Test (CBT).

4) How many Sections are there in CAT?

There are three sections –1) VARC (Verbal Ability and Reading Comprehension)

2) LRDI (Logical Reasoning and Data Interpretation)

3) QA (Quantitative Aptitude)

5) Is there a sectional time limit in CAT?

Yes, there is a limit of 40 minutes per section.

6) Can I get to choose a slot of my choice – Morning, Afternoon, and Evening?

No. You will be allotted any of the slots by the organising body.

7) Can I get to choose a city for my CAT exam?

You can choose 6 exam centres in the decreasing order of your preferences.

8) Can I switch between the sections during the test?

No – VARC appears first, followed by LRDI and the last section of your test would be QA.

9) Is there any negative marking for CAT 2026?

For MCQ problems – every wrong answer attracts a penalty of negative one mark.

For TITA problems – No negative marking.



10) How many IIMs are there in total?

There are a total of 20 IIMs.

11) Is there any age restrictions for CAT 2026?

There is no age restriction for CAT 2026.

12) What is the minimum percentage required in graduation to appear for CAT?

50% for General and OBC categories

45% for SC, ST and PwD candidates.

13) Which IIM is conducting CAT 2026?

IIM Lucknow is in charge of conducting CAT 2026.

14) What is the application fee to appear for CAT 2026?

Rs 2400 for general category candidates and Rs 1200 for the reserved categories candidates (SC, ST and PwD). This includes CAT registration fee and IIM application fee.

15) Do I have to apply separately for the IIMs of my choice?

No, you do not have to. You can choose the IIMs and their respective programmes while filling the form itself.

16) What is the last day to apply for CAT?

It is yet to be announced. Usually it is during the second week of September each year.



CAT PYQs with Answer keys

CAT is the exam that is conducted by one of the top IIMs in India every year. This exam requires diligent work and a well-planned preparation strategy. During CAT exam preparation, candidates need to utilise CAT previous year question papers, mock tests, and study materials. In this article, we will discuss the **CAT previous year papers**.

