

# **The Business of English Tests in MBA Applications**

*By Richard Burns, a regular contributor to TopMBA.com*

Applying to an MBA program is a complicated procedure. Each business school will have different application requirements and different deadlines for the various hoops that MBA applicants have to jump through. This is why planning ahead is crucial to a successful application.

One requirement almost all business programs have in common for international students is proof of English proficiency.

At the top business schools, non-native English speakers will be asked to submit a test score that reflects their ability to communicate in English, both verbally and orally.

To ensure you are fully prepared for an English proficiency test, there are several questions you should ask yourself:

## **Who is the English proficiency test for?**

It is important both for you, and the MBA admissions departments to know that you can communicate effectively in English.

While admissions staffs look for students who can actively participate in the classroom and with their peers, MBA applicants will need to be confident that their English skills will help them to succeed.

## **When can I take the test?**

Plan ahead when deciding which test to take. Some tests may be available only on specific dates and times, and competition can be fierce to reserve a seat, while other tests may allow flexibility in scheduling.

Above all else, always ensure that you plan ahead so that you don't find yourself without test scores on the date your MBA application is due.

## **How and when do the admissions departments get my scores?**

Find out how long it will take to receive your scores and how many schools you are allowed to send them to. Some tests return scores in a matter of days, while other tests may take several weeks.

Some English proficiency tests limit the number of free score reports that you can send and charge for additional reports. Other tests, such as PTE Academic, allow you to send unlimited score reports at no charge.

## How do I prepare for the test?

While some students take special English training courses, other students prefer to study on their own.

Research available materials and plan accordingly, ensuring that the preparation materials are from credible sources. Just because someone has a test training video on YouTube doesn't mean that you should use that to prepare for the test!

## Which test is right for me?

There are several English tests to choose from. You should choose the one that will best indicate your ability to participate actively in your MBA program.

Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) is designed to measure your real-life English proficiency. That means the score you achieve on PTE Academic will let you know how strong your communication skills are and in which areas you may need improvement. PTE Academic provides an overall score as well as scores for individual skills. This means that students, and business schools are able determine if students can write with more ease than they speak, which can be important an ascertaining an MBA applicant's suitability for a program.

PTE Academic is delivered in one, three hour session and is offered in the same test centre network as the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT). Many GMAC member institutions, which include schools like Harvard Business School, Dartmouth Tuck School of Business, SC Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University, and the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business, recognize PTE Academic.

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