



The Graduate Advisor

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Focus on Wharton: A Name within a Name

By Marian Dent, Dean, Pericles

In this issue of the Graduate Advisor, we are focusing on what is probably the most famous business school in the world: The Wharton School

The impetus to focus on Wharton came from a conversation over lunch with a new Pericles Russian staff member. In the middle of a conversation about business schools, he said he had never heard of Wharton before coming to Pericles. I almost fell off my chair. Our other Russian staff members, however, didn't find this odd at all.

To add to my trepidation that Russian students perhaps weren't as aware of Wharton as they should be, one Russian student informed me that she wasn't so sure about Wharton's reputation after pulling a "Top-B-School" directory off our library shelves and finding that "Wharton isn't listed."

Thus, I decided to shed a little light on the school and its top-notch reputation.

Wharton is at the University of Pennsylvania

First, to explain why there was no entry for Wharton in that student's Top B-School directory: "The Wharton School" is part of another famous brand, the University of Pennsylvania. The University of Pennsylvania is one of a select group of universities known as the "Ivy League," an elite network of historic U.S. Universities. The Ivy League is where the elite and the intelligent go to study. As an Ivy League graduate, you either have money before entering, or you can realistically expect to start earning it in the near future. Basically, in the current tight job market, if you graduate from an Ivy League University, you are much more likely to be hired for the best positions than if you graduate from less elite schools.

Most business schools, of course, take their names from the Universities that

sponsors them, (e.g., Columbia GSB or Harvard GSB) or identify at least partly with their Universities in their names (e.g., Northwestern Kellogg, Georgetown McDonough). Wharton, however, is a recognized brand on its own. Established in 1881, it was actually the first university business school in the United States. In the business world, though, Wharton is a more prestigious name to toss into a conversation than the name of the underlying University of Pennsylvania.

Despite few people knowing the whole name, being associated with the University of Pennsylvania brings a number of advantages to Wharton students. The University has top faculties in many different areas and a large campus, with all the advantages that this entails in terms of access to sports facilities, libraries and study facilities, housing, cultural events, places to eat, etc. "All of the University's eight graduate and four undergrad schools are actually on the same campus, which means easy access" mentions former Wharton Acting Admissions Director, Judith Hodara. This is a nice feature, as many of U. Penn's competing big city universities, such as Columbia for instance, have been forced to deal with growth by splitting their campus into multiple locations in the same city. Additionally,

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A New Version of an Old Test: Tackling the New, Revised GRE

By Alex Lebedeff, Test Preparation Expert, Pericles.

Prefatory Note for MBA Candidates: Should you take the GRE for B-school applications?

Some of you reading this article may assume that the GRE is only for graduate programs not related to business, but that may be a false assumption. MBA hopefuls read on.

ETS (the writers of the GRE) and GMAC (the writers of the GMAT) seem to be in a bit of a bidding war with business schools. Every year, more and more business schools are accepting the GRE in lieu of the GMAT. ETS's website not only crow's about this, but even has a section advertising their test to B-schools. For example, Harvard Business School already accepts the GRE, which is saying something. You can check the list of B-schools accepting the GRE on ETS's site at <http://www.ets.org/gre/>

See GRE, page 4.



The the \$140 million dollar Huntsman Hall houses the Wharton School



the top university affiliation allows Wharton to establish interesting joint programs with other university departments, for example a joint MBA/LLM degree with the law school, and the Lauder program with combines an MBA with an MA in International Studies.

The business school may be old but the facilities aren't. While the University of Pennsylvania campus boasts some quite beautiful ivy covered buildings from a century ago, Wharton itself is housed in the \$140 million dollar Huntsman Hall, a modern facility opened in 2002.

Location

Wharton's geographic location is also an advantage to its graduates. Wharton is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia is conveniently located in between the US business capital, New York City, and the political capital, Washington, D.C. Thus, Wharton, and the University of Pennsylvania generally, are a short train ride or two hour drive away from the power centers. Such a short commute helps the school attract the U.S. power elite to visit the campus for interesting guest speaker events.

More importantly perhaps for students, the location is excellent for job interviewing. Recruiters can easily get to Wharton to interview on campus, and students can easily get to the companies for call back interviews. Besides New York, the city of Boston, a major hub for anyone interested in consulting, is also not far away.

Philadelphia is not the prettiest city in the world, but it is small enough to be very

accessible. Wharton lies in the west of the city, about a 30 minute walk from downtown. Most students live in the nearby area named, not so creatively, University City. Rents normally range from \$1200 to \$1500 per month plus utilities. It's not as cheap as some U.S. locations, but certainly not nearly as expensive as living in New York.

Safety can be a factor in Philadelphia, though. The University community aside, many of those who reside in the area where the campus is located are working class and poorly educated. One Wharton alumnus, Alexei Mineev, on his first visit to the city, commented on the evidence of petty crime in the streets: seeing wreckage of bicycles left chained to trees, where thieves had removed the useful bits. He noted that police patrol the campus after dark to ensure that students are safe, but that doesn't help you if you don't drive and are trying to walk or take public transport home late at night. (Judith Hodara, however, points out that the University has a walking escort service and many students will walk home together after class.) Upward gentrification (the phenomenon of upper middle class professionals moving back to urban areas) is occurring in Philadelphia now. The University area is improving each year, but still, rates of violent crime in Philadelphia are far above the national average.

Finance Faculty

For most recruiters and executives, the name Wharton is synonymous with finance. Wharton is known for its emphasis on quantitative analysis in the classroom. Wharton professors are most famous in this area. Russian Wharton alumnus Sergey

Goncharev (class of 2001) told me: "the most popular professors are Jeremy Siegel and Franklin Allen. They are both professors of finance. These two are true stars. They are quoted by WSJ, BW, and FT, and appear on CNBC on a regular basis. Their books have become national bestsellers."

They are also, incidentally, excellent teachers. Siegel, particularly, focuses on international finance, advising US investors to look abroad long before that became a popular diversification strategy, and warning of downward risk in the Eurozone at least a year before the rest of the world heard the rumbles that are in the news today.

Some of Wharton's newer finance professors are also making waves, such as Assistant Professor Todd Gormley, who has been teaching just two years at Wharton, but whom one student recommended highly and described as personable and helpful; and Assistant Professor Alex Edmuns, who teaches Accelerated Financial Analysis, and is researching in the currently popular, interesting, and much needed area of corporate governance.

At Wharton, you truly have access to the greatest minds in finance and economics. One student was enthusiastic about "teach ins" formed after the 2008 financial crisis, in which professors would gather informally with students for lectures and discussions on the causes of the crisis.

Wharton likes to point out that, as a top global B-school, finance is only one of a number of areas that one can study. As you would expect from a school consistently ranked number 1 or 2 in practically ever major poll, Wharton has top quality professors and courses in all business spheres: management, marketing, real estate, health care, insurance, etc. Behind finance, entrepreneurship is probably the second most popular career track for students. And Judith Hodara points out that the marketing faculty is one of the top ranked in the world.

But still, if you don't like finance, you might not be getting the most out of your Wharton education. Despite all the emphasis given to other departments in Wharton's PR, just randomly looking through the faculty list shows you that finance expertise still dominates over other departments.

Team Work

Besides finance, the other thing people think of when you mention Wharton is the

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team approach. Wharton pioneered this approach, now followed to some extent by every major business school, in which students are divided into learning teams to study and prepare case presentations.

The amount of emphasis on the team approach really differentiates one business school from another. At some B-schools, teams are assigned and kept throughout the first semester or the first year; at others, the use of teams is at the option of the professor. Some schools let students choose their teams or have different team members in each course. Others assign one team for the entire semester.

As the founder of the method, Wharton has a “strict approach” team policy. When you enter Wharton, you are assigned to a team of 5-6 first year students; you have no choice of your team members. All your first year work is done in this team, and grades are assigned for the team. Before the semester starts you have a learning team retreat, and you are assigned a second year student mentor to presumably help you avoid the mistakes that he or she made in first year.

Says Sergey Goncharev, “students have had different experiences with their learning teams ranging from dismal to great. I was lucky and really liked my learning team. One thing, however, is that the learning team approach teaches one how to work with a group of people who are as motivated, ambitious and talented as he/she is. Truly challenging, but rewarding.”

Another student who didn’t want to be named, however, didn’t much like the strict team approach. As a female student whose first language was not English, she felt she was overwhelmed by her other team members, especially the males, who she thought were too aggressive and not willing to discuss her ideas. She admitted, however, that this is akin to real life. If you are working at a company you have to get the project accomplished with the team you have—you can’t just get rid of the people you don’t like. She said that over the year she could feel herself getting much more assertive in her team.

The team approach is mitigated a bit by the fact that grades don’t matter so much at Wharton. Even if you disagree with your team and are proven right when your team gets a low grade, this won’t affect your job chances because Wharton has a strict non-disclosure policy. Recruiters are not allowed to ask about grades and students are not allowed to tell. Said Goncharev, “there were a couple of violations when a company asked a student about his grades; the student

reported this incident to the career management office and there were serious repercussions for that company. This policy makes people concentrate on learning, rather than on grades.”

Global Footprint

Like any absolutely top B-school, Wharton is also known for its global footprint. To be honest, American business schools are far behind their European counterparts in internationalism: more students still come from the United States than from abroad. But Wharton is the one that attracts perhaps the largest percentage of international students. Last year’s admissions statistics showed that 40% of the students came from an amazing 71 different countries.

Further, Wharton’s soft-spoken Dean Thomas Robertson is determined to make sure that Wharton globalizes more than it already has. Robertson has made a career of making international contacts and launching international projects at business schools. From his biography on Wharton’s website, you can see how much the school wants to emphasize his international roots. The word “international” appears 8 times in his one page bio, giving no doubt to his intended direction for the school. He was at one time the chair of International Strategy at Emory University, was Executive Faculty Director of the Institute for Developing Nations, and has taught at London Business School. Moreover, he has charged one of his three Vice-Dean with

the sole mandate of globalization.

Wharton’s most well known global program is an alliance with INSEAD in which MBA students can study across four different campuses of the two institutions: Wharton’s Philadelphia and San Francisco campuses, and INSEAD’s Fontainebleau, France and Singapore campuses. It doesn’t appear that Wharton students can also study at INSEAD’s new Abu Dhabi campus yet, but that campus isn’t yet fully integrated with INSEAD’s “same courses on two continents” system. Perhaps once it is, Abu Dhabi will also be an option.

Wharton also has less formal exchange opportunities with IESE (Barcelona), London Business School, SDA Bocconi (Italy) and about 10 more non-U.S. MBA programs.

If long term campus hopping is your dream, though, Wharton’s program might not be as good for you as other programs such as Hult, where splitting campuses is part of the normal study plan. Despite the travel opportunities, the vast majority of Wharton students stay in Philadelphia. Out of a Wharton class size of about 850 (for each year of a two year program), only about 50-60 students from Wharton go to INSEAD each year. Moreover, some Wharton students have mentioned that they were disappointed in their exchanges, preferring the purportedly more serious attitudes in their Wharton classes and professors. One student mentioned that traveling to INSEAD in your second year meant giving

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up a chance to take courses from some of the better Wharton professors, and instead arriving at INSEAD where you don't yet know who is an interesting teacher and who isn't. Plus, as is to be expected from a one year school versus a two year school, the range of course options at INSEAD is narrower than that available at Wharton.

An alternative to campus hopping is Wharton's brand new "Global Modular Courses" program, where students can take short intensive courses in emerging economies. Established last year, this program allows students to go for approximately 6 days and take 4 days of intensive study in country. For example, last year some students attended a global modular program in healthcare management with Indian School of Business. Students

network is huge. As a top B-school, Wharton's alumni network also includes some very powerful people at powerful companies. What you might not guess is that the Wharton alumni network is much more active and much more global than the networks at most other B-schools. The point is that Wharton graduates just prefer to hire other Wharton graduates—a big advantage if you happen to be one of that happy club. Certain consulting firms are well known for preferring Wharton grads over all others.

Moreover, Wharton works very hard to keep that alumni network active and global. Wharton holds alumni forums in two or three glamorous cities around the world each year, giving alumni a chance to network with other alumni. There are also "Wharton

apply in the first or second round, as there are likely to be more spots available in next year's class than in the third round, and as it can be difficult to arrange your visa and pack up your belongings if you don't apply until the March round.

Wharton, of course, is about as competitive as a business school can be. It averages over 6000 applicants each year for the coveted 1100 acceptance letters that result in about 850 members of the entering class. The GMAT range is 560-790, with a median of 720. Hence, you need to take time to prepare and ensure your application essays are well written and your test scores are high. And don't be impatient—wait until you have at least four years of post graduation work experience. Only a small percentage of the class has 3 or fewer years of experience.



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Back to the Future: Taking the Revised GRE, continued from page 1.

revised_general/about/mba/programs/, but the best course of action is to always call the admissions departments before making a decision that could influence your ability to enter a specific business school.

Additionally, the GMAT is by nature related to the GRE. As surely as we know night follows day, we know that if the GRE makes improvements that are appreciated by business schools, the GMAT has little choice but to evolve in order to compete. In other words, now that the GRE has changed formats, the GMAT is likely to change soon as well. The addition of new GMAT Integrated Reasoning, basically a data interpretation section, is expected next June.

If you're an MBA candidate deciding which test to take, and you've already called your B-school and verified that the GRE is accepted, here's a quick comparison for you. Subjectively, I consider the math on the GMAT to be somewhat harder than on the GRE. While the GRE has tougher reading comprehension questions but completely omits grammar questions. The essay sections on the two tests are more or less identical, although the GRE has new question prompts that might make it more difficult until the test preparation companies have had time to work out an effective universal strategy.

also had an option to study Managing in Emerging Economies in Brazil or Marketing in Emerging Economies in China, among others.

Networking

The final point that people think about when they think about Wharton is the strong alumni network.

As a Russian student, you might wonder why it matters that a school has an alumni network. The answer is jobs. If graduates of a business school enjoyed their school and were impressed with the caliber of their classmates, they tend to hire other graduates of that school. This translates into an inside track to jobs that might not be advertised to the general public.

Of course, as one of the oldest business schools in the world, Wharton's alumni

Clubs" operating in most major cities in the United States and in several other countries. The Wharton Club of Russia, which some have mentioned is not as active as it should be, nonetheless publishes newsletters and holds parties and other events for alumni located here. It can be found at www.whartonrussia.com. Even if you aren't sure you are likely to become an alumnus yet, this is a good place to go to get in touch with people who can tell you more about the school. There is quite a solid community of students from the former Soviet Union at Wharton.

Application Statistics

So, if you are interested in applying to Wharton and eventually becoming one of those people networking in the Wharton Russia Club, keep in mind the dates of October 3, January 4, and March 5, the deadlines for the three rounds of admissions. As always, it's a good idea to

This article is mainly meant for people who have already decided to take the GRE, but I've made some quick comparisons to the GMAT, to help you MBA candidates make up your minds. In the end, of course, it's your personal choice.

Introduction

When I heard that the new GRE was being launched, I was excited and a bit nervous. Just as you're asking yourself, "what's really on the new test?" and "how do I prepare for it?" I was asking myself, "what's really on the new test" and "how do I teach it?" The obvious course of action was to take the test myself. The new test came out in Moscow on August 3rd. I waited a day for ETS to work out any logistical bugs, and took the test on the 4th.

This article is based on my experiences preparing for and taking the Revised GRE exam. Since I honor the non-disclosure agreement I signed at the test center, I can't reprint any specific problems from the test I took. However, I can certainly give you a good idea of what's on it, and what you should do to best prepare to tackle the new exam.

Finally, this article is published in Moscow, Russia, so I make a special emphasis on highlighting issues of interest to international students, particularly my eastern-European and Asian students. The bulk of this discussion, however, is relevant to all students preparing to take the new GRE.

This discussion of the Revised GRE also includes what ETS says about the new test on their website and my opinion on the truth of ETS' claims.

Verbal Reasoning

The ETS site states that this section "measures your ability to analyze and evaluate written material and synthesize information obtained from it, analyze relationships among component parts of sentences and recognize relationships among words and concepts."

Personally, I'd say that it "measures your ability to comprehend written text and understand how sophisticated vocabulary is used in context."

Gone are the dreaded Analogies! Exiled are the arbitrary Antonyms! This is good news for students who are sick of memorizing vocabulary words. Or is it?

Not really. The new GRE is still quite brutal with vocabulary, and in some cases, even more so. The vocabulary monsters on the Verbal Reasoning section are the Text Completion and the Sentence Equivalence questions.

The Text Completion questions offer you sentences or short paragraphs, with two to three blanks in them. Underneath, you're given a table with a few possible word choices to fill each blank. The goal is to choose words which, taken together, will cause the text to make sense. In theory, it's rather straightforward. In practice, the words provided are often very serious (obscure) vocabulary words that 98% of native speakers never use in their daily lives.

The Sentence Equivalence questions present you with a sentence containing one blank, and a list of six words (A-F) from which you must choose two, so that the resulting sentences mean basically the same thing. For example, for the sentence "I _____ my cat, and it began to purr," the words "stroked" and "petted" would both work fine. However, just as in the Text Completion questions, the vocabulary words offered are often stunningly arcane.

How hard is the vocabulary on the GRE? The examples on the ETS site are significantly below the level of what is actually on the test. As a UCLA grad (raised by a Yale professor) who's read a couple thousand books in my 40-year life, and as a GRE teacher to boot, I admit that when I was taking the test I was sweating. I was mumbling curses at the test writers under my breath. I was in top form, but the words were still very hard. Is this meant to frighten you? Yes. Why? I'll explain below, after I describe the Reading Comprehension questions.



The Reading Comp has three types of questions listed on the ETS site, but they also throw in interesting variants akin to the Critical Reasoning questions on the GMAT.

The first kind of question is the Standard Multiple Choice question, as I call it. I mean, these questions are the usual mix of "detail," "inference," "main point," et cetera, questions. You get a question, and you must choose the best out of five answers. Again, it's standard for every American standardized test since the first (circa 1920) SAT.

The second type of question, as I name it, is the "Which of These Three?" question. These are interesting and a bit reminiscent of the TOEFL "Which of the following are true?" questions. You're given a statement-question about the text and three possible check-box answers. They don't tell you how many you have to click—it's all up to you. Get them all right, get a point. Get even one wrong, no point. The demo questions on the ETS site are quite on par with the questions on the actual test. My advice is to act pessimistically—add a click only if you're very sure that a choice is a match.

The third kind of question is the "Select-in-Passage" question. You're given a prompt, such as "Select the sentence that ...," and given five choices of sentences from the passage. Your goal is to choose the sentence that best describes the theme of the question. These tasks require some mental calories and time, since you have to eliminate choices which don't fully match the point of the question, while all of the sentence choices are, by nature, related to the overall theme of the passage. Don't hurry through these: you really must take your time and be careful with these questions.

Finally, the people at ETS now throw a couple of Critical Reasoning questions (a la GMAT) into the GRE Reading Comp section. In essence, these questions quote an argument stated in the Reading Comp passage and ask, "Which of the following statements, if true, best weakens/strengthens the argument above?" Keep a cool head, and be pessimistic when eliminating wrong answers. Be careful, but remember the clock.

Now, earlier, I tried to frighten you about the prominence of vocabulary in the GRE Verbal section. I have some sound advice

for you. If you've ever attended my GMAT Reading Comprehension classes, you've already heard my rant about reading. READ! No excuses, padawans. Start reading English-language books now, and don't stop. Read for pleasure, read for fun, read for the sake of reading. Get used to putting away at least 400 pages of text per week, or else your reading load at graduate school may endanger your mental health.

Quantitative Section

The GRE Quantitative section is still easier than that on the GMAT, but unlike that on the GMAT, it's not computer-adaptive, and they now throw in a calculator.

The pop-up calculator is akin to the basic calculator you use when computing your monthly bills: simple functions, plus M+, MR, MC and square root. That's it. Don't try to calculate something to the fourteenth power on it, unless the "something" is 1 or less. As on the undergraduate SAT exam, the addition of a calculator is a mixed blessing. Don't forget that your brain and your scratch paper are still powerful allies. Only through extensive test practice can you understand where a calculator will save you time and when it will only distract you. Compound interest? Use the calc. Square roots? Sure, sometimes use the calc. Multiplying something by 4? Oh, come on. Your brain is often faster than your mouse-clicking skills.

Be wary of ETS's preparation tips on solving the Quantitative Comparison problems. They recommend "simplifying" the competing equations before tackling the comparisons. However, often you can solve them by "plugging in" numbers, such as 0, 1, -1, 0.001, 5, 10 and 1000000, rather than going through the steps of simplifying the equations, which eats precious time. A good, "intuitive" knowledge of mathematical principles is useful here. Refreshing your understanding of fractions, exponents and the properties of negative numbers is very important.

The Multiple-selection problems are either in a "which of the following is true?" format or in a "which of the following amounts could be the result?" variant. The former is quite standard, while the latter is simply an equation dictating a range of results from which to choose, presented in order. The simple approach to the range problems is to solve for the minimum range (heck, use the calculator!), write it down, solve for the maximum, jot that down, and

click along the answers that fit. These problems should inspire no fear.

Data Interpretation Sets are possibly the simplest questions in the Quantitative Section, where either you have to stare at one or two graphs for ten seconds to get your answer, or interpret the data on these one or two graphs, and crunch them through the calculator. The most insidious danger on the latter problems is failing to understand the exact specifications of the question at hand. Even if your math skills are strong, and especially if you're an international student, make sure to double-check the question before you submit your answer. The testwriters at ETS have outdone themselves in making the wording of these questions wordy, clever and annoying.

My best advice for preparing for the Quantitative section is to practice, practice, practice. Understanding the word problems, identifying potential traps and pitfalls, and recognizing similarly-themed problems are all necessary skills which will only come from practicing Quantitative problems, set after set. Also, beginning with a GRE course with a human mathematics tutor will guide you to the right approaches to the problems, and to the right areas for further study.

Skipping Around

The Revised GRE is not computer-adaptive, so "skipping around" questions and "going back" is allowed. In an effort to be more "test taker-friendly," ETS even allows you to mark answered questions for later review, and you have a "Review" button which shows you a table of all the questions you've attempted, and those you haven't.

This is certainly a liberating function, but it should also not be abused. Skipping many problems "just because they look hard" is a bad idea, and in the long run, a waste of time. Give every problem a strong attempt – you do have time – and only skip one if it's a real pain. Often problems require a comprehensive approach that you'll hit upon only if you scratch your head for 15-20 seconds. If you skip such a problem instantly, you'll later have to re-read and re-understand it. For Quantitative problems, always take notes on your scratch paper, and if you decide to leave a problem for solving later, circle your notes, jot down the problem number, and only then skip it.

A Few Software Prep Tools

Since the GRE is a computer-based test, I personally feel that, in addition to taking a

course, using software simulators to prepare is a good way to go. Since software simulators are limited in the volume of problems they present, they're best used when the test is coming up, in one or two months.

Just remember Alex's Tip #439 when taking practice sections: Do not pay attention only to the answers you got wrong, but also make sure to review the answers you got right, to understand why they were right, and thus reinforce your learning and confidence.

GRE PowerPrep II "Official" Software

ETS's preparatory software release comes across as a bit rudimentary in quality, since they had to put together *something* really fast to give to students, but is still a helpful tool.

Firstly, if you're an international student, do not wait for the CD to arrive in your mailbox. It's automatically sent to you when you register for the test, but my copy arrived two weeks after I'd already taken the test. Download it directly from the ETS site; this is the 21st century, after all.

Secondly, it won't launch instantly on all Windows setups. Don't despair. This is a commonly experienced issue, and it's documented in the help files. If you simply go to the "ETS" directory where it's installed and run "launch.bat" directly, it works fine.

Note, some of the Quantitative Comparison problems are simply wrong, as sometimes numbers are assumed to be integers, but the problems don't specify this. (The general instructions state that all numbers are assumed to be real numbers). For example, in the questions, if you use real numbers, such as decimals or fractions, the comparison can't be resolved, while if you use only integers, it can. Just keep this in mind if you get a couple of "wrong" answers and can't figure out why.

The vocabulary on the Verbal is for the most part on the same level as that on the test, and the balance between types of questions is also similar.

Kaplan GRE Premier CD Rom Practice Sets (included with the book)

This is a professional tool, since you get what you pay for.

Instead of being presented in a whole-test-like format, like the ETS software, the

Kaplan software includes 10 sets each for the Verbal and Quantitative sections. This is nice for busy people, who have kids or bosses who won't give them peace for more than half an hour at a time.

Cambridge "Cracking the New GRE" DVD

Also a professional tool. I honestly ran through this package only cursorily, but it seems to be on the same level of quality and ease-of-use as the Kaplan CD.

All the software packages mentioned above provide prompts for the Analytical Writing, but my best recommendation for that is to take the prompts, write the essays, and have a native English-speaking GRE teacher grade them for you.

Since I don't share my reviews of the paper books it doesn't mean that I find the paper books useless – quite the contrary. It's just that all of the tips and techniques outlined in the books can be better learned from a live teacher in a GRE Prep course. Remember, the books weren't written primarily for international students, while a teacher will help you custom-tailor your strategies based on your personal abilities and needs. However, if you have the extra time, the books don't hurt. Personally, I'd rather you be reading something you enjoy instead, building your vocabulary-in-context, boosting your reading speed and enhancing visual verbal strength.

Conclusion

The new Revised GRE is neither a nightmare, nor some slapped-together "problem child." It's a well put-together test, which demonstrates a departure from the status quo in two directions. On the one hand, ETS has eliminated many seemingly arbitrary aspects of the Verbal section while adding contemporary approaches to the Quantitative section, thus moving forward. On the other hand, the departure from computer adaptive sections, and the adoption of the "test-taker friendly approach" of reviewing questions, is actually a return to the feel of classic paper-based tests.

Contemporary education is rife with such a conflict: "How can we present classical material to a modern audience?" I feel the new GRE makes a solid effort to address that quandary and present a test that is fair but challenging.

Study wisely, and best of luck!

-Alex



Cranfield, continued from page 8.

Sports There are many different sports activities and you should choose to take part in at least one during your MBA. They include rugby, touch rugby, football, tennis, table tennis, cricket, basketball and many others. There are football and rugby pitches, tennis courts, a sports hall, two gyms, a sauna and a swimming pool. Remember, the tougher the sport, the better and closer friends you get playing it.

You'll really enjoy participating in impressive sports events such as Burn's Night (held in London or Cranfield) and MBAT (in Paris) where you will compete with other business schools from around Europe.

International Business Experience (IBE) The IBE is one of the most fascinating events of your MBA. It's paid for by the school and is a compulsory part of your study. You'll choose a destination country from the list of around 10 countries. The list varies from year to year but it normally includes countries such as Brazil, Chile, China, Japan, the USA, South Africa, Cambodia, Ghana and Cuba. You go to the country in a group accompanied by your group leader from the faculty. You'll study local economics and business culture, visit companies and network locally, have dinners and drinks to better understand the national mentality and cultural paradigm. You'll be asked to produce several reports about various aspects of your visit such as the business culture and a cultural metaphor. Some students will decide to go



on a field trip – an adventurous and challenging project conducted by an NGO in a remote location.

Cranfield Regatta The Cranfield Regatta is an absolutely fantastic experience of a 3-day sailing race. It costs extra but you shouldn't miss it. You'll experience real teamwork in a very extreme environment, controlled by a professional skipper and first mate. You might have a new hobby after this race.

Life on Campus Life on campus could be a bit boring if you don't know how to handle it – but on the other hand, it does help you make really good friends with your MBA colleagues. You can team up and go to Milton Keynes, Bedford or London where you can find fantastic attractions, sights and nightclubs. In terms of living arrangements, there are many options available for singles but unfortunately only a few options for couples. I'd advise against living on campus if you are with your partner and don't have kids, as there's only one option. You're in a better position if you have kids, because you'll get a two-floor family house. But anyone can choose to live off campus and take a house or a room in a nearby village.

There's a pre-school on campus and a school in Cranfield village nearby. You'll be surprised how quickly your kids will start speaking English.

Career Service There's a career service in school, but you're wrong if you expect them to find a job for you. They will advise you, help you write a CV and cover letters, they'll keep sending open positions they pick up from internet and their peers, but they won't find you a job. You have to do it yourself and the earlier you start searching, the better.

Life Changing It's wrong to expect your MBA will solve all your problems, but it will definitely change your life. You'll learn how to work with very diverse people and how to distinguish what is important and not so important. It'll improve your communication and people skills, it'll open the door to international business worldwide and it's up to you whether you walk through that door and where it takes you. Be prepared for challenges, pressure, hard work and lots of fun. You'll like how you've changed after your MBA.





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Notes from the Underground: Cranfield School of Management, Cranfield University, UK

By Alexander Shaf – full-time
MBA student, class 2011

I'm writing this note sitting in a high speed train, travelling from Milton Keynes to the centre of London, where I'm meeting my friend for some final drinks before departing for Moscow. It takes less than an hour by taxi and train to commute between Cranfield University campus and the centre of London.

Just one week ago you could have found me sitting on a terrace on the west coast of Sicily, with an amazingly beautiful sea view, talking to old friends about an exciting, one-year life changing experience at Cranfield – the No. 1 business school in the UK according to The Economist in 2010.

Let's now briefly cover various aspects of study there:

O-Week Every cohort starts its study at this fascinating time when a team of orienteers from recent alumni introduces you to the culture, life and the pace of work at Cranfield. Although brief, this is a week you'll never forget. You're busy from dawn until dusk, having insightful lectures in the mornings followed by lunches, team challenges and networking events until late. You will experience everything from incredible assignments, which feel like reading Tolstoy's War and Peace before the next morning, to cross-dressing for the Cabaret night which everyone takes part in. You'll be introduced to your first learning team, the 3-day working cycle and many other requirements of the learning process. Welcome to the beginning of your fascinating journey into big business.

Study Process The programme is broken down into 4 terms of approximately 10 weeks each. There is 3 week Christmas break between terms 1 and 2, a two-week break between terms 2 and 3 and one-week break between terms 3 and 4 when you go on what's called the 'International Business Experience' and explore business in a different country. You usually have 3 lectures a day, of 70 minutes each. But that's not all. You'll be busy for the rest of your day working in your learning team, working on a project, participating in a business competition, playing sport or taking part in optional workshops and lectures. Don't be surprised if you have to work at the weekend – sometimes it's necessary. While all the lectures in terms 1 and 2 are compulsory and the schedule is the same for everybody, terms 3 and 4 are made up of optional electives. You'll have your own schedule and will need to form your own working teams, so you have to be very organised to handle it.

Lecturers Many of the lecturers are brilliant! You'll enjoy economics, operations, strategy, finance and lectures in organisational behaviour and personal and professional development. There are some lecturers you may not think are quite so good.

WACs WAC stands for Written Analysis of a Case. You'll be given an assignment on Friday afternoon and, oh bugger, 24 hours to complete a 1500-word business report solving the issue. You're right – they don't care you normally have drinks with your friends on Fridays. The first Microeconomics WAC will be given to you by the Director of the Full-Time MBA Programme and it will be your most scary experience of term 1 – except the exams, of course. There will be 4 compulsory WACs during your study and 3 more optional WACs on some electives during terms 3 and 4.

Case Studies 'Always! Always! Always read the case!' was what was said to us by one of our orienteers. Unfortunately I didn't read all of them, but found it exceptionally interesting reading them back before leaving Cranfield. Cases give you insight into others' experience and help you to be confident in the decisions you make. The cases include fascinating stories of success and failure from various companies and industries from all over the world.

Exams and Marks All marks are based on normal distribution or the so-called bell curve. What does this mean? You could theoretically get 100 marks, but this will never happen. Most of scores will be in the vicinity of 60 which is a median for the group. If a median is higher or lower than 60, the scores will be normalised by adding or subtracting a certain number from all the marks. You have to get at least 50 after the normalisation to pass the module. The exams are pretty tough in term 1 – there are four exams in three days. It's especially stressful because you don't yet know what an examiner is expecting from you. Don't be afraid – concentrate and prepare well. Believe me, all the other exams in terms 2, 3 and 4 will be easier.

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