PREPARING FOR THE GRE

For complete information visit the web site at (www.ets.org)

1-2 Semesters prior to the GRE

♦ ETS provides free practice software and other preparation materials on the website: http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare. More practice tests and questions can be obtained through GRE Study Books available for purchase through bookstores.
♦ Obtain basic geometry and algebra textbooks
♦ Locate your Introductory Psychology textbook or obtain a new one

Entire semester prior to GRE; study 15-20 hours per week

♦ Take a practice GRE test to get a feel for the set up; many of the study guides suggest this and include a “pre-test” which is similar to actual GRE tests; this helps you to get in the right "frame of mind" while you are reviewing.

   For the Verbal Section:
   Review the GRE study guide/word list for words unfamiliar to you; review this list intensely; try to use the words in context; remember that the GRE will only have a small sample of those words, so decide how much study time will be valuable to your learning process

   For the Quantitative Section:
   Read and work through all of the review portions of the GRE study guides; work through the entire algebra and entire geometry books (all problems and take notes); don’t waste time working through material and problems you already know and feel comfortable doing

   For the Writing Assessment Section:
   You will complete a 30-minute “Analyze an Issue” task and a 30-minute “Analyze an Argument” task. This will assess your ability to articulate and support complex ideas, analyze an argument and sustain a focused and coherent discussion. GRE provides software to give you advice on how to write effective essays.

   For the Psych Subject Test:
   Review your Intro to Psych book and take lots of notes; try to combine the information in your Intro book with that in the GRE study guide (the GRE tends to emphasize names and studies, not general ideas, so keep this in mind when reviewing). Also, look over your Developmental, Social, and Cognitive textbooks.

♦ During or after reviewing the GRE study guides, textbooks, word lists, etc., take the practice tests in the GRE study guides as if they were for real and allow about 3 hours non-stop so you can see how the GRE works. After completing each test, go over it and learn from your mistakes; add new information to your notes, etc. If you choose to do only one thing to prepare for the GRE, take lots of practice tests! You are expected to know the directions and understand how the GRE is set up when you take it since the instructions are not gone over during the actual test. If you take the practice tests in the middle of your ‘preparation’ time, you see where the weak areas are and can concentrate on those areas.
Registering for the GRE

- The General test is computer-based and offered on certain dates so call well in advance of date you want to take the exam. Testing is available at ISU Testing Services located in the Student Services Building (294-5058). You may also contact Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions at www.Kaplan.com. Application booklets are available at the ISU Testing Services located in the Student Services Building.
- Register early! The General Test is available frequently but Subject Tests are given only a few times a year, don't wait until the last minute to register or you may miss your opportunity to take your Subject Test before application deadlines!
- Be sure to take the GRE in time to have results sent to the schools you are applying to (allow at least six weeks)
- Continue to review and take practice tests as time permits (10 hours/week??)

Right before the exam
- Get lots of sleep the week before the GRE and especially the night before.

Test day
- Arrive at least 30 minutes before your start time to make sure you know where you are going and that you are on time. Be sure to have your forms of identification, including a picture ID. If you are taking a Subject Test, make sure to bring sharpened pencils and spare erasers as well.

Results
- You will be able to view your unofficial scores for the Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning immediately after taking the test. You will then need to decide whether to send only your most recent scores to your selected institutions or to send all scores from all attempts of the GRE to your selected institutions.
- Results will be mailed to you in 10-15 days for the computer test and 4-6 weeks for the writing assessment.
- If you are not pleased with your results you can take it again. Please note: If you have studied for a considerable period of time in your field since last taking a Subject Test, a retake may be advisable. However, unless your scores seem unusually low compared with other indicators of your ability, taking a GRE test again is not likely to result in a substantial score increase. In fact, there is some chance that your scores may drop.
- Apply for graduate school. Application deadlines for many Ph.D. programs are in January while MS program deadlines usually in late March or early April.

Other Considerations
- When registering for the GRE, write down addresses of 4 schools you are considering applying to, even if you’re not sure you’ll apply there. ETS will send scores to these 4 schools “for free,” then it is $25 per school. It adds up very quickly!
- On the subject test, there is a deduction for each incorrect answer. It is not wise to guess randomly, but if you can narrow it down to a couple of good choices, it works to your advantage.
- The scores that programs prefer are listed in the APA Graduate Study in Psychology book, which can be bought through the University Bookstore or used in the Psych Resource Room (W022 Lago).

WARNING!! Take preparing for the GRE very seriously! Competition is very intense for Ph.D. programs. There are often approximately 150-250 people applying for 6-10 positions. Your experiences, personal statement, letters of recommendation, etc. are all important, but to make the “first cut” these schools look at GRE scores and GPA. This is a necessity to handle such massive amounts of applicants. All of your materials are reviewed only if you make the first cut.

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