

Change in Structure of GRE Test

As of October 1, 2002, the GRE General Test will undergo a significant change. The GRE Writing Assessment, which was introduced in October 1999, will replace the current analytical section and will be renamed the analytical writing section to better reflect the nature of the test. Scoring on this section will be 0.0 to 6.0, with half-point increments. The content and scoring (200-800) of the verbal and quantitative sections will not change. Following is some information to assist you as you seek to determine how this structure change may be used in evaluating applicants to your department.

What is the new analytical writing section designed to assess?

- * Higher level critical thinking and analytical writing skills of applicants.
- * A test taker's ability to make and critique arguments which is central to the work done by graduate students in many fields.

What is the new analytical writing section like?

- * Task 1-“Present your Perspective on an Issue” states an opinion on an issue of general interest and asks the test takers to address the issue from any perspective(s) they wish, as long as they provide relevant reasons and examples to explain and support their views.
- * Task 2-“Analyze an Argument” requires test takers to critique an argument by discussing how well reasoned they find it. Test takers are asked to consider the logical soundness of the argument rather than to agree or disagree with the position it presents.

How should the scores for the new section be interpreted?

Although the GRE Analytical Writing Measure contains two discrete analytical writing tasks, a single combined score is reported because it is more reliable than is a score for either test alone. Because the test is designed to assess analytical writing, critical thinking skills (the ability to reason, assemble evidence to develop a position, and communicate complex ideas) weigh more heavily than control of the fine points of grammar or the mechanics (e.g. spelling) of writing. Per ETS, the statements below describe, for each score level, the overall quality of analytical writing demonstrated across both the Issue and Argument tasks.

- * **Scores 6 and 5.5**-The writer sustains insightful, in-dept analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with logically compelling reasons and/or highly persuasive examples; is well focused and well organized; skillfully uses sentence variety and precise vocabulary to convey meaning effectively; demonstrates superior facility with sentence structure and language usage but may have minor errors that do not interfere with meaning.
- * **Scores 5 and 4.5**-The writer provides generally thoughtful analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with logically sound reasons and/or well-chosen examples; is generally focused and well organized; uses sentence variety and vocabulary to convey meaning clearly; demonstrates good control of

sentence structure and language usage but may have minor errors that do not interfere with meaning.

- * **Scores 4 and 3.5**-The writer provides competent analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with relevant reasons and/or examples; is adequately organized; conveys meaning with reasonable clarity; demonstrates satisfactory control of sentence structure and language usage but may have some error that affect clarity.
- * **Scores 3 and 2.5**-The writer displays some competence in analytical writing, although the writing is flawed in at least one of the following ways: limited analysis or development; weak organization; weak control of sentence structure or language usage, with errors that often result in vagueness or lack of clarity.
- * **Scores 2 and 1.5**-The writer displays serious weaknesses in analytical writing. The writing is seriously flawed in at least one of the following ways: serious lack of analysis or development; lack of organization; serious and frequent problems in sentence structure or language usage, with errors that obscure meaning.
- * **Scores 1 and .5**-The writer displays fundamental deficiencies in analytical writing. The writing is fundamentally flawed in at least one of the following ways: content that is extremely confusing or mostly irrelevant to the assigned tasks; little or no development; severe and pervasive errors that result in incoherence.
- * **Score 0**-The examinee's analytical writing skills cannot be evaluated because the responses do not address any part of the assigned tasks, are merely attempts to copy the assignments, are in a foreign language, or display only indecipherable text or no text whatsoever.