

CAT 2011: Helpful tips for a smooth experience

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With only a week left before the start of this year's testing window, it would be reasonable to assume that most candidates are sufficiently well prepared for the Common Admission Test 2011. While a firm grip on the test content is definitely the most important cornerstone of preparation for an exam; familiarity with the testing environment always gives one an edge.

Pre – CAT preparation

Prometric places immense importance on candidate convenience. It is for this reason that we have equipped the IIMs with preparatory tools in the form of information, videos and a practice test, for their CAT website. All candidates are encouraged to take the practice test on www.catiim.in and familiarize themselves with the exam screen layout, navigation tools like "Next", "Previous", "Mark" etc., review screen and on-screen timer. This would also enable them to understand the concept of the timed sections and alleviate any apprehension they may have regarding the new format.

It is also advisable for candidates to check their test centre location, travel time and traffic conditions in advance, and plan their travel accordingly. A map with travel directions is available for all test centres on the CAT website. Candidates should also get all their documents in place a day or two before the test day to avoid any last minute stress. These would be the Admit Card for CAT 2011 and a valid and original photo identification. SC/ST and DA candidates should also bring along supporting documents with them. For a list of acceptable forms of photo identification, visit the CAT website. If in doubt, candidates may bring a notarized Affidavit in English.

Prometric may also send important updates via email so candidates should check their email account regularly. The CAT website is also a good source for the latest information.

What to expect at the test centre

As stated in all previous communication, candidates are expected to arrive at their scheduled test centre at least an hour and a half before their scheduled test time. Only registered CAT 2011 candidates will be allowed inside the test centre. Candidates must present their Admit Card and photo identification and carry those with them at all times. Candidates will not be allowed to take the test if either of these is not presented. Apart from Admit Cards, photo identification, SC/ST and DA documents, nothing will be allowed inside the actual testing room. Candidates will be required to store small personal belongings in a bag away from the testing area. They should not bring bags, valuables and large items to the test centre as Prometric will not be able to store these.

As part of the biometric check-in process, a candidate's digital image as well as fingerprint will be captured. This will allow the IIMs to verify a candidate's identity during any follow-up interviews. Once the check-in process is completed, candidates will be escorted to their assigned seats. There could be some waiting time before the test starts, to allow for all candidates to be checked in. For the full test day procedure, a video is available from the CAT website.

Taking the CAT 2011

Prior to the commencement of the actual test, there will be a 15-minute tutorial that candidates are advised to go through. All candidates will be provided with scratch paper, pencils and an eraser for use during the test. After reading and accepting the non-disclosure agreement, the test will begin. All candidates will first be presented with the section on Quantitative Ability (QA) & Data Interpretation (DI). A countdown timer set at 1 hour 10 minutes (i.e. 70 minutes) will appear on the top-right corner of every screen. Candidates can navigate within this section using the “Next”, “Previous” and “Review” buttons. Since the two sections are separately timed, test takers can focus all their energies on one section at a time. Once the time ends for the first section, candidates will no longer be able to go back to it. The second section on Verbal Ability (VA) and Logical Reasoning (LR), will then begin, with a fresh timer counting down once again from 1 hour 10 minutes. Security is taken very seriously at Prometric. The security measures we have in place for CAT not only protects IIMs’ intellectual property, but also the test experience of genuine, legitimate candidates. All testing areas will be audio and video recorded and any suspicious or disruptive behavior could lead to a candidate’s test being invalidated by the IIMs. For any issues during the test, candidates may raise their hand to notify a test centre administrator. A technician will also be on stand-by at every location.

All registered candidates will get to test

Prometric has taken all the necessary precautions to ensure candidates have a smooth testing experience. All test centres have been quarantined prior to the start of the testing window to allow Prometric to prepare and test all the equipment that is being used for CAT.

In the unlikely event of a technical issue, candidates are requested to remain calm and immediately alert a test centre administrator. All our test centre staff have been fully trained and certified, and are well equipped to assist candidates during the test. We have built in excess capacity in all locations to cater for any unforeseen technical issues that cannot be resolved by the on-site technician. In case a new terminal is assigned to a candidate, the test will resume from the point it was last left so the candidate will not lose any testing time. Finally, we would like to assure all candidates that Prometric remains committed to providing the best possible testing experience, and that all registered candidates will get to test within this year’s testing window.

We wish all candidates the very best for CAT 2011.

Checklist for a smooth experience

- Carry the right documents – latest Admit Card, original and valid identification, SC/ST and DA support documents
- Plan sufficient travel time, check map/directions on the CAT website
- Arrive at least one-and-a-half (1.5) hours before scheduled test time
- Make use of the practice test to get a feel of the functionality and navigation of the actual test
- Check emails regularly for any updates from Prometric