

XAT Syllabus & Exam Pattern Guide

A section-wise reference summary for XAT aspirants

XAT (Xavier Aptitude Test) is conducted by XLRI Jamshedpur on behalf of XAMI and is used for admission to 250+ B-schools across India. Held annually in January, the exam is known for testing not just academic aptitude but also decision-making and ethical reasoning. This guide summarises the exam pattern, section-wise syllabus, marking scheme, and preparation strategy in one place.

Exam Pattern

The test is computer-based and conducted once a year, split into two parts within a combined duration of 180 minutes.

Feature	Details
Mode	Online (Computer-Based Test)
Total Duration	180 minutes
Part 1 Duration	170 minutes
Part 2 (GK) Duration	10 minutes
Total Questions	~95
Sections	3 in Part 1, 1 in Part 2

Marking Scheme

- Part 1: +1 mark for each correct answer
- Part 1: -0.25 mark for each wrong answer
- Part 1: -0.10 mark for every unattempted question beyond the first 8
- Part 2 (GK): +1 mark for each correct answer, no negative marking
- PwD candidates get an additional 20 minutes per hour

Sections & Structure

Part 1 – Verbal Ability & Logical Reasoning (VALR)

Roughly 26 questions. Tests command over English and logical structuring of ideas.

- Reading comprehension, including passages built around poems and cartoons
- Vocabulary, analogies, idioms and phrases
- Para-jumbles and para-completion
- Critical and analytical reasoning
- Grammar-based questions and cloze tests

Part 1 – Decision Making (DM)

Roughly 21 questions. Evaluates ethical judgment and real-world decision-making.

- Scenarios drawn from personal and professional life
- Ethical dilemmas and workplace caselets
- Business decision scenarios involving prioritisation
- Situations testing fairness and resource distribution

Part 1 – Quantitative Aptitude & Data Interpretation (QA & DI)

Roughly 28 questions. Tests numerical ability and analytical thinking.

- Arithmetic: percentages, profit & loss, ratio & proportion, time-speed-distance, time & work
- Algebra: equations, functions, progressions
- Geometry & mensuration: lines, circles, polygons, 3D figures
- Modern maths: probability, permutations & combinations
- Data interpretation: graphs, charts and tables requiring careful analysis

Part 2 – General Knowledge (GK)

20 questions (roughly 8 static GK and 12 current affairs). Used by XLRI at the final selection stage.

- Static GK: history, geography, business, economy, Constitution of India
- Current affairs: budget updates, international organisations, awards, books & authors, science, sports

Why the Decision Making Section Matters

DM is what sets XAT apart from other MBA entrance exams. It tests how candidates handle ethical conflicts, competing interests, and managerial trade-offs — skills that mirror real corporate decision-making rather than textbook problem-solving.

Preparation Strategy

- Read daily, including editorials, poems and cartoon-based pieces, to build RC comfort
- Solve previous years' papers to get familiar with question formats and difficulty
- Practice DM caselets regularly for logical, ethically sound answers
- Attempt every GK question since wrong answers aren't penalised
- Balance speed with accuracy in Part 1 given the negative marking
- Take timed mock tests and review mistakes section-wise