Taking the GRE

Historically, candidates applying for admission to graduate business programs have been required to take the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT). However, an increasing number of business schools now accept the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE); the GRE is used extensively for admission to graduate programs in the humanities.

The School of Accountancy will accept either the GRE or the GMAT for candidates applying for admission to the Masters in Professional Accountancy (MPA) program. However, the GRE is preferred for the following reasons:

1. Prestigious business schools (e.g., Harvard, Stanford) accept the GRE
2. The cost of taking the GRE is considerably less than the cost of taking the GMAT
3. The GRE is given frequently at a test site on the Hattiesburg campus; taking the GMAT requires travel to Jackson, New Orleans, etc.

Detailed Instructions for taking the GRE¹

A. The website for the exam is www.ets.org/gre. You can also reach the site at www.gre.org.

B. Under the section titled “GRE revised General Test,” there is a link “Register for the Test,” where you can register. You will have to create an account to register for the exam. Make sure the name you use when registering exactly matches the ID you will use at the test center. There is a list on the website of different valid ID types, including driver’s license, passport, and military ID. The fee for taking the GRE is $150 (January, 2013).

C. The GRE is composed of three different sections: analytical writing, verbal reasoning, and quantitative reasoning.

   a. The analytical writing section consists of two written essays. One of the essays is analyzing an issue, in which you present an argument and provide evidence supporting your view. The other essay is analyzing an argument, in which you evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of another’s argument.

   b. The verbal reasoning section evaluates your ability to analyze written material. It covers reading comprehension, text completion, and sentence equivalence.

   c. The quantitative reasoning section evaluates mathematical skills and concepts, including arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis.

¹ These detailed instructions were provided by MPA Graduate Assistant Anna McLain.
D. Under the “Prepare for the Test” link, there is detailed information regarding each section and the different types of questions that will be on the exam. There are sample questions and even a bank of possible essay questions. There are also numerous study guides available. If you have a Windows-based computer, ETS offers free software (Powerprep II) you can download. It includes two practice tests and scored essays. The website 800score.com offers 5 sample exams with explanations for $18. These questions were very similar to the ones on the exam. The complete course, which also includes a prep guide for all three sections, is $26. There are also numerous guides you can purchase. I found it most helpful to actually take the practice tests and then focus on those areas where I was weakest.

E. The scores for the verbal and quantitative reasoning sections will appear on your screen as soon as you finish your exam. However, they will not be immediately available online through your GRE account, so record these scores from the screen. Report these scores to Graduate School Admissions; this will alert the Graduate School that your official scores will be forthcoming soon. Also inform the MPA Director that you have taken the GRE along with your recorded scores.

F. You will not receive your score for the essay section until you get your official report, but your scores should be available in your GRE account shortly before you receive your paper copy. It takes 10-15 days for the official scores to be sent to you and your score recipients.

Take the GRE early!

Candidates are advised to schedule and take the GRE as soon as possible after your decision to apply to enter the MPA program. Also, candidates should prepare for the GRE by taking sample tests (see prior section). Completing all requirements for admission to the Graduate School as early as possible prior to the next academic term increases a candidate’s chances of obtaining a Graduate Assistantship and facilitates timely enrollment in graduate courses.