Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT) 2014
Sunday, January 05, 2014

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SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

CAT v/s the XAT

Academically and experientially, three things make XAT eminently a better examination as compared to the IIMCAT.

1. The XAT is designed beautifully. It is more holistic (because of the Essay and the GK) as compared to the CAT. A candidate really needs to do a 360 degrees preparation.

2. The XAT is a paper-based test, and conducted on a single day. This helps it retain the old world touch of a competitive test, with hundreds or thousands at each test venue, unlike a different feel one gets while writing the IIM-CAT (20 or 40 people in a slot sitting in a comp lab). The crowd at XAT venues makes a big difference to a candidate's mindset, and perhaps, is instrumental in bringing out the best in many.

3. The Decision Making section, which truly stands apart in its merit of judging what test-takers really believe in (the value systems stuff, and commonsense etc.). Some of the DI questions this time were beautifully designed.

Just one limitation : at times, the XAT crosses the line between toughness and incomprehensibleness. They should remember that the golden rule of management practice the world over is Keep It Short and Simple. But then, they are the examiners, and we have no choice but to play the game by their rules.

Talking of XAT 2014

They modified the pattern once again, and structured it differently. Since there was no differential marking, strategizing at the beginning of the test was easier. Since all questions carry equal marks, the SSSS technique can be applied directly – Scan and Search for the relatively easy ones, Select them (and mark with a pen or pencil), and Solve them. Do it a second time for the second round of tougher questions. And so on.

The XAT 2014 was in two parts + Essay + OMR sheet:

Part 1 – Aptitude Test – suggested 140 minutes – covered three sections:

Verbal Ability, Decision making, Quantitative Ability (including Data Interpretation)

Part 2 – General Knowledge

Suggested time 10 minutes. Students were free to do whatever they chose to, with the 150 minutes in all.

OMR sheet taken away at the end of 150 minutes.

ESSAY to be written in 20 minutes now.

Topic : The most important things in the world cannot be seen but can be felt by heart.

PART I
APTITUDE TEST

Section A. Verbal Ability (28 questions – 13 EU/Vocab/Grammar/Reasoning + 15 RC spread over 5 passages)
Difficulty level : Moderate to Tough.

Again, it was a brilliantly designed set of questions that checked three skills:

1. Are you a regular, serious reader in English language?
2. Do you pay attention to the small things that matter?
3. Do you think and analyse facts and figures when you read, and have your opinion?

The 13 questions in English Usage / Verbal were designed with a lot of thought.

The 5 fill in the blank (FIB) questions were tricky. With 2 to 5 blanks in the questions, some based on articles (a, an, the…), only those with ample reading practice could have attempted them safely! Questions based on grammar and para-jumbles were straightforward, but indeed required higher-than-normal language skills, for sure! Reasoning questions were tough. A question in grammar asked you the "parts of speech" for the given question. Now that needs fundamental understanding of English!

The RC passages – five in number – were from themes as diverse as "The morality of governments and armies & their redundancy", "Rationality and irrationality in advertising and decision making by corporates and individuals", "Probability as a verifiable theory", "Work for money's sake is the worst downfall of man" and "The difficulty of independent choices". As one can see, these are not easy themes that anyone can attempt off the shelf. The XAT repeatedly reminds its candidates that if you have not been serious with learning the language over several years, you won't get through the portals easily. In several questions in RC, the use of words like "implies that" and "arguably" etc. made things more difficult as personal interpretation comes into play. In all, 15 questions in RC gave the serious reader a good chance to surge ahead. It was crucial that you choose the right passages to attempt.

You should get at least 10-12 correct in this section to stand a fair chance at XLRI. Cutoff table given at the end also.

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Section B. Decision Making (24 questions)
Difficulty level : Moderate to tough.

How does a manager or business leader work in real life? With all facts at his /her disposal? Or with half-facts and half-truths? More likely, the latter version reflects the real world's subjective reality. And the Decision Making section of XAT precisely checks this nuanced ability to look between the lines (yes, yes, read also will do), and go beyond the obvious. A little bit of GK, a little touch of commonsense, some maths, and a lot of luck is surely a good combination to crack most of the DM questions.

As expected, the questions forced the students to try making practical decisions or chart a specific course of action. The section this year had a good number of mathematical questions too. Many questions reflected the happenings in our corporate and national life, in recent times. So that made it slightly easy to put a question in context. Commonsense questions like the "Merit pay for teachers and concern raised by parents" check a student's presence of mind, and reading span (ET, etc.). Some questions were very lengthy, making them unwieldy (for example : the smartphones sales case). These were the RC type cases / case-lets, again reinforcing the belief that XAT really wants you to be good at reading speed and comprehension.

You should get at least 8-10 correct in this section to stand a fair chance at XLRI. Cutoff table given at the end also.

Section C. Quantitative Ability (31 questions)
Difficulty level : Easy to moderate.

DI was clubbed with QA, though not mentioned in the section title. This was the easiest of the three sections in Aptitude test. If you have prepared for the CAT thoroughly, then this section was very doable. The topics were all standard – Arithmetic, Geometry, Statistics, Number system, Algebra, P&C and Probability, Set theory, and of course, DI caselets. It is important to use the "elimination of options" technique to improve your chances. This is something we have stressed upon in all our Percentile Booster Sessions also.

The good part in this section was that identifying the speed breakers was easy. They should have been really avoided. Spotting the easy ones and attempting them in the first round is very important. It build your confidence as you move through the section. The DI questions looked long and complex, but were easy if the graphs were deciphered with some effort.

You should get at least 12 to 14 correct in this section to stand a fair chance at XLRI. Cutoff table given at the end also.

PART II
GENERAL KNOWLEDGE - 20 questions

Included General Awareness / GK / Current Affairs
Difficulty level : Moderate.

No senseless questions asked. Every question had a direct link with your future career and what you really must be reading these days. So, well-designed! The examiner is trying to judge the following things: Are you really aware of what the corporate world in India is upto? Do you have idea of the scale and scope of what corporate and organizations do? Do you know that there is a world gathering called G-7? Do you realize that big companies are listed in a ranking called Fortune 500? Are you generally aware of the material and social challenges that policy makers face? Do you know what GDP really means, and how it is broken up into 3 major components? Are you aware of the major abbreviations and acronyms in use presently? Are you in the loop regarding major political and socio-economic movements

in India, and around the world? If you are asked to write the top 10 socio-political-economic headlines of the world, will you be able to do it correctly? **The options were very close in many questions**. The student should have very carefully eliminated some choices before going to the right ones. Caution – a question may look easy, but the closely placed options may make answering quite difficult. Hence take an extra ten seconds before jumping to conclusions.

The questions clearly prove that you need to prepare for 12 months prior to the exam, with a daily reading of at least two English newspapers, under expert supervision. We are happy to share that almost 80% of the questions that appeared in XAT 2013 GK section were directly discussed in PT's Knowledge Booster's 35 sessions with lots of examples and explanation. All these were also uploaded through videos inside the PT SRC. The rigour with which PT has covered the GK section is absolutely unmatched.

The tips for students targeting XAT 2014:
1. Start reading The Economic Times, and The Hindu right from today (1 hr each)
2. Be meticulous with PT's Knowledge Booster sessions, and the quizzes that follow
3. Try reading at least 1 business magazine regularly.
4. Solve all the tests in the SRC put inside the GK-CA builder
5. Attend all test specific revision sessions

Remember students: There is no alternative to regular reading of newspapers, and regular mentoring by a professionally designed course and system.
You should get at least 8-10 correct in this section to stand a fair chance at XLRI. Cutoff table given at the end also.

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then came the
Essay

"The most important things in the world cannot be seen but can be felt by heart"

While the topic looks pretty direct and simple, writing a meaningful essay on it will be far from anything simple. A really good effort should include the following ideas:

* Definition of what 'important things' really means to you
* What are the experiences that have truly moved you in your life so far?
* Difference between temporary pleasure and permanent happiness
* The fleeting nature of senses, and the associated pain and grief when one seeks permanence in them
* Many examples from Hindu philosophy of "Maya" could have been beautifully quoted here
* Role of Mass Media and Advertising in creating a world of illusions, perceptions and false identities **(many RC passages in this Test Paper itself could have given you a lot of material to write on this essay topic)**
* How to lead a better life, and how to create joy for others

As a general rule, you should make a good start – a dramatic quote is always appreciated. Similarly, you should end on a good note, with a solution, and a hint of optimism.

As you can see, the topic looks easy, but the quality of written word will vary significantly. At PT, we tried to cover all these concepts at a great length in our classes. We are sure many of our students must have pieced together the ideas at the right time.

Connecting the dots, as we call it!

OVERALL, a difficult test, beautifully designed, and requiring the best of each candidate. Please go through the rest of the analysis, and Predicted CutOffs, and and Answer Keys below.

CUTOFFS
See table at the end.

All the best – Kar ke dikhayenge!

OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

We present here an objective analysis of **Xavier Aptitude Test (XAT)** held on January 05, 2014 across India and some international locations.

XAT 2014 concentrated on checking the reading skills of students. The verbal ability section, decision making section, essay writing and the newly introduced general awareness section bear a testimony to that.

Some changes were introduced this year.

The GK section was alongwith the main aptitude paper. All questions carried equal marks. The total number of questions was 83 in Part I. So, for a student, selection became a very important factor.

In the Part II of the paper, 20 questions of general awareness were asked, as expected.

The Decision Making Section had very few questions from Analytical Reasoning and this was the trickiest section. The English Language Ability (and Logical Reasoning) section was of moderate difficulty level and the Quantitative Ability section was manageable and easy as compared to last year. The topic for Essay writing was very general.

One had to mark the answers on the OMR sheet with a pen; unlike some other exams, where the medium of marking is pencil. So there was no chance of changing an answer at the last moment. This was dangerous for the less prepared or for the ones in a jiffy!

Thus, the paper was full of surprises, which came to light section-by-section in 3 hrs.

Bird's Eye View - XAT 2014

Total Number of Questions – 83 in Part I and 20 in Part II

Total Time – 170 minutes (150 min for Part I + Part II and 20 min for Essay)

The Marking Scheme – It was mentioned that all questions carry equal marks, and negative marking was 25%

Number of Options – 5

Sections/Sectional Time Limit – Three sections in Part I and One (GK) in Part II

Essay Writing Topic – The most important things in the world cannot be seen but can be felt by heart.

Medium of marking – Black pen.

Sectional Break-up –

Part	Sections	Questions
I	Verbal Ability (and Reasoning)	28
	Decision Making	24
	Quantitative Ability (and Data Interpretation)	31
II	General Awareness	20
	Essay	
	Total	**103**

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Verbal Ability (and Reasoning)

This section was of **moderate** difficulty level. The vocabulary based questions, para jumbles and fill in the blanks were relatively easy. The reading comprehension based questions and logical reasoning questions were slightly difficult. Their options were confusing.

The detailed breakup of this section is given below:

Topic	No. of Questions	Difficulty Level
Logical Reasoning	2	Moderate
Grammar, L C I	2, 1	Moderate
F I B	6	Moderate to Difficult
Parra Jumbles	2	Easy
Reading Comprehension	15	Moderate to Difficult

A score of 10+ can be considered good in this section.

Decision Making

This section was of **higher** difficulty level. The questions required the skill of prudent and speedy judgement.

A score of 8+ can be considered good in this section.

Quantitative Ability and Data Interpretation

This section was **easy**. With good selection and speed a student could manage to get a high score. DI sets looked lengthy, with a lot of data, but could be attempted eaily, because the questions did not require lengthy calculations.

The detailed breakup of this section is given below:

Topic	No. of Questions	Difficulty Level
Arithmetic	5	Moderate
Geometry	7	Moderate to Tough
Advanced Maths (P&C, Logs, Sequences, Probabilitiy)	4	Moderate
Algebra	4	Easy
DS	2	Tough
DI	9	Easy to Moderate
Total	**31**	**Moderate**

A score of 13+ can be considered good in this section.

General Knowledge

GK was **easy to moderate**. To score high one needs a good reading habit as the fundamental skill.

A score of 8+ can be considered good in this section.

Essay

The essay topic was very general, and some quotations and examples would have made the examiner's day!
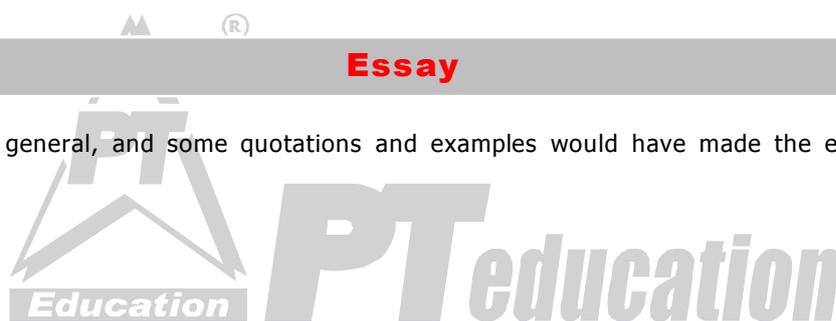
Estimated Cut offs

Sections	Topic	XLRI BM	XLRI PM and IR	XIMB
I	VA and LA	10+	8+	7+
II	DM	8+	6+	5+
III	QA and DI	15+	13+	12+
	Total	**35+**	**30+**	**27+**

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~Kar ke Dikhayenge~

Answer Key (Series B)

Q. No.	Question	Correct option
	Verbal and Logical Ability	
1	Choose the best option (mechanism of electro weak)……………..	A
2	Choose the best option (Shakespeare did not personally)……………..	E
3	The defense proposes ………………	B
4	Not just the absence ………………	A
5	In many cases………………	C
6	Peter has suggested to me………………	C
7	Clinical practitioners………………	A
8	Ontologies are ………………	D
9	The MBA………………	E
10	It is one week since………………	C
11	Which of the following is………………	E
12	When you look at the people………………	D
13	The fatal consequences………………	D
14	According to the author………………	B
15	In general, when would………………	D
16	Which of the following statements………………	C
17	Which of the following statements………………	A
18	Why has the author ………………	B
19	Which of the following, as per author,………………	B
20	The statement, "The relations between………………	D
21	Author has talked about the two………………	B
22	Which of the following statements………………	C
23	Which of the following would………………	D
24	Which of the following could………………	C
25	The author of the passage………………	B
26	Consider the statement given………………	E
27	Consider the statement given………………	B
28	Consider the statement given………………	C
	Decision Making	
29	How much profit can………………	B
30	How much profit can the company expect to make if the product………………	..
31	What is the probability of product ………………	B
32	If Rao and Reddy………………	D
33	Which of three members………………	B
34	Which of following members………………	B
35	Ms. Banerjee has to select………………	D
36	The main issues of………………	B
37	Consider merit pay for………………	A
38	Read the following newspaper ………………	D/E
39	A group of nine runners………………	C
40	Who is the best person ………………	D

Q. No.	Question	Correct option
41	After deliberation with many………………	C
42	Which is the right………………	C
43	What must not be done……………….	E
44	Rahim set up………………	E
45	Some of the managers………………	C
46	|f you analyze the three………………	E
47	Assume report 1 and report 3………………	E
48	If report 1 and report3………………	D
49	Which of the following is more likely………………	E
50	Some of the consultants were adept………………	B
51	After Ajay implemented some………………	E
52	Ajay was to retire………………	D
Quantitative Ability		
53	Consider the formula………………..	A
54	Prof. Suman takes ………………..	D
55	A polynomial…………………..	A
56	Consider four natural……………..	A
57	Triangle ABC is a right…………….	E
58	There are two circles ……………..	C
59	x, 17, ……………..	A
60	In quadrilateral PQRS…………….	C
61	The sum of the possible…………….	B
62	There are two windows…………….	A
63	Amitabh picks a random…………….	D
64	There are two squares …………….	D
65	Diameter of the base…………….	D
66	Aditya has a total of 18…………….	C
67	Read the following…………….	D
68	A rectangular. swimming…………….	D
69	The value of the expression: …………….	C
70	The probability that a randomly…………….	D
71	Circle C1 has a radius …………….	A
72	Consider a rectangle ABCD…………….	D
73	Two numbers, (297)B and (792)B,…………….	E
74	A teacher noticed a strange …………….	A
75	Which of the ,following countries,…………….	C
76	Which country…………….	D
77	Which of the following…………….	B
78	Which of the following could …………….	D
79	Which region has the highest…………….	B
80	The maximum GDP of African region…………….	E

Q. No.	Question	Correct option
81	In which of the following years……………..	C
82	In which of the following…………….	B
83	Let 'R' be the ratio of Foreign…………….	C
	General Knowledge	
84	Long Walk To Freedom' …………….	D
85	Which seventh century …………….	C
86	Which city houses …………..	B
87	Which Indian region is …………….	D
88	. The number of officially …………….	A
89	The ancient civilization of Sumer …………….	A
90	The following women have…………….	D
91	The correct ascending order …………….	B
92	The distance covered …………….	A
93	The newest country …………….	E
94	The G-7 is a group consisting …………….	B
95	The correct match between …………….	C
96	The correct match between …………….	A
97	The acronym "YAHOO" …………….	C
98	The list of persons …………….	E
99	The factor that least influences …………….	E
100	The sequence that contains a wrong match …………….	B
101	As per the Constitution…………….	D
102	Jawaharlal Nehru declared 'Poorna Swaraj' at ……………..	C
103	Who among the following was …………….	B