

CAT 2014 was the second time that the paper pattern of CAT changed after it went online. However, this years' CAT was much more flexible compared to the rigid sectional-timing based test encountered over the last couple of seasons. The first two slots on day 1 have been completed and the overall feedback so far has been the exam has been easier compared to earlier CATs but question selection is going to play a big role in deciding cut-offs. A major observation was the wide disparity in difficulty level between sectional areas i.e. QA was very easy whereas DILR was quite tough.

Summary	
Number of Sections	2
Number of questions	50 per section
Options per Question	4
Marks per Question	3
Negative Marking	1
Total Time	170 minutes
Sectional Timings	n/a

1. Section I - Quantitative Ability + Data Interpretation:

This was more or less a story of contrasts. While the QA questions were reported to be very easy (with approximately half of them being sitters), the DI questions were quite challenging. The QA questions were reported to be from nearly every area expected. Students would do well to not rely on just a couple of chapters. Based on student reports, the DI questions were not very calculation intensive (in terms of very large numbers) but involved application of logic and understanding what the given data meant. If the data was read and understood correctly, the set could be solved in approximately 12-15 minutes. In terms of style and complexity, they were similar to the infamous DILR sets asked in the CAT 2004-2008 era.

2. Section II - Verbal Ability + Logical Reasoning:

By far, this was the tougher of the two sections. The difficulty level of the VA questions has been reported to be moderate while that of LR questions has been reported to be tough. Students have claimed that there were nearly no questions on standard LR sets, and even if they were present, they were framed in such a way that comprehending them was quite difficult. The VA section has been reported to be comprehension-driven rather than vocabulary and word usage-driven. As such, students with a good reading habit stand to benefit compared to students who have focused more on words. In LR, the focus is clearly on selecting 2-3 sets that should be attempted and avoiding the toughest ones.

On the whole, while the test was easy, selecting the right questions was critical with DILR being the game-changer. 35 good attempts in section I and 30 good attempts in section II can be considered a good performance.