

Economist GMAT Tutor: A Study Plan for You

First Thing's First

The following is a study plan based on three months of study. As three months should be ample time, you may take advantage to brush up on concepts you may have forgotten, be they math concepts or even getting back into reading articles in English (whether you are a native or non-native English speaker!). Have a look, for example, at [this post](#) for tips on how to practice active reading. The idea is to get into the GMAT mindframe; if you have not started to get involved with your GMAT studies yet, you need to become more comfortable with the type of skills needed to successfully ace this exam.

A note on how to set a daily or weekly study schedule:

Your study schedule fully depends on who you are in terms of study habits, what is going on in your life, what your strengths and weaknesses are in terms of the skills necessary for this exam and how much time is available to you. Many GMAT students work full time and perhaps even go to school and/or have families, so that is quite a bit to juggle. But don't despair! The best advice is to set a schedule that you feel comfortable with. Try to balance what you **can-do** with what you **must-do**.

The **can-do** hours are those during which you have the energy and time to study; this is time you set aside or suddenly find yourself having. The **must-do** are those hours that you absolutely need to put in to complete your journey from A to Z to give yourself the best possible chance to beat the GMAT. For example, a student with very weak Mathematics skills may need to spend some extra hours catching up in basic arithmetic, algebra and geometry. That is simply a **must-do**. You may sometimes fall behind in your schedule, but that is not a big deal as long as you are **consistent**.

That said, **consistency** relates to setting a schedule and keeping to it as best you can. Your study schedule can be altered but, as much as possible, you should study at least three to four times per week. Seven days per week is not really necessary. You do want to refresh, enjoy a day off from the GMAT and do other things.

Of course it is not possible, especially with a busy schedule, to study four hours per day and in a row; that is not even necessary. You can aim to study for a half hour to two-and-a-half hours per work day. Be sure to gauge yourself and your concentration levels! You may perhaps study a bit more on the weekends. It is certainly better to do shorter sessions (thirty to forty minutes at a time and up to an hour max, then break), rather than overly long sessions. If you find that you are not absorbing information, then stop. It would be

counterproductive to continue when you are tired. Ideally, about eight to eighteen hours per week is good, but this can easily go up or down based on availability and need.

Part of your study hours should also involve reviewing summaries and notes you take on the summaries and stop signs, as well as notes on sessions you might have with an instructor. Later, those hours will also involve simulation tests. You can even split up the studies into an hour earlier in the day, and perhaps a bit more time later in the day. This is fully subjective. Again, the trick is to stay within a schedule that you feel comfortable with.

The Next 3 Months

Total Hours:

- Economist GMAT Tutor course: 80 to 120 hours
- Simulation exams and essays: 15 to 30 hours
- Overall time for notes, review etc.: 20+ hours

Note: Extra hours for material such as *The Official Guide for GMAT Review 13th Edition* (minimum 20-30 hours) are not included in the following study plan. You will need to add the hours yourself: about two hours per week or more on average and probably heavier towards the end.

Total Time:

Approximately 115 to 140 (excluding outside sources)

Changes may be needed depending on your speed, abilities, available time to study and other factors.

Average study time per week:

You should aim to study at least five hours per week and more towards the last weeks before your exam. Please note that progress accelerates faster in the beginning than in the end, as progress is the measure of completion of both the lessons (theory) and the practice items. The lessons allow for bigger jumps in the knowledge map on the Economist GMAT Tutor course. Thus, your progress will slow after you have completed the theory and are completing practice questions that the system has determined you still need work on.

As you have a decent amount of time, you should take advantage and do as much practice as possible including answering Official Questions and taking as many simulation tests as possible.

Rate of Study:

0.75% progress per hour is quite good. However, going slower than this (even 0.5% per hour) is perfectly

fine. Going faster than this is perfectly fine too – some may even complete 3% per hour! However, be sure that you are not making careless errors, are reviewing the materials and are aware of why you make errors when you do. If mistakes are creeping in and you know you should have controlled these better, then stop, review what you have been learning, and slow down how quickly you attack questions.

How to Study and the Debriefing of Questions

Many students feel that accelerating through as many practice items as possible is tantamount to success, but that is not the case most of the time. Students should plan to do most of the work after they have completed the questions. The idea is not to memorize questions but to analyze **why** you make mistakes and to understand the key concepts. As instructors, we applaud you for getting questions right! But do we care about that aspect of your studies? Not as much. We care about the learning process to ensure that the next time you see a question type that you previously got wrong, you will be able to recognize what you need to do. The debriefing of questions you got wrong should take longer than answering the question itself. Sometimes, debriefing a difficult question may even take ten minutes!

When looking over a question, make sure of the following:

- You read all the explanations fully (even the ones to the other answer choices). In the Economist GMAT Tutor course, you can see the explanations to the other answer choices by clicking on the right answer choice again to collapse the answers, and then re-answering them to see the alternate explanations. This is crucial for understanding why the other answer choices are eliminated. You should do this before using the Ask-a-tutor feature, as many of your questions about a question or its explanation may well be answered.
- While involved in a lesson, make sure you read carefully and even take notes for yourself. In addition, the summary of that lesson will show up in your topics tab in your dashboard for extra quick review.
- While involved in a practice question, make sure you ask yourself what it is you are being tested on. **Identify** the question type and try to recall the appropriate lesson. Remember, at this point you are not fighting the clock, but rather trying to work on your precision and trying to **apply** what you have learned in the most systematic manner possible. See further below on **clock management**.
- If you make a mistake, ask yourself:
 - Am I able to identify the question type properly?
 - Am I able to identify the lesson's rule(s) associated with the question?
 - Do I understand why I made the mistake? Did I fall into a GMAT trap? Was it carelessness? Lack of knowledge? Did I go too fast?
 - Do I understand a little better now the pattern (either the question pattern or the mistake pattern) that is in front of me? Do I feel a bit better about recognizing this same pattern the next time?
 - Am I committing this question type and the reason for the mistake to memory or to some form of record that will help me the next time?

These are all crucial questions, and keeping a record of mistake types (and perhaps questions that take you very long) may prove useful when strategizing your timing later on. This will also inform you about what you need to pay more attention to and possibly point at the area for which you may need more one-on-one time. One of the great aspects of the Economist GMAT Tutor course is that there will be constant reinforcements of weaker areas, and you will get further practice in the areas you need the most help with – even at the end when you complete the theory and are in pure maintenance/practice mode.

So altogether, remember that learning for the GMAT is more about quality than quantity. Getting the knowledge into your head and doing a bunch of questions is the easy part. The more labor-intensive aspect is to understand why one commits errors and to delve more deeply into the material so that you do not remain at a superficial level. You should try to recognize similar patterns no matter what question is thrown at you. It is this level of intimacy with the material that will allow you to succeed.

In effect, you are trying to become a GMAT expert!

Now, on to the timing of your study plan.

Month 1:

Target:

- 40-60+ hours on the program
- 20%-45% complete of the full program

If you have not already done so, familiarize yourself with the official GMAT site, mba.com, so you get a quick glimpse at what the exam entails. Also, make sure you research the school programs you are applying to, so you will know what their average GMAT scores are. Being aware of your target can serve as both a motivator and a calming mechanism. If a school accepts a 650, then you know what you need to attain. Certainly strive higher, but it is simply good to know beforehand.

Already in the first month, you are starting to get into the heavier part of the program. You have already learned more basic concepts in both the Quant and Verbal sections. Most of what you will see on the GMAT is indeed contained in the middle part of the Economist GMAT Tutor course. If you are doing things correctly, you will have started to attack higher-level questions in all areas you have learned, and it is time to start making the connections!

In the Quant section, hopefully the Data Sufficiency is no longer dreadful, as you will have learned the techniques necessary to get to answers more efficiently.

In the Verbal section, you will have covered the groundwork in all three areas to push you through to higher levels. You should already have graduated from the more basic grammar skills for Sentence Correction (SC), and how to break down arguments in Critical Reasoning (CR) to higher-level concepts, lessons and

questions. You will get the chance to further practice mapping out your reading efficiently and effectively to help you through both general and specific question types. There are many more to come!

Initial Simulation Exam: If you have not taken a real GMAT exam recently, then take the free trial simulation test in the first few hours on the course. No further sim tests should be taken for now. On your initial sim exam, it is not necessary to know why you made the mistakes. It is more than enough to recognize, in a *qualitative* manner, what transpired:

- How did you feel about the test?
- Did you feel that the questions were incomprehensible, semi-comprehensible or manageable with further learning?
- Did the harder items seem somewhat familiar (for example, you have not done math for a few years, but you somewhat remember the rules)?
- Was timing an issue? Did you finish the test on time or struggle with a bunch at the end or speed through everything?
- Were you able to concentrate throughout, or did you get tired?
- When reviewing the questions, do not worry about further explanations for them, as you will learn what is needed later. You should use this sim test later as an exercise in important review. But for now, if you *can* gain knowledge from the mistakes and explanations, then by all means do so!

One-on-one session: Schedule your first strategy session if you feel you need it, either for a general strategy session on how to move forward, or for an area you feel you already need help with. As for tutor sessions in general, when and whether the student schedules these is up to the student. Some may feel they do not need sessions as much, while other feel that sessions help immensely. This depends on your learning style and how you do with the materials. Many times, the explanations clarify everything. However, if you feel you need further assistance in any area you have studied, then schedule a session.

By about 30% completion, you should schedule another live session in areas in which you feel you need further assistance.

Also remember to use the Ask-a-tutor feature from inside a lesson or question when you need further clarification.

Clock Management: Do NOT worry about the clock or doing questions in under two minutes. Timing is something to worry about later, as you get closer to your practice tests. The Time Awareness Tool will make you aware of how much time you spend on a question. This will help ensure that on the real exam you do not lose track of time – something that can happen very easily when involved deeply in a question. By being more aware – but not driven – by the time spent on a question, you will know when to make an educated guess.

External Materials: Using external material on our program is certainly not a must, as Economist GMAT Tutor is a fully comprehensive program. However, utilizing official GMAC materials can be especially useful, as these are real (retired) GMAT questions. Getting used to questions from sources such as the *Official Guide For GMAT Review* will help consolidate your knowledge and simply give you further practice. If you decide to

use other materials than those offered by GMAC, make sure that you use the techniques taught on Economist GMAT Tutor as your base. You may start to attack questions there, but never do questions in areas you have not covered yet on our course. Most likely, you should only be touching the RC and CR at this point. This will be further explained as you begin the course.

Note-taking: From the start, you should establish a note-taking and review routine. Take notes as you go along on the summaries and stop signs (see your topics tabs in your student dashboard) and make sure you review them, so as not to forget what you have learned.

Organize your notes in a manner that makes sense to you. For example, among the beginning topics in Sentence Correction, you may want to put all the Subject Verb Agreement question types/topics together in one flashcard with the rule and an example for each type.

You can also start noting particular areas that perhaps take you long, or that you feel you do not understand.

Month 2:

Target:

- 40-60+ hours of study
- 40%-75% of the course complete

You are still in the thick of your studies, and you are definitely entrenched in higher-level lessons and practice questions. You have already touched on many 700+ items and GMAT Tutor continues to calibrate your learning through a mixture of newer items and previously seen ones in order to build your knowledge further and maintain what you already know.

By the end of month two, you are likely starting to wind down theory-wise. The extra study time allows you to take more simulation exams, write essays and work on external materials for further practice. Review may take longer, as you have now amassed a large amount of knowledge and you should be constantly debriefing questions!

AWA Analysis of an Argument Essay: If you have reached the Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) Analysis of an Argument portion (usually midway through the Verbal), you may submit an essay after the lessons so it can be graded and commented upon. Based on the feedback you will continue to send essays after you receive one back so as to incorporate the feedback and improve your essays. The link to access to the Essay questions will be given in the first and last AWA lesson and will be accessible via the summaries. [Here it is for you](#) — you may keep it for when you go through your AWA lessons.

One-on-one session: By 50%-70% course completion, schedule another live session (if you feel you need assistance in particular areas).

Simulation Exams: Take your first simulation test (if you have taken the initial sim test during the free trial,

this will be your second sim test with us) once you reach 50% of the course complete. You may take another exam or two in the latter half of month two. Follow the advice given on debriefing questions and tests. It is time to start consolidating your knowledge, learning more about yourself in terms of timing and stamina, and seeing how you perform in real time.

Clock Management: You should start becoming more aware of how long questions take you. At this point, the practice you have done and the techniques you have learned are making you faster. There is no need to push questions to be answered in under two minutes on practice questions; no one says you need to answer questions in under two minutes on the exam either! You have an average of about two minutes in the Quant and 1 min 50 in the verbal – that is an average only.

But you should be fully aware of which questions do truly take you around one-and-a-half to three minutes, and which take you longer to answer. It may be time to start thinking about time management and whether you need to guess and sacrifice in an aggressive and educated manner.

External Materials: Start doing all question types in external materials at this time (when you reach about 60%-65% completion), and set up mini-tests. For example, a mini test would include five SC questions, five CR questions and one RC question, with four questions in about 26 minutes total for all 14 questions. It is really up to you how you wish to do so – it is a great way to train your brain and get your stamina up!

Note-taking: Keep taking notes and reviewing summaries and stop signs every few days. Keep the information fresh. It is crucial to remember what you have studied. Maintain a reviewing schedule of what you have learned.

Month 3:

Target:

- 40-70+ hours of study
- 85%-90%+ of the course complete

You are coming to the end of the theory/lessons. You have learned the majority of the content needed to successfully go through the GMAT! To be sure, there are still higher-level lessons and questions as you approach the end of the theory.

Sometime after about 70% course completion, you will have completed the theory and are purely in practice mode in the course. Progress will be a bit slower, as you are not making huge leaps in knowledge but rather doing practice questions and self analysis.

Maintenance Mode: Post theory, you should strive to reach at least 85%-90% of the course complete during maintenance mode. The course will provide an optimal mixture of older and newer questions to keep you sharp and to refresh what you have learned.

AWA Essay: Send in two or three essays to be graded. Wait for feedback before sending in the next one.

External Materials: Keep practicing on external materials. You should be completing these materials, more or less, to coincide with the approaching exam.

Sim tests You should take one to two sim tests per week. You may wish to include the two sim tests from mba.com and other sim tests you may find. Remember, sim tests are there to consolidate your knowledge, and focus your stamina and timing. Debriefing is a must!

One-on-one session: Schedule a final strategy session one to two weeks before your exam. Use the session to speak to a tutor about timing or other aspects of strategizing for the exam.

The day before the exam: RELAX!

You should absolutely not complete any practice exams. You will receive an e-mail from us with advice on what to do before and on the day of the exam.

The day of the exam: SHOWTIME!

Do some light practice before the exam, including a few practice problems that you have gotten correct already, in both the Verbal and the Quant. This will exercise your mind and serve as a warm-up before the real exam.

Month	Hours/Month (Minimum)	Target Percentage	To Do List
Month 1	40-60+	20%-45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the initial sim test during your free trial (if no GMAT taken recently) • Complete your first one on-one strategy session with a tutor • Practice with external material on RC and CR • Review notes and summaries a very <u>minimum</u> of once per week
Month 2	40-60+	45%-75%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete 1 to 2 one-on-one sessions by 70% course complete • Continue work on external materials: read AWA section overview in OG; continue with CR and RC you have learned on the course • Complete a sim test after minimum 50% course completion and another 1 or two by the end of month two (in latter half of month preferably) • Send essay for grading after AWA lessons completion • Begin to practice on external materials all other GMAT question types as you get to 60%-65% completion (total or in the individual parts) • Review notes and summaries a very <u>minimum</u> of once per week
Month 3	40-70+	85%-90%+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete post-theory practice • Complete 1-2 sim tests per week. You may wish to use outside sim tests for additional practice eg mba.com Test Preps • Submit three essays for grading (1 per week, last 3 weeks) • Complete one-to-one sessions as needed. Be sure to schedule a strategy session 7-14 days before test as needed. • Review notes and summaries a very <u>minimum</u> of once per week