



Economist GMAT Tutor: A Study Plan for You

First Thing's First

The following is a study plan based on six months of study. As six 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 mind frame; 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 as a personal refresher. 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 3 to 4 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 workday. 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 should 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 Six 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 more on average and probably heavier towards the end.

Total Time:

- 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 Official Questions and 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** one makes 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 10 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). On 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 reenter 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. If you cannot, then you may use the lifesaver icon (next to the Ask-a-tutor icon) to bring up the summary or summaries associated with the 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 One:

Target:

- 20 hours of study
- 10%-20% 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, in order to determine your target score. 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.

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 in a deep manner. 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 time 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 and questions explain most everything. However, if you feel you need further assistance in any area you have studied, then schedule a session.

Also remember to use the Ask-a-tutor feature from inside a lesson, when you are unsure about a question.

Clock Management: Do NOT worry about the clock or doing questions in fewer than two minutes. This is something to worry about later, as you get closer to your practice tests. The Time Awareness Tool is 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 if need be.

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. Certainly, practice can be started on certain question types as you go along in the course. This will be further explained as you begin the course.

Note-taking: By now, 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.

Try to start organizing 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 Two:

Target:

- 20 hours of study
- 20-35% of the course complete

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, and it is time to start making the connections!

In the Quant section, hopefully the dreaded 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 know some of the more basic grammar skills for Sentence Correction (SC), how to breakdown an argument in Critical Reasoning (CR) and have seen different question types. You will have learned how to map out your reading and started to utilize the techniques of Initial Reading to help you through both general and specific question types. There are many more to come!

One-on-one session: By about 30% course completion, you should have taken at least one session with a tutor if you feel you need assistance in particular areas.

External Materials: If you have opted to use external materials, continue with practice questions, 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.

Note-taking: Keep taking notes and reviewing summaries and stop signs every few days. Keep the information fresh. Categorize the notes as you go along.

Clock Management-: The timer should still not be a concern; you are still working for precision. Do start to be aware of how long questions are taking you, but there is no need to push questions to be answered in less than two minutes.

Month Three:

Target:

- 20 hours of study
- 30%-45% of the course complete

You are now in the thick of your studies. 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!

One-on-one session: Schedule another live session if you have not done so (if you feel you need assistance in particular areas).

External Materials: If you have opted to use external materials, continue with practice questions, but never do questions in areas you have not covered yet on our course.

Note-taking: Keep taking notes and reviewing summaries and stop signs every few days. Keep the information fresh. Categorize the notes as you go along.

Clock Management: The timer should still not be a concern; you are still working for precision. Do start to be aware of how long questions are taking you but there is no need to push questions to be answered in less than two minutes.

Month Four:

Target:

- 20 hours of study
- 40%-60% of the course complete

AWA Analysis of an Argument Essay: If you have reached the Analytical Writing Assessment (AWA) Analysis of an Argument portion, 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% course completion, schedule another live session if you have not done so (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) towards the end of month four. Do so after reaching at least 50% course completion. 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 still no need to push questions to be answered in less than two minutes on practice questions, but you should be fully aware of what questions do truly take you around one-and-a-half to three minutes, and which take you longer answer.

Month Five:

Target:

- 30 hours of study
- 60%-75 of the course complete

By now, you are likely winding 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.

By about 75% 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. Maintain a reviewing schedule of what you have learned.

Simulation Exams: Allow for more practice time and simulation tests. By the latter half of month five, start to take one sim test per week for the last two weeks. Debrief/analyze the tests, noting how you are doing timing wise

One-on-one session: If you need help with your timing, schedule a strategy session to discuss a timing strategy that will work for you.

AWA Essay: Send in a couple of essays to be graded.

External Materials: Start doing all question types in external materials, 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 twenty-six minutes total for all 14 questions.

Month Six:

Target:

- 25-30 hours of study
- At least 90% of the course complete

Maintenance Mode: Continue further practice on the Economist GMAT Tutor course. You should be reaching at least 85%-90% of the course complete. You are in pure maintenance mode, getting only practice questions. 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 to three essays to be graded.

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 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 right 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	20	10%-20%	• 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 only
Month 2	20	20%-35%	• Complete a one-on-one session by 30% course complete
Month 3	20	30%-45%	• Complete a one-on-one by 45% course complete
Month 4	20	40%-60%	• Complete a sim test after 50% course complete • Send essay for grading after AWA lessons completion • Continue work on external materials: read AWA section overview in OG; continue with CR and RC you have learned on the course
Month 5	30	60%-75%	• Complete two more sim tests in the last two weeks of month five • Submit two essays for grading • Complete one-to-one sessions as needed • Begin to practice on external materials all other GMAT question types
Month 6	30	90%+	• Complete post-theory practice • Take three more sim tests with the course. You may wish to use outside sim tests for additional practice (1-2 exams per week) • 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.