

Muskie 2010 - Test Preparation Tips for Semi-Finalists

How do I prepare for the TOEFL, the GRE, and/or the GMAT?

The graduate school standardized tests are extremely important! If you are ranked highly after the interview, your test scores will help determine if you are offered a fellowship and what type of fellowship you receive.

In order to help you prepare, current Muskie fellows were surveyed and their recommendations are summarized in this document. It is recommended that you read this document carefully and approach your test preparation seriously.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): The TOEFL measures your English language skills (through written and listening comprehension exercises), and is used by universities to assess your ability to communicate. Semi-finalists in all fields of study must complete this exam.

Graduate Record Examination (GRE): The GRE measures verbal, mathematical and critical thinking skills. Many universities require the GRE for graduate study. Semi-finalists in all fields *except* Business and Law must complete this exam.

Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT): The GMAT measures general knowledge, including mathematical and verbal skills. Many business colleges require the GMAT. Semi-finalists in Business must complete this exam.

For all tests, current Muskie fellows recommend that you:

- STUDY, STUDY, STUDY (start early, and study a lot)
 - Increase your vocabulary; write words and definitions on note cards and test yourself frequently.
 - Practice listening sections on sample tests (see recommended web links below); practice listening for the main ideas and specific questions.
 - Practice reading sections on sample tests (see recommended web links below); first read the question and make sure you understand what is being asked, then read the selection, and then answer the questions.
 - Talk with native English speakers online or in-person; participate in online discussions and conferences.
 - Watch TV programs, movies (subtitles are helpful), and listen to music.
- Practice the test as much as you can:
 - Fellows who were familiar with the exam before taking the test scored better than those who did not prepare.
 - Identify local English language resource centers with test preparation resources.
 - Take online practice tests for Paper Based Test (PBT) or Internet Based Test (iBT), depending on the format with which you will be tested.
 - Use test preparation books and CDs (available online or at some English language resource centers). *See suggested web links on the next page; or Google "TOEFL Preparation"; or search for resources on www.Amazon.com or other local businesses that carry English materials.*
 - Follow all instructions carefully; be sure that you understand the instructions.

Some helpful web resources: The websites below are only recommendations; this is not an exhaustive list of resources. Test takers should consult a variety of sites and should not rely on any one site for test recommendations and preparation.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

- TOEFL Test Preparation Site: <http://www.ets.org/toefl>
- TOEFL podcasts: <http://www.eslpod.com/toefl/scripts/scripts.html>
- TOEFL blog: <http://www.toeflblog.com/>

Graduate Record Examination (GRE)

- GRE advice for international students: <http://www.rediff.com/getahead/2008/apr/16abr2.htm> and <http://www.rediff.com/getahead/2008/apr/17abr.htm>
- Other GRE tip sites:
 - <http://www.west.net/~stewart/gre/grtestv.htm>
 - <http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=11>
 - <http://www.microedu.com/gretest/freetest.htm>

Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT)

- GMAT tools to help you prepare: <http://www.mba.com/mba/thegmat>
- GMAT grammar site: <http://gmat-grammar.blogspot.com/>
- GMAT tips site and sample test: <http://www.4tests.com/exams/examdetail.asp?eid=31>

For all tests, online study groups, like those on Yahoo groups and Facebook, provide a social network that can be helpful when preparing for the TOEFL, GRE, or GMAT.

For additional test preparation resources and suggestions, please contact the IREX office in your country. Your country may also have an American Corners or EducationUSA Advising Center, which can provide more information about preparing for standardized tests. Contact the local IREX office to identify locations for these offices.