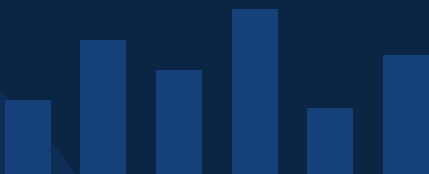


ISAT EXAM PATTERN 2026

Sections, Questions, Duration & Scoring

A focused breakdown of exactly how the International Student Admissions Test (ISAT) is structured — question format, timing, section weightage and how your score is calculated — based on official ACER guidance.

Prepared using official ACER ISAT guidance ([isat.acer.org](https://www.isat.acer.org))



1. ISAT Pattern At a Glance

3 hrs Total duration	100 Total questions	2 Sections
50 + 50 CR + QR split	4 or 5 Options per question	0 Negative marking

ISAT is a single 3-hour (180-minute) online, multiple-choice, remote-proctored test with no breaks built into the schedule. All 100 questions carry equal weight, and there is no penalty for wrong answers — so every question is worth attempting.

2. The Two Sections

Section	Questions	What It Tests
Critical Reasoning (CR)	50	Comprehending and analysing written information, understanding and extending ideas, drawing conclusions, and evaluating arguments. Material drawn from the humanities and social sciences.
Quantitative Reasoning (QR)	50	Analysing and applying information, drawing conclusions, making decisions and solving problems using data, tables and graphs. Material drawn from mathematics and the sciences.

Both sections carry equal weight — a strong Critical Reasoning score cannot make up for a weak Quantitative Reasoning score, and vice versa. Throughout the live test, units testing quantitative reasoning generally alternate with units testing critical reasoning.

3. How Questions Are Structured (“Units”)

ISAT questions are not standalone — they are grouped into **units**. Each unit begins with a piece of **stimulus material** (a passage, dataset, table, graph or diagram), followed by a small group of multiple-choice questions — typically up to five — that relate only to that stimulus.

- You do not need any prior subject knowledge — every fact required to answer is contained in the stimulus itself.
- Each question has **4 or 5 answer options**, with exactly one correct answer.
- Units alternate between Critical Reasoning stimulus (text-based) and Quantitative Reasoning stimulus (numeric/graphical) as you move through the test.
- You can navigate freely between questions using “Next” and “Back” buttons, and a review screen after Question 100 lets you revisit and check any answer before submitting.

4. Duration & Pacing

Checkpoint	Elapsed Time	Questions Done (target)
Quarter mark	45 minutes	~25 questions
Half mark	90 minutes	~50 questions
Three-quarter mark	135 minutes	~75 questions
Final review buffer	165–180 minutes	All 100 answered + review

180 minutes across 100 questions works out to roughly **1 minute 48 seconds per question**, including time to read stimulus material. ACER’s own guidance suggests checking your pace against the on-screen timer — by the 90-minute mark you should have completed around 50 questions.

5. Scoring System

Rule	Detail
Correct answer	Counted toward your raw score — all questions carry equal value
Incorrect answer	No marks deducted — there is no negative marking on ISAT
Unanswered question	Scores zero for that question — so it is always better to guess than to skip
Score reporting	You typically receive separate scores for Critical Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, and an Overall score
Results timing	Released within 2 weeks of the close of your test window
Validity	Results are considered current for 2 years from the test date

Note on scaled scores: Like other ACER-developed admissions tests, ISAT scores are typically reported as scaled scores rather than a simple raw percentage. Because ACER does not publish the exact scaling formula, treat any specific scale you see quoted online as indicative only — your official Statement of Results (issued as a PDF via your ACER account) is the authoritative source for your actual score.

6. Key Takeaways for Exam Day

- Never leave a question blank — with zero negative marking, an educated guess always beats skipping.
- Split your attention evenly between CR and QR while practising — both are worth exactly the same.
- Read the stimulus fully before jumping to the questions; the unit format means the answer is always contained within it.
- Use the review screen strategically: flag uncertain answers as you go, then spend any remaining time at the end revisiting flagged questions rather than re-reading everything.
- Practise pacing with a timer well before test day — 100 questions in 180 minutes leaves very little room for questions that eat up 4–5 minutes each.

Disclaimer: This guide is compiled from publicly available official ISAT information (isat.acer.org) for educational purposes. Exact scoring methodology and any pattern details can change — always confirm the latest specifics on the official ACER ISAT website before your test.