

PGP Admission Process for IIMB Batch of 2007¹

This document details the process that was adopted for selecting candidates for admission to the Post Graduate Program in Management (PGP) at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) for the batch of 2007. The process that would be used for admissions in 2008 by IIMB will be made available on the IIMB website before CAT 2007. It is expected that the process followed will be roughly similar.

IIMB has internally developed an admission process that seeks to identify the most promising candidates for its prestigious PGP program. This process has been progressively refined over the years based on its cumulative data on CAT applicants and on the academic performance of the candidates that were admitted at IIMB. The process arrived at is based on the relationship of academic performance in IIMB to past academic performance, CAT score, performance in group discussion, interview and prior work experience. The selection criteria and weights given to various parameters are based on data from previous cycles as well as on inputs from the IIMB faculty body and other relevant stakeholders and are usually revised every year. The admission committee fixes these criteria and weights at the beginning of each admission cycle before looking at information pertaining to candidates applying in that cycle so as to avoid any bias.

IIMB has found over the years that students who perform well in the academic program are typically those who have a consistently good academic record during their school, high school and graduation level, besides exhibiting sufficiently high aptitude as measured by the CAT. Therefore IIMB uses multiple parameters, namely academic performance in school, high school and graduation programs as well as candidates' scores in Common Admission Test (CAT) to judge the suitability of candidates for the PGP program. Relevant work experience, if any, is also given weight in the selection. Evaluation by multiple criteria is also consistent with empirical research on recruitment and selection that shows greater efficacy of recruitment processes that use multiple criteria. The CAT score, over and above being a selection criterion, is also used to establish the minimum level of proficiency that is expected from the candidate in respective faculties as indicated by section wise minimum scores in the CAT. Multiple criteria are used to arrive at a composite score for every candidate, which is used to select candidates for the subsequent stage. The remaining part of the document explains this process in detail.

IIMB adopted a two-phase selection process and accordingly these selection criteria were applied in two phases. The first phase process was applied to all eligible candidates who appeared for the Common Admission Test (CAT) to determine those candidates who would be called for group discussion and personal interview (GDPI). During the GDPI process, two faculty members evaluated each qualifying candidate on his/her performance in the group discussion, his/her summary of the group discussion and his/her performance during the personal interview. In addition, for candidates having work experience, each interviewing faculty evaluated the quality and relevance of the candidate's work experience. These scores,

¹ This information, released for the first time this year, is pertinent to the admissions cycle (2007) alone and therefore, no inference can be made from this document about the admissions process used at IIMB in the past nor does it imply that the same or similar process will be adopted for future admission cycles at IIMB. IIMB reserves the right to change, modify or adopt any new admissions process that it deems necessary and which best suits its purpose for a given admissions cycle.

in combination with the pre-GDPI selection parameters were used cumulatively in the second and final phase of selection to identify the candidates who merit selection from among those candidates who appear for the GDPI.

The selection process, parameters and weights used are uniform for all categories of applicants. Sufficient candidates were short-listed at each stage in each category to meet the reservation requirement for each group, as applicable at that time.

Phase 1

- 1) The first short list of candidates was based on candidates securing minimum section-wise and aggregates percentile scores in the CAT as shown in Table 1. All the subsequent processing, standardization and selection was limited to candidates belonging to this first short list. This means that the CAT score alone was used as the basis for arriving at the first short list. However, these section-wise and aggregate level cut-offs were not decided in advance – they were based on the overall performance of all candidates in that year’s CAT and was adjusted to ensure that a sufficiently large pool of applicants were available in each category for subsequent processing by applying other selection criteria on these candidates.

Table 1. First Shortlist

Category	Minimum Percentile Requirement for First Shortlist (2007)			
	Sec 1 (Logic & Data)	Sec 2 (Verbal)	Sec 3 (Quantitative)	Aggregate
ST	50%	55%	50%	65%
PWD	50%	55%	50%	75%
SC	50%	55%	50%	75%
OBC ²	75%	75%	75%	85%
General	85%	85%	85%	90%

- 2) For all candidates in the first shortlist as stated in Table 1, the candidates’ percentage scores in the 10th and 12th board exams are standardized by dividing each score by the 90th percentile score obtained in that board. The database of 10th and 12th scores of all CAT applicants of the past two years was used for identifying the 90th percentile score for each 10th and 12th board for this purpose.
- 3) For all candidates in the first shortlist as stated in (1), final scores obtained by the candidate were used for the bachelor’s degree and professional degrees (if any). Incomplete or intermediate scores were considered only if the candidate’s final score was pending. Thus, for final year bachelor’s degree candidates, their incomplete graduation score would be taken in lieu of final graduation score. Graduation scores were

² This is as per reservation act applicable at the time of creating the shortlist for GDPI. At the time of making admission offers, as per the Honorable Supreme Court judgment, OBC reservation was withheld and consequently all OBC candidates called for GDPI were considered in the General category.

standardized within their respective categories. This provided the standardized score for the bachelor's degree for all candidates in the first shortlist.

- 4) For all candidates in the first shortlist as stated in (1), candidates with Chartered Accountancy Professional course were eligible for weight under professional course. No other professional course was eligible for weight under professional course. The professional course score was also standardized for all candidates in the first shortlist.
- 5) For all candidates in the first shortlist as stated in (1), the score/weight for work experience was given by:

$$= \begin{cases} \frac{5x}{36} & \text{if } 0 < x \leq 36 \\ 5 - \frac{5(x-36)}{108} & \text{if } 36 < x < 144, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

where x is the months of work experience up to December 2006, as captured in CAT application Form (and substantiated in the application to IIMB). This implies that the score peaks at 36 months and falls to zero at 144 months experience - thus providing higher scores to candidates with work experience of moderate duration.

- 6) For all candidates in the first shortlist as stated in (1), the maximum of the work experience score and the professional course score was considered for selection under a common weight of 10 for work experience or professional course – since both provide professional work experience relevant to a management program.
- 7) For all candidates in the first shortlist as stated in Table 1, other than work experience or professional course, the weights for the remaining four components (each of them being standardized) were fixed as:

$$\text{CAT} = 20, \quad 10^{\text{th}} \text{ board} = 15, \quad 12^{\text{th}} \text{ board} = 10, \quad \text{Bachelors} = 15.$$

- 8) For all candidates in the first shortlist as stated in Table 1, the weighted total of the five components namely (a) work experience or professional course, (b) CAT, (c) 10th board, (d) 12th board, (e) bachelor's as stated above was used to prepare a pre-GDPI rank list for calling candidates for the GDPI. Sufficient candidates were invited for GDPI to enable selection based on the additional GDPI evaluation components (a) GD, (b) GD summary, (c) Personal interview, (d) review of work experience (if any).
- 9) For all candidates in the first shortlist as stated in (1), the top 10 candidates in each sectional and total score in CAT, adjusted SSC, HSC, Bachelors and professional (CA) (from the first shortlist, as created in Table 1) automatically qualified for GDPI. These candidates were given a chance to appear for GDPI due to their exceptional performance on one parameter. However, at the end of Phase 2, all such candidates had

to merit selection at an identical level of composite aggregate score like any other candidate.

- 10) For all candidates in the first shortlist as stated in (1), standardization in any component stated above was carried out as per the following formula. As mentioned in Table 1, all standardization was done with reference to the qualifying first shortlist or its subdivisions; Standardized score (truncated between 0 and weight (wt)) was computed from the raw score (val) as:

$$\max \left\langle 0, \min \left(wt, \frac{wt}{2} + \frac{val - mean}{sd} \times \frac{wt}{6} \right) \right\rangle$$

Phase 2

- 11) For each of the three elements of evaluation during the GDPI process – Group Discussion, Group Discussion Summary, Personal Interview - the average of the scores given by the two interviewing faculty was considered. The overall performance of each candidate in the Group Discussion was scored by each faculty individually. Similarly the quality of the Group Discussion Summary was scored by each faculty individually. Each faculty used the Personal Interview to comprehensively evaluate the candidate's motivation and ability to fit in and benefit from the PGP program. All candidates were required to provide three confidential reference letters from their employers or faculty and this was also used in the personal interview evaluation.
- 12) The work experience score was multiplied by the quality of experience score, as evaluated by the interviewing panel as an assessment of the relevance of the work experience to the program. The quality of work experience score was evaluated on a 5 point scale (0 – 0.5 – 1 – 1.5 – 2) by each member of the panel during the interviews. The average quality of work experience score was multiplied by the pre-GDPI work experience score and accordingly the work/professional experience component score used in Phase 1 was revised in Phase 2. The scores in all past academics were also updated, if required, on the basis of actual mark sheet submitted based on the principle of considering all subjects (except where mentioned explicitly in the mark sheet).
- 13) The Group Discussion score (weight=7.5), Group Discussion Summary score (weight=7.5), the Personal Interview score (weight=20), after standardization within interview panels, were added to the pre-GDPI total, to arrive at the final aggregate score.
- 14) The final offers of admission to candidates were made on the basis of ranks in each category on the final aggregate score as mentioned in (13).

Since IIMB follows a comprehensive multi-criteria process at the pre-GDPI stage, it is able to identify many candidates for the GDPI who have an excellent academic record and work experience but who, while doing well enough in the CAT to be in the first shortlist, may have narrowly missed the high score that would have been required if CAT alone was the basis for the GDPI short list. Such candidates effectively replace candidates who have

only a high CAT score but score poorly in terms of their past academic record and work experience. IIMB emphasizes consistent and high performance in past academics.

Admission into the Post Graduate Program through GMAT

A separate process was used for processing applications from candidates who applied through the GMAT route. To be eligible to apply through the GMAT route, a candidate must have resided abroad for at least 18 months in the preceding three years and should not have been in a position to appear for CAT2006.

The first short list among such applicants was created by applying the same percentile cut-offs, as used for the general category taking the CAT.

For each applicant in this shortlist, each member of the evaluating committee (6 faculty members were involved in 2007) went through the applications in detail and in particular, evaluated the academic background and the international experience of the candidates. The evaluating faculty also assessed whether the candidate was likely to gain admission through CAT. Finally each member recommended strongly or weakly in favor of the candidate or recommended rejection.

The final decision for each candidate was taken on the basis of detailed discussion on these recommendations and assessments of strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. There was no quota or fixed number of seats for such candidates. There were also no wait-lists for the same reason. In most years, the number of such candidates joining the program has not been higher than three or four.
