

Comparative Analysis of FMS 2006 to 2008

Overall Paper Pattern: In the last three years the exam has quite a few changes. Though there were no specific sections, the last year paper did have some clear indication of end of particular skill set and the start of the next skill set.

The weightage, in terms of number of questions, per skill set has also been varying. The exam has seen some surprises in terms of the reasoning, and quantitative section. What has remained consistent is FMS's preference to English section. To manage a call and convert the same, one needs to have done extremely well in this section.

Overall Pattern for the last 3 years

Particulars	2008	2007	2006
Duration	120 Minutes (2 Hrs)	120 Minutes (2 Hrs)	120 Minutes (2 Hrs)
Number of section	--	--	--
Total Number of Questions	175	175	175
Verbal Ability + Reading Comprehension;	75	57	80
Quantitative Ability +	50	59	50
Data Interpretation + Data Sufficiency			
Analytical + Logical Reasoning	50	59	45
Marks per Question	4 marks	4 marks	4 marks
Negative marking	25% of marks	25% of marks	25% of marks
Number of choices	4	4	4

2008 Pattern

More or less the pattern must remain on the similar lines as last year. This year the institute will release percentiles for the first time and the official website declares that students need to have 50%ile or above in each sectional skills to make it to the call list. Hence, students should work on all sections of paper (which was not so till last year).

Some Pointers:

For MBA course the likely requirement of marks will be above 340-350 out of 700 and a difference of 30-40 marks for the MS-MBA program. This means for an yield of 50% of the paper students will be required to attempt close to 60-65% of paper with an accuracy of 85 - 80%, which means 95-100 questions.

The paper is lengthy – 175 questions in 2 hours – So the main difference is the speed with which one can attempt maximum accurate answers. The paper does not have ANY sections and makes it difficult to comprehend the questions that are spread out – students need to identify and scan the paper accordingly.

The other major emphasis after English is the Logical and Analytical Reasoning. Mostly the LR sets are moderate while the AR is tricky with very less data provided to analyse. Students must practice sufficient number of puzzles, syllogism and assertions, reasoning, argument based questions.

The Math questions is relatively less (considering that there is a choice to attempt DI sets as DI and QA are clubbed together) and comparatively the easiest section. But concentration of topics and some outside the regular scope of CAT such as co-ordinate geometry Calculus (Differential as well as Integral) and Modern Math might be an area to practice. Since, last two years has seen an increased difficulty in terms of shift of focus within the sub-skill in this section, students are requested not to take this section lightly and build their base across different sub-topics. Students must increase their calculation speed as well for attempting maximum questions in this section and the DI sets.

90% of CAT prep is the same for FMS. Students must develop their speed both in English and Math and at the same time maintain an accuracy of 85%+ to ensure good attempts to get a call.

Important: FMS is known for repeating questions (on very familiar lines) from previous papers. So, a good practice of mocks and previous papers will be really helpful.

Comparative analysis of difficulty level of each sub-skills

Quantitative Ability:

This section has seen some changes such as DI and DS being combined in this section in 2007, the changing sub-skill questions in this section etc. Yet, what has remained consistent is the level of difficulty. Though the level of difficulty has remained easy to moderate, the section can be time consuming. However, with the increasing interests shown by Engineers the exam has a leaning towards higher math concepts in the last year paper.

Last year break up shows this

Arithmetic (Numbers, Percentages, SI/CI, Ratio, Stocks & Shares)	11
Algebra (Equations)	04
Geometry (Circles, Triangles, Mensuration, Co-ordinate Geometry)	16
Modern Math (Probability, Series, Counting Techniques, Sets, Logarithms, Functions)	14
Advance Math (Limits, Derivatives, Integration)	05

Since, the paper has seen quite a few changes in the sub-skills testes, students must concentrate on basics in each sub-skill. QA+DI+DS section in general has remained manageable for students good at speed calculations, approximations, observation skills etc.

General English (Grammar, Vocabulary, and Reading Comprehension)

Invariably this section is the real test of students' skills. The paper is filled with lengthy passages, vocabulary, reasoning intensive questions. Grammar however has remained the least priority area so far.

The good news however is – every passage offers quite a lot of questions to explore. Last year paper consisted of 5 passages each containing 8 questions (all other years have also been on similar lines). Hence, students have more choice to pick and choose. There were a number of completely direct questions, which could be solved using skimming and scanning techniques, though there were several tough indirect questions as well.

The major emphasis of the paper is the English section – with lengthy RC passages ranging from 750-1000 words per passage. Questions are - the moderate level of the inference questions with every passage usually having one or two questions that tests vocabulary. The topics are moderate to difficult. So, for CAT if one is reading between 280-300 words then one will be expected to build this up to atleast 330-350 words a minute.

In the VA section also the emphasis is on good vocabulary skills with questions ranging from Analogy, Sentence completion, Spellings, word meanings. The choices are close so to maximize and get a call the student must build a good base of Synonyms, Antonyms, and homophones. But considering the unpredictability of entrance exams and FMS preferring English – Grammar is something that the students must build their base and cannot afford to ignore but chances and number of questions could be less.

Analytical and Logical Reasoning

This section has a combination of verbal and logical reasoning questions. The type of questions that has appeared so far in the last three years include Linear arrangement, Puzzles, Family tree, Dices, Cubes, Matrix Arrangements, Selection Criteria, Diagrams, Codes, Critical Reasoning, Syllogisms etc.

The questions in this section can be moderate to difficult. Hence, students need to be well prepared for clearing the sectionals in this section.

Overall Conclusion:

Overall a tough paper considering the number of seats and number of aspirants (60:40000). A score of 330 to 350 out of 700 is an ideal aim for getting the calls based on last year paper.

If the last few years are any indication – the kind of Math section and the class composition shows that Technocrats are preferred. I cannot comment on the IITians but FMS is definitely

sought after by the DCE and NSIT students with major portion of the students comprising Engineers.

With the 50%ile in each section in place, students will have a tougher job at hand this year in striking a balance between the sectionals and maximizing overall score – as at the end of the day – overall marks will still continue to play a major role.

Over the years, FMS has built a reputation for the Marketing but last 2 years have shown that increasing Finance jobs being offered at FMS. The Average salaries have been extremely good. For the fees paid, reputation, the course content, and increasing popularity among the Engineers – my suggestion is YES – should give it a good effort – because if not the IIMs then this is a institute that should not be ignored.

Regular advice remains, ideally keep the RC in between the exam. Save the VA, GK, or few stand alone questions in QA, DS, DI to the end to maximize the last few minutes that cannot be done in the LR sets or RC.

All the best.