

SimCAT 12: The Experts' Take

TEST OVERVIEW

<u>Section</u>	<u>Cut-off</u>
Verbal Ability-Reading Comprehension	43
Data Interpretation-Logical Reasoning	35
Quantitative Ability	47
Overall	145

SimCAT-12 was marked by easier VA-RC and QA sections, and a more difficult DI-LR section, as compared to SimCAT-11.

Following table shows the marks required to score different percentiles in the three sections as well as overall.

Percentile	Score Verbal	Score DI-LR	Score Quant	Overall Score
99%	60	52	69	161
95%	52	43	59	137
90%	47	38	52	123
80%	40	32	43	107
70%	35	27	36	94

Overall analysis

DI-LR section in this SimCAT had a peculiar mix of sets. Some sets were calculation intensive (the sets on Cellphone brands and Airlines). The other two DI sets were more painful, especially the one involving comparison between the pairs of numbers (Q.13 to 16). It required patience to interpret the data and answer the questions. The first LR set that immediately followed the DI sets had the appearance of an innocuous set. But in reality, it was not all that straightforward. To complicate the things further, it was a TITA set so no clue was available from options to whether you were on the right track or not. But the remaining LR sets were rather simple. Students who spotted the easy sets that lay towards the end of the section and attempted them first before attempting the other sets definitely had an advantage.

QA section was much easier compared to the one in the previous SimCAT. However, it also had its own share of challenging and time consuming questions. For example, Q.4, Q.15 fell in that category. But in general, this section was easier than the QA in the previous 2-3 actual CATs.

Verbal Ability- Reading Comprehension

The overall difficulty level of SimCAT 12 VA RC section was Moderate. It was more difficult than SimCAT 10 but easier than SimCAT 11.

Such a test can appear rather “lengthy”, because you will take longer than usual to attempt familiar question types. In that process the test becomes a mind game. If you do not keep your confidence high and maintain your cool, the test can appear to be really difficult. Such a paper will produce mixed scores. High marks for a group of students who worked systematically to ace the test, and low marks for those who got nervous in the exam - who might, otherwise, be good in verbal.

The pattern of 24 RC and 10 VA questions is familiar to all of you by now; it is also the pattern anticipated by the students in the CAT. However, let us caution you once again against developing such anticipations in the CAT. You need to be just ready to be tested – in whichever format they want to test you.

All the five passages were readable, and the selection of passages, this time, was no expert matter. You could choose the passages just as you liked depending on how comfortable you were reading them. The questions set on all passages were majorly medium difficulty questions, with a difficult question each in the Property Rights passage and the Time Travel passage. The wise thing to do would be to select passages with maximum number of questions. The first passage on Hummingbirds (3 questions) and the last passage on Time Travel (4 questions) had fewer questions. These passages could be chosen only if you found one of the other passages difficult to manage. So a pool of 17 questions in RC would give you, comfortably, at least 14 to 15 attempts in the test. (Remember in the Experts' Take we always try to be modest in our estimate, for the simple reason that a serious candidate must not fall below this benchmark.)

In our opinion, the best way to approach the test would be to attempt the 3 Para jumbles and 3 FIJ questions first, followed by RC and then end the section by attempting the 2 Vocabulary questions (confusable words) and the 2 Odd sentence questions. In these 10 attempts if we estimate 6 correct, you could easily score minimum (net) 44 marks. With the same number of attempts and higher levels of accuracy would fetch 60 to 70 marks which would put you in the top bracket. We assume that you take stock of the entire section before beginning to answer questions.

If the attempts are lower than 24 in SimCAT 12, you need to take more section tests and make an effort to increase your attempts. If accuracy is less than 70 per cent, you need to slow down and practice to improve your accuracy.

These are general guidelines. However, you must get in touch with your mentor and get your individual score and performance analysed better.

A word of advice from us is that with three more SimCATs to go, you must now be completely focused on maximising your score in Verbal.

Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning

In the previous SimCAT, you saw somewhat easier DI sets than LR. However, in this SimCAT, LR sets were easier than DI sets. In earlier SimCATs, we had included some calculation intensive sets and you would have figured out that time that the calculator may not always be useful even in calculation intensive sets. The calculation intensive sets in this SimCAT were also meant to drive the same message home. Many times the calculation intensive sets can be solved faster using logic and observation. Also, just because calculator is now available in CAT, neglecting the approximations and speed maths will not be in your interest.

As mentioned earlier, ideally you should have attempted the easy LR sets first (Q.21 to 24, Q.25 to 28 and Q. 29 to 32) before attempting the other sets in the section. In DI, the set on airlines (Q.5 to 8) and the set on comparisons (Q.13 to 16) were rather tedious and should have been attempted only after attempting other sets.

Quantitative Ability

In the previous SimCAT, you got a taste of how a difficult QA section looks like. However in this SimCAT, QA section was remarkably easier.

As you are aware, video solutions to SimCAT questions are now available. For a number of questions, we have outlined the 'smart-cuts' that you should apply while solving the questions. Whenever possible, you should solve questions using such 'smart-cuts'. Many times, smart-cuts can get you an answer to even a question that you may not be able to solve using conventional methods.

Selection of questions

In order to clear the cut-off for section 1 comfortably, about 21 questions could have been solved with 80% accuracy. To do the same for section 2, about 18 questions could have been solved with 80% accuracy. To do the same for section 3, about 23 questions could have been solved with 80% accuracy. In order to clear the overall cut-off, you would have to solve about 5 more questions with 80% accuracy. Given below are the questions you should have solved.

<u>Sec.</u>	<u>Must-Solve Questions*</u>	<u>Potential Score Improvers**</u>	<u>Total Qs</u>
VA-RC	1,2,3,4,8,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,29	6,7,9,18,19,20,24,30,33	23
DI-LR	9,14,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32	1,2,3,13	18
QA	2,5,6,7,11,12,13,14,16,18,19,21,24,25,30,31,34	3,9,20,22,23,28,29,32,33	26

* Questions that have been attempted by a majority of the top 10 %ile students, with an accuracy of at least 80%.

**Questions that have been attempted by a majority of the top 10 %ile students, with an accuracy of 50-80%.

LEARNINGS

Every SimCAT offers you some learnings. These learnings can help you focus your preparation in a better way so that you will be best prepared on the D-day and clear the cut-offs of top b-schools.

Learning 1: If your SimCAT percentile is fluctuating

Several times students see their SimCAT scores fluctuating. In the case of some students, the fluctuation is rather significant. Such experiences tend to scare as well as frustrate the students. There are certain points we wish to tell you at this point.

Firstly, usually students see their percentile in actual CAT improving over their percentile in SimCATs. The reason is that towards the end of the SimCAT season, some students give up on CAT and as a result, the number of SimCAT takers is usually lower than in the initial days of the SimCAT season. The competition in later SimCATs, thus, is more intense than in the initial SimCATs, because the competition is now among the serious students. However most of non-serious students will still take the actual CAT. Those of you who are repeat CAT takers would have seen that your batchmates who stopped taking SimCATs towards the end appeared for actual CAT. Because of this reason and even otherwise, the number of students taking actual CAT is significantly higher than the number of students taking SimCATs. As a result, you have several non-serious students at the bottom who will push up your percentiles.

Secondly, some students are like V.V.S. Laxman in test cricket. As you know, V.V.S. Laxman did not perform particularly well in Ranji trophy matches. But his performance against Australia in test matches was always superlative. Similar thing happens to some students. Even though their performance in SimCATs is not very great, they perform exceedingly well in actual CAT. In 2015 season, we had a student who was unable to cross 200 in the SimCATs but scored 200+ for the first time in the actual CAT and now that student is in the 2nd year in one of the top B-schools of the country.

Thirdly, for some students, the D-day is just their day of glory. They perform much better on the D-day than they performed anytime earlier.

So the bottomline is you can never know till the D-day (or rather till the results are out) whether you are like V.V.S Laxman or the D-day is the day of your glory. Don't let SimCAT percentile fluctuations scare you. Do not give up!

Remember that people who actually succeed are invariably the ones who think they can succeed!! Stay positive and you will win.

SimCAT-12 is over. What next?

In this Experts' take, we have given you some important tips about how to tackle the fluctuations in SimCAT percentiles. Make sure that you implement these suggestions if you are facing similar situation.

If you have not read the expert take on the previous SimCAT, make sure that you refer to it now.

Wish you all a very happy Diwali.

All the Best for SimCAT-13!

