

## SimCAT 14: The Experts' Take

### TEST OVERVIEW

<u>Section</u>	<u>Cut-off</u>
Verbal Ability-Reading Comprehension	46
Data Interpretation-Logical Reasoning	43
Quantitative Ability	47
Overall	156

This was the penultimate SimCAT of the season. You have seen SimCATs at various levels of difficulties. You have seen some difficult SimCATs and you have also seen a test like this, which is not very difficult. As you know, you cannot predict the level of difficulty of actual CAT. Therefore our SimCATs were attempt from our side to make you acquainted with tests at various levels of difficulty.

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

Percentile	Score VA-RC	Score DI-LR	Score QA	Overall Score
99%	60	61	66	166
95%	53	54	58	150
90%	49	49	52	138
80%	44	41	44	121
70%	40	36	39	111

### Overall analysis

This SimCAT was of moderate level of difficulty. So students performed better in this SimCAT as we had expected. Yet there is another reason to feel happy about your performance. You have been taking SimCATs for more than 5 months. We have given you tests at different levels of difficulty. We have also thrown surprises at you with tests of varying difficulty levels. Additionally, you would have solved a number of take-home SimCATs. All this test-taking experience has surely honed your test taking skills. Further, you have been also working on revisiting the concepts that you did not get right in different SimCATs. All this has taken the level of your preparation at higher pedestal. Your performance will only be better in the last SimCAT and in the actual CAT.

### **Verbal Ability- Reading Comprehension**

RC VA of SimCAT 14 was, overall, Easy.

The Easy and Moderate questions comprised more than 80 per cent of SimCAT 14.

We expected the scores and the cut off to be high. First, the paper was easy (with around 20 easy questions and 10 Medium difficulty questions). Second, since this is the penultimate of the SimCATs, we expected that the students would take the test more seriously. Third, we have been constantly exhorting you to maximise your scores in RC VA Section. SimCAT 14 gave you ample scope to not only to score the cut-off easily, but also to maximise your score.

In SimCAT 14 VA RC section, it was possible to attempt 30 questions. Scores with varying accuracy from these attempts could range from 45 to 75 (after negative marks are factored in). Marks above 55 could be in the 95 to 99 percentiles.

We find that most of you have done well in SimCAT 14. It is also slightly disappointing that there are no scores above 60. At this juncture, we expect you to make use of every opportunity and maximise your score in each practice test that you take including the SimCATs. Since you got an easier test this time, compared to SimCAT 12 and 13, you can expect a different SimCAT next time. Prepare well; more importantly take the test well.

SimCAT 14 had 24 RC questions at the beginning and 10 TITA questions after that. The pattern was similar to 2016 CAT – without mixing up RC and VA.

You could begin the test by attempting all the Para jumbles questions and a couple more of the other TITA questions. In all, make 6 attempts in 10 minutes or so, and then spend 40 minute or so on RC and attempt 4 passages and at least 18 questions. In the last 10 minutes you could attempt remaining TITA questions. Since RCs were easy it was almost compulsory to do 4 passages. Those who did only 3 passages ran the risk of being rendered non-competitive. Barring the passage and questions on *everyday aesthetics*, the RC part of SimCAT 14 was easy. A serious candidate would not have settled for fewer attempts than 18. (We are not implying that 5<sup>th</sup> passage should not be attempted. We are stating the least that you should do in this SimCAT)

CAT is just round the corner and SimCAT 15 is this week. We will vary the difficulty level in the next test. We appreciate that you are working hard; you need to gain exposure to the different types of tests before the D-day. We wish you all the very best.

### **Data Interpretation and Logical Reasoning**

By design we kept the first DI and first LR sets in this test, difficult. However, the majority of the students rightly recognized that those sets were time-consuming, and avoided them. The first DI set (Q.1 to 4) was attempted by less than 40% of all students while the first LR set (Q.17 to 20) was attempted by only about 10% of all students. The third DR set (Q.9 to 12) was not difficult as such. However majority of students perceived it to be on difficult side as it was a TITA set. The last DI set (Q.13 to 16) on heights of students was the easiest of all DI sets and it must not have been missed.

As mentioned earlier, the first LR set was a rather tough set. However the remaining LR sets were relatively easier. The best strategy would have been to attempt the last three LR sets (Q.21 to 24, Q.25 to 28 and Q.29 to 32) before attempting the DI sets. Among the DI sets, the set on heights of students (Q.13 to 16) and the set on Commonwealth games (Q.5 to 8) should have been attempted first. A student who attempted these 5 sets at say 80-85% accuracy would have scored enough to clear the cut-off of the section. For scoring, other sets could have been attempted.

As usual, the best strategy is to attempt the easy sets, wherever they are located, pocket those marks and then worry about the other time-consuming sets.

### **Quantitative Ability**

This section was also of moderate level of difficulty, but had its own share of tricky questions. For example, Q.6, 7, 13, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 27 and 30 fell in that category. We are delighted to note that the performance of students on these questions (in terms of percentage attempt and accuracy) was better than expected. This indicates improved level of preparation and we have a reason to feel happy about it.

Now you have about two weeks to go for your actual CAT. At this point, take a stock of your level of preparation. We would not advise you to attempt to learn anything new at this point. If you need further sharpening of your skills or if certain points in a topic are not clear, revisit those points. Also take a stock of what all mistakes you committed that cost you marks in the SimCATs held so far. We gave you ample of opportunities to make mistakes in the SimCATs. The intention was to ensure that you learn from those mistakes and not repeat those mistakes on the D-day. If you find yourself making similar mistakes again and again, you need to be more careful in actual CAT when you have to deal with those types of questions.

Right from the first SimCAT, we have continuously been stressing on the need to cherry-pick the questions in order to maximize the score. You can recall that in almost every experts' take, we have stressed on this important aspect. By now you would have realized that the best way to score a high percentile in CAT is to attempt the right questions. We are delighted to note that students have become more comfortable with this approach. We threw in different surprises so that you could hone your skills on this art.

**Selection of questions**

In order to clear the cut-off for section 1 comfortably, about 22 questions could have been solved with 80% accuracy. To do the same for section 2, about 21 questions could have been solved with 80% accuracy. To do the same for section 3, about 22 questions could have been solved with 80% accuracy. In order to clear the overall cut-off, you would have to solve about 10 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, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19, 20, 21, 24, 28, 31, 32, 34	2, 4, 9, 11, 13, 18, 22, 23, 25, 29, 30	25
DI-LR	3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32	1, 2, 4, 25, 28	24
QA	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 29, 33	6, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 28, 30, 32	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: Interpretation of the percentiles in the last SimCATs**

As we have mentioned earlier, the performance of students in general on several challenging questions has been better than what we had expected. This is an indication of improved level of performance. In general, as you approach the end of the SimCAT season, students who cannot cope with the rigours of the preparation for CAT give up, and only the sincere students take the last SimCATs. Moreover, their performance also shows an improvement after dedicated effort of more than 6 months. As a result, cut-offs tend to go higher in the last SimCATs. As a result, many students find that their percentiles are on lower side despite scoring well.

Don't let that dishearten you. As mentioned earlier, the competition in last SimCATs is only among sincere students. However on the D-day, lot of non-sincere students will also appear for the exam and add to the pool of students who have scored less than you. This factor would automatically push up your percentiles in the actual CAT.

**Learning 2: Importance of the last mile**

You are almost at the end of SimCAT season for this year. Now you are entering the 'last mile' phase in your preparation. At this point, it is very important to keep your morale high. Some good students wear out after the long toil of last several months. As a result, they buckle under pressure and are not able to perform as well as they are capable of. Don't let that happen to you. Don't wear out. If you feel that you are facing that danger of getting worn out, take a day out of your preparation. Relax. Watch your favourite movie and recharge your batteries. Do whatever it takes to keep you at your best on the D-day. Suppose a student works really hard only to find that he/she is tired and is not able to perform to the best of his/her abilities on the D-day. How good is that? Make sure it does not happen with you. We know that you are working hard. But also relax whenever required and make sure that you have enough energy to see you through the toil of the last mile.

**SimCAT-14 is over. What next?**

In this Experts' take, we have given you some important tips about the importance of the last mile. Make sure you follow them.

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

**All the Best for SimCAT-15!**

