

EXAM STRUCTURE

& PATTERN ANALYSIS

CAT 2026

68 QUESTIONS

204 MARKS

120 MINUTES

3 SECTIONS

40 MIN / SECTION

3 SESSIONS

Quick revision guide for CAT 2026 paper structure, sectional timing, marking and recent pattern changes.

Prepared by Collegedunia for CAT aspirants

How to Use This Guide

Structure first • application next

Use this guide before full-length mocks. Learn the section limits, understand scoring, then practise the current format.

1

Memorise the three sections and their 40-minute limits.

2

Use question counts to plan section-level attempts.

3

Track MCQ errors because wrong MCQs lose 1 mark.

4

Record timing and recurring pattern mistakes after each mock.

CAT 2026 is currently expected to follow the recent 68-question, 120-minute structure.

CAT 2026 Pattern at a Glance

Current expected structure

68 QUESTIONS

204 RAW MARKS

120 MINUTES

3 SECTIONS

40 MINUTES EACH

3 SECTIONS

VARC

24 QUESTIONS • 72 MARKS

DILR

22 QUESTIONS • 66 MARKS

QA

22 QUESTIONS • 66 MARKS

Current Collegedunia CAT 2026 information lists VARC 24, DILR 22 and QA 22, with 40 minutes for each section.

120 Minutes: Sectional Timing

Fixed clock • no time transfer

VARC

0–40 MIN

DILR

40–80 MIN

QA

80–120 MIN

Each section has its own 40-minute window. Saved time cannot be transferred to another section, so mock practice should use the same sectional clock.

Timing rule: finish the section within its own 40-minute window.

Marking Scheme

Correct • wrong • unattempted

MCQ

CORRECT

WRONG

+3

−1

TITA

CORRECT

WRONG

+3

0

TITA questions do not carry negative marking. The exact MCQ/TITA distribution is not fixed in advance.

Raw Score = (Correct × 3) – (Incorrect MCQs × 1)

Pattern Changes: 2020–2026

Recent structure at a glance

2015–2019

100 Q • 180 min

2020

76 Q • 120 min

2021–2023

66 Q • 120 min

2024–2025

68 Q • 120 min

2026*

68 Q • 120 min

The major recent structural shift came in 2020, when CAT moved to 120 minutes. The question count moved from 66 to 68 in 2024.

QUICK RECALL

68 Q • 204 MARKS • 120 MIN • 40 MIN EACH