

GATE Assessment FAQs

What does CogAT stand for?

Cognitive Abilities Test

What is CogAT? Is it an IQ test?

The CogAT is very similar to an IQ test, but cannot be considered a full IQ test because it does not directly measure all areas of cognitive ability assessed by comprehensive intelligence tests, such as crystallized knowledge, working memory, and processing speed. Nevertheless, CogAT scores tend to correlate highly with IQ scores.

What is the SAS?

This stands for Standard Age Score and represents a way to compare your child's performance against other children of the same age (down to the month) against a large national sample. A score of 100 is the perfect average (the 50th percentile rank) with improved performance as the number increases.

What is a percentile rank? How is it different from a percentage?

A percentile rank tells you approximately what percent of students of the same age your child outperformed. For example, a child at the 75th percentile scored higher than approximately 75 out of every 100 same age peers across a large national sample. In the context of assessment, "percentage" usually refers to how much of a test is scored correctly (i.e., a test grade with a percentage score of 86 refers to a "B").

Can my child be tested again?

The Department of GATE Programs offers up to three assessments for each student throughout their educational careers with WCSD. Generally, students will be tested automatically during the 1st and 5th grades. Therefore, a referral or appeal may result in a third assessment. In no case may a child retake the CogAT within 12 months of the previous attempt.

How does my child compare to other students in the district?

Because eligibility for Gifted and Talented is based upon student performance against a national sample of other students, local norms are not used for comparison. Instead, students' scores refer to their performance compared with a sample of same-aged peers across the nation.

What does CogAT measure?

The CogAT measures students' logical reasoning abilities in verbal, non-verbal, and quantitative areas.

What score qualifies for GATE?

A score at the 98th percentile rank automatically qualifies students for GATE program services. A score at the 99th percentile rank allows students of the appropriate grade level to enroll in the School Within A School (SWAS) program. Scores between the 95th and 97th percentile rank may lead to eligibility in combination with high Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) scores.

How are the results used?

The results of the CogAT are only used to determine whether or not students qualify for GT services. They do not impact a student's educational (classroom) placement, their grades, the type of curriculum they receive, or anything else.

Why does WCSD universally screen in 1st and 5th grades?

Students qualifying for GATE services begin receiving them the following Fall. Because GATE services begin in 2nd grade, eligibility from a 1st grade assessment will allow students to begin receiving services at the earliest possible opportunity. The grades selected for universal screening, therefore, are strategically scheduled to allow students the maximum opportunity to participate in GATE programming.

Is the CogAT the only thing considered for GT classification?

MAPs (or DRA scores for students not yet taking the Reading MAPs) scores may supplement the CogAT score for students whose cognitive scores range from the 95th to the 97th percentile rank.

Do you accept outside test results?

Yes, we accept test scores from the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fifth Edition (WISC-V) or Stanford Binet V (SB-5) administered by a licensed clinical psychologist. Parents may pursue this testing at any time and at their own expense.

If you have other questions related to GATE assessment, please contact us at:

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