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ABSTRACT

Normative data were obtained on the performence of first-year graduate students on the Artitude Test and Advanced Tests of the Graduate Record Examinations. The population consisted of students enrolled as full-time graduate students for the first time in the fall of 1964 in a college or university belonging to the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS). Sulpopulations within fach institution were composed of students errclied in graduate study in 18 major fields--biology, business, chemistry, $\in concurs$, monoton, angineering, French, geology, government, history, literature, satheeatics, philosophy, physical education, physics, psychology, sociology, and Spanish. Hajors in these fields took both the Aptitude Test and the appropriate Advanced Test. Bores are provided for the Verbal and Quantitative sections of the Aptitude Test by major field of study and for performance on the 15 Advanced Tests. Accuracy of the data is discussed and the appendices contain the names of the institutions participating, the plan of data collection, seights used in preparing the frequency distributions, and specific fields classified under particular fields for sampling purposes. (EOF)

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The Performance of First-Year Graduate Students on the Graduate Record Examinations

Gary L. Marco

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July 1968 Graduate Record Examination Special Report

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THE PERFORMANCE OF FIRST-YEAR GRADUATE STUDENTS

ON THE GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATIONS

. Gary L. Marco

The National Program for Graduate School Selection is under the policy direction of the Graduate Record Examinations Board, an affiliate of the Association of Graduate Schools, the Council of Graduate Schools, and Educational Testing Service.

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PURPOSE ANI	BACKGROUND
POPULATION	AND SAMPLE
PERFORMANCI	E ON THE GRE TESTS
ACCURACY OF	F THE DATA
REFERENCES	
APPENDICES	
Α.	Colleges and Universities which Participated in the GRE Study of First-Year Graduate Students
в.	Plan for Data Collection
C.	Weights Used in Preparing the Frequency Distribution 27
D	Specific Fields Classified Under Particular Major Fields for Sampling Purposes

CONTENTS

Page

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5

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TABLES

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1:	Percent of Graduate Students Scoring Lower than Selected Scaled Scores on the Verbal Section of the Aptitude Test
2:	Percent of Graduate Students Scoring Lower than Selected Scaled Scores on the Quantitative Section of the Aptitude Test
3:	Percent of Graduate Students Scoring Lower than Selected Scaled Scores on the Advanced Tests
4:	Number and Percentage of Students in a Particular Sample Who Had Advanced Test or Aptitude Test Scores

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PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Until the 1967-68 academic year, the primary interpretive materials for the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) were the scores for basic reference groups of college seniors, who for the most part took the tests in 1952 (1). At its meeting in 1964, the Committee on Testing of the Association of Graduate Schools recommended that new data--data representative of the performance of enrolled first-year graduate students--be collected and published. This recommendation resulted in the initiation of the current study. The purpose of this study was to obtain data on the performance of first-year graduate students on the Aptitude Test and the Advanced Tests of the Graduate Record Examinations.

Today the primary interpretive data for GRE tests are norms for National Program candidates tested from May 1964 through April 1967 (1). However, since not all National Program candidates attend graduate school, the data on first-year graduate students described here should be of further use to graduate schools and fellowship sponsors in interpreting GRE scores.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of the study consisted of those students who enrolled as full-time graduate students for the first time in the fall of 1964 in a college or university belonging to the 228-member Council of Graduate Schools (CGS). Students from countries where the primary language is not English and students who had physical handicaps (such as blindness) which might have affected their GRE scores were excluded from the population.

Subpopulations were composed of students enrolled in graduate study in 19 major field categories--18 major fields for which GRE Advanced Tests were appropriate and a nineteenth category called "other."

The Advanced Tests for the 18 major fields were as follows:

Biology	Engineering	Literature in	Physics
Business	French	English	Psychology
Chemistry	Ceology	Mathematics	Sociology
Economics	Government [*]	Philosophy	Spanish
Education	History	Physical Education	-

A two-stage sampling plan was used to select the samples for each of the various subpopulations. The first stage involved the selection of universities and colleges from the CGS members. CGS member institutions were grouped into categories according to the number of graduate degrees awarded in 1961-62 as reported by the U.S. Office of Education (3). The

"The name of this test will be changed to Political Science in the fall of 1968.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE - Page 7

thirty institutions granting the most graduate degrees in 1961-62 were included in the sample. Also included were 15 institutions randomly selected from the 60 universities or colleges with the next highest number of conferred graduate degrees, and 15 randomly selected from the remaining institutions. A greater proportion of the large universities was included in the sample, so that those fields in which only a small number of students were enrolled would be adequately represented.

Of the 60 institutions in the sample invited to participate in the study, 52 agreed to furnish rosters of students and 35 agreed to test each of those students who had not taken the Aptitude Test or an Advanced Test in his major field. Eight schools did not participate. (A list of the participating colleges and universities in each of the three size categories is given in Appendix A.)

The second stage of sampling involved the selection of students within each institution. Some of the participating institutions selected their own samples following a plan suggested by ETS (see the "Plan of Data Collection" in Appendix B), while other institutions sent rosters to ETS for sampling. A spaced sample was chosen according to the ETS plan. The sampling ratios, which varied from field to field, were designed to yield a minimum of 300 students in the group for each of the 19 major field classifications. Thus, smaller percentages of students were sampled from the more popular major fields.

After the second stage of sampling was finished, the 1963 and 1964 ETS files were searched to determine which of the students in the sample had appropriate GRE scores. Each student who attended an institution

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that agreed to conduct special testings was asked to take the Aptitude Test if Aptitude scores were missing and the Advanced Test in his major field (provided his undergraduate and graduate major fields were the same) if the Advanced Test score was missing. The special testings were conducted late in the first semester and early in the second semester of the 1964-65 academic year.

PERFORMANCE ON THE GRE TESTS

How well did the first-year graduate students perform on the GRE tests? Score data for Verbal Ability, Quantitative Ability, and the Advanced Tests are given in Tables 1-3. These tables show the percent of graduate students scoring lower than selected scaled scores. It is important to note that, because of missing scores, the Advanced Test distribution for a particular major field was not based on the same students as the Aptitude Test distribution for that field.

The data in Tables 1-3 are based on <u>weighted</u> frequency distributions. Weighting was necessary to estimate the population frequency distributions from the sample data. The weights were determined primarily from the number of full-time first-year graduate students reported by the U.S. Office of Education for each of the participating institutions (4).

The score frequencies for a particular field and institution were adjusted for (a) the size of the institution's class of full-time firstyear graduate students, (b) the number of full-time first-year graduate students in the size category (large, medium-sized, small) in which the institution was classified, and (c) the number of CGS schools in that particular size category. (The actual formula used in computing the weights is given in Appendix C.)

Since the score data for the fields of business, education, and physical education were probably biased (see next section), neither

PERFORMANCE - Page 10

Aptitude Test nor Advanced Test score data are reported for these forms. Aptitude Test data for these fields were, however, included in the form tributions for "all fields." It was thought that any bias existing in the data for the three fields would not have a biasing effect on the overall Aptitude Test distributions.

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Table 2

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PERCENT OF GRADUATE STUDENTS SOCIATING LOWER THAN SELECTED SCALED WORKS ON THE QUANTITATIVE SECTION OF THE APTITUDE TEST

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Page 13

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ACCURACY OF THE DATA

How accurate are the data reported in Tables 1-3? One way to answer this question is to determine confidence intervals for the various means of the score distributions. However, such a procedure can be used legitimately only if the sampling is random. Since there is reason to believe that the final samples were how random, this procedure was not considered appropriate. Another way to approach the question of accuracy is to examine (a) the representativeness of the original sample and (b) the number of students in the original sample with appropriate CRE scores.

The samples in three fields were considered unrepresentative because there were insufficient numbers of students in the samples from particular graduate schools. For example, because of a communication problem, no students from the University of Michigan were represented in the sample for education, even though a large number of first-year graduate students were enrolled in this field at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1964. Thus, the sample for education could not be considered representative. The other fields which were judged to have biased data because of inadequate representation from some colleges or universities were business, physical education, and "other".

The samples in some fields were also considered unrepresentative because of ambiguity in the definition of subpopulations. Since graduate

DATA - Page 15

school personnel should be more able than anyone else to determine the subject-matter areas for which a given Advanced Test is appropriate, the colleges and universities that selected their own samples were asked to define the subpopulations for the various fields. Educational Testing Service defined the subpopulations when it selected the samples. (Subjectmatter areas included under a particular major field heading when ETS selected the samples are indicated in Appendix D.) As a result, certain ambiguities arose. The fields most seriously affected were probably biology, education, and "other".

Even if samples of students are representative, the data might still be biased if appropriate test scores are not available for all of these students. In this study, not all of the students in the original sample had scores. Students at 17 institutions were not offered special testings, and only about 30% of the students asked to participate in the special testings offered by the other 35 institutions actually were tested. The number and the percent of students in the original sample for this study who had Advanced Test or Aptitude Test scores are reported in Table 4. The percent of students who had appropriate test scores ranged from 9% (in business) to 66% (in physics) for the Advanced Tests, and from 21% (in business) to 73% (in psychology) for the Aptitude Test. Because the percentages of students with GRE scores were so low, the Advanced Test distributions in the fields of business, education, and physical education and the Aptitude Test distributions in the field of business were probably biased.

Another way to approach the question of accuracy is to compare the distributions with data for other groups. Two such groups are the

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Table 4

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN A PARTICULAR SAMPLE WHD HAD ADVANCED TEST OR APTITUDE TEST SOORES

	Númber 1n	Students Advanced Tes	with t Scores	Students Aptitude Tes	with it Scor <u>es</u>
major rield	Sample	Number	Х	Number	\$
Biology	243	129	53	163	. 67
Business	.332	. 31	(ف	. 69	21
Chemistry	458	268	59	280	61
Economics	445	234	53	260	`5 8
Education	353	69	20	116	33
Engineering	348	159	46	175	50
French	397	.152	38	146	37
Geology	202	99	49	126	62
Government	470	164	35	212	45
History	505	232 -	46	259	51
Literature in English	469	232	49	237	51
Mathematics	506	265	- 52	289	57
Philosophy	436	188	43	228	52
Physical Education	149	36	_2 4	[.] 55	37 [.]
Physics	346	227	66	233	67
Psychology	355	.222 ·	63	258	73
Sociology	555	187	34 1	251	45
Spanish	1 251	82	. 33	77	31
Other	1014	• •	 .	378	36

GRE basic reference groups of college seniors (1) and 1963-64 GRE National Program Candidates (2). In general, the means for the Aptitude Test and the Advanced Tests from the current study were somewhat larger than those reported in the 1963-64 study and much larger than the means for the college seniors. The Verbal Ability and Quantitative Ability means of first-year graduate students were approximately 15 points higher than the corresponding means of the 1963-64 National Program candidates. The Verbal Ability mean for first-year graduate students was, on the average, 55 points higher than . the corresponding mean of college seniors, while the Quantitative Ability mean was about 75 points higher. The Advanced Test scores of first-year graduate students averaged about 25 points higher than the scores of National Program candidates and about 100 points higher than the scores of college seniors. However, the means for first-year graduate students were slightly lower than the means for National Program candidates in biology (Verbal Ability mean), government (Quantitative Ability mean) and mathematics (Advanced Test mean).

A third comparison group is the 1964-67 norms group, who also were National Program candidates (see the <u>Handbook for the Interpretation</u> of <u>CRE Scores, 1967-68</u>). No data by major field are available on the 1964-67 group for the Aptitude Test. However, the overall Verbal Ability and Quantitative Ability means for first-year graduate students were approximately 25 points higher than the means for the 1964-67 norms group. The Advanced Test means for first-year graduate students in all fields but mathematics were also higher than the means for the 1964-67 group. In mathematics the mean for the norms group slightly exceeded the mean for first-year graduate students. In the other fields, the means of first-year

DATA - Page 18

graduate students ranged from 23 points higher in biology to 58 points higher in geology.

Generally, these findings seem reasonable. Most of the persons who took the GRE tests in the National Program intended to go to graduate school or in some cases were already enrolled. However, a number of these persons were probably not admitted to CGS member schools, and others failed to attend any graduate school. Thus, one would expect the scores of the National Program candidates to be lower on the average than the scores of enrolled first-year graduate students. Likewise one would expect the scores of enrolled first-year graduate students to be substantially higher on the average than the scores of complete classes of college seniors, not all of whom actually attend graduate school.

That the means for first-year graduate students were lower than the means for National Program candidates in biology and government on the Aptitude Test and in mathematics on the Advanced Tests is somewhat disturbing. It might be that the means for first-year graduate students in these fields were low. However, a large percentage of the National Program candidates were applicants for National Science Foundation (NSF) fellowships. Each applicant was required to take the Aptitude Test and an Advanced Test if one was offered in his field. Advanced Tests were offered in biology, chemistry, economics, engineering, geology, government, mathematics, physics, psychology, and sociology. The percent of applicants for NSF fellowships in the 1964-67 norms group was particularly high in chemistry (26%), mathematics (25%), physics (23%), and geology (20%), respectively. Thus, the Advanced Test means for these four fields especially and the Aptitude Test means for the 1964-67 norms

DATA - Page 19

group were somewhat inflated. If one removed the effect associated with the percentage and caliber of NSF fellowship applicants, the means for first-year graduate students would probably have been consistently higher than the means for National Program candidates.

In summary, then, the Aptitude and Advanced Test data for the fields of business, education, and physical education and the Aptitude Test data for "other" fields were probably biased and are not reported. However, the data for the other fields appear to be reasonably consistent with comparative data from other sources, particularly when the percentages and caliber of NSF fellowship applicants are considered. The reported data are probably fairly accurate estimates of the performance of full-time first-year graduate students who attended colleges or universities belonging to CGS in the fall of 1964.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix A

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE GRE STUDY OF FIRST-YEAR GRADUATE STUDENTS

Large Colleges or Universities

Boston University

California, University of (Berkeley)

California, University of (Los Angeles)

Chicago, University of

Columbia University

Harvard University

Illinois, University of

Towa, University of

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Michigan State University

Michigan, University of

Minnesota, University of

Missouri, University of

New York University

Northwestern University

Ohio State University

Pennsylvania State University

Pennsylvania, University of

Purdue University

Stanford University

Syracuse University

Washington, University of

Wisconsin, University of

Medium-Sized Colleges or Universities AIabama, University of Arkansas, University of Cincinnati, University of Colorado, University of Colorado, University of Johns Hopkins University Kent State University Miami University (Ohio) Nebraska, University of Oklahoma State University Colkahoma, University of Princeton University

Southern Illinois University

Western Michigan University 'Small Colleges or Universities

Akron, University of

Atlanta University

California Institute of Technology

California, University of (Santa Barbara)

Dartmouth College

Duke University

Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphis

Louisville, University of

Maine, University of

Miami, University of (Florida)

New York, State University of (Albany)

Tuskegee Institute

Utah State University

Virginia Polytechnic Institute

Washington State University

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Appendix B

PLAN OF DATA COLLECTION

I. Identification of students to be included in the sample

- Major fields to be sampled. In the Graduate Record Examinations National Program for Graduate School Selection, the Aptitude Test and eighteen Advanced Tests are administered. It is planned to obtain Advanced Test norms on first-year graduate students enrolled in the corresponding major fields. Aptitude Test norms will be obtained on the basis of a cross section of all first-year graduate students. In order to provide Aptitude Test norms it is necessary to obtain score data on the Aptitude Test for students enrolled in other fields. In addition, it is planned to provide Aptitude Test norms on students enrolled in the eighteen major fields. In addition, it is planned to provide Aptitude Test norms on students enrolled in each major field. The major fields to be sampled are listed in the table in Section I-C.
- B. <u>Sampling ratios for the major fields</u>. The number of cases needed in the sample to represent the population of each major field adequately is approximately 300. Since more students are enrolled in some fields than in others, it is desirable to use different sampling ratios for the different major fields to obtain adequate samples Thus for a field with a large enrollment, such as engineering, a smaller proportion of the total enrollment would need to be selected than for a field with a smaller enrollment. In the case of a field with a very small enrollment every student may have to be selected. To adjust for differences in enrollment in the major fields the sampling ratios given in the table in Section I-C have been chosen.
- C. <u>Procedure for the selection of an unbiased sample</u>. It is essential that the sampling within each major rield be as nearly random as possible in order not to bias the norms. The following procedures are designed to produce an unbiased sample.
 - 1. The population to be sampled consists of all students entering graduate school in the fall of 1964. Since sampling ratios differ from field to field (see table on following page), the total population of students must be identified according to the eighteen major fields designated in the table. All of the names of the students in major fields not specifically designated in the table should be listed on a combined roster and identified by

major field. Although a single roster is to be used for major fields not listed in the table, the major field with which each student is affiliated should still be indicated.

2. Within each of the eighteen fields named in the table and within the combined category, each student should be assigned a number from 1 to N (where N equals the total number of students enrolled in the field or in the combined category).

In the actual selection of the students for a major field 3. sample, the first student to be selected will be the one whose number corresponds to the initial selection number given in the table. Then the following cases to be selected will be determined by the sampling ratio for that major field. Of course in the case of a sampling ratio of 1/1, all cases would be included in the sample. For example, if at institution A there were 100 greduate students enrolled in the History Department in the fall of 1964, these students would be lieted on a roster and assigned consecutive numbers. In accordance with the initial selection number in the table, the first student to be selected would be student No. 2; and in accordance with the sampling ratio for History (1/3), every third student thereafter, i.e., students numbered 5, 8, 11, etc., would be selected until the entire list of students in the field was exhausted.

Major <u>Field</u>	Sampling _Ratio	Initial Selection No.	Major <u>Field</u>	Sampling Ratio	Initial Selection No.
Biology	1/5	1.	Literature -	1/5	1
Business	1/10	1 ~	Mathematics	1/3	2
Chemistry	1/3	2	Philosophy	1/1	1
Economics	1/2	1 [,]	Physical	-	· ••
Education	1/10		Education	1/2	1
Engineering	1/10	-	Physics	.1/3	2
French	1/1	1	Psychology	1/3	2
Geology	1/1	1	Sociology	1/1	1
Government	1/2	1	Spanish	1/1	1
History	1/3	2	Major Fields		
•			Not Listed	1/1ċ	i.

Sampling Ratios and Initial Selection Numbers for Major Fields

D. <u>Preparation and mailing of the rosters</u>. On the enclosed rosters the names of the students selected for the samples should be listed according to major fields. If GRE scores are readily available on the students, they should be recorded in Columns 1-6 on the rosters. For a student who has one or more missing GRE scores, the name of the undergraduate college he last attended should be given; and his date of birth should be provided if it is readily available. When the rosters are completed, they are to be sent to:

> Dr. Philip R. Harvey Assistant Program Director Graduate Record Examinations Educational Testing Service Princeton, New Jersey

II. Special test administration for securing missing data on students in the sample

The students in the sample for whom GRE scores are available will not need to be tested. ETS will search the files for the scores of those students whose scores are not furnished by the cooperating institutions. Students for whom the Advanced Test score and/or the Aptitude Test scores are missing will be requested to take the test(s) for which scores are not available. ETS will report to each cooperating institution the names of students to be tested, and a test date will be arranged for the institution. Examination materials and instructions for testing will be provided by ETS.

computed as follows:

Appendix C

WEIGHTS USED IN PREPARING THE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS

The weight for a college or university i in a given field was

 $W_{i} = \frac{N_{i}}{F_{i}} \times \frac{N}{N'} \times \frac{N}{N'} \qquad (F_{i} \neq 0)$

where N_i = The number of full-time first year graduate students at college or university 1 in the sample;

 F_i = the number in the sample who had the appropriate GRE score;

- N = ΣN, for all colleges or universities in the same size category as college or university i;
- $N' = \Sigma N_i$ (F_i \neq 0) for all colleges or universities in the same size category as college or university i;
- R = the weight based on the sampling ratio in the appropriate size category (1 for large colleges or universities, 4 for mediumsized colleges or universities, and 138/15 for small colleges or universities).

To see how this weighting scheme worked, consider the following example for the field of Biology:

Size Category	College or University No	N	<u>F</u>	<u></u>
Large	l	21	0	
(R=1)	3	48	· 4	15.5
	30	24	2	15.5
Medium-Sized	31	21	· 3	28.0
(R=4)	32	. 0	0	
•	<u>4</u> 5	` 19	1	76.0
Small	48	18	4	42.4
(R-138/15)	49	8	6	12.27
	60	× 9	l	82.8

In this example the weights for colleges or universities 3, 31, and 49 in Biology were computed as follows:

> No. 3: $\frac{48}{4} \times \frac{93}{72} \times 1 = 15.5$ No. 31: $\frac{21}{3} \times \frac{40}{40} \times 4 = 28.0$ No. 49: $\frac{8}{5} \times \frac{35}{35} \times \frac{138}{15} = 12.27$

For both the Aptitude Test and the Advanced Tests, the frequencies were weighted according to the weights calculated by the formula given previously. However, for the Aptitude Test frequencies were combined across fields to give overall distributions for Verbal Ability and Quantitative Ability as well as distributions for each of the major fields.

Appendix D

SPECIFIC FIELDS CLASSIFIED UNDER PARTICULAR MAJOR FIELDS FOR SAMPLING PURPOSES

Biology:	Biológy, General Botany Zoology	Government:	Government Political Science
		History:	American History
Business	Accounting	-	European History
	Business Administration		History, General
	Business and Commerce		
-		Literature:	Comparative Literature
Chemistry:	Chemistry (including	•	English
	Analytical, Inorganic,		Literature
	Organic, and Physical		
•	Chemistry)	mathematics	Mathematics Statistics
Feenerie	Feeningless		Statistics
20010012031	ECONOMICS	Philosophyt	Philosophy
Education	Administration	initosopny.	
nauca crosss	Counseling and	Physical	Physical Education
e .	Quidance	Education:	
•	Early Childhood		•
	Education	Physics:	Chemical Physics
	Education, General		Physics
	Educational Psychology		
•	Elementary Education	Psychology:	Psychology (including
	History and Philosophy		Clinical Psychology and
	of Education		Social Psychology)
	Secondary Education	~~ 	
	•	Sociology:	Sociology
Engineering:	Aeronautical	Georgen	9 and ch
	Clear	oparciant	opanitsii
			-
	Engineering, General		
	Indvistrial		
-	Mechanical		
<u></u>			
French	French		

Geology

Geology