

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to inform you that the GRE Mathematics Subject Test has been rescaled, effective October 2001, and has been renamed “GRE Mathematics Test (Rescaled).” The *content* of the test has *not* changed in any way: the topics and skills being assessed, and the proportions of these, remain the same. In addition, the score range continues to extend from 200 to 990, as it does for all other Subject Tests. However, as with the other Subject Tests, the range of actual scaled scores is smaller.

Why was the test rescaled?

The primary reason for rescaling the Mathematics Test was to make the test scores more useful for admissions committees and other score users by *spreading out* high-ability examinees on the score scale. The scores of the Mathematics Test population have increased substantially since the test was first scaled in 1952, and an increasingly large percentage of individuals each year have been earning 990, the highest possible score on the scale. For example, recent data — based on the scores of individuals who tested between October 1996 and October 1999 — indicate that about 18 percent of examinees received 990 on the test and the highest percentile an examinee could obtain was 82. The Mathematics Test (Rescaled) will enable score users to distinguish among high-scoring examinees in a way that has not been possible with the Mathematics Test for several years.

Interpreting Scores

Although the possible range of scores has not changed, the range of *actual* scores on the new scale is wider than the range of *actual* scores on the former scale. This is because on the new scale each observed raw score corresponds to a unique scaled score; on the former scale a range of raw scores corresponded to the same scaled score at the top of the scale. The rescaling will likely result in fewer, if any, 990 scores and will provide better discrimination of mathematical ability.

Because the distribution of test scores on the rescaled test will be different than the distribution on the former scale — and because this change will affect the rank ordering of test takers — it is not appropriate to compare scores and percentiles earned on the Mathematics Test (Rescaled) to scores and percentiles earned before October 2001. It is important to remember that the meaning of each score point, and of each percentile, is very different between the former Mathematics Test scale and the new Mathematics Test (Rescaled) scale. For example, a 750 on the former scale does not mean the same as a 750 on the new scale, and a percentile of, say, 50 corresponds to a different score on the new scale than it did on the old. Therefore, scores on the former and new scales should be treated as if they were received on two separate, independent tests.

I realize that for some time you may receive scores earned on the Mathematics Test before October 2001. In this case, it may be helpful to rely on your past experience with the former scale in interpreting these scores.

If you have questions about interpreting scores on the Mathematics Test (Rescaled), please contact Kathy O’Neill in the GRE Program at (609) 683-2988 or koneill@ets.org. If you have questions about the test content, please contact Daryl Ezzo, the primary test specialist, at (609) 683-2619 or dezzo@ets.org.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas R. Rochon
Executive Director
GRE Program