

GATE PREPARATION: ROADMAP

As they say, Rome was not built in a day. Also, we all have heard the story of “Hare and the Tortoise”. There is one basic formula to succeed in these exams and that is; **start early and keep moving ahead consistently at a regular pace as per a predefined plan**. Don’t think that cracking the GATE exam is a difficult task. It just requires a proper planning and execution of it. Top rankers are normal human beings, just like you.

There are two categories of GATE Aspirants:

- **Freshers:** Preparing first time for the competitive exams.
- **Repeaters:** Who have already given one or more attempts - Rank Improvers.

Strategy for Freshers:

If you are fresher and preparing for the first time then you should adopt the following approach;

- ✓ Define your Aim and Target the GATE right from the beginning. You should closely examine the Exam Pattern, Syllabus and the Level of Difficulty of the questions asked.
- ✓ The first step of yours should be, to go through previous year’s question papers and identify what type of questions are asked, like whether it is theoretical (then what subjects or which topics are mostly asked) or derivations or numerical type.
- ✓ Always keep at least one reference book handy for each subject (which one - will be discussed during lectures). You are not advised to read too many books, as practically it is not possible to finish that in the limited time frame.

The Study Roadmap

Have an Overall Plan:

Make an overall plan of your career by defining immediate and ultimate goals of it. Then, make a roadmap to execute it in the most effective manner. Being an engineer you should understand the importance of planning and execution of the plan. Overall plan may be further divided in three stages:

1. One and a Half Year Plan:

Divide months for different subjects and plan it so as to complete the entire syllabus in the left over time. In the current scenario of high cut-offs, do not go for selective study; instead cover the entire syllabus, because you never know “the topic left could be the topic of conquest” and you will get side-lined from the competition.

2. Subject-wise Plan:

For each subject, study should be exam oriented, so that you know which area is to be focussed like whether theory has to be focussed or numerical or solving previous year’s questions will suffice. Every subject requires different approach.

For example, in Mathematics you may be required to focus on practicing problems where as in cracking a General Aptitude question a different approach is to be adopted. Similarly, technical subjects like Thermodynamics, SOM, Fluid Mechanics, Machining science, Vibration etc require a different approach of preparation.

If you are enrolled in our coaching institute; then never miss any lecture and always be before time, concentrate and study well in the classroom, your class notes should be full and final and should be ready in classroom itself, with simultaneous marking of important concepts /formulae and develop a habit of writing down NOTE points, wherever required. It helps in memory retention. If only self-study is your style of preparing without coaching, then also Notes making is advisable. It may take more time, but you have to do that.

3. Daily Basis Plan:

- It is just an effective time management. Plan and freeze the study hours and abstain from using Mobile phones, Social media, WhatsApp etc during these hours.
- Before you sleep, invest 5 to 10 mins to plan your next day schedule. It will help you avoid every unnecessary activity in your schedule and helps you in effective time utilisation. It is also recommended to pre plan your topic of study for the next day, it would help in activating senses of your mind to stimulate for study which indirectly motivates you to remain consistently focussed.
- Habit of solving previous year's questions of GATE (at least of last 25 years) should be made compulsory once a particular topic is competed in the class. Don't procrastinate on this. It is this habit of yours that would eventually become your Distinguishing Strength and Confidence Booster.
- While solving questions, mark the questions which you were not able to solve. Refer the concepts given in the class notes along with the reference book suggested for the given topic. Go through the related article and then again try to get an answer. Have a habit of writing the page number of the reference book across the question that you had referred for it. Also keep underlining or highlighting the corresponding points in your book and put it down in your conclusion booklet. Mark those Q's as LMR (Last Moment Revision), that you feel needs to be visited again while revision.

Have a Revision Plan:

- ✓ The way it is important to complete the syllabus by studying the pending topics or subjects, it is equally important to keep revising the previous topics or subjects covered.
- ✓ In a week, to begin with devote 90% of your allotted time (towards GATE) to study the new topic and 10% to revise the previous topics and or subjects already covered.
- ✓ This percentage allocation of time needs to be modified with every passing month. As the time passes by, and you move closer to your month of exam, the time allotted for revision will gradually increase to 100% and studying new topic will decrease to almost 0%.
- ✓ While revising, go through all the points from the conclusion booklet (will be developed during the lectures). Solve only those Q's which you have not tried until now and keep tickmarking. It's ok, if you cannot complete all the Q's. Do whatever maximum you can, before you get super exhausted. Remaining Q's can be covered in the next revision slot. Aim should be to finally cover all the questions well before exams.
- ✓ Always carry your revision / conclusion booklet along with you and as and when you get time (while waiting for your bus / train or during travelling or break between lectures etc) even if you are getting 2 mins, utilise it. Keep doing this throughout the course. Ab Agar Hum Top Nahi Karenge, toh Kaun Karega?

Evaluate yourself:

Never miss any of the Tests and don't take it lightly. Plan and prepare for it. It's ok, if you don't score well. By giving these tests, you will understand where you stand. The mentor will understand your weakness. And then suggest you an improvement roadmap so that your performance will be better in the next exam. Progressively, over a period of time, you would be so refined and polished that getting within Top - 100 rank will be just a piece of cake.

Imp. note: Stay away from incompetent and non-achievers. Don't let their failure demoralise you in any sense.

Adopt a Balanced Approach:

- No doubt, we need to cover the full syllabus of GATE, but there is a need to segregate the topics or subjects that carry more weightage or are more scoring from the ones which are less. Proportionately the time needs to be allotted (More details will be shared during the lectures).
- Also, a balance has to be adopted between “Technical Subjects” and non-technical subjects like “Engg. Maths and General Aptitude”. A very strong boost can be achieved in your score by preparing these subjects properly.

Strategy for Repeaters:

- It's the time to review yourself and try to figure out, why you failed to get a decent score. Note that, failing is not a problem, accepting the failure is the main culprit. In fact, if you closely observe, you have not failed. It's just that, your success has been postponed a bit. Failure gave you an opportunity to improve.
- Try to identify as to what are your weak areas subjectwise and topicwise. You need to be putting more effort on improving that.
- Focus on solving more varieties of problems and that too from a new source (may be a GATE paper, which you have never touched).
- Plan your study to maintain consistency. Have a weekly, monthly, quarterly, half yearly and yearly target. Topic and subject - wise time allocation is very important for a systematic preparation.
- Never miss any of the Tests (if you have joined our classroom coaching) and don't take it lightly. Plan and prepare for it. It's ok, if you don't score well. By giving these tests, you will understand where you stand. The mentor will understand your weakness. And then suggest you an improvement roadmap so that your performance will be better in the next exam. Progressively, over a period of time, you would be so refined and polished that getting within Top - 100 rank will be just a piece of cake.

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