

# ADMISSION TESTS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



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*Admission test — the one ominous exam standing between you and your dream university, a test more gruesome than the Twelve Labours of Hercules. Admission tests can be highly challenging not only due to the sudden leap in difficulty, but also since your result directly reflects on the undergraduate programme you choose and the path your life takes thereafter.*

Growing up, our aspirations are endless. Some dream of floating in space while others dream of becoming professional athletes. By the time we graduate from school and sit for our HSC or A Level exams, we form a somewhat grounded idea of what we might want to pursue. Yet, once we are done with the exam, we discover ourselves stranded in a sea of confusion – “How do I begin preparing for admission tests? WHERE do I begin?” And thus begins the 3-month long battle which feels like ages.

### WHEN SHOULD I BEGIN TAKING PREPARATIONS?

If you are still asking yourself this question, then I hate to break it to you, but you are approximately a month behind. However, considering that major public university exams begin from September alongside the fact that private universities have multiple sessions, there is still enough time to catch up. The key is to allocate your time properly and formulate a routine that allots all your concerned subjects a few hours of focused study time. Remember, it is not about when you begin, rather how many hours you put behind your preparations.

### IS ATTENDING CLASSES AT COACHING CENTRES MANDATORY?

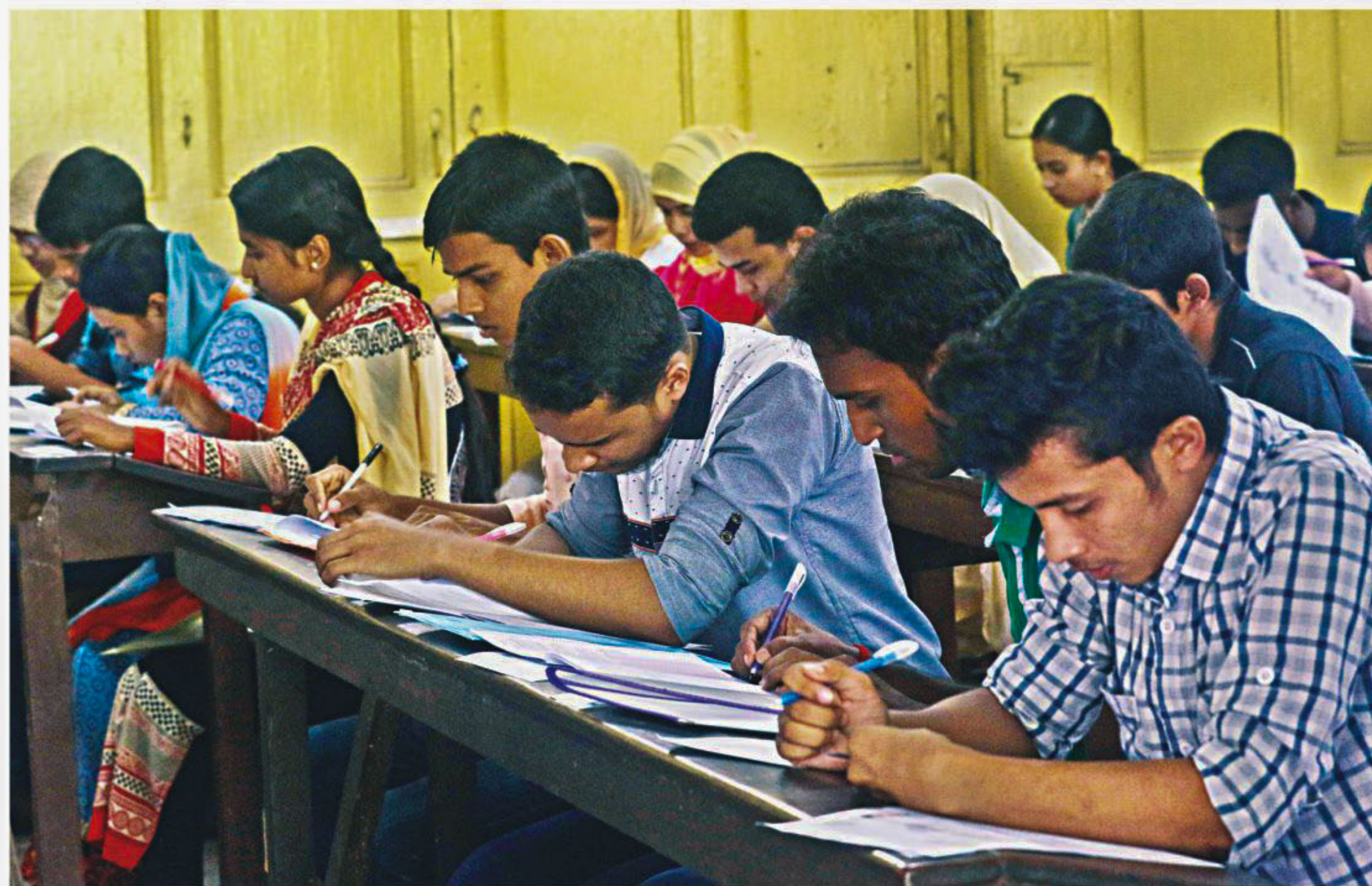
Like most other cases, the answer is a resounding “NO”. Majority of the admission tests primarily follow the national curriculum (HSC) with the exception of some business schools which tend to loosely follow the SAT’s question pattern.

Therefore, in order to prepare for pure subjects, engineering, and medical schools, you need to have a firm grip on the related topics of your textbook. So, if you think you can maintain your attention span long enough to study for hours with complete focus, you will be easily able to prepare yourself at home. But if there are gaps in your understanding of the relevant topics, and if you need help, you should get that extra help as soon as possible. You can collect the previous years’ questions to get an idea about the question pattern and practice the papers within a set time. Moreover, you can even collect the mock/model questions from your friends and peers for further practice if required. This saves a lot of precious time that would have otherwise been wasted in commuting through our capricious traffic conditions.

For business school preparations, admission coaching centres offer a tad bit more utility than the prior since all the content is not as well organised. However, that too can be prepared at home. Since these tests are aptitude tests, they demand less textual knowledge. Rather, a clear conceptual understanding of basic topics in English and Mathematics which we all learn in our school years would be more useful. Websites such as [majortests.com](http://majortests.com) and [10minuteschool.com](http://10minuteschool.com) have adequate resources for you to be able to practice for these tests from the sanctity of your homes.

### HOW MANY A’S OR HOW MUCH GPA DO I NEED TO SIT FOR THE ADMISSION TEST?

Every university has their own set of requirements. Rest assured, you do not generally need straight A’s or a per-



fect GPA score throughout to be eligible for the test, with the exception of top engineering universities. You can find the requirement criteria in the respective websites and the circulars of the universities that you want to apply in.

### SHOULD I PREPARE FOR MULTIPLE UNIVERSITIES OR FOCUS ON JUST ONE?

Being culturally prone to avoid the risks of uncertainty, we often believe that keeping our options open is the best way to go about things. If there is one situation where this notion may backfire it is probably during the admission tests. While it is not completely impossible to take multiple preparations at the same time, it is highly improbable for an average person to cope up with the immense challenge it poses. Sure, you can prepare for multiple universities which require similar subject knowledge, but it is awfully ambitious to attempt to prepare for universities in completely different fields.

Sanjana Siddique, currently doing her BSc in Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology in the University of Dhaka, said, “Preparation for engineering schools coincides with that of science departments. So, you can easily prepare for say, Dhaka University’s ‘A’ unit and BUET together since they require you to answer mostly common papers like Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics. On the other hand, medical preparations are widely different than that of the others. Therefore, trying to prepare for medical schools and business or engineering schools together can prove to be disastrous.” Since time is very limited during this phase, it is important to make every second count. Shuffling back and forth not only creates unnecessary mental duress with too much on the plate but also strips you off the

much-needed sense of direction and determination.

Hence, it is better to prepare yourself for the tests that overlap with one another and avoid perplexing yourself with starkly contrasting topics in this short time span.

### SO I SHOULD ONLY SIT FOR THE UNIVERSITY THAT I REALLY WANT TO GET INTO?

It is wise to sit for any and all admission tests which consist of the same subjects as what you prepared for. This has two good effects: firstly, you get warmed up for your most prioritised test. The more tests you take, the better you can handle your nerves in the exam hall. So, you would want to practice and sit for tests as often as you can. Secondly, if you have a safety net in the field that you desire to study in, it puts your mind to ease. You can keep yourself collected during your most significant exam as you will not take it as the end of the world.

### DOES MY MEDIUM OF EDUCATION AFFECT MY CHANCES OF GETTING INTO A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY?

As mentioned before, most admission tests follow the national curriculum. Therefore, English medium students need to adapt a bit to the topics while Bangla medium students are naturally accustomed to the syllabus.

“I felt the strain of the monstrous HSC syllabus which had to be completed within 1.5 months. I wasn’t used to devouring massive amounts of facts since A levels followed a more conceptual style,” said Swapnil Saha, a student of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, University of Dhaka. According to him, the best way to

adapt with the change is to practice regularly and solve past papers as often as you can to get accustomed to the question pattern.

In a nutshell, while the medium of education certainly does not affect the chances since the topics are already covered in both mediums, it affects how a student might perceive the subjects. English medium students need bit of an adjustment period initially, so it is wise to start early and be smart about going through the chapters.

### ARE PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES GOOD ALTERNATIVES TO PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES?

This is where it gets a little tricky. Since the quality and experience differs to a great extent from one university to the other, it is difficult to objectively answer the question. Nonetheless, private universities have some merits that most public universities do not.

Fariza Tasnim who is doing her Bachelor’s in Business Administration from North South University elucidated the benefits you might get from a private university, “The best part is probably the fact that you get to choose your own courses. Instead of getting stuck with courses that you do not want, you get to explore more areas of your choice. For instance, I have taken a course on Mandarin and it has been really interesting thus far.”

You have more freedom of choice when it comes to private universities over most public ones. However, the admission fee and related costs can be very hefty for a lot of people. So, if you are someone who likes to explore areas of study and can afford the fee, private

universities can be great alternatives. It’s also a good idea to check into the various grants and scholarships some private universities offer.

### HOW DO I GET THE MOST PRODUCTIVITY OUT OF MYSELF DURING THE PREPARATION PHASE?

The key here is to chalk up a routine and follow it strictly. Instead of staying glued to one subject, you need to allot all the subjects a certain portion of your reading time. It is better to divide the time according to your weaknesses, that is, the subject you are relatively weaker in needs to be allotted the largest chunk of your time and the strong subjects require shorter portions. Also, it can get a bit tedious to go through the same subject for a prolonged period of time. So, try to switch up the subjects whenever you feel monotony taking over you. Furthermore, do not forget to take some time off and let your brain relax over a good book or a quick nap. It is imperative that you do not stress yourself out. Proper rest and a regular diet is necessary to ensure you do not have breakdowns.

In conclusion, the key to dealing with the admission test is being decisive and focused. No matter how tough the competition is or how limited the seats are, as long as you clearly know what you want and work accordingly, the stress cannot get to you.

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