

I'm not happy with my GMAT score. What will schools think if I retake the exam?

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<https://web.archive.org/web/20131012005644/http://asktheexpert.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/7725-delmonico.jpg>) Submitted by **Bruce Delmonico**, director of Admissions, [Yale School of Management](https://mba.yale.edu/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20131012005644/http://mba.yale.edu/>)

Whether to retake the GMAT exam is a decision many candidates struggle with during the application process. Because the answer to this question is so dependent on the specifics of an applicant's situation, there's no single, one-size-fits-all guidance that I can offer. Rather than try to do so, let me offer some general thoughts for you to consider and apply to yourself.

The first thing I would note is that there's nothing inherently negative about retaking the GMAT. We see many successful candidates who have taken the test more than once. So the mere fact that you have retaken the test is not a negative in and of itself.

Beyond this initial observation, I would add a few points. First, even though retaking the GMAT exam is not inherently negative, as with other aspects of the admissions process this conclusion is context-dependent. If you retake the test once or twice, that's generally fine. But once you get beyond that, you begin to reach the point of diminishing returns. The candidate who retakes the test five or six times may be regarded differently from one who has taken it twice or three times. Most times, you'll either be confirming the trend or tilting at windmills. So be mindful not just of whether to retake the test, but of how many times you retake it.

Another important consideration is what you hope to accomplish by retaking the test. Candidates obviously consider retaking it because they are not pleased with their existing score. But as you consider whether to take the test again, you need to think about why you are displeased with your score and what score you think you can achieve. If you see specific areas of improvement and feel as though you can materially increase your score, then it may well make sense to try to do so. The term "material" is a squishy one, but to put some greater definition on it, GMAC advises that GMAT scores within 40 points of each other are functionally equivalent. So to really make a difference in your score, as a general matter you need to feel as though you can improve it by 40 points or more. If you're looking to improve by 10 or 20 points, that's really not a meaningful change in your profile.

I hope these insights have been helpful to those of you who are considering retaking the GMAT. Good

luck!

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