



National Benchmark Test

Information Pack

AdvantageLearn.com

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General Information

What are the NBTs?

The National Benchmarking Tests (NBTs) are a set of tests used to assess a student's academic literacy, general knowledge and mathematical skill in an effort to measure academic readiness for university.

The NBTs are national initiative run by *Universities South Africa* (formerly known as Higher Education South Africa). NBT results are used by many universities as an extra admission criterion for applicants to their institutions. They serve to complement and support, rather than replace or duplicate NSC results.

The NBT assesses core areas of competency in which students entering higher education would be expected to display minimum levels of proficiency. Besides assisting with placement, the NBT may also be used to gather information regarding the necessity for, and development of, bridging programs.

The NBT consists of two tests: the MAT and the AQL. The AQL combines Academic Literacy and Quantitative Literacy into one assessment. The AQL is compulsory. The MAT tests on Core Maths concepts. The MAT is only required for certain degree programs, it is always assessed on the same day as the (compulsory) AQL. Each paper is three hours long and is assessed in multiple choice question format. Negative marking does not apply.

What does the NBT assess?

The NBT test assesses readiness for tertiary study. It is made up of two assessments: AQL and MAT.

The AQL paper aims to test proficiency in language comprehension (Academic Literacy - AL) as well as logic based numerical skills (Quantitative Literacy - QL). It assesses knowledge learned in the senior high school phase. It aims to assess whether students will be able to apply knowledge learnt in high school to the tertiary context.

- The Academic Literacy (AL) sections will require reading of various texts with multiple choice questions referring to the text. Some questions are general knowledge based. Questions on grammar, punctuation, vocabulary are included. It predominantly assesses the ability to understand the meaning and application of various texts as well as understanding and applying the argument or main point of the author.
- The Quantitative Literacy (QL) sections assess a student's capacity to: understand basic numerical concepts, read and interpret graphs, reason logically and identify patterns and trends. It is largely based on the Grade 11 Maths Literacy syllabus.

The MAT paper assesses mostly Grade 11 Core Maths syllabus content although some Grade 12 work is included. It tests proficiency in such areas as problem solving and modelling, functions, trigonometry, spatial perception, and probability.

Both the AQL and MAT are differentiated into cognitive levels, meaning there is a range in difficulty in each section - with the easier applications generally coming first. Both papers change throughout the year in order to maintain the integrity of the assessment.

Visit this link to view in detail what is covered in the NBT: <https://advantagelearn.com/nbt-test-national-benchmark-test/>

Do I need to write the NBT? And if so, when do I need to write it?

Many South African universities and tertiary institutions require applicants to write the NBTs. Some institutions only require applicants to write the NBT for certain degrees (for example, only applicants for medicine), while other universities require ALL applicants to write the NBT, regardless of degree program. Some degree programs only require applicants to write the AQL (for e.g. Law) while others require the AQL & the MAT (for e.g. Engineering).

Besides first year applicants, some post-graduate degrees (for example MBA programs) require the NBT as well as certain scenarios where students need to change degrees or universities. So, the NBT is NOT only for first year applicants.

We recommend that you write your NBT even if you are taking a gap year, or if your first choice degree program does not require it. Your NBT results will last for three years, and thus it is a good idea to write it while your high school work is still fresh in your mind.

As tertiary institutions cannot complete your application until they have your NBT scores, students need to write at their earliest possible date in accordance with their chosen university and degree programme requirements. Available data by the NBT suggests that learners who write the tests later in the year have no advantage over those writing in earlier sessions.

You should write the NBTs when you feel ready. If you feel that you may benefit from further revision, and you do not have an early university application date (it can be as early as June for medical students), you may choose to write your test later in the cycle.

Besides making sure that you write at a time that meets the application requirements for your university and degree program, the most important factor to consider when choosing your test date is that you should write it at a time when you can adequately prepare for this important assessment. **Important to note:** It is unclear whether universities will look at

second test attempts. Some may look at the first test only, some may look at the second test only, but it is unlikely that they will ever just take the best score. You cannot decide which score to submit to your university, so make sure your first attempt is a great one!!

The NBTs are available from the end of May until the 1st Saturday in January of the following year. Tests run every weekend or second weekend in this time period with multiple test venues across South Africa.

Keep in mind that different institutional and faculty requirements determine the deadlines for learners to submit NBT results, which may be as early as June or July. You must meet the closing dates and deadlines for the institutions where you are applying. You should also allow time for your NBTs to be processed and the results sent to institutions. Some universities/ departments accept applications with proof that you have written the NBT without having received the actual results.

We have summarised some helpful tips for you below according to our recommendation.

Table 1: Universities and Departments NBT Requirements*

University	Required or Recommended	Department
UCT	Yes	All
WITS	Yes	Health Sciences
Stellenbosch	Yes	All
Rhodes	Yes (recommended)	All
Tuks	Yes	Health Science & Veterinary Science compulsory, other-recommended
UFS	Yes	All
NMMU	No	N/A
UKZN	No	Medicine (some-times)

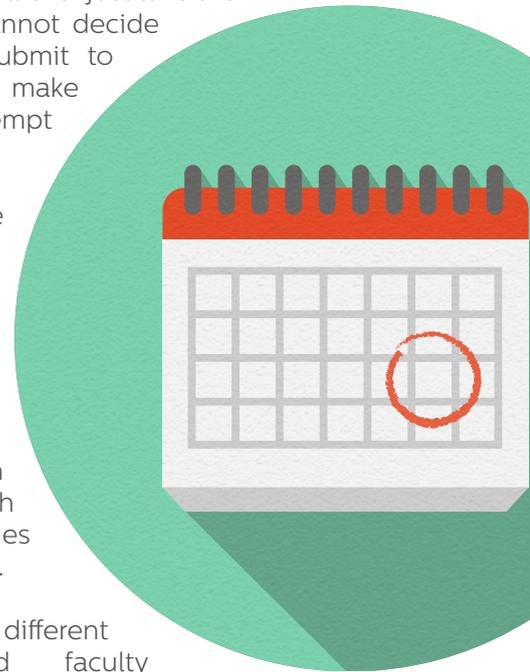


Table 2: Recommended writing dates and results to aim for by department*

Degree	Recommended Test Date	MAT + AQL or AQL only	Minimum NBT result to aim for		
			MAT	AL	QL
Medicine	On or before 1st week July	MAT + AQL	90%	70%	80%
Engineering & Built Environment	On or before 1st week July	MAT + AQL	80%	65%	80%
Business Science	On or before last week July	MAT + AQL	75%	65%	60%
BCom	On or before last week July	MAT + AQL	60%	60%	50%
Health Science	On or before 1st week July	MAT + AQL	70%	70%	70%
BSc	Before Trial exams	MAT + AQL	65%	65%	60%
BA Law	Before Trial exams	AQL only	50%	60%	50%

*Each institution determines which tests are required i.e the university and faculty where you apply will determine which tests you must write (AQL or MAT, or both). Please check with each institution/faculty where you intend to apply, before you register for the NBTs with regards to their application requirements including closing dates and deadlines for receiving NBT results. Please note that each university has different requirements and each faculty may require different tests or have different deadlines.

Check the following before you book!

You need to check the following before you select the date and test site:

- Your school's calendar for sporting and social events, holidays and exams
- Closing dates and application deadlines at all institutions where you intend to apply
- The language of instruction where you are applying

All this needs to be taken into consideration when you are deciding **when** the best time is to write your NBTs.

What are the tests like?

Due to the different nature of the NBT, students generally find them to be a rather difficult assessment, requiring careful preparation.

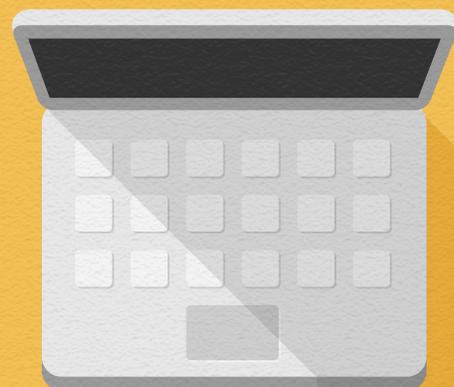
The NBTs are multiple choice tests. Both the AQL and MAT test are 3 hours long. Answers are recorded on what is called a "bubble sheet".

The answer sheets are scanned and then transferred into scores using sophisticated computer software. The AQL is made up of 25 minute sections.

You may not refer back or go forward but can only work in the specified 25 minute section. The MAT is not made up of sections in this way.

What if I am applying to two institutions with different application deadlines?

If you are applying to more than one institution or faculty then you need to register and write the NBTs to meet the earliest deadline. You are only required to write the test once, even when applying to more than one institution. All institutions to which you apply will be able to access your NBT results.



How do I book an NBT?

Registration for the NBTs is done online and takes about 5 minutes. NBT registration for the upcoming intake cycle usually opens on the 1st of April with the first test of the year taking place at the end of May.

Follow this link: <http://nbt.ac.za> to book your test.

Note: you will need your official South African ID or foreign passport in order to complete the registration process.

Your registration is only valid for the specific date and location you select and must be done at least three weeks before you wish to write. It is your responsibility to register early enough to ensure a place on one of the national test days at your chosen venue. There is a full list of available test days and venues on the NBT website.

If you do not have access to the internet, or encounter problems during the registration process, you may either call 021-650-3523 or send an e-mail to nbt@uct.ac.za for assistance.



How much does it cost to write my NBT?

Test fees are non-refundable and can be paid at any EasyPay point.

The fees change every year and can be found on the NBT website.

Should you miss the test for which you were registered, you will need to reregister and pay again.

Why do I have to register?

The NBT project and the local venues guarantee space and materials ONLY for students who have registered to write at a specific venue on a specific day.

What are the available dates to write my NBT?

All test dates are published on the NBT website usually in January. You can book your test from the first Monday in April. The first test date is mid-May and the final test date is early January.

Check the NBT website to see when the test dates are released.

Where can I write my NBT?

There are various centres across South Africa where you can write your NBT. Click on the following link for a list of all the venue sites across the country. Choose a venue that is convenient for you to get to: <http://www.nbt.ac.za/content/test-venues>

What time are the tests?

The AQL is written in the morning (3 hours writing time), and writers must be at the test venue by 07:30. The MAT is written in the afternoon on the same day, with a short lunch break between the two tests. The MAT also has 3 hours writing time.

No learner is allowed to arrive at mid-day to write just the MAT test. If you are writing the MAT test, you **must** write it on the same day as you write the AQL test.

What must I take to my NBT?

- Your ID Book, passport, or a certified receipt of application for South African ID
- Your registration letter and EasyPay proof of payment (without this you will not be allowed to write the NBTs - the venue administrator will stamp the receipt and return it to you)
- Two HB pencils, an eraser, and a pencil sharpener
- Lunch and water, if you are writing both tests
- **DO NOT** bring calculators, rulers, dictionaries, scrap paper, notebooks or ipads, tablets or phones

NOTE that learners without an official ID will be turned away and not allowed to write (except where the following documentation is provided - a birth certificate with an affidavit from the police including a recent photograph and a letter of application for ID from Home Affairs).

What can I expect on test day?

YOU MUST CHECK IN AT 7:30AM. The test venue door closes at 8:30 after which no one is allowed inside the test room.

- At check-in, you will be given an answer sheet with your name and ID number printed on the back
- Once you are seated inside the test room, carefully check the printed name
- You will be given instructions by the Chief Invigilator how to make corrections
- You must show your official ID to an invigilator before the test begins
- Place your ID beside the answer sheet, along with your pencils and eraser. Everything else must be placed on the floor
- Note that bathroom breaks are not allowed. Plan ahead, and remember that the writing session is 3 hours long



In what languages can I write the NBTs?

The NBTs are available in English and Afrikaans. When you register you will be asked to indicate the language in which you wish to write.

Note that you can only use one language i.e there is no option to write one test in English and the other in Afrikaans.

How do I get my NBT results?

You can access your results by logging onto the NBT website with your ID or by sending a request to nbt@uct.ac.za approximately 5/6 weeks after you have written your test. If you are having difficulty accessing your results, you should send an e-mail to request them. NBT Project staff are not allowed to release your results over the phone.

To request your NBT results you need:

- Your ID number
- Your full names (as provided on the NBT answer sheet)
- Your surname (as provided on the NBT answer sheet)

For your NBT results, please log in to your NBT account <https://nbttests.uct.ac.za/user>

Which institutions will use my NBT results and how do they get them?

All the universities to which you apply can receive your NBT results. Many South African universities use the NBTs in conjunction with the National Senior Certificate (NSC) for access to their programmes. The NBTs help to interpret your NSC results and can be used by universities in different ways.

- Some use them to **help make decisions** about your access/application to university. This means that your NBT results, in combination with your matric results, are used to determine whether you are ready for academic study
- Some universities use the results for **placement** within the institution. This means that your NBT results are used to decide whether you will need extra academic support after you have been accepted to university
- Some institutions use them to **develop curricula** within their university

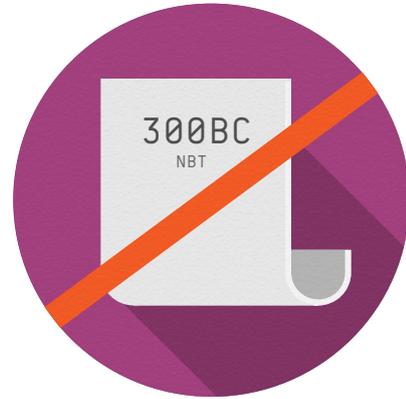
When you apply to an institution, they will place your name on their applicant list. As applications are processed, they send the NBT Project a request for scores that match the applicants on the list. Universities will only get your results when they request them.

Before you submit your registration to write the NBT, you are asked to check a box giving permission for your results to be sent to the requesting institutions and for your results to be used in research projects. Be sure to read this and check this box before hitting “submit”. Remember, it is your responsibility to check whether your NBT results have been loaded with your tertiary institution.

Can I write the NBTs more than once?

Some universities do allow their applicants to write the NBT more than once in an attempt to achieve a better result the second time around. However you **need to check** with the specific faculty and tertiary institution that you are applying to, to make sure that this is the case as not every university will accept the second result.

Note If you do choose to write a second time, you should give yourself at least 6 weeks between writing sessions. If you write the MAT test a second time, you must also write the AQL test a second time on the same morning.



Are past tests available?

No. The tests are confidential and not available to anyone. There is a pool of tests that are used throughout the year. Tests are also updated and changed regularly.

Other useful information

The NBTs are available in both Afrikaans and English.

When you register, you will have the opportunity to indicate which of these two languages you prefer to write in.

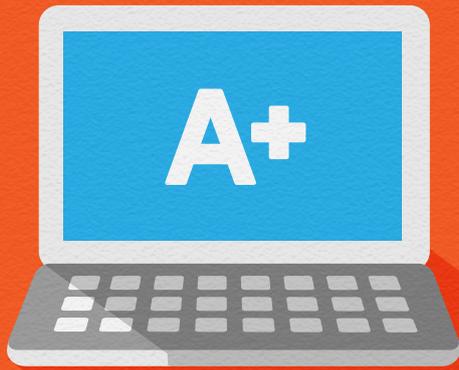
NBT results are valid for three intake years. This means that it is worthwhile writing your NBT in your Matric year even if you are having a gap year. Your syllabus will never be more fresh in your mind as it is now.

If you cannot write the NBTs in the year before your studies (if, for example, you are overseas), you are allowed to write them in January before the start of the academic year. Bear in mind, however, that you do expose yourself to specific risks and practical implications in terms of placement and selection if you write the tests at such a late stage. It is therefore strongly recommended that you write the NBTs in your matric year.

Enquiries

For all and any other enquiries about the writing of your NBTs and release of NBT results contact: NBT Client Services Centre (University of Cape Town).
Telephone: 021 650 3523. Website: www.nbt.ac.za.

How Can I Prepare?



How do I prepare for the NBTs?

Advantage Learn offers NBT Prep courses, both in-person and online via our website: advantagelearn.com

This course is recommended for all students wanting to prepare and do well in their NBT. With many years experience in preparing students for the NBT, coupled with a world class online learning environment and exceptional educators, we are well placed to give you peace of mind with this challenging test.

Since formally commencing NBT training in 2013, Advantage Learn has helped over 10 000 students across South Africa to prepare for this test. We offer over 40 workshops per year in various cities across South Africa, both for individuals and schools, in English and Afrikaans.

Our carefully designed courses prepare students for both papers of the National Benchmark Test (NBT) – the MAT and AQL. It is important that you do this course at the appropriate time for your NBT.

Our course includes the following: training of essential sections known to be tested regularly in the NBTs, test day best practices, how to go about answering multiple choice questions, extensive practice examples and a full mock exam.

When should I do my course?

It does not matter when you attend an NBT workshop. The important thing is to make sure you utilise the online course in the 2 weeks leading up to the NBTs to make sure the content is fresh for when you write the test.

NBT Preparation Workshops:

The workshops cover material tested in the MAT paper of the NBT. All students who attend workshops are given access to the full online NBT course where the AQL is taught, as well as where there is a full mock NBT.

The workshops generally run on the weekends, or public holidays with some weekday courses happening during school holidays.

Included:

- A printed workbook
- Access to online course with over 20 hours worth of content (teaching videos, notes, quizzes, PLUS live student support over chat)
- A mock NBTs

NBT Preparation Online Course:

Made up of just over 20 hours of content led by our Maths and English experts, the course focuses on covering key concepts tested in the NBT as well as test day best practices. Students have full access to the material for 12 months from the date their order was completed. Students are able to work at their own pace, at any time of the day, in accordance with their NBT date.

Part Two: How Can I Prepare?

There are teaching videos, practice questions, quizzes, downloadable notes, a mock NBT for the MAT & AQL and live student support via chat to help you when you get stuck.

The more you engage with the material you are watching the better you will do. Press pause, watch again, try the examples on your own and learn at your own pace. You can access the online courses at any time of the day/night - that is the beauty of online learning!



Course Dates, Costs and Venues

All course dates, costs and venues can be found on our website *under the NBT section*. We release the dates and prices at the end of the year for the following year.

We offer NBT Training to Schools too!

Please contact our team through our website for more information about our schools offering.

Testimonials from our students



“After writing my NBTs I am truly thankful for the preparation I received through this course. Great in-depth videos, and similar questions to the ones you will see in the NBT. One thing that stood out of this course is its user-friendliness and its approach to learning – exceptional website design I might add. Some tips for those writing the NBT: go through the online videos, pace yourself during the exam (more in the AQL than the MAT) and don’t stress too much. Once again, I thank the Advantage Learn team and support center for being very helpful.”

- Bayan Ashoori



“i would have been caught off guard by the NBT’s if it weren’t for this workshop. We were not only told what to expect and how it would work, but also taught the tips and tricks needed to do well in the tests. Excellent revision and teaching methods allowing me to go into the test with much less fear. definitely recommended.”

- Justin Van Aardt



“This course has given me far more insight into what to expect for the NBT than I had ever thought! The workshop has provided me with a new look at that maths asked in the NBT, but has also helped greatly with my normal maths too.”

- Leora Puterman



“This Trails course prepared me like no other math course! Not only was I fully prepared in all major aspects of both my math examinations but we completed 30 hours of math - I would never have achieved that by myself! I was not stressed when checking all major components had been learnt therefore this lent me more time to revise rather than stressing the day before! Thank you Advantage Learn!”

- Daniella de Charmoy