ULTIMATE UCAT GUIDE

A comprehensive guide to the University Clinical Aptitude Test

WE ARE MEDICS

Contents

Introduction
Welcome!

This UCAT eBook has been designed to ensure you reach your full potential. We will teach you UCAT strategies, provide top tips and guide you through structuring your UCAT revision. We have also linked extensively to other free UCAT resources.

Most contributors to this eBook scored in the top 20% when they sat the UCAT. The eBook has been edited, and all content approved, by a current medical student who scored in the top 5%, scoring 3,050 in the UCAT!

This booklet has been created with love by the We Are Medics team, tag us on Instagram - we would love to see you using it!

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Survey + disclaimer

Survey

A survey is available here, this will allow you to leave a short review on the quality of the eBook.

Completing this survey is a way of supporting us, and we can use the results to secure more funding, which will allow us to create more exciting opportunities for you.

Please complete it **after** you have sat your UCAT exam!

Disclaimer

This advice is based on personal experience, and we cannot guarantee UCAT success based on it. However, as current medical students (who scored highly on the UCAT) we believe it is high quality information.

We do not support or endorse any company or individual which charges money for support during the medical application process. We strongly believe that this advice and information should be available for free.

Therefore, we do not support or endorse paid-for UCAT teaching courses, UCAT eBooks and UCAT question banks. We believe this eBook simulates a premium UCAT teaching course. We have linked to free UCAT question banks and provided a 28-day revision timetable which together we believe simulate a paid-for UCAT question bank.

Any external content we recommend may contain adverts or suggest you need to purchase paid-for resources. We do not support such adverts or claims.

What is the UCAT exam?

The UCAT is a compulsory computer-based entrance exam required by most UK medical schools. It tests various aptitudes, such as mental abilities and ethics. These skills are key in the clinical context and help universities pick out the best candidates. Each university uses your score differently – some may put a heavy emphasis on the UCAT, whilst others look at your entire application. A full list of medical schools that use the UCAT is available [here](#).

You can take the test only once in a cycle. The test must be sat the same year that you apply through UCAS.

- Tests taken in UK/EU: £75
- Tests taken outside the EU: £120

Visit [here](#) to register for the test.

Bursaries
If you are a UK or EU student that is facing financial difficulty, the UCAT bursary scheme allows you to sit the exam for free. Even if you have already paid for the exam, the bursary voucher can be applied retrospectively. The scheme opened at 9am on 1st July 2020 and closes 1st October 2020. Vouchers expire 16th October 2020. For the full criteria and application process, visit [here](#).

UCATSEN
If you are eligible for extra time in school exams, they you are more than likely to be eligible for the UCATSEN. This is just the UCAT exam, but with 25% extra time (or even 50% if you usually receive this) in each section. There are also other access arrangements for the UCAT exam e.g. some that allow for rest breaks if you are eligible

UCATSEN: student perspective
- I'd highly recommend taking this exam if you are eligible as I found that the time pressure of the UCAT really highlighted the struggles my special education need gives me.
- To register for UCATSEN, simply register as normal when registration opens on the 1st July to open an account and receive a candidate ID. Once you

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have done this, go to the Access Arrangements page on the UCAT website where you should find an application form for UCATSEN.

- When submitting this form, you must have evidence to show that you are eligible for these access arrangements. This can be in the form of a signed letter from your school, on headed paper,
specifying exactly which arrangements you have in place at school for exams along with a letter from a medical practitioner/ educational psychologist that confirms your diagnosis of the extra need that your arrangements are based on.
- When booking your test, book the UCATSEN or other amended exam that you're eligible for, but ideally wait until you have had confirmation by email from UCAT that you are eligible – this normally takes 10 days.

Key dates for your diary

01 July
Registration open, booking opens, bursary scheme opens, access arrangements / UCATSEN applications open

03 August
UCAT testing begins

17 September
Registration closes, web booking closes, access arrangements / UCATSEN application deadline

30 September
Final booking deadline (for registered candidates)

1 October
Last testing date, bursary application deadline (4pm)

All information taken from the official UCAT website

Structure of the UCAT

Verbal reasoning
- Format - 11 passages, each with 4 questions
- Timing – 21 minutes (UCAT), 26 minutes 15 seconds (UCATSEN25)
- Purpose - Ability to understand critically understand written information

Decision making
- Format - 29 standalone questions
- Timing – 31 minutes (UCAT), 38 minutes 45 seconds (UCATSEN)
- Purpose - Ability to make decisions using complex information

Quantitative reasoning
- Format - 36 questions
- Timing – 24 minutes (UCAT), 30 minutes (UCATSEN)
- Purpose - Ability to critically understand and interpret numerical information

Abstract reasoning
- Format - 55 questions associated with various shapes
- Timing – 13 minutes (UCAT), 16 minutes 15 seconds (UCATSEN)
- Purpose - Ability to recognise and identify patterns

Situational judgement test
- Format - 69 questions
- Timing – 26 minutes (UCAT), 32 minutes 30 seconds (UCATSEN)
- Purpose - Ability to make real world decisions, it tests professional judgement

UCAT 2020

Changes to the UCAT 2020 cycle

- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all aspects of normal life, including education.
- For the 2020 medical school admissions' cycle, this means that the UCAT will still go ahead but some key changes have been made in its test dates and logistics, which are summarised below.
- The type of content and structure of the test itself, however, has remain **unchanged**.

- UCAT registration, bookings, bursary schemes and access arrangements' applications opened on **1st July 2020**
- Testing will take place between **3rd August 2020** and **1st October**
- 2020 candidates will have the option of taking the test at a Pearson VUE Test Centre like before or take it **at home** using Pearson VUE's online proctoring service. This will be called UCAT Online.

- The UCAT consortium recommend taking the test as early as possible, given that new government restrictions can be imposed at any time due to the ongoing pandemic.
- There will be added health and safety measures at test centres including the recommended use of facemasks, possibility of a temperature check upon arrival and enforced social distancing.
- Alternatively, this year, candidates can sit for the test online, at home.

UCAT online explained

- UCAT Online can be taken at home, or other preferred private locations, after downloading OnVUE, an online proctoring software.
- Artificial intelligence and live monitoring by an online proctor through this software will ensure the test's integrity is maintained.
- The test's content and structure will be the same as those taken in test centres.

Exam environment

- There will be a room scan during the check in process to ensure the candidate's workspace meets suitable criteria.
- Candidates will have to upload real time photographs of their enclosed room with the door closed. There must not be any study materials within reach and no one else will be allowed to come in or be present in the room during the test.

IT & equipment

- Candidates will require a Windows/Mac personal computer or laptop, a working webcam and microphone and a stable internet connection. For those using a laptop, a mouse may be preferable over the laptop's touchpad when navigating through screens.
- An online system test is available to check whether your computer meets the technical requirements. This system check will also have to be passed on the day of the test. There will be an option to message or speak with a proctor in real time, should candidates face technical difficulties or have questions.
- Alongside the new onscreen scratchpad, candidates taking UCAT Online will be allowed to use a whiteboard, which is 30x50 centimetres in size at a maximum, and up to two markers.
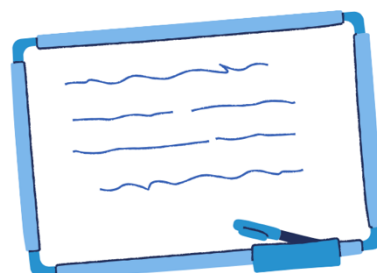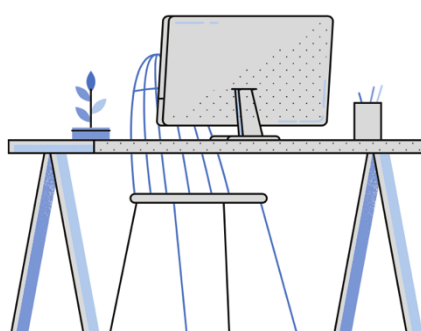
Required ID

- Due to the current circumstances, ID that has expired not more than 6 months ago will still be accepted. The online check in will require valid Photo ID with the name matching exactly that of the web account used to register and the name in the confirmation email.
- Permissible ID include a passport, driver's licence (full or provisional), identification card (national/state/province), government-issued local language ID, military ID, and alien registration card (green card, permanent resident, visa).
- <u>For under-18 candidates, a parent or guardian must be present with their valid ID during the check-in process in order to provide consent on their behalf.</u>

Access arrangements

- UCAT Online is most appropriate for candidates taking the standard 2-hour long test, but it is possible to apply for extended versions (UCATSEN, UCATSA, UCATSENSA and UCATSEN50).
- Rest breaks in UCAT Online must be taken at the desk and the candidate will not be allowed to move out of the proctor's view or exit the room, as opposed to those in the test centre where candidates may do so.
- Some arrangements, such as access to medical items, are only possible at test centres and cannot be provided on UCAT Online.

Deciding between UCAT online or at the test centre

The decision of whether to sit for UCAT Online at home or travel to a test centre is completely up to the individual and their circumstances.

Firstly, candidates must ensure they have the suitable ID and reliable internet and technology to consider UCAT Online. The last thing anyone would want is to let technical issues get in the way of their UCAT success. Sitting the UCAT Online also means not having to travel amidst the ongoing pandemic. This may be particularly useful if the nearest open test centre is far away and/or if there are strict local travel restrictions. Candidates must also consider if they have access to a quiet environment (at home or elsewhere) where there will be no disruptions from others. Sitting for the test on the same desk, where they practised before and scored high on practise exams, can boost confidence and work in their favour.

Others may thrive in a more professional exam setting such as that in an official test centre. Those who also feel their home environment is not ideal for such a long test or do not have access to the required equipment can still sit for the UCAT at a test centre. It may help to not have to worry about the technical prearrangements and focus solely on the exam. The need for specific access arrangements only available at test centres may be another reason to consider travelling to one. At the end of the day, there is no right or wrong option to choose. It is only recommended that candidates decide early and prepare accordingly.

Advice

General advice for the UCAT

The UCAT (University Clinical Aptitude Test) is the same as the UKCAT (UK Clinical Aptitude Test). The UKCAT was renamed as the UCAT in 2019 to reflect the use of it in Australia and New Zealand- there is absolutely no difference in the content of the test.

- Registration and web booking for the UCAT opened on 1st July 2020 at 9am and closes at midday on 17th September 2020. It's advisable to book as early as possible to guarantee you get the date and time most convenient for you. Test dates are available from 03/08/20 to 01/10/20.
- Given the COVID-19 situation at the moment, it may be in your best interests to book an earlier date in case you fall ill and need to reschedule to a later date (which will be much harder to do near the end of the test cycle)
- I would strongly recommend starting to study for your test at least 2 weeks beforehand, ideally giving yourself 4 weeks or more. It is more sustainable to initially study for a few hours each day, gradually building up the hours you spend on revision over the 4 weeks, rather than intensively cramming on the last week, as you may burnout.
- Revisiting each topic regularly over these 4 weeks also means it will stay fresh in your mind for longer, compared to if it was crammed and never reconsidered.

How to interpret your results

We've previously talked about how the exam is scored, but we'll now look at what these scores mean. Unlike school exams, there's no grades 1-9 or A*- G, instead your score will fit into a decile/ percentile or a band (for SJT), which shows you how you performed in comparison to all other candidates.

The higher the decile or percentile, the better!
- Deciles refer to groups that represent 10% of a population – in this case, the 30,000 or so people to take the UCAT each year.
- If you are in the 9th decile, this means you have scored in the top 10% of all candidates.
- Percentiles refer to groups that represent 1% of a population, so give a more precise idea of where you have scored.
- If you are in the 87th percentile, you have scored in the top 13% of all candidates

As the deciles are based on the exact scores of the candidates who have taken the exam each year, it is not possible to publish deciles/ percentiles until the end of testing, meaning you can't find your exact ranking until around the middle of October.

- In mid-September, UCAT will publish interim results which give an idea of your decile based on how all candidates who have taken the exam up to that point have performed.
- In the meantime, you can refer to previous year's deciles, as although there is some change, it is rarely significant.
- This table shows the mean average from the last few years, the information is available here.

	2019	2018	2017
Verbal Reasoning	565	567	570
Decision Making	618	624	647
Abstract Reasoning	638	637	629
Quantitative Reasoning	662	658	695
Overall	2483	2485	2540

The Situation Judgement Test is scored differently to the other subsets. You are given a band ranging from 1-4, with 1 being the best and 4 being the worst.

- Along with the deciles, the percentage of the cohort who scored each band will be published.
- This table highlights how the scores are normally distributed. The information source is available [here](#).

	Percentage of Cohort
Band 1	19
Band 2	40
Band 3	29
Band 4	12

Applying strategically with your UCAT score

Different medical schools look for different thing in their applicants, with some focussing heavily on your UCAT score but others using things such as your personal statement or GCSE grades to decide whether you are invited to interview. This means that even if you haven't achieved a particularly high UCAT score, you can probably still apply to various medical schools, you just have to be selective with which ones.

While we do not endorse any paid-for services, the Medic Portal site has a significant amount of high-quality free information. One if its most useful offerings is the detailed information about different medical school selection methods. Utilising this information will allow you to apply strategically, regardless of your UCAT score. This information is available [here](#).

Applying strategically is the most important aspect of your medicine application. We cannot emphasise how crucial this is. It is vital that you understand how the medical schools you are applying to select candidates for interview, and whether this maximises the strengths of your application.

Deep dive: verbal reasoning

Verbal reasoning is the first of five subtests and is designed to test a candidate's ability to read a passage of text and to decide whether certain conclusions can be made from the information presented.

As candidates have 21 minutes to read 11 passages, each with 4 related questions meaning that overall there are 44 questions, it also tests a candidate's ability to read quickly and efficiently, critically evaluate written information, prove causality and identify reasoned conclusions.

Why is verbal reasoning important?

In clinical practice, doctors have to be able to read and draw conclusions from scientific articles and apply the information to improve their clinical practice. They must also be able to read these articles and interpret them carefully, so that can communicate the information clearly and accurately to a patient. Furthermore, as doctors have to sift through lots of reading material on a daily basis, it is really good practise to be able to pick out and summarise key points efficiently from the information given, especially when working in a time-pressured environment.

What is the format of the verbal reasoning sub-test?

In this component, candidates will be given a 200-300 word passage, which they will have to read and answer 4 questions per passage.
There are two types of verbal reasoning question; true/false/can't tell and free text. These are described in further detail below.

## True/ false/ can't tell questions

Alongside the passage presented on the screen, you will be shown 4 statements, which make up the 4 questions. Based on the passage alone, you must decide whether each of the 4 statements are true, false or can't tell. When deciding, my top tip would be to make sure it is purely based on the passage and not based on your own knowledge.

Free text questions

In this type of question, after reading the passage of text given, you will be given 4 incomplete statements or questions. You must then decide which free text option is most appropriately applied to the statement/question. As this subtype of question is usually the type candidates find trickier, another top tip of mine would be to make sure to practise this subtype frequently until you feel more comfortable with them. It also tends to take longer to answer this subtype than the true/false/can't tell questions, so for some candidates, the strategy of answering the true/false/can't tell questions quicker and leaving more time for the free text questions works best. However, this is a personal choice, so practising questions will allow you to develop a strategy that best suits you.

Preparation advice
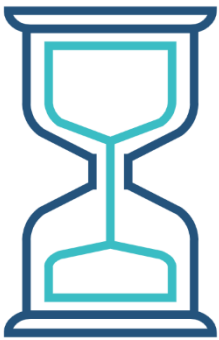
Having to answer 44 questions in 21 minutes may sound very daunting, as this seems very time pressured. Timed practice is key. The more verbal reasoning questions you do, the quicker you pick up time-saving techniques.

Another useful preparation strategy for VR is reading articles (e.g. online scientific articles or in the newspaper) as efficiently as you can, and then summarising their content into a couple of bullet points at the end. This will enable you to practise your critiquing skills regularly and you will get much faster at reading the passages and answering the questions in the exam. A way to use this method to test yourself even further is to get a friend/ family member to read the article first and pick out a piece of information that they want you to find in a certain time period. It's a good way of switching up your revision to avoid boredom and burnout.

Similar to above, practicing your speed reading is vital. A speed-reading test is available free here. Make a note of your baseline reading speed and work actively to improve this.

Another thing to be very careful of in these passages is wording. Words such as 'always' and 'sometimes' crop up a lot in the passages and can help you narrow down the free text options that best suit the statement given. Read with a critical eye! Always consider if something is explicitly stated or just implied. Is an opinion being presented as fact?

Words to look out for:
- Sometimes, often, maybe, might, could, likely, unlikely, possible, rarely, most, many
- Always, all, none, never

Remember that in the UCAT, all questions are equally weighted. In the verbal reasoning section, some passages will be significantly longer than others. This means that learning when to move on is vital. You do not want to waste time on longer passage questions and miss the chance to answer the questions with shorter passages.

One strategy is to first quickly flick through all of the questions in the first 30 seconds or so and then initially answer all the sections with the smaller paragraphs. These would usually be the T/F sections. Once complete, you can then move on to answering the questions with larger passages later on during the test. This way, you'll have a high accuracy rate for the easier questions and score higher in the test rather than fumbling through all of the questions and panicking towards the end.

Always read the questions posed to you first. This way, once you know the question, you can search for key words in the passage to help you find the correct section of the passage to answer your question. This focuses your reading a lot more and will save you a lot of time in the exam.

Once you have identified the key word in the question, scan the passage for that same keyword and place your finger on it. Then read the sentence before, during and after that keyword when answering any of the true, false, can't tell questions

Key words may be abbreviations, names, dates or capitalised words. With practice, identifying key words will be easier.

Remember not to consider any prior knowledge that you may have. Don't make any assumptions either!

Deep dive: decision making

The decision-making section is the fourth section and requires you to use logic and reasoning to solve textual and visual data-related questions. It is the newest UCAT section and replaced decision analysis in 2017. It consists of 29 questions that are to be answered in 31 minutes.

It is made up of multiple-choice questions (4 answer options – only one will be correct) and yes/no type questions (5 statements – you must mark 'yes' or 'no' for each). Questions may involve interpreting information in the form of text, graphs and diagrams.

You'll have access to a basic on-screen calculator for this section.

Why is the decision-making section important?

Although it may seem unrelated to the rest of your medical school application, this section is important in testing some clinically relevant skills. The questions require the use of logic and an ability to work under time pressure to reach a conclusion or solution to a problem, and they assess your ability to evaluate arguments, gain information using statistics and make an educated decision based on the information provided. These are skills that are transferrable to a career in medicine as pressured, important decisions based upon logic and reasoning are common in the field.

Also, the graphs and charts that are included in the decision-making section prepare you for the statistical and visually presented data that you may encounter and be expected to analyse in interviews, as well as in your role as a future clinician.

What is the format of the decision-making section?

There are six types of questions that could come up in this section. They are:

1. Logical Puzzles

Information is presented in the form of text, tables or graphs and candidates must select the correct conclusion based on this.

- Try to eliminate answers that are definitely false to start with.
- Look out for words such as 'must' and 'might' in the answers.
- Do not waste time doing any working out that you do not need.

2. Syllogisms

Candidates are given a series of statements and based on these, must decide whether a list of conclusions is true or not. Multiple answers may be correct in this type of question.

- Do not make assumptions – only select a particular conclusion if the text has explicitly mentioned it.
- Don't rush reading the information and don't be afraid to reread if the text is confusing to wrap your head around.

3. Interpreting information

Candidates are presented with information in formats such as written text, graphs or charts and are expected to interpret this. A list of conclusions is then provided, and you must drag and drop 'yes' and 'no' answers depending on which of the statements follow from the information given.

- Round numbers to simplify questions and speed up your working out.
- Use only the information provided to figure out the answers, not your own knowledge – some answers may seem plausible to you but will still be wrong if they are not relating to the data given.

4. Recognising assumptions

These questions involve evaluating the strength of arguments for and against a solution to a particular issue and choosing the strongest one. Your own beliefs should not be considered here; you are expected to be objective.

- Strong arguments: facts; evidence-based such as statistics; directly related to the subject at hand; emotionless and not based on opinion
- Weak arguments: based on assumption, opinion or emotion, rather than fact

5. Venn diagrams
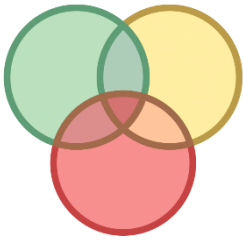
Here, you will either be presented with a Venn diagram and asked which conclusion follows, or information will be provided, and you must select the most appropriate Venn diagram that best represents this data.
- Remember that you may not need all the information in the question so don't do working out for the sake of it – only use what is necessary.
- Some Venn diagrams may look complicated and involve unusual shapes, but the premise is still the same – don't be put off, just focus on the relevant sections of the diagram, and picking out the information relating to the statements.

6. Probabilistic Reasoning

Candidates will be given a short passage containing statistical information, usually centered around probability, and are asked to select the best response to the question.

- This type of question typically involves decimals and percentages, as well as being primarily about probability, so make sure to refresh these topics in preparation.

Preparation advice

These questions can feel quite time pressured, so it may be useful to start off attempting the questions without a time limit, in order to get used to the style of the problems given. Then, when you are more comfortable with the six types of question, have a go timed.

As described above, some of the questions tend to involve certain maths skills seen at GCSE, such as probability, Venn diagrams and percentages. Make sure you are comfortable with these before making a start with the decision-making section of the test.

The whiteboard is there for a reason, use it! If you find visualising the information in the question makes it easier to work through try and do quick sketch of it. This can sometimes make it easier than trying to work it all out in your head.

It is possible that you will encounter questions that involve statistics. So, familiarize yourself with interpreting graphs and tables. Look back at GCSE and A-Level Biology or Maths past papers and practise interpreting the information presented in graphs.

Reading the statements and questions closely is vital. Pay attention to the language which can often give clues. Are the statements presented as a certainty or likelihood? Don't forget: unless something is explicitly stated in the text given, don't answer based on your own prior knowledge.

Deep dive: quantitative reasoning

The quantitative reasoning section of the UCAT is the second section of the exam and tests your numerical problem-solving skills as it involves evaluating numerical data sets and answering multiple choice questions.

It consists of 9 scenarios, each usually with 4 questions, totalling 36 questions which need to be answered in 24 minutes. This equates to, on average, 40 seconds per question.
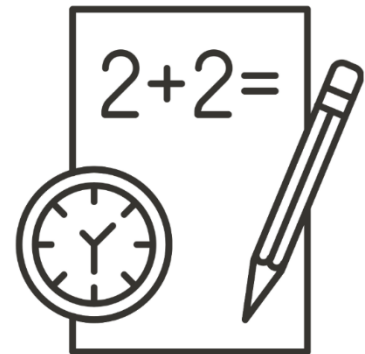
It is important to note that certain question types take slightly longer to complete. However, this will be balanced out with questions you can complete quickly, so don't start panicking if you take a little longer on a question. If you do get stuck on a question and are unsure of how to complete it, simply flag it, and move on.

Questions in quantitative reasoning include the use of graphs, charts, shapes and tables with data that you need to be able to extract and then use to answer the questions.

You'll have access to a basic on-screen calculator for this section.

Preparation advice

Read the question first as you are often presented with lots of excess information that you do not need. Read the question carefully as the test is designed to try and trip you up so pay attention to all the key words.
After reading the question, then look at any data provided. Keep an eye out for extra information in bullet points that some candidates ignore but could be essential in answering at least one question. Make easy eliminations throughout, looking out for units and orders of magnitude.
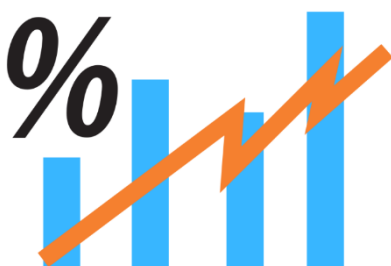
Make sure you are confident with your basic maths: e.g. percentage changes/direct and inverse proportions/averages/ratios/rates.

However, don't feel disadvantaged if you don't think you're good at maths. While this section does test numerical skills, the arithmetic required is not complicated so don't fret! Still, as you will be assessed on your ability to interpret data, practice basic arithmetic and mental maths skills. For example, working out percentage profit. GCSE Maths past papers will come in handy!

Get used to using the online calculator. However, relying on your mental maths is also important as using the calculator for every calculation will slow you down. Practicing your mental maths will help you complete more questions with as little use of the calculator as possible, which will increase your speed and help make sure that you do not run out of time! The best solution is to work out easier calculations mentally then use the calculator for the harder calculations. Experiment with how often and when you use the calculator during practice questions to get the best results.

If you are using your keyboard for calculations, ensure 'Num Lock' is on to be able to use the number keypad. This is faster than clicking the numbers on the calculator itself. Remember, timing is everything. You can practice using the calculator online before you complete your test. Make sure you do this to familiarise yourself as you may be slower than you would expect!
Learn key conversions! Whilst most of them will be provided in the exam, if you already know 1 mile ≈ 1.6km, then this will help you to complete a question involving the conversion between the two faster, saving you more time for other questions!

Some key conversions:
- 1 mile ≈ 1.6 km
- 1kg ≈ 2.2lb
- 1cm ≈ 0.4 inches
- 1 gram = 0.035 ounces

Be prepared to skip extremely long and difficult questions. There may be one or two questions which are extremely long and/or difficult and will take 3 or 4 minutes to do properly. Remember that in the time it would take to do these questions, you could attempt 4 or 5 easier questions, and all questions are worth

the same number of marks! Flag these and come back to them at the end (if you have time).

Tips from someone who can't do maths to save their life:

I have always hated maths, so trust me when I say that this section terrified me, but with the right prep it ended up being my best score!
If you are like me and feel that you struggle with maths, don't feel guilty for spending more time practicing this section than others.

- Different people have different strengths, and knowing were yours lie, and most importantly where they don't, can be vital to your success.
- If you know that you struggle with maths but are much better at verbal/ ethical things, spend more time practicing QR than VR/ SJT and you'll probably end up getting an equal score overall in the end.
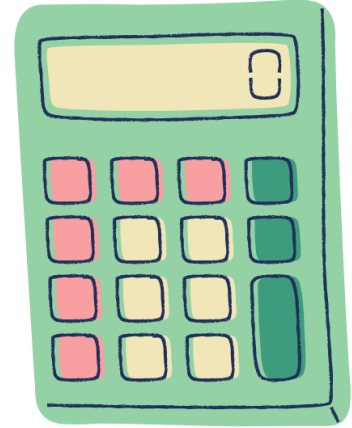
Try and build your confidence with these maths skills!

- I found one of my main issues with this section was that when it came to it I'd start to stress out and then couldn't focusing properly because my mind was telling me I couldn't do it
- Making yourself more and more familiar with the skills needed and the types of questions you will be required to answer is key to increasing your confidence
- The skills are basic and after a few weeks of practice you'll probably realise that, so tell yourself, if you could do GCSE maths, you can do quantitative reasoning.

Deep dive: abstract reasoning
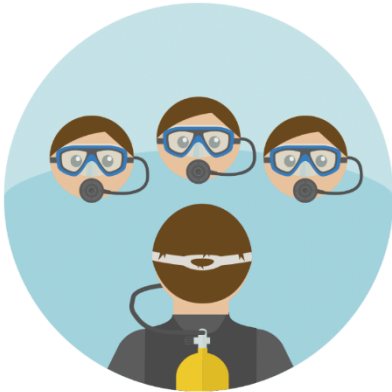
The abstract reasoning section is the third section and tests whether you can identify particular patterns amongst abstract shapes. You will be given shape-based patterns and sequences and assessed on your spatial awareness and reasoning.

There are 55 questions, divided into 13 question sets, to be answered in 13 minutes (1 minute per set) and 4 different questions types within this section.

The four question types:
1. **Two sets of shapes labelled Set A and B.** You are given five test shapes shape and must decide whether <u>each</u> shape belongs to Set A, B, or neither.
2. **A series of shapes**. You must select which of the four test shapes would follow in the series.
3. **A statement, involving a group of shapes.** You need to determine which shape completes the statement.
4. **Two sets of shapes labelled Set A and B.** You must identify which <u>one</u> of the four test shapes belong to Set A or Set B (this is similar, but slightly different, to question type 1)

Type 1
To start simply, consider the below rules and then test the entire set to validate the rule you have created. There are lot of things to consider here and so practice helps to make these rules obvious without thinking. A few things to consider:

- What shape are the objects?
- How many objects there are?
- How many sides do all objects combined have?
- How many lines of symmetry are there?
- How many vertices are there?
- How many intersections between shapes exist?
- What shade are the objects? (white, grey, black as usually no colour in tests)

- Which direction do the objects face? (arrows, triangles...)

Also, consider how objects relate to one another. This may be the direction or colour of one shape influencing the number or positioning of other shapes. Watch out for distractors, these have no particular relationship to the true rule. However, distractors are usually easy to spot, do not crop up regularly and may just be objects filling space. Think briefly about the relationship between the 2 sets, utilising the difference in rules. This may be a mirroring, or the 2 sets may have a shared rule and then each a further separate rule which may be also be similar though not identical.

Make a list of (common) rules you come across. Every year some common rules are repeated. Some usually even correspond to specific types of patterns. Making a list of them as you practise will mean that at one point, it will become a matter of narrowing down to only a few possible rules from your list and simply recognizing patterns rather than figuring it out from scratch.
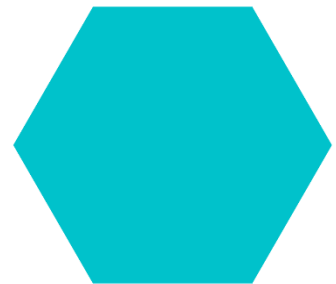
Get a "bird's eye view". When frantically counting sides or matching colours with shapes do not seem to work, it can help to take a step back and look at the set of boxes as a whole. This makes it easier to recognize simpler patterns that we may overcomplicate in the spur of the moment.

Look for similar boxes from each set. Comparing between similar boxes from each set will allow you to rule out the common things between them easily. This should leave you with the differentiating factor, e.g an extra side in the box from set A, one less striped object in the box from set B, etc. Check if this rule applies to the rest of the boxes.

Do not spend too much time trying to figure out ALL the rules in a set. In some questions, 2-3 different rules may apply to the same set. There may be an obvious basic rule but others that are very specific and difficult to find. If you find yourself spending too much time figuring out the more difficult rules, answer the questions with the basic rule in mind, flag them and move on. You are likely to get around 3 of the 5 questions correct already and can come back at the end, if you have time, to figure out the other rules.

Type 2
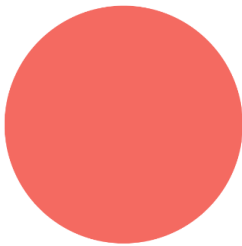
Try to see progression in an individual feature (e.g. the rules described previously!) before zooming out to assess as a whole. For example, start by focusing on the progression of a black shape, rather than number of sides of all shapes. I found that this was the most time-effective strategy and as we know, seconds count.

Some series questions may pose no challenge. For example, if the 'number of sides increases by 1'. But, be wary as some sequences may have an **alternating** sequence such as 1, 3, 2, 4. There may also be **changing number increases**: 1, 2, 4, 7, 11 (+1, +2, +3). Furthermore, watch out for **negative** changes (11, 9, 7, 5) in a sequence and rarely for **square numbers** (1, 4, 9, 16...)

There are a finite number of rearrangements of shapes so proceed by eliminating the answers you know not to be correct. Often, this may remove 2 of the answers, then leaving you with a 50% chance if you have to guess.

Type 3

All the clues for this type of question are contained within a single frame which means answers may often look very similar but with slight differences in colour, shape or position. Double check quickly to ensure there isn't something which doesn't conform to the statement.

- **Colour** - Have the colours been swapped or have they moved around the image? Are colours/ shades linked to number of sides/ degrees of an angle?
- **Shape** - Are they entirely different? - If so, how do the new shapes represent the old shapes?
- **Position** - Do orientation or position change? Do specific shapes or colours move in a certain manner?

Type 4

For these questions, utilising your preparation and strategies for predominantly for type 1 questions, but also for types 2 and 3, will work well.

Preparation advice

In summary, the most important way to improve your abstract reasoning section is to practice. Learning rules is one thing, but when you have practiced a lot, the rules will be second nature and it will become far easier to spot similarities and differences between sets and question shapes.

I'd also say that in the exam, if you can't find the pattern after a few seconds, because this subset is so time pressured, you have to just make an educated guess and move onto the next question where your time will be used more efficiently as you hopefully will be able to identify that pattern. Our advice would be: if you can't find the pattern in 45 seconds, flag the question and come back to it.

With educated guesses, I'd say the best way to do this is look at the 2 sets as a whole – almost 'zoom out' on them – and ask yourself simply which one do the given objects look most similar to. You will not always get the questions right using this method, so where you can, it is vital to find the patterns, but it is also vital not to waste time so finding a balance is a really good skill.

Questions in the popular question books you may have seen or used are often much harder than the questions in the real exam. Bear this in mind if practising with these as it is easy to feel you aren't good at this section, when really it's because the questions are much more difficult.

Familiarise yourself with the different question types. This section assesses your pattern recognition abilities. The more practice questions you do, the quicker you'll be able to recognise the common patterns. Examples of patterns could be the number of shapes in each box, colour pattern, symmetry, shapes rotated clockwise or anticlockwise.

Some people find the acronym 'SCANS' helpful in this section. It can remind you what to look for specifically:
- S: shape
- C: colour
- A: arrangement
- N: number
- S: size

Don't rush to time yourself when you first start practising. It will take a while for you to recognise and learn the patterns. Have a system and list of questions for each set of shapes to rule out obvious patterns. For difficult sets, sometimes taking a step back and not focusing on any one box can make the pattern a bit clearer. Give it a try!

Deep dive: situational judgement

The Situational Judgement test (SJT) is the final component of the UCAT.

The SJT is designed to test an applicants' non-academic ethical decision-making and moral judgement in various clinical ethical scenarios. It will also test one's capacity to respond to real-life situations in a way that shows both integrity and professionalism.

I would recommend making sure you check whether the SJT band is used in the selection process of the universities you are applying to; this information can be found on the entry requirement section of the medical school website.

Why is the SJT important?
The SJT can feel like another hoop to jump through to obtain the goal of securing a place at medical school, and in some ways it is, but I find a more productive way of viewing this test is that it is a fantastic introduction into the life of a healthcare professional. A lot of the time in medicine we come across scenarios that we are unsure of how to deal with, which can be daunting. However, the SJT will allow you to start to learn how to deal with certain ethical scenarios in a professional manner, which will be invaluable throughout your medical career.

I also felt that it provided a really good introduction to the sort of ethical dilemmas/ scenarios that you will be expected to engage with in the interview stage of the admissions process, so don't think that it's all just for the sake of one exam!

As a doctor, you'll be working with other medical professionals, so it is important to have good people skills. The SJT involves assessing real-world scenarios, identifying important factors and appropriate responses. The questions centre on ethics, confidentiality, empathy, integrity, teamwork and communication.

What is the format of the SJT?
This section is quite different from other UCAT sections and has a different marking system. So, understanding how it works and what you are being tested

is key. It is the only UCAT section that uses a 1-4 band scoring system (Band 1 is the highest and Band 4 is the lowest).

The SJT is composed of 22 scenarios, in which you must rate how important or appropriate certain responses are to the situation. Candidates will have 26 minutes to answer the 69 questions related to the scenarios. This gives you about 70 seconds per scenario and around 23 seconds per question.

There are two types of questions that can be posed to candidates; appropriateness and importance questions.

Appropriateness questions
After each scenario, you are presented with an action. You must rank the options for an appropriateness question as 'very appropriate', 'appropriate, but not ideal', 'inappropriate, but not awful' and 'very inappropriate'.

Importance questions
For the importance questions, you will rate the response options on how important it is to carry out the action in the context of the scenario, from 'very important' to 'not important at all'. The questions posed can have a student as the responder, or a different healthcare professional. It is vital that you read the question thoroughly to make sure you know who is responding in the scenario. Furthermore, a statement of appropriateness or importance can be used more than once, or not at all, as outlined by the example below.

SJT example: appropriateness question
The following question has been sourced from the official UCAT website, available [here](#).

Natasha, a 4th year medical student, is on a clinical placement in the Accident and Emergency department (A&E). A fellow 4th year medical student and friend of Natasha's, Amber, who is on the Gastroenterology ward, telephones Natasha to ask if she can have access to a file of a patient in the A&E department. Amber sounds very distressed down the phone and says that the patient is her friend Harriet and she wants to know Harriet's current medical status.

How appropriate are each of the responses by Natasha?

1. *Sorry Amber, I appreciate this must be distressing for you, but as you know I'm not allowed to disclose patient information for confidentiality reasons.*

2. *Why don't you come and visit Harriet when you are free to check how she is?*
3. *Of course Amber, I'll send over the file right away!*
4. *Sorry Amber, it is probably better to speak to the doctor in charge of Harriet's medical care to find out more information*

    A. A very appropriate thing to say
    B. Appropriate, but not ideal
    C. Inappropriate, but not awful
    D. A very inappropriate thing to say

Answers and explanation

1A- This is a very appropriate thing to say, as it acknowledges Amber's feelings with empathy, but also politely reminds Harriet that Natasha cannot disclose this sort of personal information, because it breaches the confidentiality in a doctor-patient relationship and the data protection act. As Natasha has given the reason for not acting on this request, it is more likely that Amber will be understanding of the situation she has put Natasha in.

2A- This is also a very appropriate thing to say. This response offers a practical solution to the scenario, without breaching patient confidentiality or the data protection act, as Amber will not have access to the files.

3D- This is a very inappropriate thing to say. Sending Harriet's file to Amber breaches both the data protection act and patient confidentiality. This would be viewed as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action for both Natasha and Amber.

4C- This response is inappropriate, but not awful. It is not awful, as Natasha has not breached confidentiality, as she is not sending the file, but she should know that the doctor in charge of Harriet's medical care will not be able to disclose information to Amber either. This could lead to further distress for Amber and could've been avoided, had Natasha addressed the issue head on instead of passing the responsibility onto another healthcare professional.

Preparation advice

To prepare for the SJT, I would recommend reading the ethical guidance section on the General Medical Council (GMC) website. 'Good Medical Practice' and 'Confidentiality' in particular can be really useful for understanding the practical procedures in place for certain ethical scenarios and a lot of the themes in SJT questions seem to be embedded in this guidance!

Unfortunately, even if you're the most morally correct person out there, rights and wrongs in medical practice can be more complex than just doing what seems to be 'the right thing'. This, therefore, can result in the answer you would give as the 'right' one, actually being the wrong answer. Luckily, practice really does make perfect and the more time you spend getting to grips with this sub-section and its quirks, the better.

Furthermore, I found that I had some time left after I'd completed the question set and I used this to go back over every single SJT question and actually ended up changing a lot of my answers – something I believe massively contributed towards my high score. Don't be afraid to change answers, because when scenarios are as complex as these can be, looking back at them a second time can help you see things with a completely fresh set of eyes, so don't waste a second of any left-over time you may have!

Even with the uncertainty I am sure everyone feels while answering questions in this section, there are a few pointers you can always keep in mind when deciding on the most appropriate answers in this section:

- First, a good rule of thumb to remember is that always start from the response that is the least intense and then escalate upwards. For example, if you are asked on your response to a colleague's catty behaviour, your most appropriate response will be to first talk to them about it and see if it can be fixed. If the situation is still not resolved, then you would escalate it to your supervisor and so on
- In any ethical situation, ignoring the situation is the LEAST APPROPRIATE response

- The patient's safety and comfort is of the utmost importance. Therefore, if a question talks about something impacting patient safety, that will be a VERY IMPORTANT consideration.
- Medical students should never assume authority outside what they are legally able to do. For example, they cannot prescribe medications or discuss test results
- Never do anything that may make the patient question the integrity of healthcare. For example: Confronting a colleague or correcting their mistakes in front of patients.
- Always try to resolve situations as quickly as possible
- If a situation is blatantly illegal, your best response in that situation will be to report it your superior or the police.
- Wherever possible, asking advice from and seeking help of your peers is a VERY APPROPRIATE response.
- I found that when patient safety or confidentiality were involved, the answer is typically the strongest (very appropriate/very inappropriate).

Always answer the question by thinking about what you SHOULD do in the situation. You may think you would do something different so try and take the time to think about the scenario and answer it how you should behave.

Remember that SJT questions are to test what you would be expected to do as a medical student or doctor. The GMC *Good Medical Practice* is considered to be fundamental reading for aspiring medics! It discusses all aspects of good practice, including communication, maintaining trust, patient safety and teamwork. It is only 80 bullet points so make sure you read it! You can then apply this new knowledge to SJT questions!

Common pitfalls during UCAT prep

1. **Over-relying on the UCAT Calculator**
The UCAT Calculator is a very basic online model.
Accessing the calculator and inputting data into it is a
rather time-consuming process - this is a PITFALL and will
cost precious seconds. Use the calculator ONLY if
you have to – brush up on your mental maths skills!

2. **Getting bogged down on particular questions**
Each question is worth the same mark! In each section
there are bound to be questions which are difficult or text heavy. These are time-
wasters – questions which can catch students early on in the test. It is important
to realise that questions can come in ANY ORDER – not necessarily from easiest
to hardest. Since each question is weighed equally, there is no point wasting
time solving a difficult question off the bat. Just flag and go on if you are finding
it difficult!

3. **NOT using keyboard shortcuts**
Keyboard controls will save seconds – and every spare second can be critical
in rechecking questions or answering previous ones. The most helpful ones
are Alt + C (Calculator), Alt + P (Previous Question), Alt + N (Next Question), Alt + F
(Flagging Question).

4. **NOT flagging (Ctrl F for flagging and moving on)**
Flagging is a helpful mechanism – it allows you to mark difficult questions and
return to them once you've gone through the entire test. This function
(along with the key-board shortcut) will help save time and achieve as many
marks as you can in the first round. DO remember to go BACK to these questions,
though!

5. **NOT utilizing the end check page**
At the end of each section, you'll be presented with an end check page. This,
combined with flagging, is a very useful mechanism, as it allows you to
go directly to the flagged question. Use this feature wisely – mishandling it could
mean having to go one-by-one through questions to get to the end of the
section!

6. NOT answering every question

Each question in the UCAT is multiple choice AND there is no negative marking! This means that even a random guess has a $1/4^{th}$ chance of being right. DO NOT move away without answering a question. Try making educated guesses – if you are able to narrow it down to 2 or 3 choices, that increases the chances further!

7. NOT booking early

Pre-booking is very important, since you get a wider choice of location, day and time.

- The location of the test should ideally be somewhere that is convenient – you don't want to stress your way through traffic!
- Find the Golden spot! In order to maximise the UCAT Prep and to prevent clashing with any A-level work that is there, the ideal time would be the last week of your summer break before your final year in sixth form. This is typically the Golden Week – try to get your slots early on!
- Book the right time slot: And book according to your strengths! For example, I personally found I worked most efficiently between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM, so I booked my test between these times. Given the current COVID-19 restrictions, it will be all the more important check the available test slots.

8. Doing a mock test the night before – guaranteed panic booster!

You absolutely need to be in a good mental state on the eve of your test. This means eating sensibly, having a good nights' sleep and all the regular sensible stuff. I found that doing a mock test the night before can be quite depressing, especially if you score lesser than anticipated. Therefore, rather than stressing yourself out, its best to get a good night's sleep and attempt a few questions before entering into the test on the day (if you have enough time).

9. Focusing too much on stronger sections/ not focusing too much on the weaker sections

During much of my preparation, I found myself attempting questions in the sections that I scored best – mostly Quantitative Reasoning, and Decision Making. It took quite some effort to bring my Verbal Reasoning and Abstract Reasoning scores to par! It is key to always pay attention to any weaker sections, especially at the outset of your preparation – as each section is weighed the same and all sections are counted in your overall UCAT score.

Even if you are outstanding in a section, say Quantitative Reasoning, that section can only carry you so far. It is better to be an all-rounder with say 710 average, than to get an 890 in QR and have the average pulled down by the other sections. Remember, some medical schools score you on each section, so try focussing evenly.

10. NOT identifying important key information

In the UCAT, all the sections have a chance of having many text-heavy questions (with the exception of Abstract Reasoning). Therefore, it is key to learning how to skim through questions and look for important pieces of detail. This is especially important in Quantitative Reasoning, where some questions might have extra information pertinent to the calculations. For instance, beneath a table of ticket prices, you might find a statement about a £2 tax, which needs to be added to the calculated price to get the right answer.

11. NOT skim-reading the questions

Key words are all-important, especially in Verbal Reasoning. Seeing as each text has 4 associated questions, deep reading would be waste valuable seconds (this is counter-intuitive, but remember, UCAT is a timed test!) Therefore, a common strategy is to identify key words and look through the text for them – thereby saving precious time for checking and answering other questions. It all boils down to a fine balance between grabbing just the vital information and ignoring the rest. And yes, this comes with practice!

12. NOT practising with a whiteboard

During the UCAT, a whiteboard (laminated paper) is provided by the test centre. It is important to practise with this. For example, at first you may find it difficult to keep track of your calculations on a whiteboard, since you will constantly be erasing and reusing it.

13. NOT ensuring your own comfort

For UCAT tests, environment is key to ensuring a good run. If there is any disturbance that hinders your ability to perform the test, bring it to the notice of the test centre staff BEFORE you begin the test. If you find the test centre too noisy, request for headphones or earplugs to block out the noise. In fact, you might even want to travel to the test centre a few days before the exam, at around the same time as your test – this will help you figure out travel

plans/traffic conditions, as well as give you an idea about the exam environment.

14. NOT keeping in mind that this a relevant exam

Students often question the point/purpose of taking the UCAT (I certainly did!) All the more so because the questions don't seem to test scientific knowledge. However, it is vital to realize that this is a skills-based test, with each section testing a particular skill that would come in useful in a healthcare setting.

For instance, VR encourages keyword identification (you can't read through reams of medical records when you have a really sick patient on hand!) Likewise, AR helps identifying patterns (similar to finding patterns during medical diagnosis). And QR develops quick calculations (ever seen a doctor use a calculator for figuring out medicine dosages?)

Most of all, the exam tests your ability to handle yourself under pressure, and in situations that demand quick thinking. In the UCAT, what counts more is your ability to keep a cool head, and triage questions according to the situation. It is therefore important to keep in mind that the UCAT does indeed have a purpose, and it is not an exam expressly designed to deter you from being a medical student!

15. Thinking this is an exam you cannot prepare for.

Sitting for the UCAT without sufficient practise can be a hit-or-miss. This is why only a few people go on to do very well with little practice. However, with optimal preparation you can discover what specific strategies work best for you and use those to achieve safe results consistently. This means even if you do not perform your best on the day, you are likely to score above a certain threshold which can be enough to secure interviews at many medical schools!

Night before and morning of the exam

The night before the exam

Try not to do any work on the evening of the exam to let your mind rest and refresh and to avoid burn-out. Since the UCAT is not a knowledge test, cramming is not very helpful.

This would be a good time to prepare yourself for the examination day. Prepare yourself for:
- which items you will need at the test centre, such as ID
- the journey to the test centre (how are you going to get there, do you know the route, what time you need to leave by etc.)
- what you will find at the test centre, and what the process of taking the test will be. Information on this topic is available here.

Since the UCAT can only be taken once, the night before can be a very stressful time. Try and be confident- you have prepared adequately. Here are some tips for reducing stress the night before the exam:
- Do certain relaxation and breathing exercises (such as meditation).
- Do activities to take your mind off the exam, such as watching a film/ funny TV show.
- Consider the wider implications of the exam; some universities do not require a high score in the UCAT and others do not use it at all, therefore it will not be the end of the world if it doesn't go to plan.
- Consider ways to keep yourself calm during the exam, such as certain breathing techniques (which usually involve taking slow, deep breaths in). Practice these.
- Getting a good night's sleep is very important.

The morning of the exam
- Do some UCAT questions in the morning to get your brain in the zone. However, try not to overexert yourself: you want to keep your mind fresh for the exam.
- Read over any notes you have made for yourself.
- Make sure you have the necessary items that you will need (such as ID) before leaving home.

- Eat a meal full of complex carbohydrates before you leave the house, and eat a healthy snack (such as a banana) before entering the test centre, to avoid feeling hungry in the exam.
- Be careful of eating extremely sugary foods/ drinking an energy drink before the start of the exam if you are not used to doing so, since you do not want to have a 'sugar crash' during the exam.

- Stay hydrated since you will not be allowed to have a water bottle with you when doing the exam. Although, make sure you do not drink water excessively, since this would make you need to go to the bathroom.
- Be careful of drinking excessive tea/ coffee/ other diuretics before the exam, since these will make you need to go to the bathroom. Note that if you normally have a cup of tea/ coffee in the morning, that is fine (avoid drinking them excessively).
- Avoid drinking coffee and other highly caffeinated drinks before the exam if you are not used to doing so, since caffeine can enhance your anxiety in the short term.

These tips were compiled from personal experience, and online research. The sources of information used to compile these tips are available here, here and here.

Resources

Best free UCAT resources

Alongside this eBook there are various other free resources available. Below we have included a range of materials with different ways of preparing you for the UCAT.

Note

There are many UCAT advice videos, blogs, eBooks etc. – a significant number may be sponsored by for-profit companies or may recommend paid-for services. Once again, the We Are Medics team does not endorse these. We are sharing these resources because some of the advice included is still extremely relevant, useful and applicable.

Written resources

- [How to Smash the UCAT](#) – free eBook, Glesga Medic
- [How to Approach the UCAT](#) – free eBook, Julia the Medic
- [UCAT cheat sheets](#) – free download, Life of a Medic
- [UCAT blog](#) – Progress with Jess

YouTube videos

Hearing other medical students' journeys through the UCAT can be a useful source of information. These videos offer helpful strategies to help you get the highest marks in each section.

Journey 2 Med Videos
- [Verbal Reasoning](#)
- [Decision Making](#)
- [Quantitative Reasoning](#)
- [Abstract Reasoning](#)
- [Situational Judgement](#)

Kharma Medic UCAT Playlist

18 videos containing strategies for efficient preparation along with a step by step guide on how to answer practice questions from the official UCAT website. Available here.

Other channels or videos

- Aika Abi
- Atousa
- Post Grad Medic

Question banks

Completing practice questions is one of the best ways to prepare for the UCAT, especially if they are done online in a similar format to the official exam.

The list below features 4,368 free UCAT questions in total. If you do all of these once they should provide around 36 hours of preparation. You can repeat the questions twice, to provide 72 hours of preparation.

UCAT app - 227 Qs in total

- VR subtest A – 12 Qs
- VR subtest B – 12 Qs
- VR subtest C – 11 Qs
- VR subtest D – 11 Qs
- DM subtest A – 10 Qs
- DM subtest B – 10 Qs
- DM subtest C – 10 Qs
- DM subtest D – 10 Qs
- DM subtest E – 7 Qs
- DM subtest F – 8 Qs
- QR subtest A – 10 Qs
- QR subtest B – 10 Qs
- QR subtest C – 10 Qs
- QR subtest D – 10 Qs
- QR subtest E – 10 Qs
- AR subtest A – 10 Qs
- AR subtest B – 11 Qs
- AR subtest C – 10 Qs
- AR subtest D – 11 Qs
- SJ subtest A – 12 Qs

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- SJ subtest B – 10 Qs
- SJ subtest C – 12 Qs

PassMedicine

Practice papers - 2108 Qs in total
- VR question paper x10 – 44 Qs in each
- DM question paper x9 – 29 Qs in each
- QR question paper x10 – 36 Qs in each
- AR question paper x9 – 55 Qs in each
- SJ question paper x8 – 69 Qs in each

Mock exams – 699 Qs in total
- Mock A – 233 Qs
- Mock B – 233 Qs
- Mock C – 233 Qs

UCAT Official Question banks and subtests

402 Qs total
- VR question bank 1 – 16 Qs
- VR question bank 2 – 27 Qs
- VR practice subtest – 44 Qs
- DM question bank 1 – 17 Qs
- DM question bank 2 – 17 Qs
- DM question bank 3 – 16 Qs
- DM practice subtest – 19 Qs
- QR question bank 1 – 25 Qs
- QR question bank 2 – 21 Qs
- QR practice subtest – 36 Qs
- AR question bank 1 – 19 Qs
- AR question bank 2 – 20 Qs
- AR practice subtest – 55 Qs
- SJ question bank 1 – 30 Qs
- SJ question bank 2 – 31 Qs
- SJ question bank 3 – 9 Qs

UCAT Official Mocks

932 Qs total
- Practice Test A – 233 Qs

- Practice Test B – 233 Qs
- Practice Test C – 233 Qs
- Practice Test D – 233 Qs

UCAT score convertor

Raw scores convertor – use if doing practice tests which include the same number of questions to the real test.

Estimated UCAT score	Number of correct answers			
	Verbal Reasoning	Decision Making	Quantitative Reasoning	Abstract Reasoning
300	0–5	0–3	0–3	0–5
330	6–7	4	4–5	6–7
350	8	5	6–7	8–9
370	9–10	6	8	10–11
400	11	7	9	12–13
430	12	8	10	14–15
450	13–14	9	11	16–17
470	15	10	12–13	18–19
500	16–17	11	14–15	20–21
530	18	12	16–17	22–23
550	19–20	13	18–19	24–25
570	21–22	14	20	26–28
600	23	15	21	29–30
630	24–25	16	22	31–32
650	26–27	17	23	33–34
670	28–29	18	24	35–36
700	30–31	19	25	37–38
730	32	20	26	39–40
750	33	21	27	41–42
770	34	22	28	43–44
800	35–36	23	29	45–46
830	37–38	24	30	47–48
850	39	25	31–32	49–50
870	40–41	26–27	33	51–52
900	42–44	28–29	34–36	53–55

We have also made this score convertor available online, just pop your scores in and it will calculate a scaled UCAT score using the same formula above! Access it here and don't forget to save it to your bookmarks

Percentage score convertor – use if doing practice tests which include a different number of questions to the real test. This will be slightly less accurate, but will still serve as a very useful indicator of performance.

Estimated UCAT score	Percentage of correct answers			
	Verbal Reasoning	Decision Making	Quantitative Reasoning	Abstract Reasoning
300	0–11%	0–10%	0–8%	0–9%
330	12–16%	10–14%	9–14%	10–13%
350	17–18%	15–17%	15–19%	14–16%
370	19–22%	18–21%	20–22%	17–20%
400	23–25%	22–24%	23–25%	20–24%
430	26–27%	25–28%	26–28%	25–27%
450	28–31%	29–31%	29–31%	27–31%
470	32–34%	32–34%	32–36%	32–35%
500	35–39%	34–38%	37–42%	36–38%
530	40–41%	39–41%	42–47%	39–42%
550	42–45%	42–45%	48–53%	43–45%
570	46–50%	46–48%	54–56%	46–51%
600	51–52%	49–52%	57–58%	52–55%
630	53–57%	53–55%	59–61%	56–58%
650	58–61%	56–58%	62–64%	59–62%
670	61–66%	59–62%	65–67%	63–65%
700	67–70%	63–66%	68–69%	66–69%
730	71–73%	67–69%	70–72%	70–73%
750	74–75%	70–72%	73–75%	74–76%
770	76–777%	73–76%	76–78%	77–80%
800	78–82%	77–79%	79–81%	81–84%
830	83–86%	80–83%	82–83%	85–87%
850	87–89%	84–86%	84–89%	87–91%
870	90–93%	87–93%	90–92%	92–95%
900	94–100%	94–100%	93–100	96–100%

Both score convertors have been created using personal experience, as well as existing UCAT score convertors. The two UCAT score convertors used are available here (page 74) and here. We did not have enough information to create an SJ score convertor. Instead, we have linked you to an existing one: please access it here.

28-day revision plan

Guidance

Record all your scores and convert them to UCAT scaled scores using our convertor tools. Use our UCAT progress tracker to track your scores over time.
You do not have to follow this timetable exactly. However, we recommend you complete all the activities included in it.

UCAT official states that the highest scoring candidates spend 25-30 hours preparing and dedicate 1 hour per day to revision for a number of weeks. However, the highest scoring candidates may have a nature aptitude for the test, and therefore perform well with less preparation.

When we asked medical and dental students to tell us how long they prepared for, the answers ranged from 25 hours to 100 hours. It is impossible for us to predict how long you will need to prepare. The consensus from our followers appeared to be between 40-75 hours.

We estimate our timetable includes over 60 hours of suggest activities, and it includes over 4,000 free UCAT questions, with some repeated twice. As it spans 28 days, this is equivalent to two hours of work per day. However, this is excluding time for revision breaks. Including breaks, it may take around three hours to complete.

Timing

When we advise timed practice, please use the timings below and multiply for the number of questions in the sub-test or practice test:
- 29 seconds per VR question
- 64 seconds per DM question
- 40 seconds per QR question
- 14 seconds per AR question
- 23 seconds per SJ question

We advise timing for the set of questions (e.g. 6 minutes and 40 seconds for a 10 question QR practice test) as opposed to timing per individual question. This is because some questions will take longer than the average time, while others will take less time.

If you are sitting the UCATSEN the time per question will be different, depending on how much extra time you have. Please check the timings for UCATSEN here and make a note of the timings per question applicable to you here.

Week 1

The aim of Week 1 is to familiarise yourself with all the subtests, learn some strategies, identify your weakest section of the exam and complete a full mock to obtain your baseline score. We use the UCAT app questions because these are the least representative of the exam (as they are on a phone or tablet), but they are official UCAT questions and so we want to make sure we use them fully!

Day 1
- ☐ Read the UCAT Official candidate guide
- ☐ Watch the UCAT Official prep plan video
- ☐ Review the key UCAT Official practice tips
- ☐ Complete the UCAT Official tour tutorial
- ☐ Create a free PassMedicine account and download the UCAT app

Day 2
- ☐ UCAT question tutorial, complete introduction, VR + DM: watch and make notes
- ☐ Do VR subtest A, and DM subtests A, B - UCAT app

Day 3
- ☐ UCAT question tutorial, complete QR, AR, SJ: watch and make notes
- ☐ Do QR subtest A, AR subtest A and SJ subtest A – UCAT app

Day 4
- ☐ Read UCAT Official candidate advice
- ☐ Make notes on the advice in this video
- ☐ Watch this VR video, and read the VR sections in the four written resources listed prior: make notes
- ☐ Do VR subtests B, C, D on the UCAT app – perform these in timed conditions

Day 5
- ☐ Watch this DM video, and read the DM sections in the four written resources listed prior: make notes
- ☐ Do DM subtests C, D, E and F on the UCAT app – perform these in timed conditions
- ☐ Watch this QR video, and read the QR sections in the four written resources listed prior: make notes

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- ☐ Do QR subtests B, C, D, E on the UCAT app – perform these in timed conditions

Day 6
- ☐ Watch [these](#) [two](#) AR videos, and read the AR sections in the four written resources listed prior: make notes
- ☐ Do AR subtests B, C, D on the UCAT app – perform these in timed conditions
- ☐ Watch [this](#) SJ video, and read the SJ sections in the four written resources listed prior: make notes
- ☐ Do SJ subtests B, C on the UCAT app – perform these in timed conditions

Day 7
- ☐ First UCAT timed full mock: PassMedicine Mock A
- ☐ This is a diagnostic mock. Use the performance in this mock to identify your weakest sections. Consider whether you will need to dedicate more time to your UCAT preparation.

Week 2

From now, all UCAT practice must be timed. Use the online calculator and an erasable whiteboard. Practice in a quiet room with no distractions.

In Week 2 we try to build our stamina. Therefore, if possible, dedicate time each day to do all the questions in one sitting – this will build your concentration and focus. There are also two UCAT mocks this week.

Day 1
- ☐ VR – paper 1, PassMedicine
- ☐ DM – Q bank 1, UCAT
- ☐ QR – paper 1, PassMedicine
- ☐ AR – Q bank 1, UCAT
- ☐ SJ – paper 1, PassMedicine
- ☐ VR – Q bank 1, UCAT
- ☐ DM – paper 1, PassMedicine

Day 2
- ☐ QR – Q bank 1, UCAT
- ☐ AR – paper 1, PassMedicine

- [ ] SJ - Q bank 1, UCAT
- [ ] VR - paper 2, PassMedicine
- [ ] DM - paper 2, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR – paper 2, PassMedicine
- [ ] AR – paper 2, PassMedicine

Day 3
- [ ] Second UCAT timed full mock: UCAT Mock A

Day 4
- [ ] SJ – paper 2, PassMedicine
- [ ] VR – Q bank 2, UCAT
- [ ] DM – Q bank 2, UCAT
- [ ] QR – Q bank 2, UCAT
- [ ] AR – Q bank 2, UCAT
- [ ] SJ – Q bank 2, UCAT
- [ ] DM - Q bank 3, UCAT
- [ ] SJ – Q bank 3, UCAT

Day 5
- [ ] VR – paper 3, PassMedicine
- [ ] AR - paper 3, PassMedicine
- [ ] VR – practice subtest, UCAT
- [ ] DM – practice subtest, UCAT
- [ ] QR – practice subtest, UCAT
- [ ] AR – practice subtest, UCAT

Day 6
- [ ] Third UCAT timed full mock: PassMedicine Mock B

Day 7
- [ ] DM - paper 3, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR - paper 3, PassMedicine
- [ ] SJ - paper 3, PassMedicine
- [ ] VR – paper 4, PassMedicine
- [ ] DM - paper 4, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR - paper 4, PassMedicine

Week 3

Week 3 is similar to Week 2, and there are also two UCAT mocks this week.

Day 1
- [ ] AR – paper 4, PassMedicine
- [ ] SJ – paper 4, PassMedicine
- [ ] VR – paper 5, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR – paper 5, PassMedicine
- [ ] VR – paper 6, PassMedicine
- [ ] DM – paper 5, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR – paper 6, PassMedicine
- [ ] AR – paper 5, PassMedicine
- [ ] SJ – paper 5, PassMedicine

Day 2
- [ ] Fourth UCAT timed full mock: UCAT Mock B

Day 3
- [ ] VR – paper 7, PassMedicine
- [ ] DM – paper 6, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR – paper 7, PassMedicine
- [ ] AR – paper 6, PassMedicine
- [ ] SJ – paper 6, PassMedicine
- [ ] VR – paper 8, PassMedicine
- [ ] DM – paper 7, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR – paper 8, PassMedicine

Day 4
- [ ] AR – paper 7, PassMedicine
- [ ] SJ – paper 7, PassMedicine
- [ ] VR – paper 9, PassMedicine
- [ ] DM – paper 8, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR – paper 9, PassMedicine
- [ ] AR – paper 8, PassMedicine
- [ ] SJ – paper 8, PassMedicine
- [ ] VR – paper 10, PassMedicine

Day 5

☐ Fifth UCAT timed full mock: PassMedicine Mock C

Day 6
☐ DM - paper 9, PassMedicine
☐ QR – paper 10, PassMedicine
☐ AR - paper 9, PassMedicine
☐ VR - paper 1, PassMedicine
☐ DM - Q bank 1, UCAT
☐ QR - paper 1, PassMedicine
☐ AR - Q bank 1, UCAT
☐ SJ - paper 1, PassMedicine

Day 7
☐ VR - Q bank 1, UCAT
☐ DM - paper 1, PassMedicine
☐ QR - Q bank 1, UCAT
☐ AR - paper 1, PassMedicine
☐ SJ - Q bank 1, UCAT
☐ VR - paper 2, PassMedicine
☐ DM - paper 2, PassMedicine
☐ QR – paper 2, PassMedicine

Week 4

Test date is only a week away! This week we will do 2 UCAT official mocks, repeat some question banks and complete some gentle practice recapping every section in the last two days before the exam.

Day 1
☐ Sixth UCAT timed full mock: UCAT Mock C

Day 2
☐ AR – paper 2, PassMedicine
☐ SJ – paper 2, PassMedicine
☐ DM - Q bank 3, UCAT
☐ VR – paper 3, PassMedicine
☐ AR - paper 3, PassMedicine
☐ QR – practice subtest, UCAT
☐ SJ – Q bank 3, UCAT

- [ ] VR – practice subtest, UCAT

Day 3
- [ ] DM – practice subtest, UCAT
- [ ] AR – practice subtest, UCAT
- [ ] DM - paper 3, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR - paper 3, PassMedicine
- [ ] SJ - paper 3, PassMedicine
- [ ] VR – paper 4, PassMedicine
- [ ] DM - paper 4, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR - paper 4, PassMedicine

Day 4
- [ ] VR – paper 5, PassMedicine
- [ ] DM - paper 5, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR – paper 5, PassMedicine
- [ ] AR - paper 4, PassMedicine
- [ ] SJ - paper 4, PassMedicine

Day 5
- [ ] Seventh UCAT timed full mock: UCAT Mock D

Day 6
- [ ] VR – paper 6, PassMedicine
- [ ] DM - paper 6, PassMedicine
- [ ] QR - paper 6, PassMedicine
- [ ] AR – paper 5, PassMedicine
- [ ] SJ - paper 5, PassMedicine

Day 7
We have scheduled fewer questions today, as some people find last minute preparation to be anxiety-inducing. If you would rather do more, please feel free!

- [ ] VR – Q bank 2, UCAT
- [ ] DM – Q bank 2, UCAT
- [ ] QR – Q bank 2, UCAT
- [ ] AR – Q bank 2, UCAT
- [ ] SJ – Q bank 2, UCAT

UCAT progress tracker

Date	Scaled UCAT score				
	VR	DM	DR	AR	SJ