

UCAT



MSC Medical
Schools
Council
Selection Alliance

Did you know?

The best preparation is to complete the free practice papers under examination conditions. The most successful candidates spend around 21 to 30 hours preparing for the test.

Useful stuff

WHAT DO MEDICAL SCHOOLS WANT TO SEE?

The University Clinical Aptitude Test is designed to select people to be medical students. It is a two-hour computer-based test that can be taken at centres across the UK and worldwide. It includes subtests involving verbal reasoning, decision-making, quantitative reasoning, abstract reasoning and situational judgement.

The UCAT helps medical schools assess a student's aptitude for medicine and a future career as a doctor.

The results can be used to:

- Decide whether to invite a student to interview
- Inform whether an offer should be made
- Decide between two equally ranked applicants

Medical schools use the UCAT in different ways. Some medical schools use thresholds and require that a candidate's score be over a particular threshold. These thresholds can change year on year. Every medical school will detail on their website how the tests will be used within their admissions process.

Top facts

- Your score from one year will not affect your chances of re-applying in later years, as each application is considered afresh.
- There is a bursary available to cover the full test fee for students from low income households.
- For many medical schools the UCAT is a mandatory entry requirement for medicine.

Key dates

Registration opens in May and closes by mid-September. Students can take the test from July until the beginning of October.

What you should do...

The most useful preparation you can do for an admissions test is practice. You need to be willing to put in a significant amount of work. However, you don't need to pay for specialist courses and support; UCAT has lots of advice and other materials on its website including fully-timed practice papers that mimic the live test. Reading example questions and completing practice papers allows you to become familiar with the format of the questions, and trains you to recognise quickly what questions are actually asking you to do. It is particularly helpful to carry out practice papers under the same time constraints that you will face in the real test, to get you used to the pace at which you need to answer questions in order to complete on time. The advice from the medical schools is that you do not need to pay anyone for help.

Be aware

The test can only be sat once in any year. The test results are only valid in the year that the test is taken and cannot be carried over to a re-application.

What they say...

"All of the challenging aspects of the test became much easier after lots of practice questions as patterns began to emerge, making approaching the harder sections less daunting. With regards to timing practising triage using the flagging tool is key as it is almost impossible to answer all of the questions accurately in the given time."

Previous UCAT high-scoring candidate.

More help & advice

To find out more: www.ucat.ac.uk

Test yourself

Look at the UCAT website and review the guidebook, practice questions and video information.

Write down:

- Your top five things you have learnt from looking at the resources
- The most surprising thing you have learned about the test
- What your next steps will be to prepare for the test

Other tests used by medical schools are BMAT and the GAMSAT (for graduate entry).

This information is endorsed by all undergraduate medical schools in the UK who are members of the Medical Schools Council. The information relates to UK medical schools only. It is correct and accurate at the time of publication (July 2019), and relates to the 2020 admissions process. It will be updated annually but we advise you to check individual medical school websites.