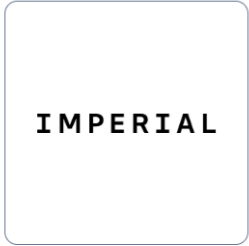


New Admissions Tests at Competitive Universities



(For applicants to universities using admissions tests and further assessments in addition to UCAS application information)

Dave Leal, Philosophy Faculty Admissions Coordinator, University of Oxford

What do we already know about applicants?

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- Existing qualifications and grades

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- Future qualifications currently being studied for, with predicted grades

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- What schools you've attended, both where and when
- Employment, etc.
- Personal Statement
- UCAS Reference

So, why an extra test as well?

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‘Provisionality’

So, why an extra test as well?

- Large numbers of applicants

So, why an extra test as well?

- Large numbers of applicants
- International students (and varied qualifications)

So, why an extra test as well?

- Large numbers of applicants
- International students (and varied qualifications)
- Mature students

So, why an extra test as well?

- Large numbers of applicants
- International students (and varied qualifications)
- Mature students
- Variety of subjects studied

So, why an extra test as well?

- Large numbers of applicants
- International students
- Mature students
- Variety of subjects studied
- A levels (the most common qualification among applicants) doesn't tell us all we want to know

A Levels...

Over recent decades:

- The proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades has greatly increased, perhaps most notably in subjects which show the greatest correlation to some particular subjects or abilities (analytical subjects such as mathematics, for example)
- The assessment methods at A level have tended towards favouring more precise and prescriptive answers

Universities want to know things like...

- Can the applicant for our degree think clearly and independently?
- Can the applicant actually *use* what he or she has been taught?
- Can the applicant write in clearly-constructed and appropriately-argued English prose?

But we want to know things like...

- Can the applicant for our degree think clearly and independently?
- Can the applicant actually *use* what he or she has been taught?
- Can the applicant write in clearly-constructed and appropriately-argued English prose?

... and it's not obvious even from very strong results in A levels that a candidate can do these things at a high level. (*Nor, of course, that they can't!*)

Example A: Medicine (UCAT, possible others)

Number of qualified applicants;

Variety of qualification subjects;

International applicants;

Probing deeper than school assessment;

Adequacy of core knowledge/skills

Example A: Medicine (UCAT, possible others)

Number of qualified applicants;

Variety of qualification subjects;

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UCAT (Medicine etc.)



The University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) is a computer-based admissions test, used by a consortium of UK and partner universities to help select applicants for their medical and dental degree programmes.

About the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)

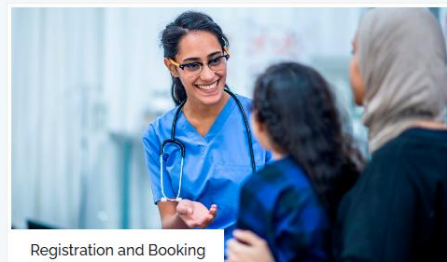
The University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) is an admissions test, used by a consortium of UK and partner universities to help select applicants to their medical and dental degree programmes.

The test is used alongside other selection criteria such as your academic qualifications and interviews.

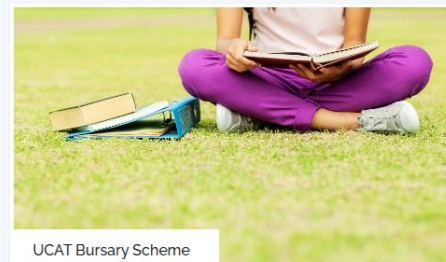
The UCAT is a computer-based test, delivered in Pearson VUE test centres throughout the UK and worldwide.



[UCAT Essentials - What do I need to know?](#)



[Registration and Booking](#)



[UCAT Bursary Scheme](#)

Example B: Law (LNAT)

Number of qualified applicants;

Variety of qualification subjects;

International applicants;

Probing deeper than school assessment;

Adequacy of core knowledge/skills

Example B: Law (LNAT)

Number of qualified applicants;

Variety of qualification subjects;

International applicants;

Probing deeper than school assessment;

Adequacy of core knowledge/skills

LNAT (Law degrees)

LNAT FOR STUDENTS

LNAT FOR INSTITUTIONS

LOG IN

SEARCH



NATIONAL ADMISSIONS TEST FOR LAW

WHAT IS LNAT?

REGISTRATION

HOW TO PREPARE

ON TEST DAY

YOUR FUTURE

? WHAT IS LNAT?

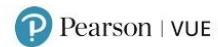
The Law National Aptitude test helps you understand if Law is the right career path for you, and it helps Universities check that you'll be able to succeed on a law course.

LNAT IS: ✓

- A test of your verbal reasoning skills
- A test of your ability to understand and interpret information
- A test of your inductive and deductive reasoning abilities
- A test of your ability to analyse information and draw conclusions

LNAT ISN'T: ✗

- An intelligence test
- A test of your knowledge of law



[Pearson VUE corona virus update](#)

APPLY TO TAKE THE TEST

REGISTER NOW



IMPORTANT DATES



Don't miss the important deadlines!

FIND OUT MORE >

SAMPLE PAPERS



Download sample tests on this site....

FIND OUT MORE >

RESULTS



The universities see your results before you do...

FIND OUT MORE >

LNAT BENEFITS



A test of aptitude rather than educational achievement....

FIND OUT MORE >

WHAT IS LNAT?

[Do I Need To Sit The Test?](#)

REGISTRATION

[Set Up Account](#)

HOW TO PREPARE

[Sample Essays](#)

ON TEST DAY

[Test Centres](#)

YOUR FUTURE

[Student Examples](#)

FAQS

Example C: Mathematics (TMUA, STEP)

Number of qualified applicants;

Variety of qualification subjects;

International applicants;

Probing deeper than school assessment;

Adequacy of core knowledge/skills

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Variety of qualification subjects;

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Home > Students > STEP Mathematics

STEP Mathematics

Key dates and fees

How to register

Preparing for STEP

Special consideration

Scoring and results

Results enquiries

Appeals

FAQs

Contact the team >

☎ 01223 553998

✉ STEPmaths@ocr.org.uk

🐦 @OCR_Maths

STEP Mathematics



STEP (Sixth term examination paper) is a well-established mathematics examination designed to test candidates on questions that are similar in style to undergraduate mathematics.

STEP is used by the University of Cambridge, the University of Warwick and Imperial College London. Other universities sometimes ask candidates to take STEP.

Some students take STEP papers just for the challenge.

Please check the details of your course(s) to confirm if you are required to take STEP as part of the application process.

There are two STEP examinations: STEP 2 and STEP 3. Students are usually required to sit either one or both of the examinations, depending on the requirements of the universities they have applied to.

For more detailed information about the format of STEP, see the [specification](#).

TMUA (Cambridge, Imperial, Durham, Warwick, LSE...)



[About the tests](#) ▾

[Register](#) ▾

[Prepare](#)

[Sitting](#) ▾

[Test Results](#)

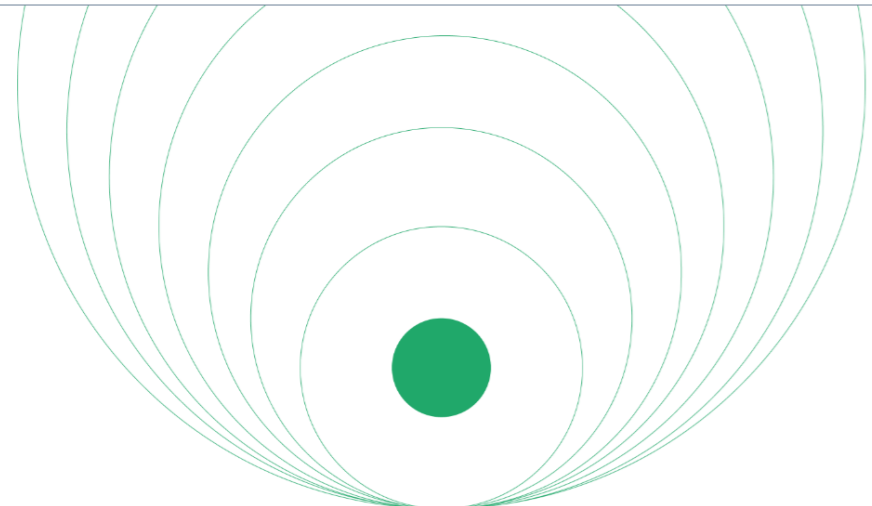
[About UAT-UK](#) ▾

[FAQs](#)


[Enquiries](#)

TMUA

The Test of Mathematics for University Admission



Test Sitting 1
16 and 17 October 2024

Test Sitting 2 
8 and 9 January 2025
Not applicable to Cambridge applicants

[Register for the TMUA \(from 1 August 2024\)](#)

TMUA for Universities

The TMUA is currently used by the universities shown for selection to some courses in Mathematics, Economics and Computer Science.

You must refer to the relevant course pages of each institution's website to find out if the courses you are applying to require the TMUA. Failure to register for the TMUA where it is compulsory may invalidate your application.

Depending on the University to which you are applying, the TMUA may be a compulsory part of your application, or it may be optional. Make sure you know the requirements for the specific courses to which you intend to apply.

If you are applying to Cambridge and are required to sit the TMUA you must sit it in the October test sitting. All other candidates can choose whether to sit the test in October or January.

IMPERIAL



Example D: Science, Engineering (ESAT)

Number of qualified applicants;

Variety of qualification subjects;

International applicants;

Probing deeper than school assessment;

Adequacy of core knowledge/skills

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ESAT (Cambridge, Imperial, Oxford, UCL)

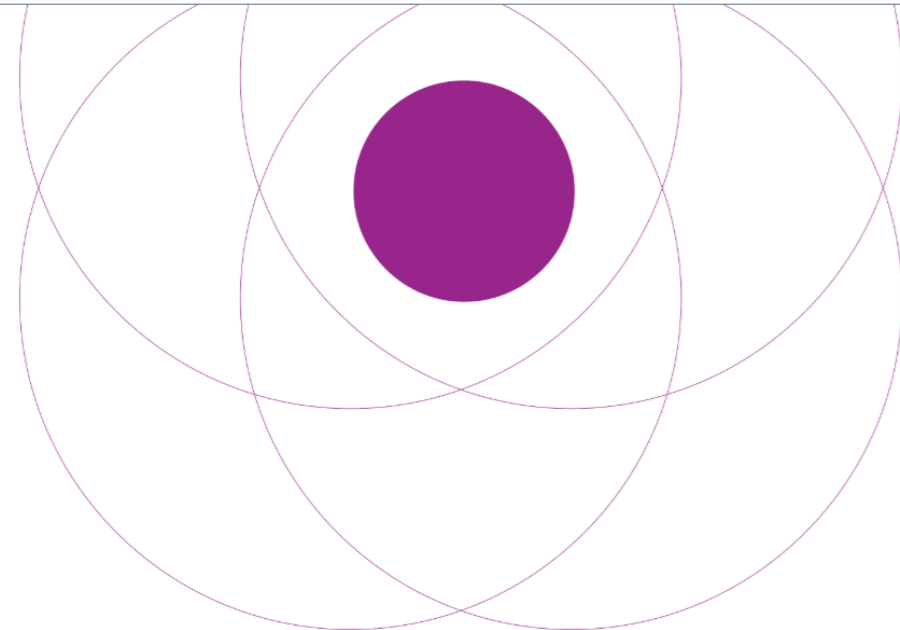
Test Scores for January 2026 will be available via your account on Wed 11th February.



[Our Tests](#) ▾ [Key Dates](#) [Before your Test](#) ▾ [Test Day](#) [After your Test](#) [About](#) ▾ [Policies](#) [FAQs](#) [Contact](#)

ESAT

The Engineering and Science Admissions Test



Test Sitting 1

9 and 10 October 2025

Test Sitting 2

6 and 7 January 2026



Not applicable to Cambridge applicants

[Register for the ESAT \(from 31st July 2025\)](#)

[Overview](#) [Test Format](#) [How to Prepare](#) [Candidate Support](#) [Universities](#) [How To Register](#)

ESAT (Cambridge, Imperial, Oxford, UCL)

Test Scores for January 2026 will be available via your account on Wed 11th February.




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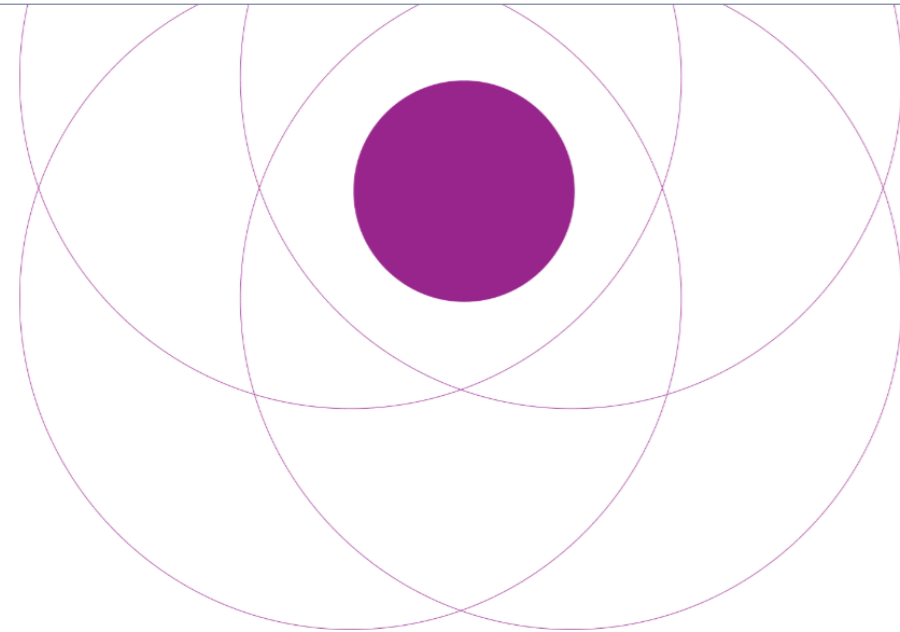
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ESAT (Cambridge, Imperial, Oxford, UCL)

[Overview](#) [Test Format](#) [How to Prepare](#) [Candidate Support](#) [Universities](#) [How To Register](#)

What you need to know



Who should sit the test?

If you are applying for Engineering or Science subject at one of the UAT-UK institutions, check if the ESAT is required. Failure to register for a required test may invalidate your application.

[See the full course list here](#) →



Which modules should I sit?

Be careful to select the modules required for your course. These cannot be changed without cancelling and re-booking your test.

All candidates need to sit Maths 1. **Most** other candidates need to sit **two** further modules.

If you are applying to two courses that require the ESAT, and one has a free choice of module, you must sit the compulsory module for your other course.

If your courses have conflicting compulsory requirements, contact UAT-UK to seek advice. You can do this via your online account. Please do so **before** booking a test.



How is the ESAT scored?

For the ESAT you will receive a score per module taken.

Results for each module are reported on a scale from 1 (low) to 9 (high) to one decimal place. This allows us to share scores from various test versions and sittings on a unified scale.

There is no pass/fail score for the ESAT. Scores are typically used alongside other information provided as part of your university application.

[Get prepared](#) →

[More information on test results](#) →

Example E: Psychology at Oxford (TARA)

Number of qualified applicants;

Variety of qualification subjects;

International applicants;

Probing deeper than school assessment;

Adequacy of core knowledge/skills

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What are we looking for in the test?

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- Evidence of close critical reading and understanding;
- Capacity to write clear, connected, well-argued English prose, or to apply existing knowledge in new situations (science, maths);
- (Where relevant) Interest and enthusiasm for the subject

‘Interest and enthusiasm for the subject’

In an essay section of a test candidates will convey this interest and enthusiasm by **engaging with the questions directly and in their own voice; by actually *thinking*.** They will *not* convey it by:

- Name-dropping (say) ‘Great Historians/Philosophers I have heard of’
- Shoehorning into some essay passing mention of arguments they have read or been told about where it has little relevance
- Indicating that they can tell what the question is asking for *without actually reading the question carefully* (‘clairvoyance’)

What's my test actually like?

LNAT and UCAT are longstanding, well-known quantities; look at websites.

Other 'Consortium' tests (e.g. TARA/TMUA/ESAT) are likely to be predominantly multiple choice, though the precise nature of the multiple-choice may vary (negative marking for wrong answers may be introduced in some questions; check the rules!) TARA has a structured essay as one component.

You may not be required to take all parts of the test (ESAT will have sections relevant to different sciences), so do check!

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The trick is (always)...

... that there is no trick.

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The only basic guidance that really matters is:

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Answer the question asked

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The key steps:

Before You Begin



Are you a returning candidate?

If you sat the test last year, or made an account but did not sit, please refer to our information for returning candidates.

[Information for returning candidates](#) →



Do you need financial help?

If you are based in the UK and need assistance in covering the cost of the test, you may qualify for a UAT-UK Bursary. Please check the [eligibility criteria](#) and apply **before** you book a test. If your application is approved, your test will be free of charge when you book.

For October 2025 sittings, you can apply for a bursary from June.

[More information on bursaries](#) →



Require Access Arrangements?

If you need adjustments for your test, please request them under our Access Arrangements Policy. Be aware that you will need to do so before booking and separate deadlines apply.

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[More Information on Access Arrangements](#) →

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Interviews

- How suitable you are for the style of teaching used (Oxford, Cambridge);
- How well you can use knowledge and information to solve problems, assess arguments, develop proposals for research;
- (Relevant to a few competitive subjects) How will this applicant be as a member of a key profession?

Interviews

‘Word Triples’:

- Guilt; shame; remorse
- Intelligent; clever; wise
- Intelligence; understanding; wisdom

Interviews

Ambiguity:



Interviews

Ambiguity:



Interviews

Ambiguity:



1. It's a myth that women like chocolate more than men

"There is no evidence that women like chocolate more than men," says Dr Catherine Jansson-Boyd, Reader in Consumer Psychology at Anglia Ruskin University. "Research has recently found that it's much more likely to be social influence. We're bombarded with information that women should like chocolate more, and that it's particularly good when you're pre-menstrual. But there is no real foundation for it."

"Chocolate had been enjoyed for thousands of years - as a medicine, as a ceremonial drink and also as an energy drink," adds Sue Quinn author of *Cocoa: An exploration of chocolate*. "It was given to soldiers going off to battle and fed to women who were in childbirth to sustain them through labour. When the Spanish invaded, they didn't know what to make of it. They were suspicious of it and the people who made the chocolate drinks and administered it as medicine, which was women. So you started to see these negative stories emerge about women and their relationship with chocolate."

Interviews

Ambiguity:



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