

Admissions Tests for Medical & Dental Schools

Types of test

At present, there are three different admissions tests which may be used in selecting candidates to study medicine and, in some cases, dentistry. The tests may be used as part of the admissions process for both fast-track graduate entry and the traditional undergraduate course. The tests are:

- UCAT – University Clinical Aptitude Test
- GAMSAT – Graduate Australian Medical Schools Admissions Test
- BMAT – BioMedical Science Admissions Test

Individual medical and dental schools decide which, if any, of these tests it will use in selection - details should be on their website.

Important points to note

- It is your responsibility to enrol for the test(s) required by the institutions(s) to which you apply.
- If you apply to two or more schools requiring the same test, you only need to take the test once.
- Tests are only offered at certain times of year, and at selected locations. Be careful not to miss deadlines to register and take the test, which could be weeks before the UCAS application deadline. Further information will be on the test provider's website. You can usually only take the same test once in any admissions cycle.
- Leave plenty of time to practice test taking techniques (6-8 weeks). A few tips include:
 - o Start by making sure you are familiar with the format of the test, the style of questioning and timings - there's usually plenty of information on the test provider's website.
 - o If necessary, re-familiarise yourself with relevant science subjects (using A-level revision guides can help, or revise first year notes at degree level). Make sure you refresh your memory on maths skills like percentages, ratios and fractions.
 - o Have a go at practice questions available on the test provider's website. You can also find several books with example questions, either second hand or from a library.
 - o Think about your test-taking technique eg, for abstract reasoning get into the habit of looking for key themes like shape, number, position, symmetry, reflection. For verbal reasoning try reading different newspaper articles and comment pieces to practice speed reading and critical reasoning - think about, and understand, what you are reading. Look for the implied meaning in what you read. Collect interesting quotes that you may find useful in written pieces.
 - o It can help to practice taking psychometric tests in general, not just the UCAT/BMAT/GAMSAT practice tests. The Careers Service [Psychometric tests](#) webpage has top tips and practice tests used in job recruitment.
 - o Familiarise yourself with the [GMC's Good Medical Practice](#) to help answer questions around ethics, values and best practice eg, for Situational Judgement Tests or written components where you may have to express values, opinions and judgements.
- Institutions tend not to recommend particular preparation courses, which can be expensive.
- All tests involve a fee. This is stated on the test provider's website, along with details of any bursaries.
- Candidates with disabilities should check with the test provider, in advance of taking the test, what special arrangements can be made and complete the necessary paperwork.
- It is not a case of 'pass or fail'. Institutions will set their own criteria for what minimum scores they will accept. Results are sent separately to the individual institutions to which you have applied, so your course choices are not seen by the other universities.



The tests

UCAT (University Clinical Aptitude Test)

The most popular admissions test for UK medical and dental schools, many undergraduate courses and several graduate-entry programmes ask for applicants to take UCAT - the full list of institutions appears on the UCAT website. UCAT focuses on general aptitude and attributes considered to be valuable for health care professionals, not science content. It currently comprises the following multiple choice subtests:

1. **Verbal reasoning** - Assesses the ability to critically evaluate information presented in a written form.
2. **Decision making** - Assesses the ability to make sound decisions and judgements using complex information.
3. **Quantitative reasoning** – Assesses the ability to critically evaluate information presented in a numerical form.
4. **Abstract reasoning** - Assesses the use of convergent and divergent thinking to infer relationships from information.
5. **Situational Judgement Test (SJT)** – Measures the capacity to understand real world situations and to identify critical factors and appropriate behaviour in dealing with them.

There is a choice of test date, usually between the start of July and the start of October (ie, before you submit the UCAS application form) - you must register for a test, usually between early May and mid September. Total test time is two hours. Results available to you at the end of the test, to help you decide which universities to apply to, but not sent to your chosen universities until late October / early November.

For more information, including fees for taking the test, see the [UCAT website](#).

GAMSAT (Graduate Australian Medical Schools Admissions Test)

GAMSAT, a paper-based test, comprises three sections:

1. **Reasoning in Humanities and Social Sciences** - multiple choice questions requiring analysis and interpretation of written and diagrammatical information
2. **Written Communication** - two short writing tasks based on stimuli such as social commentary / current affairs or famous quotes (there's no correct answer, assessors are looking for ability to articulate and develop arguments or discuss relevant issues effectively)
3. **Reasoning in Biological and Physical Sciences** - multiple choice questions in Chemistry, Biology and Physics.

Total test time is 5 ½ hours. There are two test dates per year - March and September (registration closes a few weeks in advance of the test date). You must have taken GAMSAT before you submit your UCAS application; taking it in the March means you'll have your results before the UCAS deadline in October and it may help you choose which universities you should apply to. Candidates will get their scores by email sometime after they have taken their test.

For more information, including fees for taking the test, see the [GAMSAT website](#)

BMAT (BioMedical Admissions Test)

The BMAT test has three parts:

1. **Aptitude & skills** - multiple choice / short answer questions assessing generic abilities in problem solving, understanding arguments, data analysis and inference
2. **Scientific Knowledge and Applications** - multiple choice / short answer questions assessing knowledge of science and mathematics
3. **Writing Task** - choice of stimulus questions on scientific ideas or concepts of learning, one of which must be answered in a single page of writing

Total time for this paper-based test is 2 hours. The test is delivered several times a year, but most UK universities will only accept the August or October test date (check with the university - if any courses you are applying for do not accept August results, you must take the test in October only). Taking it in August means you'll have your results before the UCAS deadline in October - which can help you decide which universities you apply to. You'll need to register with BMAT a few weeks in advance of the test date.

For more information, including fees for taking the test, see the [BMAT website](#).

University of Sheffield Careers Service (AC) January 2020