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Dr Barrie Lyell

Chief Mentor for UCAT

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What is the Purpose of Today?

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To plan an **effective** UCAT revision period to help students achieve their best possible UCAT score
(essential for a successful application)

- **UCAT basics** -> introduction, when to book, sections
- **Scoring** & percentiles
- Common **mistakes** & pitfalls
- How to **improve scores**
- **UCAT consortium**

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What is the UCAT?



- **2-hour** computer-based entrance exam
- Required by all **medical** and **dental** schools
- **Standardised** test that **compares candidates**
- Examines a number of skills required of future doctors and dentists

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UCAT Universities

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- For 2025 entry onwards, **all medical and dental schools** (for undergraduate entry) require the UCAT
- BMAT no longer in use



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UCAT 2025 Key Dates

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Dates for **UCAT 2025** will be published in **January 2025**. 2024 dates below:

14th May -> account creation, bursary & access arrangements applications

18th June -> booking opens (at 6am - set those alarms!)

8th July -> tests begin

19th Sep -> booking deadline

26th Sep -> last test date

15th Oct -> UCAS deadline

Early Nov -> results delivered to universities (students receive results instantaneously)

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UCAT Bursary

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*UCAT have announced that bursary information will be updated before UCAT 2025 registration opens in May 2025. 2024 criteria:

- Open to UK candidates
- Need to meet ONE of the criteria AND provide evidence
- Applications open 14th May (deadline 27th Sept)

Eligibility Criteria	Evidence Required
Free School Meals	A recent letter (dated 2022 or 2023) from your school/college confirming you receive free school meals (Local Authority funded only).
16 to 19 Bursary (England), or EMA (Scotland, Wales or NI)	Your official award letter or communication for academic year 2022/23 or 2023/24 . We must be able to see your name and the date of the award. Evidence that relates to scholarships/bursaries at independent or fee-paying schools is not accepted.
Learner Support (FE 19+) or equivalent for Scotland, Wales or NI	Your official award letter for academic year 2022/23 or 2023/24 .
Undergraduate Student Finance maintenance award (full rate)	Your award letter (all pages) for academic year 2022/23 or 2023/24 . This includes a full rate (means-tested) undergraduate: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Finance England Maintenance Grant/Loan• Student Awards Agency Scotland Young / Independent Students' Bursary• Student Finance Wales or Northern Ireland Maintenance Grant. Check what qualifies as a full-rate maintenance award . Postgraduate loans are not accepted.
Universal Credit	The first page of your or your parent/guardian's Universal Credit statement, dated within the last 3 months . We must be able to see the name and address of the claimant, the date, and the award amount.
Working or Child Tax Credit	The first page of your or your parent/guardian's award letter for financial year 2022/23 or 2023/24 . We must be able to see the name and address of the claimant and the date of the letter.
Income Support, or Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA), or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	Your or your parent/guardian's award letter (all pages) from the UK Jobcentre Plus, dated 2023 . A parent/guardian in receipt of JSA or ESA must be entitled to the income-based benefit (e.g. means-tested) and not a contribution-based award. This is specified on the first page of the award letter.
Asylum Support	Your or your parent/guardian's official award letter, dated in the last 12 months .

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Access Arrangements

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*UCAT have announced that access criteria will be updated before UCAT 2025 registration opens in May 2025. 2024 information:

Access arrangements are available to disabled candidates. This may apply to candidates with a:

- learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia, dyscalculia)
- long-term physical disability
- medical condition (including ADHD or ASD)
- sensory impairment (visual, hearing or multi-sensory)

15th Sept - Access arrangements application deadline

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UCAT Sections

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Consists of **THREE** cognitive subtests + **SJT**

- **Verbal Reasoning** -> 22min, 44qn -> 30s/question
- **Decision Making** -> 37min, 35qn -> 63s/question
- **Quantitative Reasoning** -> 26min, 36qn -> 43s/question
- **Abstract Reasoning** -> no longer a section from 2025
- **Situational Judgement Test** -> 26min, 69qn -> 23s/question

Very tight for time!

Verbal Reasoning

- **Comprehend**, analyse, and draw **accurate** conclusions
- No prior knowledge
- **11 passages**, each followed by **4qn**
 - Selection - choose most suitable
 - Evaluation - true, false, can't tell
- Practise **speed reading**
- **Question first** approach

44 questions, 22min -> 30s per qn

120 seconds to read passage AND answer 4qns



Passage 1

Self-service checkouts

Self-service checkouts have become an increasingly common sight since they were first introduced in supermarkets in 2008, and Britons have very strong feelings about whether or not this latest shopping technology is actually convenient. In a recent survey, 48% of people in the UK said that self-service tills are slow and inconvenient, with a range of complaints – most commonly, that they don't scan items properly and do not let you use your own bags. Some complaints are a bit inaccurate – all self-service checkouts let you use your own bags, though their weighing mechanisms may have trouble recognising these – and many complaints are a bit humorous, such as gripes that they often cannot recognise common fruits or take banknotes properly.

While some of these gripes are a bit funny, and certainly point up the popularity in whingeing about computerised innovations that can be rather frustrating, the fact remains that most people like having the option of scanning and paying for their shopping all on their own, rather than queuing for a manned till. Most supermarkets have replaced some of their manned tills with self-service checkouts (though none have replaced all their manned tills), and, as a result, supermarkets with both types of tills have recorded a slight increase in waiting times at manned tills. This is a sign of how strongly certain customers prefer face-to-face communication to checking out via computer, and of course there are fewer manned tills to accommodate this relatively increased demand.

Customers tend to prefer the self-service checkouts because the shopping experience seems to go more quickly when you do the work of scanning and bagging yourself, rather than waiting while it's done for you. However, the actual time spent queuing and checking out is roughly the same, whether at a self-service or manned till. Self-service checkouts don't help in reducing staff costs either, as supermarkets must provide checkout assistants to help with the many new problems that may occur in customer-completed checkouts. Perhaps the least controversial – and certainly the funniest – dimension of self-service checkouts is the range of innovative phrases they contribute to our everyday experience: most notably (but hardly exclusively) the endlessly beguiling and amusing warning, 'Unexpected item in bagging area'.

1. Which of the following statements about self-service checkouts is best supported by the passage?

- A. Most self-service checkouts do not let you use your own bags.
- B. Most people in the UK think they do not save time.
- C. Nearly half the people in the UK find them inconvenient.
- D. Some supermarkets have replaced all their manned tills with self-service checkouts

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Passage 2

England's woodlands

According to the Forestry Commission, 40 million people visit England's publicly-owned woodlands each year. This figure surpasses the number of annual visitors to Britain's entire seaside. Forests are popular as an escape from the urban realities of everyday life, as 90% of us live in cities or towns. Four percent of the UK was forested land when the Forestry Commission was formed in 1919; today that proportion is three times greater. Woodlands have grown in popularity with a rise in such activities as recreational walking and cycling, and also due to a rise in environmental awareness, and an increasing longing to 'get back to nature'.

Some of the most popular forests are ancient woodlands, defined as areas covered by trees from 1600 to today (or from 1750, in the case of Scotland). The Domesday Book listed some of England's ancient woodlands, meaning that ancient woodlands have existed since 1086! The trees in ancient woodlands live for hundreds of years, and support a habitat with an extraordinary range of birds, insects, fungi and other plants. These ancient trees can also grow to remarkable heights: the tallest broad-leaf tree in England lives in ancient woodland in Dorset. This London Plane, with maple-like leaves, rises to a height of 51 metres – only a few centimetres shorter than Nelson's Column, and is a proud monument to our beloved forests.

'True', 'False', 'Can't Tell'

1. The tallest tree in England is in Dorset.
2. Most people in Britain live in urban areas.
3. 12% of the land in the UK is forested.
4. An ancient woodland is a forest listed in the Domesday Book.

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'True', 'False', 'Can't Tell'

1. The tallest tree in England is in Dorset. **CT**
2. Most people in Britain live in urban areas. **T**
3. 12% of the land in the UK is forested. **T**
4. An ancient woodland is a forest listed in the Domesday Book. **F**

Decision Making

- **Apply logic**, analyse stats, and reach **conclusions**
- No prior knowledge - GCSE maths helpful
- **35qn** - text, graph, charts etc
 - Each qn is a standalone
 - Some ask for correct answer out of 4, others have series of 'yes' 'no'
- Use on screen **calculator** & the notepad
- Strengthen **basic maths**
- **Impartiality**

35 questions, 37min -> just over 1 min per qn

The following table shows sales of three separate magazines.

There are two versions, the normal version which is 300 pages, and the deluxe edition which is 400 pages. The normal edition costs £8.99 whereas the deluxe edition costs £13.99.

Book	Magazine 1	Magazine 2	Magazine 3
Normal	36	41	61
Deluxe Edition (+100 pages)	29	25	27

1. Which of the following statements is true?

- A. There were more sales of deluxe edition than normal copies
- B. Magazine 1 was more popular than Magazine 2 overall
- C. Magazine 3 made more revenue through its normal edition than its deluxe edition.
- D. The deluxe edition was found to be more cost effective by its customers.

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- D. The deluxe edition was found to be more cost effective by its customers.

Explanation

The correct answer is C.

Magazine 3 made more revenue through its normal edition than its deluxe edition.

Normal Edition

$61 \times 8.99 = \text{£}548.39$ (Could estimate by doing $60 \times 10 = \text{£}600$)

Deluxe Edition

$27 \times 13.99 = \text{£}377.73$ (Could estimate by doing $30 \times 14 = \text{£}420$)

There were more sales of deluxe edition than normal copies

Deluxe: $29 + 25 + 27 = 81$

Normal: $36 + 41 + 61 = 138$

Magazine 1 was more popular than Magazine 2 overall

Magazine 1 $36 + 29 = 65$

Magazine 2 $41 + 25 = 66$

The deluxe edition was found to be more cost effective by its customers

No evidence of general consensus of public

Three mixed doubles tennis pairs are sat around a round table discussing their upcoming matches.

Jamie is on the left of a woman who is on the left of a man who is on the left of Alicia.

Catherine is on the left of a man who is on the left of a woman who is on the left of a man who is on the left of Alicia.

Boris has two people between him and his partner.

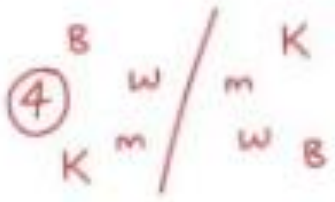
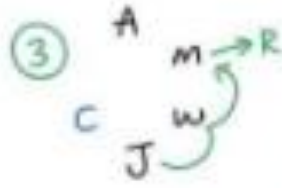
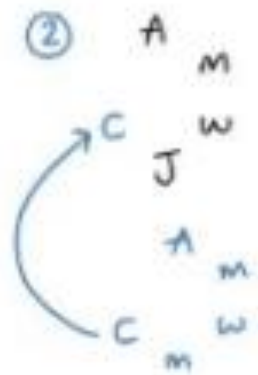
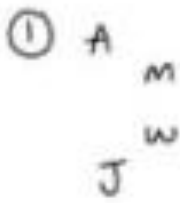
Roberto is not next to his partner but his best friend Jamie is two seats away on his left.

Kiki is on the left of a man who is on the left of a woman who is on the left of Boris.

No player is sat next to their playing partner.

5 Which of the following statements must be true?

- A. Jamie is sat between Catherine and Boris.
- B. Boris is partnered with Alicia.
- C. Roberto is partnered with Catherine
- D. Kiki is between Boris and Roberto.



Quantitative Reasoning

- Using **numeracy skills** to **problem solve**
- No prior knowledge - but assumes GCSE-level maths
- **36qn** - sets of 4qn around same data
 - Also some standalones!
- Time management
- Read **questions, data,** and **answers** closely
- Understand what the qn is asking before looking for answer

36 questions, 26min -> 43s per qn

Annual Taxable Income Bracket (\$)	Tax Rate	Total Tax paid (\$) at the top of this taxable income bracket
0 - 8,950	10%	895
8,950 - 36,250	15%	4990
36,250 - 87,850	25%	17890
87,850 - 183,250	28%	44602
183,250 - 400,000	33%	116129
400,000 and over	39.6%	

The table shows the total tax paid (\$) on annual taxable income.

For example, a person with an annual taxable income of \$60,000 will pay \$4,990 plus 25% of (\$60,000 - \$36,250)

Bill has an annual taxable income of \$28,950. The income tax, to the nearest \$, he has to pay is:

- A. \$2,895
- B. \$3,895
- C. \$4,342
- D. \$4,510
- E. \$5,237

Correct response: B

Bill pays \$895 on his first \$8,950.

Remaining taxable income: $\$28,950 - \$8,950 = \$20,000$

15% tax on \$20,000 = \$3,000

Total tax: Tax from lowest tax bracket (\$895) + tax from next bracket (\$3,000) = \$3,895

Situational Judgement Test

- **Real-world** situations
- Doesn't require medical/dental knowledge
- **69qn** - scenario with up to 6qn each
 - Some qns ask you to rate importance
 - Others ask most and least appropriate response
- Read each qn & the options carefully
- **Don't jump to conclusions!**

69 questions, 26min -> 23s per qn

Mia, a medical student, is on a placement at an antenatal clinic in a rural community. The clinic is under resourced with only one doctor and three midwives. A patient comes into the clinic to have her baby delivered. Most staff, including the doctors, are unavailable as they are dealing with emergencies. An experienced midwife requests support from Mia to deliver the baby. Mia does not feel comfortable helping deliver the baby.

How **important** to take into account are the following considerations for Mia when deciding how to respond to the situation?

Her degree of competence

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Of minor importance
- D. Not important at all

Answer - A

Degree of competence is VERY important as a trainee and as a fully qualified clinician.

Must be able to recognise our competence and act within those limits.

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How **important** to take into account are the following considerations for **Mia** when deciding how to respond to the situation?

That no other staff are available

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Of minor importance
- D. Not important at all

Answer - C

Of little importance because patient safety is number one priority. Staff shortages are important factors to consider, but minor importance.

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How **important** to take into account are the following considerations for **Mia** when deciding how to respond to the situation?

The risks involved in delivering the baby

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Of minor importance
- D. Not important at all

Answer - A

Links back to competence. Does Mia have the competence to handle the risks should they occur?

would the mother not be safer with another person helping as long as she is clear about the limits of her capability

Rachel 04:06 PM

a

anscombe 04:06 PM

But then for the 2nd one, surely this relates to patient safety in the sense that potentially not helping is even more dangerous for the patient than helping when untrained, if no-one else would be available, and this could lead to no help for the patient?

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- Scored based on number of correct answers
- **No negative marks!**
- **Scaled** score plus **decile ranks**
- Each cognitive subtest scored 300-900
- SJT band 1-4

Universities have different score requirements - students need to research each choice!

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For a **“competitive score”** students should be aiming for **>2100 and SJT band 1-2**

- 8th decile for 2024 was 2780 (however at this point there were still 4 subtests)

What if their score is lower than expected?

- Can only sit **once** per UCAS cycle
- Apply anyway (tactically!) but plan to reapply, focus on grades, consider backup options such as an ROI/international application

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Exam Preparation & Tips

- Students **can and must revise** for the UCAT
- **4-6 weeks** to prepare - **Don't start too early!**
- **Understand the exam** format
- Be selective in resource materials - Use a high **quality question bank**
- Drilling technique
- **Time management!**
- Recognise question **patterns**
- **Accuracy**
- Stay **calm**
- If students are struggling with a question, eliminate any clear incorrect answers and reassess
- **Track** and **evaluate** scores over time
- Join a reliable **study group**
- Attend **teaching** and **mentoring** sessions

Would you advise them starting to practice Situational Judgement Test now/ASAP? As this seems the section that needs the most prep and knowledge

[Collapse All](#) ^

[Martin Blamey](#) 04:20 PM

MB

I would suggest that they read some of the GMC guidance publications first especially Good Medical Practice, Consent, and other guidance such as use of social media! Available to download free from GMC website!

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UCAT consortium

- Forming a group to buy **UCAT question banks** together
- Checking different providers for the **best price** and **quality**
- Negotiating **better deals** by purchasing as a **consortium**
- **Saving money** for everyone involved

<https://airtable.com/appd0uBUVz1rNdpa3/shr9wpsTNu0bOlhne>



<https://www.gmc-uk.org/gmpinaction/>

<https://www.theukcatpeople.co.uk/medical-schools/ucat/how-universities-use-the-ucat>