

UCAT Consortium Complaints and Appeals Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1. The UCAT Consortium is the operating name of the UKCAT Consortium. We are a consortium of medical and dental schools from across the United Kingdom. Our admission tests are *delivered* by our business partner Pearson VUE.

1.2. This policy applies to:

1.2.1. Candidates undertaking, attempting to undertake or seeking advice regarding our admission tests.

1.2.2. Individuals who have made a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act or a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act.

1.3. Please note that the UCAT Consortium does not deal with complaints about admissions decisions, which should be addressed to the individual University concerned.

1.4. Where a third party (such as a parent or guardian) makes a complaint or appeal on behalf of a candidate we can only address general issues, unless we have the candidate's express written consent to the third party acting on their behalf, and allowing us to refer to the details of their own specific case. Where a third party is acting on the candidate's behalf, the UCAT Consortium will communicate with both the third party and the candidate to ensure the candidate is aware of any developments. The UCAT Consortium may in such circumstances request a first-hand account of any incident from the candidate.

1.5. Complaints and appeals will be dealt with quickly and treated seriously. Candidates will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of making a complaint in good faith. However, complaints should not be made frivolously, vexatiously or with malice, and if they are we will not investigate them.

1.6. A flowchart setting out how we deal with candidate incidents, complaints and appeals is included as Appendix A.

2. What happens if something goes wrong during my test?

2.1. Please refer to our website in the first instance regarding our policy relating to mitigating circumstances.

2.2. Candidates who test at a test centre, will have been given, on arrival, a copy of the UCAT Consortium Test Centre Exam Rules to read prior to testing. This document advises you that if you experience hardware/software problems, noise disturbance, illness or other distractions that affect your ability to take the exam, you must notify the invigilator immediately by raising your hand. If you did not do this, then such events will not usually be investigated after testing – especially where it is possible that had you reported the incident, the issue could have been resolved by the invigilator.

2.3. During the check-in process for the UCAT Online, you will be reminded of the key exam rules prior to starting your test. The UCAT Consortium UCAT Online Exam Rules can be read in full on the UCAT website. This document advises you that if you experience hardware/software problems, illness or other distractions that affect your ability to take the exam, you must notify the proctor immediately by starting a chat session. If you did not do this, then such events will not usually be investigated after testing – especially where it is possible that had you reported the incident, the issue could have been resolved by the proctor.

2.4. If there is a general disruptive incident at a Pearson VUE test centre during a test (e.g. a fire alarm), the test centre will do what it can to minimise the disruption and to let you finish your test. Incidents are logged. Where they are sufficiently serious Pearson VUE will proactively inform the UCAT Office.

2.5. In the event of you reporting an incident or if a general incident affects your test, you will be given an incident number by the test centre or proctor. If you wish the incident to be followed up you must contact Customer Services (contact details below) as soon as you are able following testing. The issuing of an incident number does not automatically result in detailed follow up unless it is specifically requested.

2.6. Once an incident has been logged in this way it will be investigated by Pearson VUE and the outcome of this investigation reported back to you.

2.7. Pearson VUE will only consider incidents reported after the day of testing in exceptional circumstances as it is often difficult to investigate such incidents fully.

2.8. Following investigation and in the most exceptional circumstances (and after discussion with the UCAT Consortium) you may be offered a further opportunity to take the test or may have your record annotated in order that Medical and Dental Schools are aware of the circumstances which may have affected your test result. For clarity, where candidates have been allowed to re-sit the test due to mitigating circumstances, only the result of the *final* test in that test cycle (regardless of the result) will be made available to Universities.

3. How do I raise an issue regarding test content or my test result?

3.1. If you wish to raise an issue regarding the content of the test or challenge your actual test result you should contact Pearson VUE (contact details below) in the first instance who will check that due process has taken place.

4. What should I do if I feel ill before or during my test?

4.1. As stated in our Test Centre and UCAT Online Exam Rules, in presenting to test you are declaring yourself fit to take the test. If you are not fit to test, you must reschedule to a later date. If you choose to sit your test against this advice, UCAT will not consider such issues as mitigating circumstances. Candidates who plan to take the test in the final weeks of testing but fall ill may not be able to reschedule within the test window. This is why we recommend that candidates take the test early in the cycle. It is probable that Universities will also not consider such issues as mitigating circumstances.

4.2. If you feel ill during your test, you need to inform the invigilator/proctor. If you are not well enough to continue, you should ask the invigilator to end your test. You then need to contact the UCAT Office as soon as possible. If you choose to continue testing, it is unlikely that UCAT will consider this as mitigating circumstances.

5. How can I complain about the service I have received from Pearson VUE?

5.1. If you have a complaint about how registration or check-in was handled or any other aspect of service from Pearson VUE you should contact Pearson VUE directly in the first instance:

In the UK: 0161 855 7409 International number: +44 161 855 7409

Email: via the website www.ucat.ac.uk/contact-us/

The Telephone helpline is available 08:00 to 17:00 UK time, Monday to Friday excluding English Bank Holidays.

6. What can I do if I am not happy with the response from Pearson VUE in relation to an incident or the service I have received?

6.1. Candidates may request a **review** of their case if they are unhappy with the outcome of any investigation undertaken by Pearson VUE into a complaint or incident affecting their test. If they wish their case to be reviewed, candidates should contact the UCAT Consortium in a timely manner, normally within 1 week of the outcome of any investigation by Pearson VUE.

Please address your request in writing to: The UCAT Consortium, WD1418 D Floor West Block, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, NG7 2UH or email ucat@nottingham.ac.uk

6.2. The review of the case will be handled by a member of staff who will liaise with Pearson VUE as required in order to gather the required evidence.

6.3. Following review of the incident, the UCAT Consortium will confirm to the candidate whether it intends to take further action to any already identified by Pearson VUE. For clarity this may include any of the actions identified in 2.7 above.

7. What can I do if I am not happy with the outcome of the UCAT Consortium Review of my case?

7.1. You may **appeal** to the UCAT Board if you are not happy with the outcome of a review of any complaint or investigation by Pearson VUE into a reported incident.

7.2. The Board will only consider appeals made in writing to the following address:

Chief Operating Officer, The UCAT Consortium, WD1418 D Floor West Block, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, NG7 2UH or email ucat@nottingham.ac.uk

7.3. When submitting an appeal you need to be clear as to the grounds of your appeal, submit supporting evidence, outline any informal attempts to resolve this issue (e.g. previous contact with the UCAT Consortium and Pearson VUE) and indicate what outcome you want.

7.4. Appeals should be submitted in a timely manner, which should normally be within 1 week of receiving a response to your request for a review of the incident by UCAT.

7.5. UCAT will acknowledge receipt of the appeal. In considering the appeal we will:

- make sure the review is concluded as quickly as possible, without unnecessary delay;
- meet or make contact with other parties relevant to the appeal (e.g. Pearson VUE), if we feel this may assist our understanding;
- take all the evidence into account in the process of making a decision;
- handle the appeal sensitively, especially where individuals are named;

- set out our decision in writing and if the decision has a practical consequence, make sure this happens as intended, and in good time.

7.6. Documentation for an appeal will be collected by a member of UCAT office staff. The appeal itself will be considered by a member of the UCAT Board who has not had any involvement with the case prior to the appeal.

8. How can I give the UCAT Consortium feedback and suggestions regarding the service I have received?

8.1. Sometimes candidates do not wish to make a formal complaint, but want to make the UCAT Consortium aware of an issue which could benefit from improvement. We would encourage candidates to do this, and all such suggestions will be positively received.

9. Freedom of Information (FOI)/Data Protection Act (DPA)

9.1. Individuals may make requests for information to the UCAT Consortium under FOI or request access to their personal data under the DPA. Requests will be dealt with in line with guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.

9.2. If you feel that the service you have received does not meet these aims or your expectations, in the first instance please contact:

The UCAT Consortium, WD1418 D Floor West Block, Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, NG7 2UH or email ucat@nottingham.ac.uk

9.3. If having contacted us you are not satisfied with the response you receive, please contact us again and we will ask a member of the UCAT Board to review the response.

9.4. Please note that requests for a review of our response must be received within forty days of the date of that response.

9.5. If you remain dissatisfied after following these steps, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). You should do this within two months of receiving the UCAT Consortium's final response to your complaint. For further advice on making a complaint to the ICO, please see their website at <https://ico.org.uk/>

Appendix A: Flowchart for dealing with Candidate Incidents

