

UCAT Fitness to Test Policy

1. Overview

UCAT has a Fitness to Test Policy to ensure that candidates who sit their test are fit to do so and that their result should stand.

UCAT places the responsibility on candidates to decide whether they are fit to test.

On occasion, candidates may make a case to UCAT that they will not be fit to test for a period of time or were not fit to test when they sat their test. This policy outlines how we consider various circumstances and the advice and possible outcomes for these situations.

The fitness to test policy is clearly communicated to candidates in their appointment confirmation email, at key points through the website and in the exam rules which they read before entering the test room.

Candidates have the flexibility to test over a period of 12 weeks. A period of contingency testing also takes place once the main testing window has closed. UCAT also permits free reschedules up to 24 hours before an appointment time.

UCAT allows candidates to withdraw a “fit to test” declaration in certain circumstances, for instance where they were taken ill partway through a test, or where their judgment was impaired, and they were unable to make a rational decision about whether they were well enough to sit.

2. Principles of this Policy

- Candidates who attend their test are declaring that they are fit to test.
- Candidates aware of anything that might affect their performance on the day, should not sit the test. This applies even if they fall ill or experience issues on the day of their test.
- If a candidate is not fit to test, they must reschedule their appointment to a later date. This advice applies even if they have missed the deadline to reschedule and as a result would have to pay another test fee to book again.
- Candidates with moderate to severe illness/injury (usually requiring medical treatment and absence from school/work) which they are unlikely to recover from before testing ends, must contact the UCAT Office for advice before sitting their test.
- Candidates experiencing major illness/injury or significant personal circumstances that affect their ability to declare themselves ‘fit to test’ for the *duration of the testing window*, must contact the UCAT Office for advice before sitting their test.
- If a candidate chooses to sit their test against this advice, UCAT will not normally take any action.

- On occasion, UCAT may allow a candidate to withdraw a fitness to test declaration after testing if they have experienced exceptional circumstances close to their test date which affected their ability to make a judgement about their fitness to test.

3. Circumstances that may affect fitness to test declarations

a. Minor illness or injury

i. Advice to candidates

UCAT do not normally consider **minor illness or injury** to be significant enough to impact on a candidate's fitness to test.

Minor illness or injury includes (but is not limited to): colds, coughs, hay fever and allergies, mild infections (e.g., chest, sinus or ear), migraine or headache, back pain, toothache, sprains, strains, cuts and grazes, arm, foot and leg injuries, bites, minor burns and scalds.

The UCAT is delivered over a period of 12 weeks. Candidates who experience **minor illness or injury** are expected to reschedule their test and sit once they have recovered.

Candidates are strongly advised to test as early as possible.

Candidates who choose to book a late test date and encounter **minor illness or injury** which prevent them from attending their test appointment, may struggle to reschedule within the testing window.

ii. Outcomes

UCAT will not normally take action over **minor illness or injury**.

Access arrangements are not normally approved for **minor illness or injury**.

b. Major or moderate/severe illness or injury

i. Advice to candidates

Candidates experiencing **major illness or injury** that affects their ability to declare themselves fit to test *for the duration of the testing window*, must contact the UCAT Office for advice before sitting their test.

Major illness or injury includes (but is not limited to): major surgery, severe disease or permanent bodily injury requiring hospitalisation or significant medical treatment, flare-up of a severe medical or psychological condition, very recent broken limb.

Candidates with **moderate to severe illness/injury** which they are unlikely to recover from before testing ends, must contact the UCAT Office for advice before sitting their test.

A moderate to severe illness or injury would usually require hospital or medical treatment and absence from normal daily activities (e.g. school or work) to recover.

Candidates contacting the UCAT Office should provide the following information in order that appropriate advice can be offered:

- Candidate ID
- Full name
- A detailed description of their circumstances (with dates and likely timescales)
- independent evidence (e.g., a letter from a GP, other medical professional, or current place of education)

Candidates should make contact in a timely manner unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent this.

If a candidate chooses to sit their test against this advice, UCAT will not normally take any action.

ii. Outcomes

Candidates who make contact *before* sitting their test

The UCAT Office may offer one (or more) of the following options to candidates who are not fit to test due to **major illness or injury**:

- deferring a test until the contingency test window.
- annotating their test result, to inform their university choices of their circumstances.

If appropriate, a candidate may also be advised to make a separate application for [Access Arrangements](#).

On occasion, having reviewed any evidence, a candidate with **moderate to severe illness/injury** may be permitted to defer testing until the contingency test window.

Some circumstances may be so significant that a candidate is unable to test during the testing window. In these cases, the candidate will be advised to speak to their university choices about their application.

On occasion the UCAT Office might offer to communicate with an applicant's chosen universities to provide an explanation of the candidate's specific circumstances.

Candidates who make contact *after* sitting their test

If a candidate has sat their test, UCAT will not normally take any action.

On occasion, UCAT may allow a candidate to withdraw a fitness to test declaration after testing if the candidate experienced **exceptional medical circumstances** close to their test date which affected their ability to make a judgement about their fitness to test.

If a candidate is permitted to withdraw their fitness to test declaration, they will be offered the opportunity to retest.

If the candidate is unable or does not wish to retest, an annotation can be added to their result, to inform their university choices of their circumstances.

c. Minor personal circumstances

i. Advice to candidates

UCAT will not take any action for the following **minor personal circumstances**:

- Minor life events or general domestic / family / financial problems
- Victim of petty crime e.g., mobile phone theft
- Circumstances which are foreseeable or preventable

This list is not exhaustive.

The UCAT is delivered over a period of 12 weeks. Candidates who experience **minor personal circumstances** are expected to schedule their test around these circumstances.

Candidates are strongly advised to test as early as possible.

Candidates who choose to book a late test date and encounter **minor personal circumstances** which prevent them from attending their test appointment may struggle to reschedule within the testing window.

d. Significant personal circumstances

i. Advice to candidates

Candidates experiencing **significant personal circumstances** that affect their ability to declare themselves Fit to Test for the duration of the testing window, must contact the UCAT Office for advice before sitting their test.

Significant personal circumstances may fall under the following:

- Very serious illness or injury of a parent/carer or other close family member.
- Recent bereavement of a member of the immediate family (usually within the last two months).
- Recent violent crime or traumatic experience.

Candidates contacting the UCAT Office should provide the following information so appropriate advice can be offered:

- Candidate ID
- Full name
- A detailed description of their circumstances (with dates and likely timescales)
- independent evidence (e.g., a death certificate or a letter from a GP, other medical professional, or current place of education).

Candidates should make contact in a timely manner unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent this.

If a candidate chooses to sit their test against this advice, UCAT will not normally take any action.

ii. Outcomes

Candidates who make contact *before* sitting their test

The UCAT Office may offer one (or more) of the following options to candidates who are not fit to test due to **significant personal circumstances**:

- deferring a test until the contingency test window.
- annotating their test result, to inform their university choices of their circumstances.

Some circumstances may be so significant that a candidate is unable to test during the testing window. In these cases, the candidate will be advised to speak to their university choices about their application.

On occasion the UCAT Office might offer to communicate with an applicant's chosen universities to provide an explanation of the candidate's specific circumstances.

Candidates who make contact *after* sitting their test

If a candidate has sat their test, UCAT will not normally take any action.

On occasion, UCAT may allow a candidate to withdraw a fitness to test declaration after testing if the candidate experienced **exceptional personal circumstances** close to their test date which affected their ability to make a judgement about their fitness to test.

The following are examples of **exceptional personal circumstances**:

- Terminal or life-threatening illness of a member of the immediate family.
- Very recent bereavement of a member of the immediate family.
- Violent crime or traumatic experience at or near the time of the test.

If a candidate is permitted to withdraw their fitness to test declaration, they will be offered the opportunity to retest.

If the candidate is unable or does not wish to retest, an annotation can be added to their result, to inform their university choices of their circumstances.

e. Becoming ill during testing

i. Advice to candidates

Candidates who **become ill** during their test are instructed to notify the invigilator and, if they are not well enough to continue, ask the invigilator to end their test.

Candidates are then instructed to email the [UCAT Office](#) as soon as possible (usually within 1 working day of their test).

If a candidate chooses to continue testing, UCAT will not normally take any action.

ii. Outcomes

The UCAT Office will confirm if a candidate is permitted to book another test (at their own cost). Tests must be booked by calling Customer Services once the UCAT Office has authorised a retest opportunity.

4. Process for dealing with fitness to test cases

Candidates making a fitness to test case should make contact with the UCAT Office in a timely manner (before testing) unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent this.

Cases will not be considered once the test cycle has ended.

Initial decisions regarding fitness to test cases are made in the UCAT Office. On occasion external advice may be requested to support decision making.

The UCAT Office aims to respond to candidates by email within 3 business days.

UCAT reserves the right not to approve any recommendations made in the evidence supplied by the candidate. UCAT may request additional evidence if, in our view, the initial supporting documentation is not sufficient.

5. Reviews and Appeals

Candidates whose cases have been rejected (or partially rejected) are provided with a written explanation of the decision made by the UCAT Office and, if appropriate, advised of alternative arrangements which could be put in place. They are further advised to email the UCAT Office if they wish to have this decision reviewed.

As part of this review candidates may be invited to provide further evidence to support their claim that they are not fit to test. The UCAT Office will consider any such requests for review and respond in full with a final decision to the candidate.

On occasion the UCAT Office might offer to communicate with a candidate's chosen Universities in order to provide an explanation of the candidate's specific circumstances.

Candidates may appeal the final decision of the UCAT Office. Details of the Appeals Policy can be found on the [Appeals Policy page](#).