

UCAT Fitness to Test Policy

1. Introduction

The UCAT Consortium is the operating name of the UKCAT Consortium. Our admission tests are delivered by our business partner Pearson VUE (PVUE).

The UCAT Consortium has a number of official policies which guide its work in specific areas. Each policy is reviewed on an annual basis and any updates reflected in operational processes, website information and other communications to candidates. Where appropriate, policies are made available on the UCAT website.

UCAT policies are underpinned by its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Any substantial amendments to policies are considered in the light of their impact on EDI.

2. 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.

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

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 are read before entering the test room) and introductory exam screens.

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.

3. 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 who choose to book a late test date and encounter minor illness/injury or minor personal circumstances which prevent them from attending their test appointment may not be able to rebook within the test window.
- 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 experienced exceptional circumstances close to their test date where their judgement was impaired, and they were unable to make a rational decision about whether they were well enough to test.

4. Circumstances that may affect fitness to test declarations

a. Minor illness/injury or minor personal circumstances

i. Advice to candidates

UCAT do not normally consider **minor illness/injury** or **minor personal circumstances** to be significant enough to take any action.

- **Minor illness/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.
- **Minor personal circumstances** include (but are not limited to): minor life events or general domestic/family/financial problems; victim of petty crime e.g., mobile phone theft; circumstances which are foreseeable or preventable.

If a candidate is not fit to test due to **minor illness/injury** or **minor personal circumstances** they must reschedule their appointment to a later date.

The UCAT is delivered over a period of 12 weeks. Candidates are strongly advised to test as early as possible. Candidates who choose to book a late test date and encounter **minor illness/injury** or **minor personal circumstances** which prevent them from attending their test appointment, may not be able to rebook within the testing window.

ii. Outcomes

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

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

b. Significant illness/injury or significant personal circumstances

i. Advice to candidates

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.

- **Major illness/injury** includes (but is not limited to): major surgery, severe disease or injury requiring hospitalisation or significant medical treatment, flare-up of a severe medical or psychological condition.
- **Significant personal circumstances** may fall under the following:
 - Very serious illness or injury of a parent/carer or other member of the immediate family (e.g. a sibling).
 - Recent bereavement of a member of the immediate family (usually within the last two months).
 - Recent violent crime or traumatic experience.

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/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 (which must include dates and likely timescales)
- Independent evidence (e.g., a letter from their GP or current place of education or a death certificate).

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

Cases will not be considered once the testing window has ended.

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/injury** or **significant personal circumstances**:

- 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 they experienced **exceptional personal or medical circumstances** close to their test date where their judgement was impaired, and they were unable to make a rational decision about whether they were well enough to test.

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

In such cases UCAT will normally request evidence to support their claim. Evidence must be supplied by the stipulated deadline.

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.

5. 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 normally be considered once the testing window 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 working 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.

6. 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, make a final decision and respond in full to the candidate.

If a candidate is unhappy with the final decision from the UCAT Office in relation to their fitness to test they may [appeal to the UCAT Board](#).

UCAT Consortium
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