

UCAT Test Incident Policy 2025

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Overview

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

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.

The UCAT Consortium is committed to ensuring a high quality and consistent candidate experience. To this end we work with our business partner Pearson VUE to put in place processes and standard operating procedures to support candidates when they are taking their tests. On occasion things go wrong but we have rigorous processes in place to deal with complaints from candidates regarding their testing experiences.

The number, nature and outcomes relating to candidate incidents are reviewed by the UCAT Consortium on an annual basis. This includes a discussion with universities regarding candidate annotations to ensure they are well understood by consortium members. Processes and candidate communications are reviewed with Pearson VUE in the light of problems that occur in each test cycle.

Test Incidents

Candidates are required to read the [Test Rules](#) prior to testing which advise candidates that any problems during testing must be reported to a member of test centre staff/online proctor immediately.

A **Test Incident** is defined as:

- a problem that occurred during testing which the candidate feels adversely affected their test performance; and
- which they reported during their test; and
- which was recorded by a member of test centre staff/online proctor.

Candidates who feel that a problem during testing has not been satisfactorily resolved must obtain a case number from the test centre/online proctor to allow them to request an incident investigation (if appropriate).

Principles of this Policy

- We have a clear and transparent process in place for making decisions regarding Test Incidents that is shared with candidates through our website. There is an opportunity for candidates to make direct contact with the UCAT Office if they require additional advice/support.
- We encourage candidate who have had a Test Incident to request an incident investigation and as such our policy is promoted through our website in a positive manner.
- The UCAT Consortium never makes an adjustment to a candidate's scores to reflect an incident during their test.

Candidate Data

The UCAT Office uses candidate data and evidence to assess Test Incidents reported by candidates. Information may be shared with Pearson VUE. Candidates consent to this data being used for this purpose. Where evidence includes the data of any third party, candidates also confirm consent to share these data has been obtained. Candidate data is retained for the duration of the relevant admissions cycle (usually September the following year).

Information from candidates is held in the strictest confidence unless the candidate agrees for information to be shared with third parties such as Consortium Universities.

Incident Investigation Requests

If a candidate had a Test Incident (as defined above) that they believe has not been satisfactorily resolved at the test centre or when testing online, they may request an **incident investigation**.

Candidates should normally request an incident investigation within one day of their test. Requests submitted more than 5 days after the test date will not be accepted.

The issuing of an incident case number (as outlined above) does not automatically result in UCAT or Pearson VUE taking any action unless the candidate requests an incident investigation.

Incident investigation requests that will be considered

Incident investigation requests relating to the following Test Incidents reported during testing will normally be considered.

For **test centre** candidates:

- A technical problem with the computer (hardware or software) or problems with equipment
- Significant disruption caused by another user of the test centre.
- Disruption caused by excessive noise in the test centre.
- Unscheduled interruptions to the test such as a fire alarm.

For candidates **testing online**:

- A technical problem with OnVUE software.
- Unavoidable disruption to their test environment.

For **all candidates**:

- Test content challenges.

Incident investigation requests that will not be considered

Incident investigation requests relating to the following will not normally be considered.

For **test centre** candidates:

- Noise due to normal test centre conditions (e.g., keyboard noise or other people leaving and entering the test room).
- Noise from test centre staff going about their normal business, including giving assistance to other candidates in the testing room.
- Access refused due to late arrival.
- Access refused if incorrect photo ID has been presented.

For candidates **testing online**:

- A technical problem with their personal computer hardware or equipment.
- A disruption to their test environment that could have been avoided.
- Missed tests due to late check-in.
- Missed tests if incorrect photo ID has been presented.
- Missed tests if a minor's parent/guardian (with correct ID) is not present.

For **all candidates**:

- Appeals against test scores or requests for re-scoring. The UCAT is a computer-based test and is marked automatically. Errors are extremely unlikely as the marking and scoring system is subject to rigorous testing before each test cycle.
- Circumstances relating to illness, injury or other personal circumstances affecting performance (refer to the Fitness to Test Policy).
- Lack of access arrangements, if not arranged in advance of their test (see Access Arrangements).
- Appeals about admissions decisions, which should be addressed to the individual university concerned.

Making an Incident Investigation Request

Incident investigation requests must be submitted using the [online form](#). Pearson VUE will not accept requests over the phone.

When making their request, candidates are required to provide their incident case number and a brief explanation of the incident which makes clear:

- in which UCAT subtest(s) the incident occurred;
- any action taken by the candidate or test centre staff;
- an estimate of any test time lost (if relevant).

Candidates should submit their own incident investigation request unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing this. Where a third party (such as a parent or guardian) contacts Pearson VUE or the UCAT Office on a candidate's behalf, we would require the written permission of the candidate to further consider the request. In such cases we would normally communicate with both the third party and the candidate to ensure they are aware of any communications/outcomes. Pearson VUE or the UCAT Office may in such circumstances request a first-hand account of any incident from the candidate.

Processing Incident Investigation Requests

Once a request has been submitted, the case will be investigated by Pearson VUE and the outcome reported back to the candidate by email within 5 business days.

Stage 1: Investigation and initial outcome by Pearson VUE

Following receipt of an incident investigation request, Pearson VUE will investigate the incident, report back any findings to the candidate and confirm one of the following outcomes.

Outcome 1: No action to be taken

This would apply to incidents where the candidate has not followed the correct incident process, where the incident is considered to be of a minor or trivial nature or where no evidence of an incident has been found. The candidate will receive a written explanation of the decision.

Candidates who are unhappy with the outcome of the Pearson VUE investigation may request their case to be further *reviewed* by the UCAT Office. This request must be made within 2 days of the outcome of the Pearson VUE investigation.

Outcome 2: Referral to the UCAT Office for action

If Pearson VUE conclude that an incident was sufficiently serious and may have impacted on test performance, the candidate will be advised to email the UCAT Office within 2 days if they wish to take this further. Cases will be closed and no action taken for candidates who do not contact the UCAT Office in this timeframe.

Outcome 3: Retest Opportunity

Where there is clear evidence of *significant* disruption to a candidate's test resulting in sizable delay or time loss, Pearson VUE are authorised to offer the candidate an opportunity to retest. In such cases the candidate would be permitted to retake the test at no additional cost. They will receive a confirmation email advising them how to go about booking a retest. The candidate will also be advised to contact the UCAT Office if they wish to discuss their case further.

Stage 2: Review by the UCAT Office

Where candidates contact the UCAT Office after having been *referred* by Pearson VUE or where the candidate has requested a *review* of the outcome of the Pearson VUE investigation, the UCAT Office will review the Pearson VUE findings (made at Stage 1) and confirm their decision.

A review of the case will be handled by a member of UCAT staff who will liaise with Pearson VUE as required to gather required evidence.

Following a review the UCAT Office will confirm one of the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: No action to be taken

If the candidate has not followed the correct incident process, or the incident is considered to be of a minor nature, or no evidence of an incident has been found no action will be taken. The candidate will receive written confirmation explaining why this decision has been made.

Outcome 2: Annotation

If the incident was sufficiently serious the candidate's result may be annotated with a factual statement so that the universities they apply to, are aware of the circumstances which may have affected their test result.

The candidate will be provided with a draft annotation and invited to confirm the proposed wording. On occasion, amendments to be wording will be permitted bearing in mind the need to provide consistent wording to universities to inform their selection decisions. The final decision on the wording of annotations will be made by the UCAT Office.

Outcome 3: Retest opportunity

In exceptional circumstances a very small number of candidates are permitted to retest in any test year. Candidates who are permitted a retest opportunity due to a test incident that occurred during one of the cognitive subtests (verbal reasoning, decision making or quantitative reasoning) must take the whole test again; re-sitting just one of the cognitive subtest(s) affected is not possible. If a candidate had a test incident during the Situational Judgement Test (SJT) they will only be offered the chance to resit the SJT. Where candidates choose to retest, their original result is made void and only the result of the final test in that test cycle (regardless of the result) will be made available to universities.

In such cases the candidate would be permitted to retake the test at no additional cost. They will receive a confirmation email advising them how to go about booking a retest. The candidate will also be advised to contact the UCAT Office if they wish to discuss their case further.

Appealing a decision made by the UCAT Office

If a candidate is unhappy with the final decision from the UCAT Office, they may [appeal to the UCAT Board](#).

UCAT Consortium

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