

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2026

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## Introduction

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

The UCAT Consortium has 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.

## Overview

Inequality and discrimination exist in society. No organisation is without biases. The UCAT Consortium is committed to advancing fairness in selection and to widening participation in medical and dental training of underrepresented groups. The UCAT test contributes to a broader selection process which seeks representational equity in the workforce and seeks to embrace the differences in the lived experiences and outlook of a diverse group of applicants.

The objects for which the Charity is established are to promote and provide for the advancement of education in the United Kingdom and in particular to establish and operate tests to aid selection for admission to medical and dental degrees.

The Consortium is committed to advancing greater fairness in selection to medicine and dentistry and to the widening participation in medical and dental training of under-represented social groups. Through an ongoing programme of research the Consortium is seeking to identify the characteristics in applicants which will make them good dentists and doctors and thus to improve the quality of those who enter the professions with the ultimate aim of improving patient care.

## EDI Principles

As an organisation committed to high standards and with a significant customer service focus, the UCAT Consortium seeks to embed principles of EDI in governance, test development and all interactions with test takers.

In committing to equality, the UCAT Consortium commits to individuals being treated fairly, free from discrimination. This does not mean that all individuals will be treated the same, as the UCAT Consortium acknowledges there are some test taker groups who require additional support to prepare for and take the

test. In fact, the requirements of test-takers are becoming increasingly diverse, requiring the UCAT Consortium to continually review support mechanisms in place.

Every test taker should be given the opportunity and support to achieve to their potential in the test, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

In addition to the protected characteristics listed above, the UCAT Consortium is also committed to supporting those with caring responsibilities, UK test takers from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those who have a temporary impairment (not covered by the definition of disability). The UCAT Consortium recognises that many test takers have particular needs such as those who are neurodiverse and those with invisible disabilities. For many test takers, English is not a first language, requiring the UCAT Consortium to pay particular attention to communication with test takers throughout the test journey.

Given the diversity of the test taker population, the cultural context and language used in the test ought to be carefully crafted to ensure all test takers have the opportunity to perform to their best ability.

## Governance and EDI

Decision making in the UCAT Consortium is led by the Board of Trustees but undertaken collaboratively involving stakeholders from across the Consortium as appropriate. Principles of openness and transparency guide organisational decision making and inform communications with test takers. Engagement with Consortium universities over the development and delivery of this strategy will be important.

As an inclusive organisation, the UCAT Consortium welcomes stakeholders regardless of their characteristics and backgrounds.

A Trustee is identified as the Board lead for EDI who will work alongside the office team and monitor and report progress against EDI objectives.

The UCAT Consortium has a contract with PPA to develop and deliver the test on its behalf. As a result, much of the direct contact with test takers is through PPA systems or by PPA staff. PPA is also responsible for monitoring test (and subgroup) performance and proposing changes to test content. It is therefore important that colleagues at PPA are aware of the UCAT Consortium's commitment to EDI and contribute as appropriate to discussions about implementing this strategy. Where appropriate, requirements around EDI have been built into the contract with PPA.

On an annual basis this policy will be reviewed by the UCAT Board and updated as appropriate. New Board members and Consortium Representatives are provided with a copy of this document.

On an annual basis, the UCAT Consortium reviews the following policies/plans to inform planning for the next cycle. The impact of any substantive changes on equalities and underrepresented groups in particular is considered and documented.

- Access Arrangements Policy
- Bursary Scheme Policy
- Fitness to Test Policy
- Incident Policy
- Marketing and Communications Planning Document
- Misconduct Policy

This policy together with a statement regarding the UCAT Consortium's commitment to EDI is included on the UCAT website.

## Test Delivery and EDI

This area of work is overseen by the UCAT Test Delivery Group which includes members of the Board, representatives from Consortium Universities and PPA.

The data collected from test takers at registration is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that (in line with the data privacy policy) data collected is sufficient for the purposes of monitoring EDI.

UCAT Consortium aims to support test takers with disabilities when testing by providing a straightforward process for them to apply for a range of access arrangements and accommodations. These are reviewed annually to ensure they continue to meet the needs of test takers with disabilities.

Financial barriers for UK test takers from a low income background are reduced by the operation of a comprehensive system for the award of full fee bursaries for eligible test takers. The criteria and processes are reviewed on an annual basis. The UCAT Consortium continues to review the potential of extending the use of online proctored testing which would further reduce the impact on test takers in terms of travel costs.

PPA is required to provide diversity and inclusion training to its customer service staff, Test Centre staff, staff interacting with those testing online and writing teams, in line with best practice. In addition, PPA is required to ensure that the content and language of all communications with test takers (including information provided on websites) are inclusive and accessible, recognising the diversity of the test taker population. This includes ensuring that any images/stories used in communications with test takers are from a wide range of backgrounds.

PPA is required to advise The Consortium of the nature of EDI training routinely undertaken by Customer Service and Test Centre staff.

The UCAT Marketing and Communications Plan is reviewed on an annual basis with regard to:

- content and language used in test taker communications to ensure inclusivity and accessibility to all test takers;
- images and test taker contributions to the website and other marketing materials to ensure that images and stories are from a wide range of backgrounds;
- the offering in terms of preparation materials and advice to test takers to ensure that under-represented groups are well supported in their journey to take the UCAT Test;
- the offering in terms of events for test takers/advisors ensuring that the focus is on reaching under-represented or lower performing groups (including ethnic minority test takers, test takers with disabilities and those from low income backgrounds).

On a regular basis UCAT obtains feedback from test takers (through surveys/focus groups etc) to inform the development of services, processes and support. Underrepresented /minority groups may be sampled/targeted when seeking test taker feedback.

## Developing the Test and EDI

The UCAT Research and Development Group oversees this aspect of the UCAT Consortium's works and includes representatives from the Board, Consortium and PPA.

Following the development of the UCAT Consortium in Australia and New Zealand there has been an additional focus on internationalising test content. This has included reviewing question scenarios to include more without a UK/European focus and ensuring that units used in measurements are widely recognised. Given the diversity of test takers this will benefit many test taker subgroups.

Test and test taker performance is analysed in detail annually and reported to the Research and Development Group, Board and Consortium. Analysis includes overall test performance, performance of different test taker subgroups, reliabilities and (at an item level) investigations as to whether bias exists in the test. Using demographic information collected at registration, sub-group analysis includes gender, ethnicity, age, socio-economic class, place of education and language fluency). Annual analysis informs the development of the test.

PPA produces and keeps updated a Test Development Plan in which it is required to ensure:

- context of items and language used in the UCAT test is inclusive, gender neutral where appropriate and suitable for a test taken by significant numbers of international test takers and test takers for whom English is not a first language;
- scenarios used in the UCAT test include a representative mix of individuals in terms of race and gender;
- context of scenarios used in the UCAT test should be broad and reflect the diverse nature of the test taker population;
- diversity in writing teams.

PPA is expected to work with the UCAT Consortium to explore ways in which test taker sub-group differences within the Test (e.g. gender, ethnicity) might be reduced, drawing on best practice in the sector. On an annual basis, PPA produce a Technical Report which includes analysis of individual item and test taker performance to ensure that the UCAT Test is a fair one in relation to the total test taker population and in consideration of test taker gender, ethnicity, age, social class, and other factors. Annual trends and trends over time in testing will be identified and reported to the Customer with recommendations for changes to the Test where appropriate.

## Test Taker Well Being

The UCAT Consortium recognises that preparing for the UCAT, taking the test and navigating the university application process can be a challenging time for our test takers. The wellbeing of candidates is incredibly important. Processes, candidate advice and communications are written and developed with this in mind. The UCAT website signposts candidates to support if they are experiencing significant stress and anxiety.

UCAT Consortium, March 2026