

UCAT Test Incident Policy 2026

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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 Professional Assessments ('Pearson').

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.

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 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 in the light of problems that occur in each test cycle.

Test Incidents

A **Test Incident** is:

- 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.

The [Test Rules](#) which candidates read prior to testing advise candidates that problems during testing must be reported to a member of test centre staff/online proctor immediately. Candidates who feel that a problem during testing has not been satisfactorily resolved must obtain a case number from the test centre/online proctor. This will allow the candidate to request an incident investigation.

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 Consortium Office for additional advice/support.
- We encourage candidates who have had a Test Incident to request an incident investigation, and 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.
- 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.

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 should obtain an incident case number from the test centre or proctor.

They then should request an **incident investigation**, normally 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 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.

Test Centre Candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
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Candidates Testing Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A technical problem with OnVUE software. • Unavoidable disruption to their test environment.
All Candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test content challenges.

Incident investigation requests that will not be considered

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

Test Centre Candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 assisting other candidates in the testing room. • Access refused due to late arrival. • Access refused if incorrect photo ID has been presented.
Candidates Testing Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A technical problem with the candidate's personal computer hardware or equipment. • A disruption to the candidate's 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.
All Candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 by the candidate in advance of their test (see Access Arrangements). • Appeals relating to university admissions decisions, which should be addressed to the individual university concerned.

Making an Incident Investigation Request

Incident investigation requests should be submitted as a Help Request via a UCAT account. Pearson 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/online proctor;
- an estimate of test time lost (if relevant).

Candidates should submit their own incident investigation request unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing this. Pearson and the UCAT Consortium Office require a first-hand account of any incident from the candidate.

Where a third party (such as a parent or guardian) contacts Pearson or the UCAT Consortium Office on a candidate's behalf to discuss the outcome of an incident investigation request, we would require the written permission of the candidate to further consider the request. In such cases we normally

communicate with both the third party and the candidate to ensure they are aware of any communications/outcomes.

Processing Incident Investigation Requests

Stage 1: Investigation Outcome by Pearson

Following receipt of an incident investigation request, Pearson will investigate the incident, report back any findings to the candidate and confirm one of the following investigation outcomes by email within 5 working days.

Outcome	Circumstances	Communication from Pearson
1: No action to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The candidate has not followed the correct incident process. The incident is considered to be of a minor nature. No evidence of an incident has been found. 	Email confirmation explaining why this decision has been made.
2: Referral to the UCAT Consortium Office for action	Pearson conclude that an incident may have impacted on test performance.	The candidate will be advised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To email the UCAT Consortium 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 Consortium Office in this timeframe.
3: Retest Opportunity	There is clear evidence of <i>significant</i> disruption to a candidate's test resulting in sizable delay or time loss.	The candidate will be advised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to book a retest and that this would be at no additional cost. That if they choose to retest, their original result will be made void and only the result of the final test in that test cycle (regardless of the result) will be made available to universities. To email the UCAT Consortium Office if they wish to discuss their case further or if they do not want to resit the test.

Stage 2: Investigation Outcome by the UCAT Consortium Office

Where candidates contact the UCAT Consortium Office after having been *referred* by Pearson (outcome 2 above), the UCAT Consortium Office will consider the Pearson findings and confirm one of the following investigation outcomes.

Outcome	Circumstances	Communication from the UCAT Consortium Office
1: No action to be taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The candidate has not followed the correct incident process. The incident is considered to be of a minor nature. 	Email confirmation explaining why this decision has been made.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of an incident has been found. 	
<p>2: Annotation</p> <p>An annotation is a factual statement that informs universities of circumstances which may have affected a candidate's test result.</p>	<p>UCAT Consortium Office conclude that an incident was sufficiently serious to impact on test performance.</p>	<p>The candidate will be provided with a draft annotation and invited to confirm the proposed wording. On occasion, amendments to the wording are permitted, bearing in mind the need to provide consistent wording to universities. The final decision on wording will be made by the UCAT Consortium Office</p>
<p>3: Retest opportunity</p>	<p>There is clear evidence of <i>significant</i> disruption to a candidate's test resulting in sizable delay or time loss.</p>	<p>The candidate will be advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to book a retest and that this would be at no additional cost. That if they choose to retest, their original result will be made void and only the result of the final test in that test cycle (regardless of the result) will be made available to universities. To email the UCAT Consortium Office if they wish to discuss their case further or if they do not want to retest the test.

Appealing an Investigation Outcome

In certain circumstances the [Appeals Policy](#) allows candidates to appeal an investigation outcome.

Appeals should be submitted in a timely manner, normally within 5 days of receiving an investigation outcome from Pearson or the UCAT Consortium Office. New appeals will not be considered after 31 October.

Candidate Data

The UCAT Consortium Office uses candidate data and evidence to assess Test Incidents reported by candidates. Information may be shared with Pearson. 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.