

UCAT Fitness to Test Policy 2026

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1. 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.

1.1. UCAT and Fitness to Test

Candidates who attend their test are declaring that they are ‘Fit to Test’ and are therefore not aware of any mitigating circumstances that will affect their performance.

Candidates may experience mitigating circumstances that mean they are unable to declare themselves ‘Fit to Test’.

In this document we refer to **Mitigating Circumstances** which include:

- Candidate illness or injury at or near the time of testing.
- Flare-up or significant worsening of a candidate's existing disability or medical condition (i.e. difficulties over and above those supported by approved access arrangements) at or near the time of testing.
- Death of a member of the candidate's immediate family (parent/carer, spouse, sibling or child), usually within 6 months of the last test date.
- Death of a member of the candidate's extended family (grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin) or close friend, usually within 2 months of the last test date.
- A member of the candidate's immediate family (parent/carer, spouse, sibling or child) or extended family (grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin) is affected by a significant illness at or near the time of testing. This would normally involve a recent diagnosis of a life-threatening illness or the family member being towards the end stage of a terminal illness.
- Serious crisis or incident leading to distress at or near the time of testing.
- Safeguarding concerns at or near the time of testing.

This list is based on JCQ guidelines. Circumstances which are foreseeable or preventable are not considered.

This policy outlines how mitigating circumstances can be reported to UCAT, how they will be considered and the possible outcomes.

1.2. Guiding Principles

- This policy is clearly communicated to candidates in their appointment confirmation email, at key points through the website, in the exam rules (which are read before entering the test room) and introductory exam screens.
- It is up to candidates to decide whether they are fit to test.
- Candidates with mitigating circumstances that might adversely 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 and would have to pay the test fee again to rebook. They should [reschedule](#) their test to later in the test window (13 July – 24 September). Candidates unable to reschedule their test in the final week of testing should contact the UCAT Consortium Office promptly for support by submitting a Help Request via their UCAT account.
- Candidates experiencing mitigating circumstances who are unable to declare themselves fit to test before testing ends, should contact the UCAT Consortium Office promptly for advice and support by submitting a Help Request via their UCAT account.
- **UCAT will not normally take any action where candidates have sat their test and subsequently report mitigating circumstances.**
- On occasion, UCAT may allow a candidate to **withdraw a fitness to test declaration** after testing. Candidates would need to provide independent evidence that they experienced **exceptional mitigating circumstances** very close to their test which impaired their judgement to the extent that they were unable to make a rational decision about whether they were fit to test.
- UCAT will not usually take account of mitigating circumstances **reported after testing** (see [section 2.3](#) below).

- UCAT reserves the right not to approve any recommendations made in the evidence supplied by the candidate.
- The UCAT Consortium never makes an **adjustment to a candidate's scores** to reflect mitigating circumstances.

1.3. Supporting Candidates who are not Fit to Test

UCAT can support candidates who are not fit to test in several different ways.

- **Reschedule:** Candidates have the flexibility to test over a period of 11 weeks, rather than a single exam sitting. Most candidates who are not fit to test are able to reschedule their exam to a later date. UCAT permits free reschedules up to 24 hours before an appointment time.
- **Contingency Testing:** If appropriate, candidates with mitigating circumstances may be supported to test in the contingency testing window which takes place once the main testing window has closed.
- **Access Arrangements:** If appropriate candidates may be advised to make an application for access arrangements for their rescheduled test.
- **Annotation:** If appropriate, candidates who defer their test may be permitted to have an annotation to their test result, to inform their university choices of their circumstances if not resolved.
- **Advice and Support:** Candidates who are not 'Fit to Test' during the test window can contact the UCAT Consortium Office for advice and support by submitting a Help Request via their UCAT account. If the candidate's circumstances are so significant that they are unable to test during the testing window, the UCAT Consortium Office will advise them in line with this policy.

2. Process for candidates who are not fit to test

2.1. Candidates who have *not* tested

Candidates experiencing mitigating circumstances who are unable to declare themselves fit to test before testing ends, or unable to reschedule their test in the final week of testing, should *not* sit the test and should contact the UCAT Consortium Office promptly for advice and support.

UCAT will not normally take any action where candidates have sat their test and subsequently report mitigating circumstances.

Candidates contacting the UCAT Consortium Office for advice and support should submit a Help Request via their UCAT account and provide the following information:

- Test date
- The precise nature of the circumstances affecting them, including when the circumstances first began to affect them and when they are likely to end or if they are ongoing.
- The impact these circumstances are having on their ability to test.

Candidates should contact the UCAT Consortium Office in a timely manner (before testing) unless exceptional mitigating circumstances prevent this.

UCAT may require independent supporting evidence to consider a case which will be discussed with the individual candidate. Lack of evidence should not delay candidates making contact.

Cases will not be considered if a candidate has not registered by the published deadline.

2.2. Candidates unable to complete their test due to mitigating circumstances

Candidates who become unwell during testing are permitted to stop their test and can be supported to arrange a new test booking. This includes flare-ups or significant worsening of a candidate's existing disability or medical condition (i.e. difficulties over and above those supported by approved access arrangements).

Candidates who become unwell during testing must notify the invigilator. If continuing would affect their test performance, they should ask to end their test. They should then contact the UCAT Consortium Office as soon as possible (by submitting a Help Request via their UCAT account) to arrange a new test booking.

If a candidate chooses to continue testing, UCAT will not normally take action or allow the candidate to withdraw their fitness to test declaration (see below).

2.3. Candidates who have tested

UCAT will not normally take any action where candidates have sat their test and subsequently report mitigating circumstances.

On occasion, UCAT may allow a candidate to **withdraw a fitness to test declaration** after testing. Candidates would need to provide independent evidence that they experienced **exceptional mitigating circumstances** very close to their test which impaired their judgement such that they were unable to make a rational decision about whether they were fit to test.

UCAT considers the following to be **exceptional mitigating circumstances**. This list is not exhaustive.

- A candidate receives notification of a significant bereavement immediately before their test which could reasonably be considered to result in a temporary lack of capacity to determine if they should take the test or not.
- A candidate experiences a mental health crisis such as a psychotic episode resulting in a lack of capacity to make decisions in their own best interest.
- A candidate witnesses or is involved in a serious accident immediately before their test seriously impacting on their capacity to make decisions.
- A candidate is a victim of a crime, such as theft and assault, immediately before their test severely impacting on their mental state.

Candidates wishing to withdraw a fitness to test declaration should contact the UCAT Consortium Office by submitting a Help Request via their UCAT account, and provide the following information in order that their case can be considered:

- Test date
- The precise nature of the circumstances affecting them, including when the circumstances first began to affect them and when they are likely to end or if they are ongoing.

- An explanation of how the circumstances impaired their judgement regarding their fitness to test and why they appeared for testing and made the fit to test declaration.

Candidates should contact the UCAT Consortium Office in a timely manner after testing unless exceptional mitigating circumstances prevent this. Cases will not normally be considered more than 5 working days after a test date. No cases will be considered after 31 October.

UCAT may require independent supporting evidence to consider a case which will be discussed with the individual candidate. Lack of evidence should not delay candidates making contact.

3. UCAT Consortium Office process for fitness to test cases

Decisions regarding fitness to test cases are made by the UCAT Consortium Office. On occasion, advice from the UCAT Board and/or **external advice** may be requested. UCAT may request additional evidence if initial supporting documentation is not sufficient.

The UCAT Consortium Office aims to respond to candidates within 3 working days.

3.1. Outcomes

Candidates will be advised of one of the following outcomes.

3.1.1. Outcome 1: Candidate *confirmed as not fit to test* before sitting their test

If the UCAT Consortium Office agrees that a candidate is not fit to test, they will be permitted to defer their test until the contingency test window.

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

If appropriate, candidates who defer their test may be permitted to have an annotation to their test result, to inform their university choices of their circumstances if not resolved. UCAT will normally require independent supporting evidence to support this process. This will be discussed with the individual candidate. Evidence must be supplied by the stipulated deadline.

If the candidate's circumstances are so significant that they are unable to test during the contingency test window, they will be advised to speak to their university choices about their application. If appropriate, the UCAT Consortium Office will offer to communicate with an applicant's chosen universities to provide an explanation of their specific circumstances.

3.1.2. Outcome 2: Candidate permitted to withdraw their fit to test declaration after sitting their test

If the UCAT Consortium Office agrees that a candidate has experienced **exceptional mitigating circumstances** which prevented them from making a rational decision about their fitness to test, they will be permitted to withdraw their fitness to test declaration and offered the opportunity to retest.

If the candidate is unable to retest, an annotation can be added to their result, to inform their university choices of their circumstances.

3.1.3. Outcome 3: Candidate's claim that they are not or were not fit to test is *rejected*

If (in the opinion of the UCAT Consortium Office), a candidate is fit to test or does not meet the requirements to withdraw their fit to test declaration, their claim will be rejected. The candidate will receive a written explanation of the decision made by the UCAT Consortium Office. If more information is needed, and/or evidence is missing, unclear, or does not meet the stated requirements, the candidate will be given further opportunities to meet the requirements.

The UCAT Consortium Office will consider any such requests, make a final decision, and respond in full to the candidate.

4. Candidate Data

The UCAT Consortium Office uses candidate data and evidence to consider claims from candidates around their fitness to test. Information may be shared with Pearson. Candidates consent to these 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.

5. Appeals

In certain circumstances the [Appeals Policy](#) allows candidates to appeal the final decision in relation to their case. Appeals should be submitted in a timely manner, normally within 5 days of receiving a final decision from the UCAT Consortium Office. New appeals will not be considered after 31 October.

UCAT Consortium
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