Interviews and admissions tests in the Covid-19 pandemic

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Tests during Covid-19

University of Oxford and Cambridge tests

- Admissions tests are expected to go ahead in November
- The deadline for registration remains at 6pm on 15 October (earlier deadline for BMAT (1 Oct) and LNAT (15 Sept)
- But there has been a slight adaption to timetables due to social distancing guidelines

15 Sept – 15 Oct As scheduled	4 November As scheduled	5 November New date
LNAT	All other tests	HAT (Oxford)
		PAT (Oxford)
		TSA (Both)
		ECAA (Cambridge)
		ENGAA (Cambridge)
		NSAA (Cambridge)
		CTMUA (Cambridge)

- TSA and BMAT will be offered as computer based tests this year

How to prepare for tests

The UCAT

- Admissions test used in the selection process by a consortium of UK university medical and dental schools
- Introduced in 2006 by a consortium of universities to help assess other 'skills and attitudes' needed by future doctors and dentists for successful clinical practice
- Previously known as the UKCAT. Whilst the name has changed, the test content remains the same
- No curriculum content; the test examines innate skills
- Helps universities make more informed choices from amongst the many highly-qualified applicants who apply for their medical and dental degree programmes
- Used in collaboration with other admissions processes: UCAS application, academic qualifications, references, MMI / interviews
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The UCAT

- Students sit the test in the same year that you apply through UCAS
- They can only sit the test once each year
- 2 hour, multiple-choice, computer based test which you sit at a local Pearson VUE test centre
- Assesses a range of mental abilities across 5 separately timed subtests:

- Verbal Reasoning
- Decision Making
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Abstract Reasoning
- Situational Judgement

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The UCAT

4 May 2020	Registration opens Booking opens
1 July 2020	Testing begins
22 September 2020 at midday	Registration closes Online booking closes Access Arrangements deadline
5 October 2020 at midday	Final booking deadline
6 October 2020	Last testing date Bursary application deadline
15 October 2020	UCAS application deadline
Early November 2020	Results delivered to universities

The UCAT

Verbal reasoning   Assesses the ability to critically evaluate information that is presented in a written form

Decision making   Assesses the ability to apply logic to reach a decision or conclusion, evaluate arguments & analyse statistical information

Quantitative reasoning   Assesses the ability to critically evaluate information presented in a numerical form

Abstract reasoning   Assesses the use of convergent and divergent thinking to infer relationships from information

Situational judgement   Measures the capacity to understand real world situations and to identify critical factors & appropriate behaviour in dealing with them

The UCAT

Subtest	Questions	Timing (includes 1 min per subtest for instruction)
Verbal Reasoning	44	22 minutes
Decision Making	29	32 minutes
Quantitative Reasoning	36	25 minutes
Abstract Reasoning	55	14 minutes
Situational Judgement	69	27 minutes
Total time		120 minutes

The UCAT result will comprise of:
- A score of between 1200 to 3600
- A banding for Situational Judgement

Verbal Reasoning   – 300 to 900
Decision Making   – 300 to 900
Quantitative Reasoning   – 300 to 900
Abstract Reasoning   – 300 to 900
Situational Judgement   – Band 1 to 4 (1 = highest)

Total mean average score in 2019 = 2483

The UCAT

- Although it is a test of aptitude rather than academic knowledge, students should still allow time to prepare thoroughly for the UCAT

- We recommend they spend around 25-30 hours preparing for the test

- Start at least 4-6 weeks before the test date

- Use the FREE resources available on the UCAT website (we have over 1,000 example questions)

- If they have not studied maths beyond GCSE level, revisit and practice these skills (QR and DM subtests)

- Brush up on mental maths (QR)

- Practice speed reading skills (VR)

- Read GMC and GDC guidelines to help with situational judgement

The UCAT

Visit the UCAT website: **ucat.ac.uk/ucat**

Follow UCAT on social media to see EXTRA FREE practice questions, revision tips, deadline reminders, and get the 2020 scores as soon as they are released

Individual universities offer preparation support – visit websites

How to prepare for tests

Specimen and past papers are available for all of the tests, offering applicants the opportunity to:

- familiarise themselves with the test content, level and format

- get to know the types of ... b...

- ... under timed ...ns

- review answers

Register on time!

Revision needed

- Biomedical Admissions Test (B...
- Maths Admissions Test (...
- Physics Admission...

Si... ...helpful

- ...e Admissions Test (ELAT)
- ...Languages Admissions Test (MLAT)
- ...History Admissions Test (HAT)
- Oriental Languages Admissions Test (OLAT)
- Classics Admissions Test (CAT)

Practice required

- Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA)
- Law National Aptitude Test (LNAT)

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Interviews
during Covid-19

Medical Science
Interviews

Medicine and Dentistry Interviews

The vast majority of Medical and Dental Schools will interview all applicants who meet their initial selection criteria and academic thresholds.

Interview styles and formats vary across different institutions.

The most common interview styles Medical and Dental applicants will encounter are:
- Multiple Mini Interviews
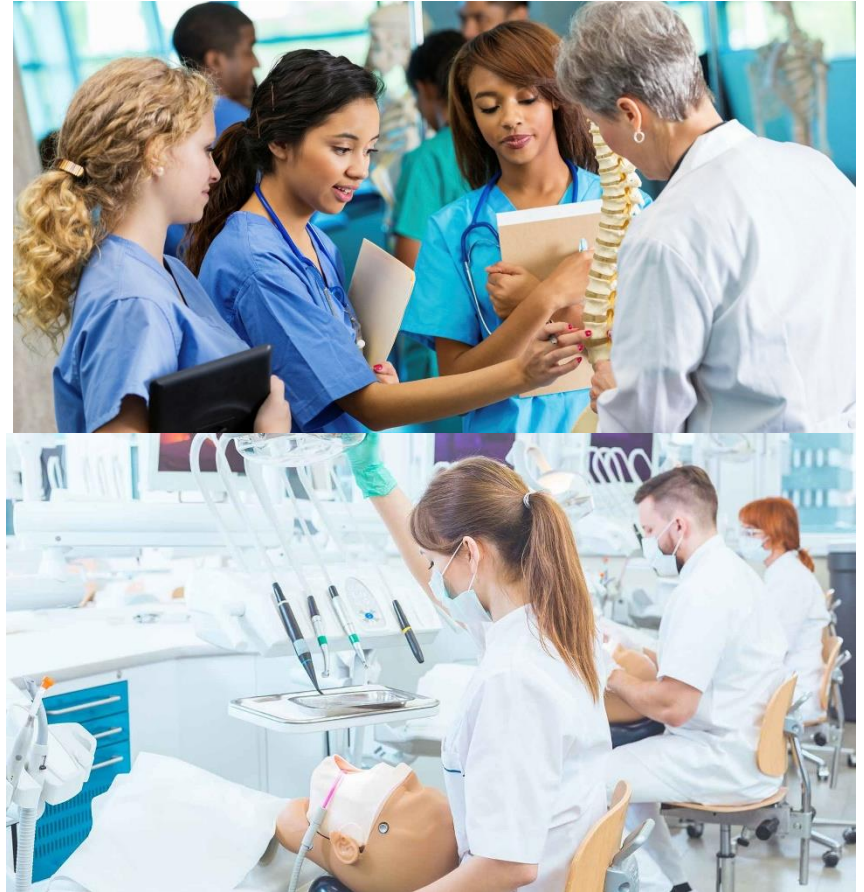- Panel Interviews

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Created for Advancing Access Conference Sept 2020. All information correct at time of recording but is subject to change/ 16

How are applicants selected for Medicine and Dentistry Interviews?

The initial selection criteria and academic thresholds which secure students an interview vary across universities.

Universities use a selection of the following to decide which applicant they want to interview:

- UCAT or BMAT result
- Predicted grades
- GCSE results
- Personal statement
- Work experience

Multiple Mini Interviews

A series of mini interviews where applicants meet different selectors who ask them about different key criteria.

Somewhere between 5 – 10 different stations, lasting between 5 – 10 minutes.

Mixture of competency based interview questions, role play and potentially manual dexterity tasks.
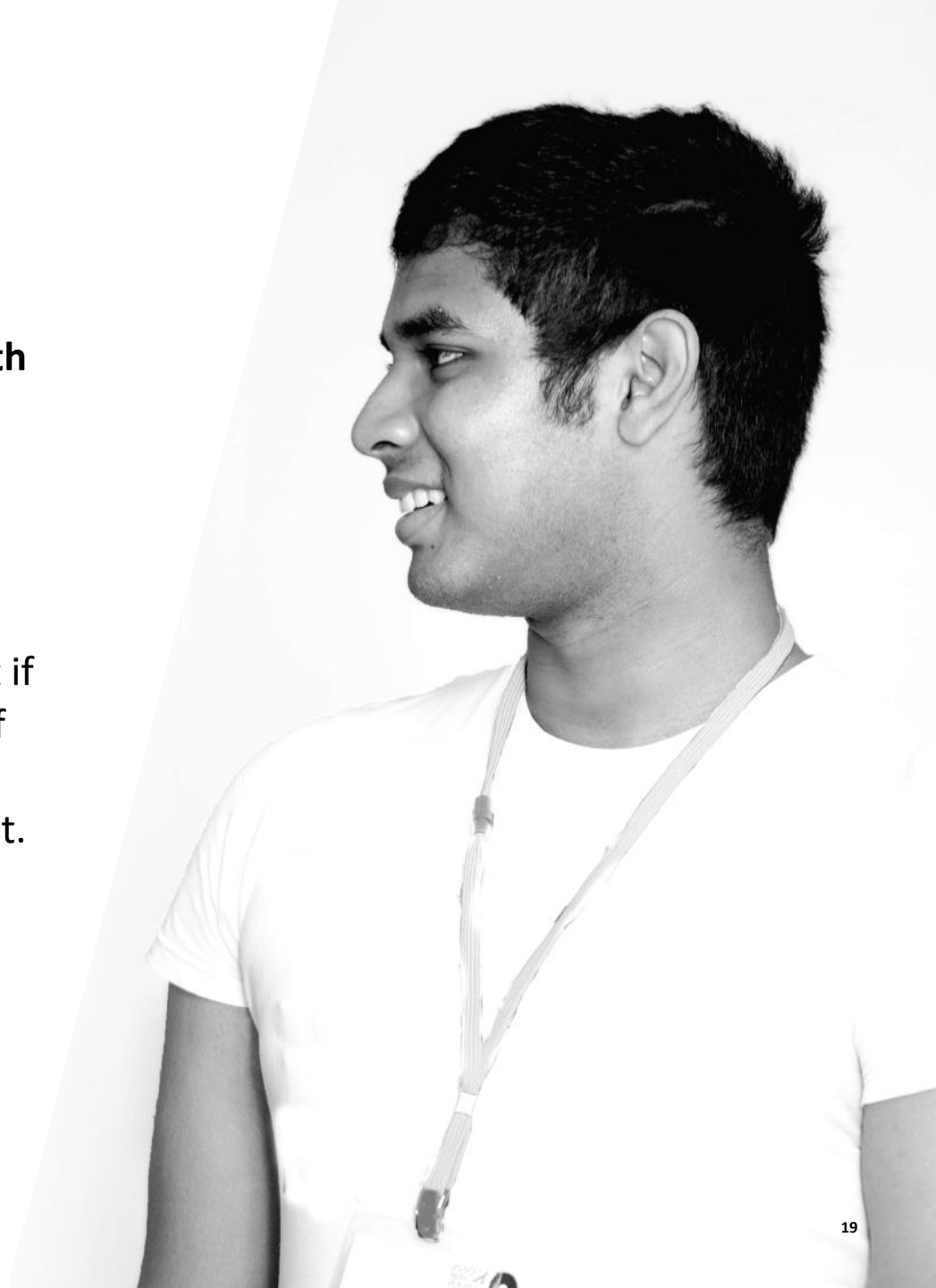
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Panel Interviews

A traditional style interview, usually with 2 -3 selectors.

Anywhere between 25 minutes to 60 minutes.

Competency based questions which test if the applicant meets the requirements of the course, understands the university and has the key aptitudes of a Dr/Dentist.

How will these translate virtually?

The majority of Medical and Dental schools will run 2021 interviews online.

Newcastle will use Zoom. Other universities may chose different virtual engagement platforms.

Interviews are likely to be panel due to the constraints of running an MMI virtually. The questions and competencies selectors ask about should stay the same.

Timings (Nov – Feb) should stay quite similar.

Check websites of universities that students are applying to for updates.

Oxford and Cambridge Interviews

What to expect

ONLINE INTERVIEWS FOR 2021 ENTRY

BUT whilst the format might be different the content and style will remain the same meaning the advice we typically give does not change

- Applicants often have 2 or 3 interviews, possibly with multiple colleges and the department

- Normally 25-40 minutes in length

- Interviews are an academic, subject-focused discussion in which tutors hope to see applicants thinking problems through for themselves

- They are structured but relatively informal

- We have no hidden agenda, and do not ask 'trick' questions or erect 'hurdles' for applicants to jump over

What we are looking for

Academic ability and potential

Flexibility of thought and responsiveness

Ability to think clearly and critically

Enthusiastic engagement with new ideas

What we are NOT looking for

A smooth performance

A good public speaker

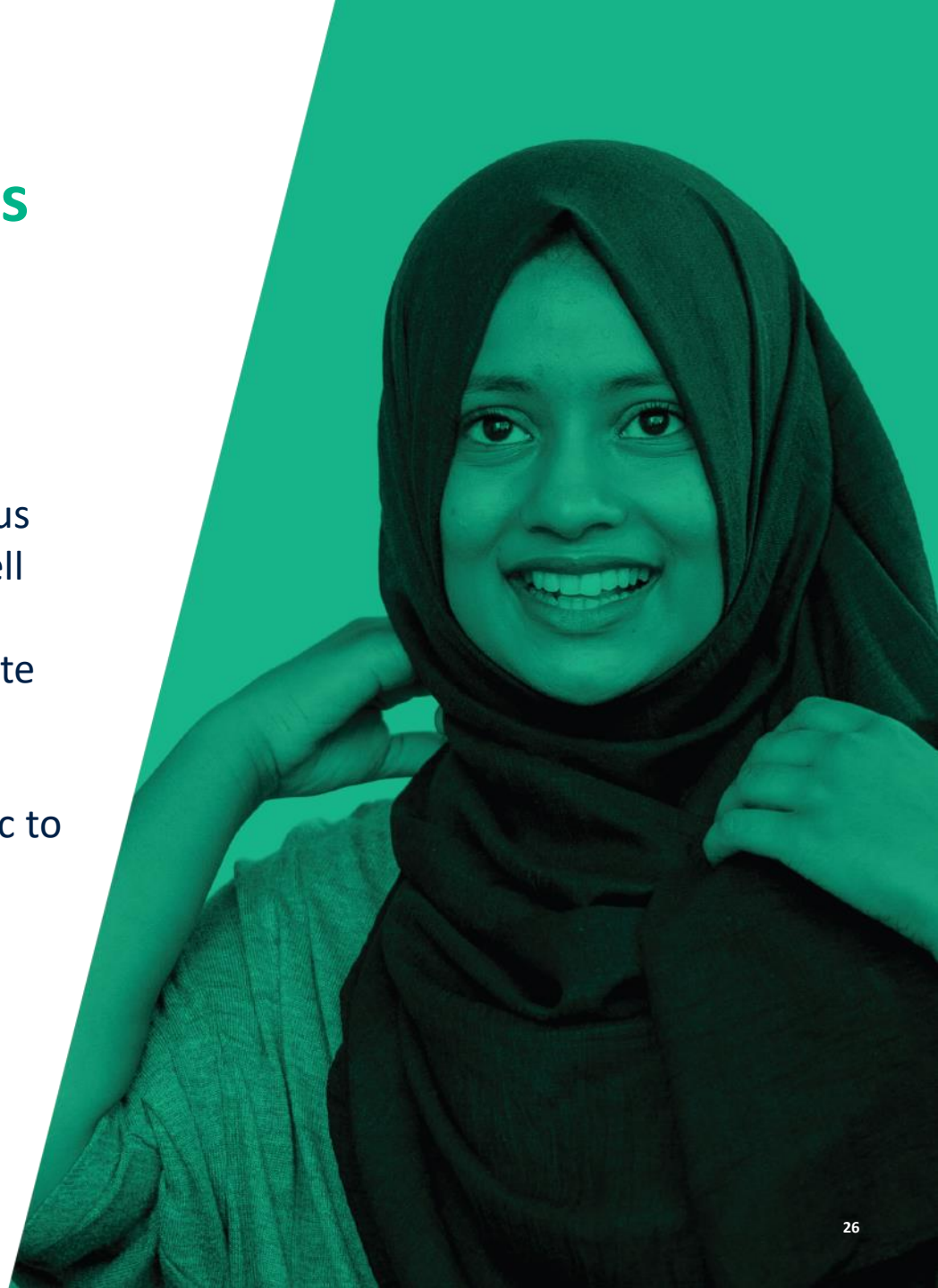Extra curricular activities

Why they chose a college

How to prepare for interviews

How to prepare applicants for interviews

Practice

- Small groups
- Subject specific and academic in focus
- Interdisciplinary groups can work well depending on numbers
- Thinking out loud - discuss and debate academic topics with peers and in school
- Choose a manageable question/topic to cover

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How to prepare applicants for interviews

Advice for Students

- Listen and take time to think - ask for clarification on the terms or scope of the question if required

- Try to answer with clarity and focus

- Be willing to explain your thinking

- Concentrate on the current question

- Ask questions if necessary

- What matters is content <u>not</u> style

- Remind yourself of the selection criteria for your subject

- Take a copy of your personal statement to read over

How to prepare for online interviews

How can students prepare for online interviews?

Much of the preparation for online interviews remains the same as if they were visiting the campus for a face to face interview

- Read the admissions policy of the university they are interviewing for
- Remind themselves of key competencies that selectors are looking for
- Prepare examples of when they have demonstrated key competencies
- Practice answers with teachers, family and friends
- Research the university, the research conducted and teaching styles
- Prepare a smart interview outfit

Preparation specific to online interviews

Space

ENSURE THE STUDENT HAS A SUITABLE QUIET SPACE FOR THEIR INTERVIEW. TELL THEM TO INFORM FAMILY MEMBERS THEY NEED QUIET AND THAT THEY HAVE A NEUTRAL BACKGROUND.

IT

REMIND THE STUDENT TO TEST THEIR COMPUTER, ZOOM, MICROPHONE AND SPEAKERS.

Practice

STUDENTS NEED TO DO AS MANY ZOOM PRACTICE INTERVIEWS AS POSSIBLE TO GET USED TO COMMUNICATING VIRTUALLY.

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Pros and cons of online interviews

Pros

- No travel stress or finding the way around a new campus
- Interview in own personal comfort zone
- Lots of students find it less nerve racking

Cons

- Chance of IT issues
- Less opportunity to show workings on paper
- Some students find it harder to create a rapport with the selector

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24 leading universities working together with schools and colleges

University of Birmingham / University of Bristol / University of Cambridge / Cardiff University

Durham University / University of Edinburgh / University of Exeter / University of Glasgow / Imperial College London

King's College London / University of Leeds / University of Liverpool

London School of Economics and Political Science / University of Manchester / Newcastle University

University of Nottingham / University of Oxford / Queen Mary University of London / Queen's University Belfast

University of Sheffield / University of Southampton / University College London / University of Warwick / University of York