





Preparing students for admissions tests and interviews



Coming up



A deeper understanding of admissions tests and interviews

Identify different types of tests and interviews used by Russell Group universities

Consider how to help
your students prepare for
admissions tests and
interviews







Admissions Tests





Ice-breaker: What do you currently do?





Admissions Tests



Many Russell Group universities use admissions tests to inform the decision-making process. They can be used in different ways:

- To inform whether an offer should be made.
- To decide whether to invite a student to interview.
- Following an interview, to decide between two equally ranked applicants.

The good news is that most university applicants do not have to take any kind of additional admissions





Students need to be proactive and research which of their university choices require admissions tests, which tests they require, and what the deadlines are.

The logistics



Registration deadlines, where and when the tests are held, and UCAS deadlines

- Tests generally take place between August and November the year before starting the course.
- Oxbridge applicants will usually have to take admissions tests earlier, due to the early UCAS application deadline.
- Test locations vary depending on the type of test these can be found on the admissions test websites.
- Some tests have a cost associated (approximately £50-£100) but bursaries may be available.





Commonly used tests



UCAT

- The most used test for Medicine and Dentistry courses
- Assesses verbal reasoning, decision-making, quantitative reasoning, abstract reasoning and situational judgement
- Testing runs from July-October, and students can book up to 90 days in advance.

25%

of students who took the UCAT in 2023 achieved a Band 1 in Situational Judgement

MAT (Mathematics Admissions Test)

- Used to test mathematical ability
- Commonly used by the University of Oxford (for Maths and Computer Science) and Imperial College London (for Maths).

STEP (Sixth Term Examination Paper)

- Mathematics
- Consists of up to three paper-based examinations
- Takes place in June during the summer exam season



Commonly used tests



- LNAT (Law National Aptitude Test)
 - For applicants to Law
 - Online test in two parts
 - Register from August, Oxbridge applicants must take the test by 15th October (others differ, check the LNAT website)
 - Help them to prepare:
 - ➤ Practice, practice, practice
 - >Use online resources at lnat.ac.uk
 - > Financial assistance is available
 - ➤ Its meant to be hard! Prepare them for this.

33%

of Russell Group universities require the LNAT for admission onto their Law courses.





Less commonly used tests



- Supplementary Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ)
 - For some Vet School applicants
 - Often used to assess 'alternative' work experience as well checking situational* and/or professional understanding of the industry/sector.
 - Typically sent out to students by the universities once they've received their applications via UCAS.
- *Situational Judgement Tests (SJT)
 - Some Vet schools also use SJT's to assess students' situational awareness through scenario-based multiple-choice questions

Top Tip:

When having 1:1's with your students encourage them to check each of their chosen universities 'admissions statements' for their course choices!

Read more on the University of Bristol webpage:

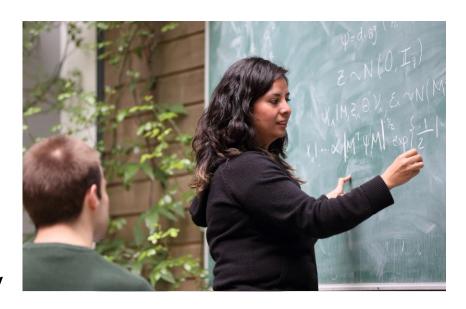




How to prepare



- **Practice papers** Support students to practice questions under examination conditions. Timing is important. Practice tests and answers are available on test websites.
- **Read the guidance** Students should read the guidance for candidates. This will help them understand the structure of the test and how it is used by universities.
- Deadlines Ensure you and your students know the deadlines - some courses may not accept a student if they have not taken the test.
- **Study groups** Encourage groups of students undertaking the same tests to form study groups to support each other.
- Mailing lists Staff can sign up to University
 Outreach/Admissions mailing lists to receive email
 reminders about when admissions tests registrations are
 open.





Admissions Tests





Universities	MAT	LNAT	STEP	TSA	UCAT	TMUA	ESAT
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							
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					Postgrad entry only.		
University of York							

** May give a reduced offer.

Warwick strongly encourage students planning on entering the Mathematics and Statistics, MORSE or Data Science degree courses to take an additional maths paper (STEP, TMUA, AEA, MAT).



Interviews



Interviews





Russell Group universities may use interviews to help them decide which candidates should receive offers. Universities may:

- Interview for all courses (e.g., Oxford and Cambridge)
- Have two interviews: one of the course, and another for the college/university
- Interview for specific courses only
- Use interviews for information gathering
- Use interviews as an opportunity for the applicant

Many universities provide (free) accommodation for applicants during the interview process.



"Decisions are not based on your manners, appearance or background, but on your ability to think independently and to engage with new ideas beyond the scope of your school or college syllabus." – University of Oxford, Why Does Oxford Interview?

Interviews



Very few universities interview for all their courses. The main exceptions are Oxford and Cambridge. Imperial College also interview for most courses. Other may interview for some courses.

- Common subjects requiring interviews:
 - Medicine
 - Dentistry
 - Nursing
 - Education
 - Music
 - Art and Design

What's the link?







Why do we use interviews



There are several reasons why some universities and some courses require an interview:

- Competition
- Academic potential
- The right fit
- To see examples of your work





Types of interviews



There are different types of interviews, the structure can differ depending on the university or course. Example types:

Individual interviews

- Panel or one-to-one
- Traditional method
- Opportunity to ask questions
- Could be very subject-specific or more general
- Academic discussion rather than traditional questions (Oxford and Cambridge)

Group interviews

- Q&A session
- Task or scenario
- Contributions from each candidate





MMI Interview





Multiple mini-interviews may be used by professional courses such as Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science and Nursing.

- Typically consists of six to ten different stations
- No more than 10 mins each
- Assess qualities required for that course and profession

"Keeping abreast of medical issues appearing in the news and media and discussing and debating them with friends and family" – University of Birmingham, How to Prepare

Example stations include:

- Traditional interview questions
- Working through a scenario
- Written exercise
- Interacting with an actor
- Data interpretation
- Ethical reasoning







Sample MMI questions and scenarios

How would you answer these questions?

1. You're a medical student and you see a patient who you recognise from your GP placement in a supermarket car park, getting into a car. You remember the GP telling the patient that he is unable to drive due to his uncontrolled epilepsy. Discuss the relevant ethical issues with the examiner.

How would you support your students to practice these questions?

- 2. Without using your hands, explain how to tie shoe-laces.
- 3. Discuss one of your hobbies outside of school and how the skills you gained from this activity will help you in your career.
- 4. What personal qualities do you think are not required for a Nurse?



5. Role play: You are on your way home from a lecture and you reach a bus stop. A student from your course is sat at the bus stop looking very upset. You don't know their name and you haven't spoken to them before. Demonstrate how you would approach this situation.

How students can prepare





There are some things that your students can do before an interview that will make them feel more confident.

- Think about how they might answer possible questions students can practice with friends, family and teachers.
- Be careful not to over-rehearse interviewers will not want to hear scripted answers.
- For academic discussions practice speaking out loud when completing homework.
- Read around the subject and think about relevant topics that particularly interest them.
- Reread their personal statement.

Students with disabilities are entitled to accessibility adjustments for interviews.

Your students should email the university or check the university's Accessibility and Disability Services webpage to find out what is available to them.

How staff can support students





Research – Create the space and time for your students to research the course and university beforehand. University websites often have interview tips and advice pages which can also support students.

Practice – Set up mock interviews at your school or college.
Encourage students to think about their body language whilst interviewing. Practice should support students in being as relaxed as possible at the interview, so they can be themselves and confident in their knowledge and abilities.

Prepare – Help students to prepare responses to standard questions such as "why do you want to study this subject?", and to think of questions to ask the interviewer(s). Make sure students know how to get to the interview.

Reassure – Support students with combatting imposter syndrome "It's not for me".

Tip: Students can wear casual clothing to Oxbridge interviews if they prefer this.

STAR technique





Situation

 Students should begin by very briefly presenting a recent challenge or situation in which they found themselves.

Task

• Students should briefly explain the task and what they set out to achieve.

Action

 What did the student do? The interviewer will be looking to find out what action the student took, why, and what the alternatives were.

Results

 What was the outcome of the student's actions? What was achieved through the actions taken and did they meet the objectives? What was learned from this experience and has this learning been used since?





Additional resources

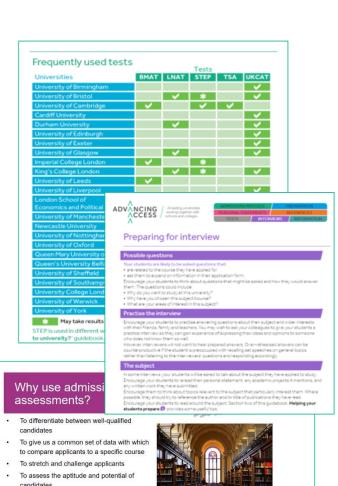


Further resources





- Admissions testing service: http://www.admissionstesting.org/
- LNAT: https://lnat.ac.uk/
- MAT: https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/study-here/undergraduate-study/maths-admissions-test
- STEP: http://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/step/about-step/
- UCAT: https://www.ucat.ac.uk/
- TMUA/ESAT: https://esat-tmua.ac.uk/about-the-tests/tmua-test/.
- The Uni Guide interview preparation tips: https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/advice/ucas-application/university-interviews-how-to-prepare
- UCAS information page about admissions tests: https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/admissions-tests
- UCAS advice on interviews: https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/undergraduate-interview-invitations
- Advancing Access: www.advancingaccess.ac.uk

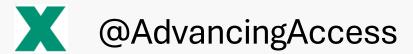


Questions?









in Advancing Access

