

# UNDERSTANDING THE UKCAT



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*Setting standards in psychometric test preparation*



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# WHAT IS THE UKCAT?

**The UK Clinical Aptitude Test, or UKCAT, is an aptitude test used for medical and dental school admissions in the UK.**

The test is comprised of five reasoning assessment subtests which are designed to evaluate your cognitive abilities. You do not need to worry about memorizing science facts as the test is not based on scientific or curriculum material.

The UKCAT is provided by **Pearson Vue** and is taken at Pearson Vue's testing centres all over the world. You are given your results immediately upon completion of the exam which means no anxiety waiting for your scores to be sent in the mail.

The scores are also sent directly to the university or universities to which you are applying, making the whole process very quick and painless

The scores you receive on your test are only valid for that school year, meaning if you are taking the exam in the summer of 2016, you are applying for university entry in 2017. The difficulty is that you cannot re-sit the exam in the same testing season and if you do not achieve the desired results, you will need to wait until the testing season of the following year. This is one of the big reasons why being well prepared is so important.

# WHAT'S ON THE TEST

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Time**</b>	<b>Questions</b>
Verbal Reasoning	22 min	44 questions
Quantitative Reasoning	25 min	36 questions
Abstract Reasoning	14 min	55 questions
Decision Making*	32 min	29 questions
Situational Judgment	27 min	27 questions
<b>Total</b>	<b>120 min</b>	<b>232 questions</b>

\*Decision Making is a new section on the UKCAT and the results do not affect your final score.

\*\*Time includes one minute for instructions



# UKCAT SUBTESTS

## Verbal Reasoning

On this test, you are given a short text to read followed by a statement. There are two types of questions on this test: The first type is based on the information provided in the text from which you must decide if the statement is true, false, or you cannot say. The second question type is based on reading a list of options and then determining the correct answer from that list. You are only allowed to use the information provided in the text and not your outside knowledge. The test contains 11 texts, with four questions on each.



## Quantitative Reasoning

On this test, you are given numerical data in a table, chart, or graph, and you are asked questions on the information provided. Solving the questions usually involves some form of basic calculation. The same set of information may be used for more than one question.



## Abstract Reasoning

-On this test, you are asked to identify the correct shape in order to complete the question. There are four types of questions you may experience. This is a fast-paced test with less than 20 seconds to answer each question. It is a nonverbal test as it does not use words or numbers, and it is often considered to be like an IQ test.





## Decision Making

On this test, your ability to implement logic in order to assess arguments, evaluate statistical data, and make a decision will be measured. This section is replacing Decision Analysis in 2016 and will not affect your score in the 2016 testing season.

## Situational Judgment

On this test, you are asked to identify the correct responses to a series of scenarios relating to the life of a medical or dentistry student. There are two types of scenario responses asked: the appropriateness of a behaviour and the importance of a set of options. You are presented with 19 scenarios; each one contains between two and five questions.





# UKCAT 2016 - Important Dates

3 May

Registration opens

1 July

Testing begins

21 September

Registration closes +  
busary and exemption  
deadline

4 October

Booking and  
rescheduling closes

5 October

Last testing date

15 October

UCAS application  
deadline



# STUDY TIPS FROM AN EXPERTS

It is very easy to fall into the trap of not preparing for the UKCAT correctly. You might hear from students who have previously taken the test that “you only need one or two days before the test to revise” or even that “you don’t need to revise at all!” Take a look at what one of our experts has to say, giving you a full run-down on the best techniques to study, revise, and fully prepare for the UKCAT.

*Shahab is an experienced and trained UKCAT tutor who successfully scored 800 on his own exam. About to graduate from the University of Sheffield as a dentist, Shahab has accumulated over five years of UKCAT experience, teaching classes and private tuition with great success.*

“The first issue to tackle is the amount of revision required. Obviously, every student is different, with some requiring less time and others more time to grasp the concepts or techniques necessary to answer questions.

Therefore, the amount of revision you do will depend on how confident you feel. One thing that is for certain, however, is that revision is needed. Our research at JobTestPrep, both through the classes and the one-to-one tuition we provide, proves that those who complete sufficient revision to a high enough standard consistently score higher on the UKCAT. As the saying goes, practice makes perfect!”

So, now that we’ve established we need revision to succeed on the UKCAT, how do we go about it effectively? Here is a quick checklist Shahab has created for you to follow, highlighting the main problems students face whilst preparing for the UKCAT:

The majority of students tend to take their exam towards the end of August or in early September. This gives most students the entire summer holiday to prepare. Remember, the more time you spend preparing, the more likely it is you will do well. I recommend you start preparing as early as you feel is necessary (I usually recommend 3 to 4 weeks before your exam date), and you should start by creating a study plan. ***My top tip: Taking your exam at the end of August/start of September means you will not be distracted by school work, university interviews, or writing your personal statement – you can focus fully on the UKCAT!***





Structuring your plan: I recommend you begin your UKCAT preparation by compiling all of your resources and material and ranking them from easiest to most challenging. (JobTestPrep's question bank insert link is a great place to start for revision material – and the question bank even ranks the material for you!) Starting your preparation this way allows you to begin with the easier questions and then, as you develop your skill, challenge yourself with the harder questions. One very important thing to consider is that there will be some questions that are almost impossible to answer, regardless of how much practice you put in. Don't be disheartened, but do take away any learning points that you can!"

Give yourself plenty of breaks. If you overwork yourself right up to the date of your exam, you will likely take the test in a stressed and anxious state. Therefore, by giving yourself breaks, you will allow your brain to relax and even compile all of the tips and techniques you've picked up into an organised arrangement. If you find yourself getting tired of revising one section of the UKCAT, spend some time focusing on another section before revisiting the original one. Each section of the UKCAT uses a different part of your brain, so it's good to rest each area equally. Try not to overwork yourself, but make sure to dedicate a maximum of 2-3 hours of revision every day. Some students may find they want to revise less, but more than 3 hours per day is definitely not recommended! ***My top tip: Many students find it useful to give themselves a complete rest on the day before their test. This will completely relax your mind and allow it to be most efficient during the UKCAT exam itself.***

Finally, make notes! Very few students preparing for this test tend to make notes, yet it would be very strange to prepare for any other exam without making notes. Try to find patterns and common questions, especially for the Quantitative and Abstract Reasoning section. While the shapes in these questions might always be different, once you recognise the patterns, you'll see that they tend to be the same. Grasping a general understanding of medical law and ethics is also very important for the Situational Judgement Test. If you are struggling to find any points worthy of making notes, do not hesitate to contact a member of our team. We are more than happy to point you in the right direction!

So there you have it: a brief but informative checklist from one of our experts to help you on your way to UKCAT success. Keep checking our blog for more in-depth coverage of each section and the most successful way to tackle them!

Check out JTP's UKCAT tips  
too!

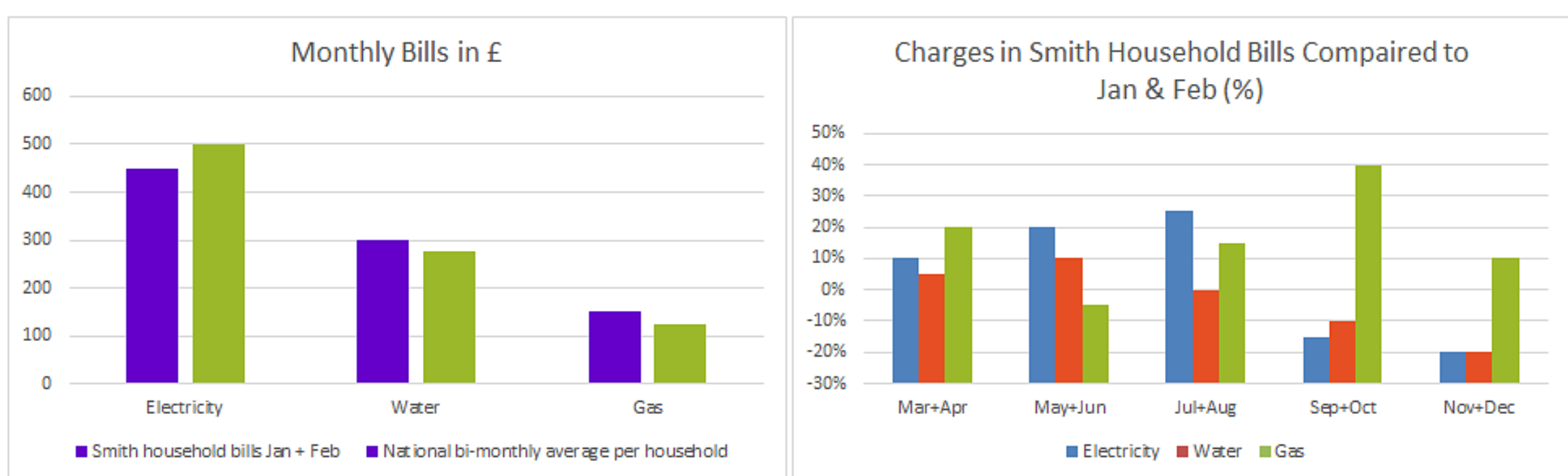


# Practice Questions

Being prepared for the UKCAT is all about getting the right practice materials and using them well - that means not just knowing the answers but having the right tactics to tackle the questions. Here are a few to start with!

## Quantitative Reasoning

The Smiths are investigating irregularities in their household bills. Below are two charts analysing these payments:



How many bi-monthly electricity bills of the Smith household are higher than the national average?

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4

## Answer & Explanation

The chart on the left informs us of the Smith household's bills in January and February as compared with the national bi-monthly average per household.

The national average of a bimonthly electricity bill is £500 (green column).

The Smith's bimonthly electricity bill for Jan+Feb was £450 (blue column).

The chart on the right informs us of changes to the bimonthly electricity bill relative to the Smiths' Jan+Feb bill.

Therefore, not every increase necessarily represents a higher payment than the national average.

Note that the bills for Sep+Oct and Nov+Dec were lower than the bill for Jan+Feb, and thus they cannot be higher than the national average given that Jan+Feb's bill was already lower than the national average. Therefore, the Sep+Oct and Nov+Dec bills can be eliminated from the start.

The electricity bill for Mar+Apr was 10% higher than the bill for Jan+Feb:

110% of £450 =  $1.1 \times 450 = £495 < £500$ . This is not higher than the national average.

The electricity bill for May+Jun was 20% higher than the bill for Jan+Feb:

120% of £450 =  $1.2 \times 450 = £540 > £500$ . This is higher than the national average.

The electricity bill for Jul+Aug was 25% higher than the bill for Jan+Feb. Because this is a higher figure than the previous bimonthly bill, we already know this bill is higher than the national average. Therefore, we don't need to calculate the actual sum.

**The correct answer is C: Two bimonthly electricity bills, those of May+Jun and Jul+Aug.**



# Abstract Reasoning

The following test shape (right) belongs to which set?

Set A	Set B	Test Shape
		<p>Set A</p> <p>Set B</p> <p>Neither</p>

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- A. Set A
- B. Set B
- C. Neither

### Answer to Abstract Reasoning

Set A: There is an even number of striped cylinders. The stars are a diversion and don't follow a rule.

Set B: There is an odd number of stars. One star is located within one of the shapes. The cylinders are a diversion.

The test shape belongs to set A since the number of striped cylinders is an even number (2).

The answer is Set A.



# Verbal Reasoning

**Read the following passage and answer the question below.**

Millions of years before humans invented sonar, bats and toothed whales had mastered the biological version of the same trick -echolocation. By timing the echoes of their calls, one group effortlessly flies through the darkest of skies and the other swims through the murkiest of waters. This is one of the most dramatic examples yet of 'convergent evolution', where different groups of living things have independently evolved similar behaviours or body parts in response to similar evolutionary pressures.

A number of studies have shown that convergence on the surface - like having venom, being intelligent or lacking enamel - is borne of deeper genetic resemblance. A researcher sequenced the gene Prestin in a wide range of bats and whales which use sonar and which do not. Based on the DNA sequences of these Prestin versions, the researcher drew a mammal family tree. As one would expect, the whales and bats were clustered in separate family groups. But convert the sequences into amino acids and the picture changes dramatically. Suddenly, the family tree becomes utterly misleading. The echolocating mammals, be they bats or whales, are united as close relatives, to the exclusion of their rightful evolutionary kin.

It might seem strange to see such strong convergence at the genetic level, since bats and whales echolocate very differently. Bats create their sonar pulses using their voicebox while whales pass air through their nasal bones. A single gene can't have accounted for these differences. Instead, Prestin's role is in detecting the rebounding echoes. It is activated in the "outer hair cells" of the ear, which allow mammals to hear ultrasonic frequencies.

**Examination of the amino acid sequences resulted in the classification in one family of the echolocating bats and the non-echolocating whales.**

- A. True
- B. False
- C. Cannot say

## **Answer to Verbal Reasoning**

Classifying the mammals according to the amino acid sequences resulted in the grouping of echolocating bats and whales in one family and the non-echolocating bats and whales in another.  
The answer is False.



# Further Resources

## practice



JTP's UKCAT Prep Pack

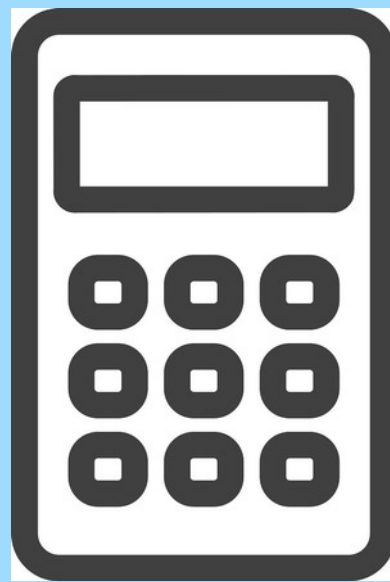


JTP's Free UKCAT Practice

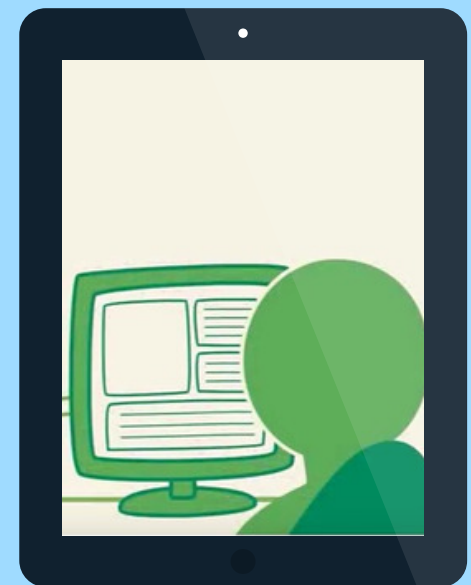
## videos



Why Universities Use the UKCAT



How to Use Your Calculator

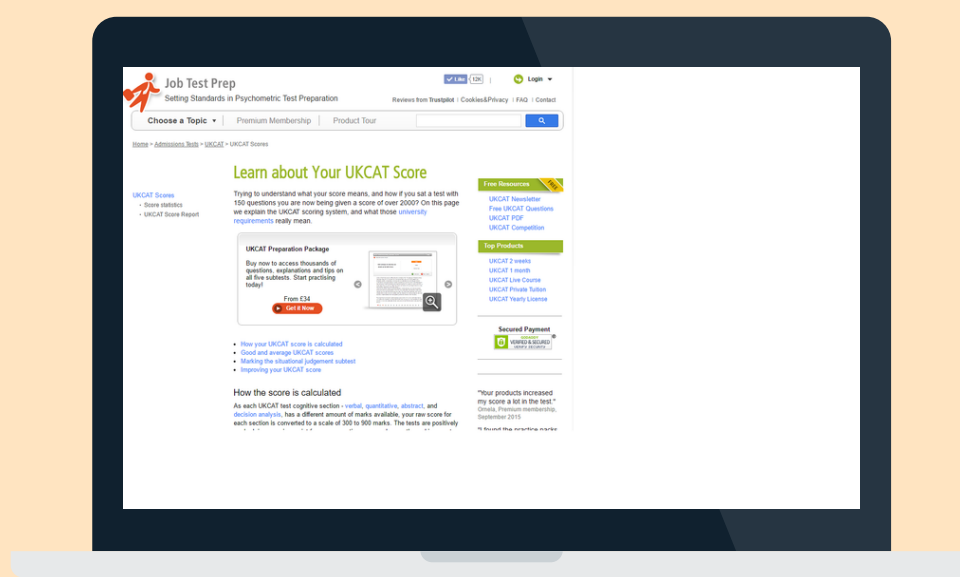


What to expect on test day

## other info



The Official UKCAT Website



Guide to UKCAT Scores



The UKCAT on Facebook

# Where to Next?

Now that you know what to expect, it's time to start preparing! Given the breadth of information on this topic, we are aware that this guide alone cannot cover all your questions and needs. We therefore strongly recommend to continue **using our website** to become better prepared for your test.

Our site is full of useful materials, helpful articles and great tricks to help you in your UKCAT preparation process. Looking for something you don't see? Email us at [info@jobtestprep.co.uk](mailto:info@jobtestprep.co.uk) and we will be happy to help you find what you're looking for or answer any questions you may have. Good Luck!



**START  
PRACITISING  
NOW!**