

JobTestPrep Medical Doctor's Principles

Basic UCAT SJT Guide



Introduction to The Doctor's Principles:

Medical Practice is known to be a highly unique and demanding profession. Therefore, academic institutions have set high standards for candidates who wish to become medical students. In the UK – one of the main ways of measuring these traits is by the UCAT test – a highly demanding, time crucial, and elaborate test which measures a large scale of cognitive abilities through the first 4 segments. The fifth segment – Situation Judgement – measures different personality aspects of the candidate – as compared to the demands of academic and government institutions in the UK.

JobTestPrep Medical Doctor's Principles have drawn their inspiration from both the assessed traits as officially written by UCAT, as well as the Good Medical Practice document. The principles also reflect globally agreed medical ethics, as well as both academic and clinical organizations' requirements for their students, residents, and experienced medical doctors. The principles embody the different aspects and traits that are required of a medical doctor, to provide care successfully and continuously to different patients, while working in large organizations and with dynamic medical staff.

The 10 principles serve as a toolkit that allows the candidate to focus on specific traits and decide whether they support the principle or not. Not all principles are equal, the first 3 principles are superior in importance to the remaining 7, and therefore will usually triumph if they will clash with other principles that are not included in the other leading principles.

This version of the Doctor's Principles includes the three leading principles, with examples on how to use them as well as additional tips for the UCAT SJT. [Go to our main page](#) for the full version, as well as UCAT practice questions and full UCAT mock tests.

Leading Principles

The leading principles are the top 3 JTP Medical Doctor's Principles, which are ranked above the other principles in terms of importance. That means that in the case of any clashing between any of the three leading principles and the seven completing principles – the decision must lean towards the leading principles.

The leading principles serve as the most important aspects of the physician, as they concentrate on a few of the most important parts of the profession:

1. **Patient Care Comes First**
2. **Integrity**
3. **Professionalism**

As the name implies, the leading principles have triumphing power over the other principles in the case of collision. That fact is crucial in understanding the decision-making process of the physician in different dilemmas and a guideline in many difficult situations. In the UCAT SJT segment – many options will hint at least one of these principles – and in that case, the answer must always serve them as they are key to the success of the medical doctor.

Sometimes, two of these principles may collide. These are some of the most difficult situations that a physician may encounter in their work. Those situations require personal judgment and consultation with others, many times with more senior doctors, and at times even ethics committees. Therefore, it is very unlikely that two of these principles would collide in the test. If so, try to better understand if you've interpreted the principles correctly, and remember that the first principle (Patient Care Comes First) is always the main objective of the medical doctor. Further elaboration on the decisionmaking between principles will be at the end of this guide.

Patient Care Comes First

A medical doctor must first and foremost consider the physical and mental well-being of the patients. Any decision must include a perspective on how to help and improve the patient's health, or deny any deterioration and potential risks.

Being the first of all principles, the patient's care is both a professional goal and a personal value. The medical doctor is expected to be a caring person, seeking to help even of duty, and have a deep passion for helping people in different circumstances, even at a personal cost.

While the medical doctor or the staff may think specific treatments are best for different patients – a crucial part of the patient care is their autonomy. A patient which is physically and mentally fit to make reasonable decisions (or a child's parents as their guardians) have the autonomy to make their own decisions regarding different medical approaches. The medical doctor – while being professional and wishing to provide the best care – must properly explain every method and help the patients make the right decision as they see it.

The care is not necessarily provided to the physician's patients solely. The doctor is required to consider the well-being of others as well, including both the patients of different doctors and medical staff as well. Also, patient care doesn't always mean improvement in health. Steps that deny unnecessary pain, prevent potential deterioration in health and remove risk factors are as important as improving the health of an ill patient. Mental health is also a key aspect of providing care – and the medical doctor must always take into consideration the patient's personal experience, which has been proven to affect their physical health.

Example:

David, a medical student, has just finished his shift at the ward and is planning to go to an important family meeting that he has known about for months and has informed his superiors, who have agreed to release him at the specific time. On his way out, he noticed an open bag of potentially biohazardous substances. While already being late for the family meeting, he doesn't want to leave the bag without it being taken care of. David needs to choose how to handle the situation.

How important are the following consideration for David to decide how to handle the situation?

The dangers that the substances in the bag impose on the patients and staff.

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Of minor importance
- D. Not important at all

Answer – the correct answer is A (Very important). The dilemma that David is dealing with is between going to a family meeting, which can be seen as very important to him, and also making sure to minimize the problems that it will impose on his job and the handling the mysterious and potentially bio-hazardous bag. Since the substances inside the bag may endanger both patients and medical staff, handling the bag and removing the potential threat represents the Patient Care Comes First principle. Despite David being late for his important family meeting, he is expected as a medical student to first and foremost think of the well-being of the patients and medical staff, and make sure by any means that the bag is safely removed and is not exposed to other people.

Integrity

A medical doctor should always be honest, even and especially in difficult situations. The doctor must also be worthy of his authority and the faith that is put in him, and never misuse his position. Any medical decision that the physician does not believe in, must never be taken.

As one of the leading principles, integrity is one of the most important cornerstones for a physician to be given trust and authority in the field of medicine. Patients very often must put their faith in the medical doctor – that includes being in intimate and uncomfortable situations, taking medicine without complete knowledge of its effect on their body, and in extreme circumstances, being operated on and putting their lives in the hands of their doctors.

Medical doctors will have access to the personal and medical information of patients, and due to the cultural view of physicians, this can easily influence both the patients and their families and friends. A medical doctor who will not follow a strict ethical code and be honest will pose a great physical and emotional danger to their patients.

Integrity is comprehensive – it includes following the simplest of rules such as cheating in exams, marking a fellow student's attendance despite them not being there, and failing to report any unethical, unprofessional, or illegal behavior and actions. The risk that small unethical instances of candidates pose to their professional future as physicians are crucial, and therefore is highly important at every stage.

Example:

Cynthia is a medical student placed in a community clinic. She is watching the nurse's room while Layla, the nurse for the current shift, has gone out for a few minutes buying lunch. Layla has worked at the clinic for the past 2 months. While Cynthia is using the computer to examine and learn from it, she sees a few tabs with websites for other nurses' positions. All tabs were closed at the beginning of the shift – so only Layla could have opened them. Using the nurse's computer for personal matters is against the clinic's policies.

How appropriate are the following responses by Cynthia to this situation?

Pretend that you didn't see the tabs and carry on without mentioning it.

- A. A very appropriate thing to do
- B. Appropriate, but not ideal
- C. Inappropriate, but not awful
- D. A very inappropriate thing to do

Answer – the correct answer is D (A very inappropriate thing to do). Even though this is personal information, and whether Layla wishes to find a new job is none of Cynthia's business, it is her responsibility to address the situation as she sees that Layla has breached the clinic's policies. Speaking to her about it, informing her that it is not OK, and ensuring that she will speak to the clinic's manager – while also suggesting that she can speak to her about issues at work if Layla wishes.

Professionalism

A good medical doctor must strive to be as professional as possible. Curiosity, constant learning, clinical improvement, and professional behaviour are critical for a medical doctor.

As a leading principle, the medical doctor is expected – by himself, his patients, his fellow staff, and the community, to be intelligent, starving for knowledge, and reasonable. The physician makes critical decisions on a daily basis, as well as provides suggestions and care to patients with many risk factors surrounding every decision. Excelling and constantly learning to allow the medical doctor to keep providing the best medical care.

The scientific field of medicine is constantly evolving. It is immense, filled with new and old knowledge which in many instances contradicts one another. Medical doctor is expected never to be satisfied with their current knowledge – curiosity, learning from peers, listening to patients, and learning more before making important decisions are expected of the physician. Mistakes which were made because of lack of knowledge – which was accessible to the doctor – are unacceptable.

Professional conduct is also expected of the medical doctor. Similar to Integrity, the medical doctor must remain professional, make his decisions based on scientifically proven and clinically reasonable reasons, and deny personal interests and non-professional behavior on his behalf.

Example:

Shawn is a medical student doing a placement in a public clinic. A 22-year-old patient named Rob visits him. Rob had cardiac surgery, which requires him to take daily medicine. He must do routine blood tests to check the stability of the medications, as instability may lead to serious complications. Shawn asks Rob why he missed his blood tests for the past 3 months, to which Rob responds that he feels good, and that the tests are useless.

How appropriate are the following responses by Shawn to this situation?

Ask Rob why he feels the blood tests are useless.

- A. A very appropriate thing to do
- B. Appropriate, but not ideal
- C. Inappropriate, but not awful
- D. A very inappropriate thing to do

Answer – the correct answer is A (A very appropriate thing to do). Since the stability of the medications is highly important, ensuring it through blood tests is essential for Rob's health. Professionalism is the doctor's ability to understand the situation in front of him, and solve it in the best manner. Shawn's attempt to better understand Rob's reasons for not taking blood tests will create trust and confidence between them, and by understanding Rob's motives, Shawn can react appropriately and provide the best response that will also motivate Rob to follow up.

Useful Tips

- A. **Hinting phrases** – through the scenario or the questions different phrases or words may hint at the correlating principle demonstrated in the question. Since the test is strictly timed with less than 30 seconds available for each question – the hinting words or phrases are key to answering quickly, especially with such a short time limit, and even if not all the text was read. In our practice simulations and additional practice questions, the explanations include marking these hinting words or phrases, which will give the candidate an idea of different phrases and improve the ability to find them quickly. Words such as Patient's health (Patient Care Comes First), against the rules (Integrity), the patient's feelings (Empathy), additional information (Critical Thinking), finding different methods (Flexibility) and so on – should be always looked at to answer the questions in the most efficient way.
- B. **Two principles per question** – in many instances, the candidate may find more than two principles per question. The principles may be supporting one another or clashing with the others. While that is possible, we recommend always choosing up to two different principles for each question (occasionally the overlap between scenarios may be demonstrated and therefore either principle can be chosen). Choosing more than two principles can often lead to confusion, overthinking and dwelling on questions for too long – thus wasting valuable time. It is also very difficult to compare more than two principles at once for a clear and quick answer.

- C. [The scenario's principle](#) – in many instances, the scenario itself demonstrates at least one, if not two principles. In that case, these principles will be demonstrated in multiple questions – with each question demonstrating either another principle, support, or not the related principles from the scenario. Understanding the principle(s) of the scenario in many instances is key to answering correctly and doing so quickly can save valuable time – especially when the scenario holds many questions (up to 6).

- D. [Being decisive and swift](#) – since the SJT segment is strictly time-limited, with less than 30 seconds available per question, it is important to answer quickly, be decisive, and not dwell on specific questions. To do so, we suggest the candidate learn and understand the 10 JobTestPrep Doctor's Principles, practice a lot of questions from our simulations and additional practice, read the explanations, and practice the principles on the free practice content from the UCAT official site. We also recommend that the candidate be decisive on the principles – once a principle is chosen, follow through with it as it will most likely guide you to the correct or at least a partial scoring answer. If no principle can be found, we recommend marking the question, guessing according to intuition, and continuing the scenario if there are further questions – as sometimes they can assist in identifying the scenario in the difficult question, which can be revisited later.

Summary

This short guide is an introduction to the Doctor's Principles Method. Using the three Leading Principles detailed here can help you make swift, accurate choices during the UCAT SJT under its brutal time limit. If you want to learn more about the method, including the 7 Completing Principles, hundreds of practice questions for the SJT and Cognitive sections of the test as well as detailed solutions, **go to our [UCAT page](#)** and get the full preparation pack now. You can also google "UCAT JobTestPrep" to go to any of our other pages on the subject, including ones focused on each of the subtests, with practice questions and info available freely.

Good luck!

- **JobTestPrep Team**