

THE UAT-UK Candidate Handbook



Key information
for all candidates sitting
the ESAT, TARA or TMUA

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the UAT-UK Candidate Handbook.

This handbook is intended to provide you with all the key information as you move through your admissions testing journey, starting from the point at which you research which test you might need to sit, right through to receiving your test results.

Please read each section carefully, paying particular attention to the two checklists on pages 9 and 14 as these will serve as good reminders of everything you need to consider before either booking or attending your test.

UAT-UK offers three different admissions tests;

- The Engineering and Science Admissions Test (ESAT)
- The Test of Academic Reasoning for Admissions (TARA)
- The Test of Mathematics for University Admission (TMUA)

The information in this book, unless stated otherwise, applies to all three tests. However, each test does have a slightly different structure so make sure you familiarise yourself with the format of the test you are taking by reading the relevant test page on [our website](#).

Each section will point you towards some **key resources** and will end with some **top tips** that will help your admissions testing journey run smoothly.

Remember that key dates and deadlines may vary each year, so be sure to refer to [our website](#) for the dates for your admissions cycle. [All the UAT-UK policies are set out in full here](#). These documents include our full list of criteria for our bursary scheme, how we can support candidates needing access arrangements and how we define and deal with candidate misconduct.



2. The UAT-UK admissions cycle

KEY RESOURCES

All key dates and deadlines for this year can be found on [our website](#).

2.1 An overview

The admissions testing cycle runs from May through to February of the following calendar year. Within an admissions testing cycle there are two opportunities to sit each test: October and January. Both sittings are applicable to candidates wishing to start their course in the following September/October.

If you are deferring your entry, you must sit the test in the same year you submit your UCAS application.

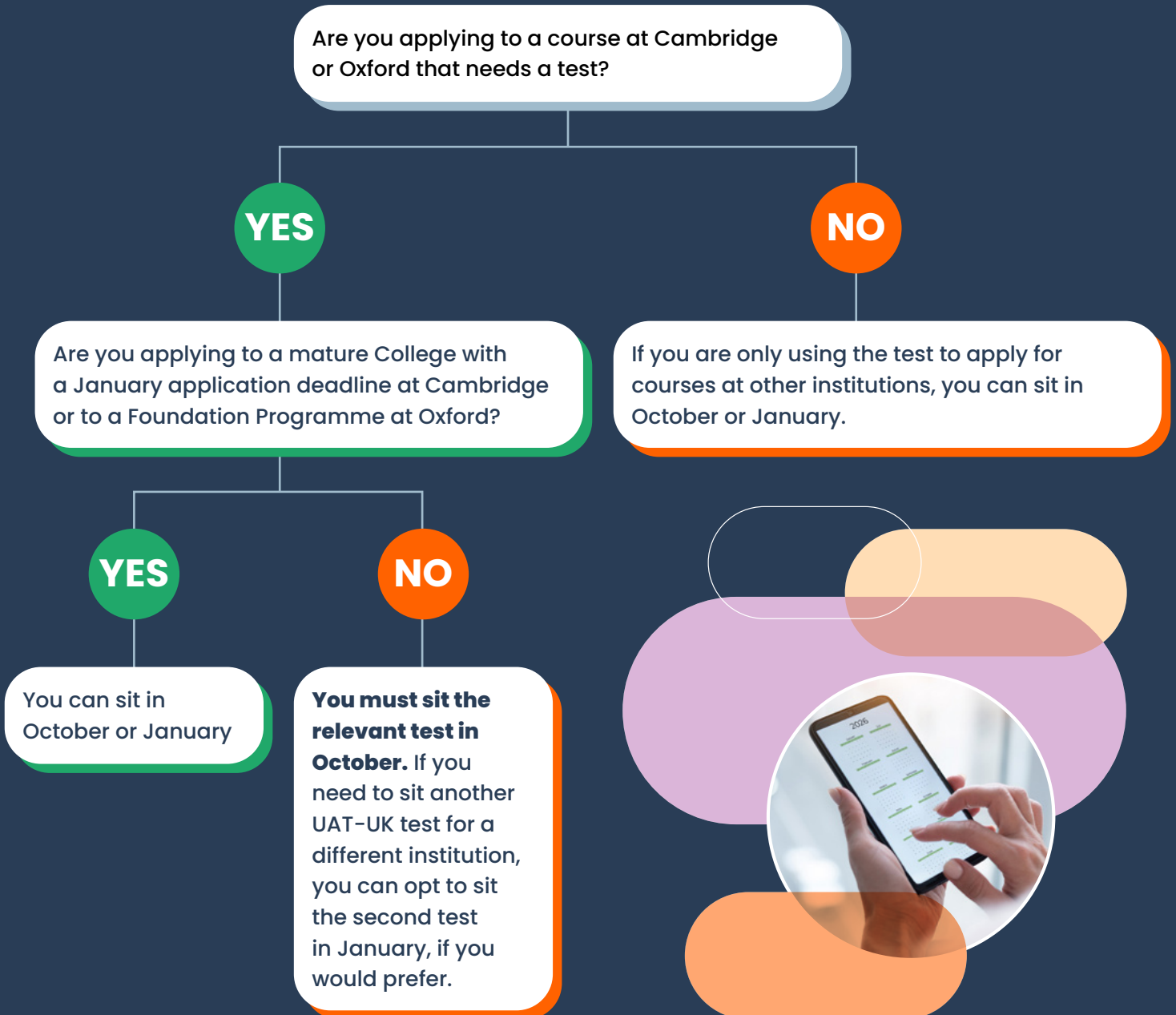
Most applicants to the University of Cambridge or the University of Oxford will be required to sit the test in October. Exceptions to this rule apply to mature applicants applying to a mature College with a January admissions deadline at the University of Cambridge, or applicants to the Astrophoria Foundation Year at the University of Oxford.

Applicants to all other institutions can decide when to sit. There is no advantage to sitting in either session, but you can only sit **once** within an admissions cycle.

If you need to sit two tests, for two different courses, you can opt to sit them both in the same sitting, or you can sit one in October and one in January (subject to any applicable rules for Cambridge and Oxford applicants).



2.2 When do I need to sit my test(s)?



TOP TIPS

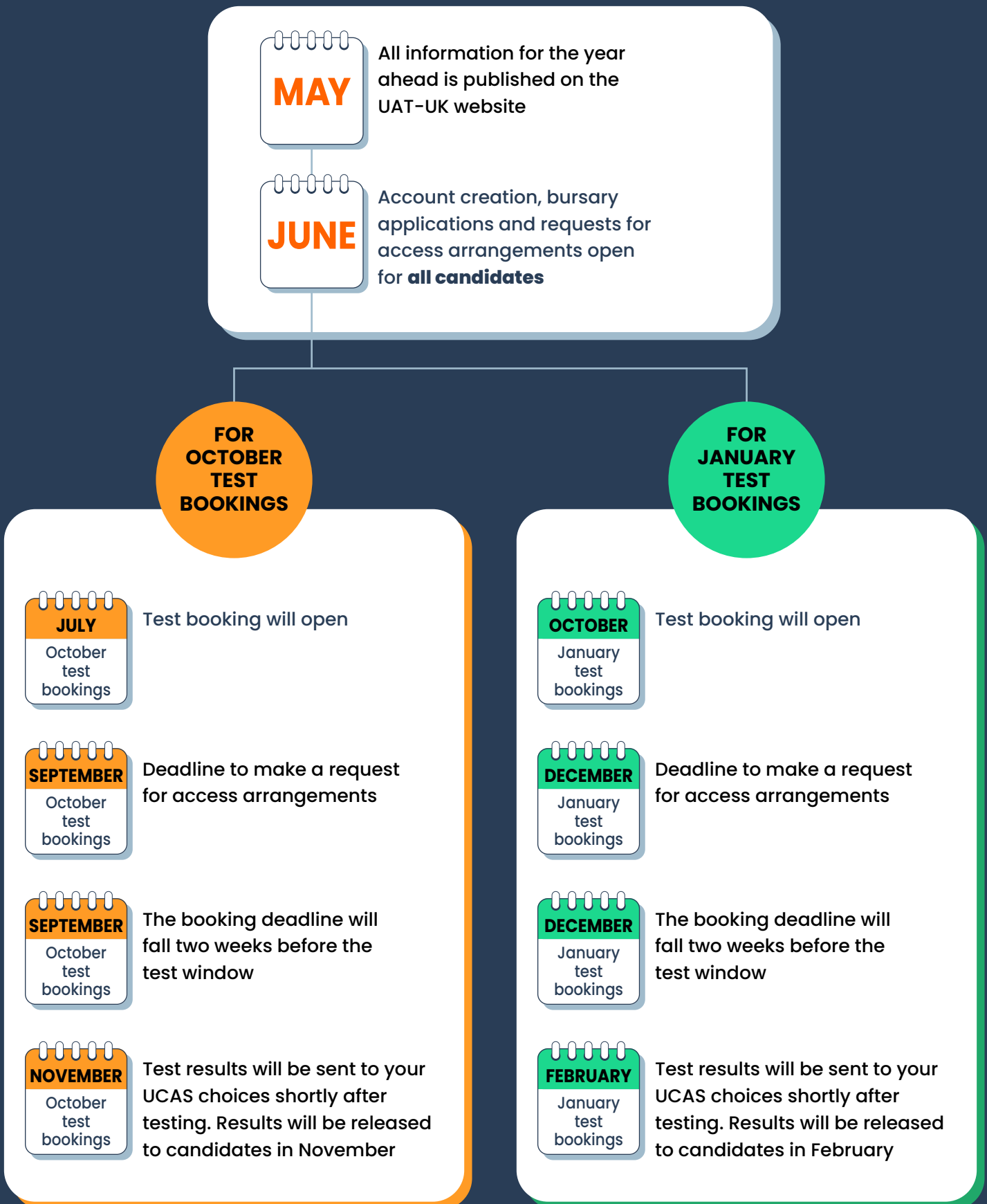
It is recommended that you set up your account and familiarise yourself with the dashboard before test booking opens. The platform gets very busy when test booking goes live, so it is good to be ready to log straight in.

Although we advise that you book a test earlier in the booking window for the best choice of dates and times, UAT-UK does not limit the number of candidates that can sit our tests. **Please do not attempt to log into your account using multiple devices at the same time – this will only slow down the booking system.**

You can reschedule or cancel your test, free of charge, until 48 hours before. Use the 'manage my appointment' button in your account.

2.3 What dates and deadlines do I need to be aware of?

The flow chart below provides an overview of the year. The deadlines that apply to you will depend on whether you wish to sit your test in October or January. Refer to [our website](#) for the exact dates applicable to your admissions year.



3. How will I communicate with UAT-UK about my test?

KEY RESOURCES

Create or log into your UAT-UK account [via our log-in page](#).

UAT-UK and Pearson will send key information about your test via email, including your booking confirmation, information about your access arrangements, where applicable, or any key reminders.

Please add the following email addresses to your safe senders list:

- uatuk-noreply@em52.useclarus.com
- enquiries@esat-tmua.ac.uk
- noreply@notifications.pearson.com
- pearsonvuecustomersupport@services.pearson.com
- PearsonVUEConfirmation@e.pearson.com

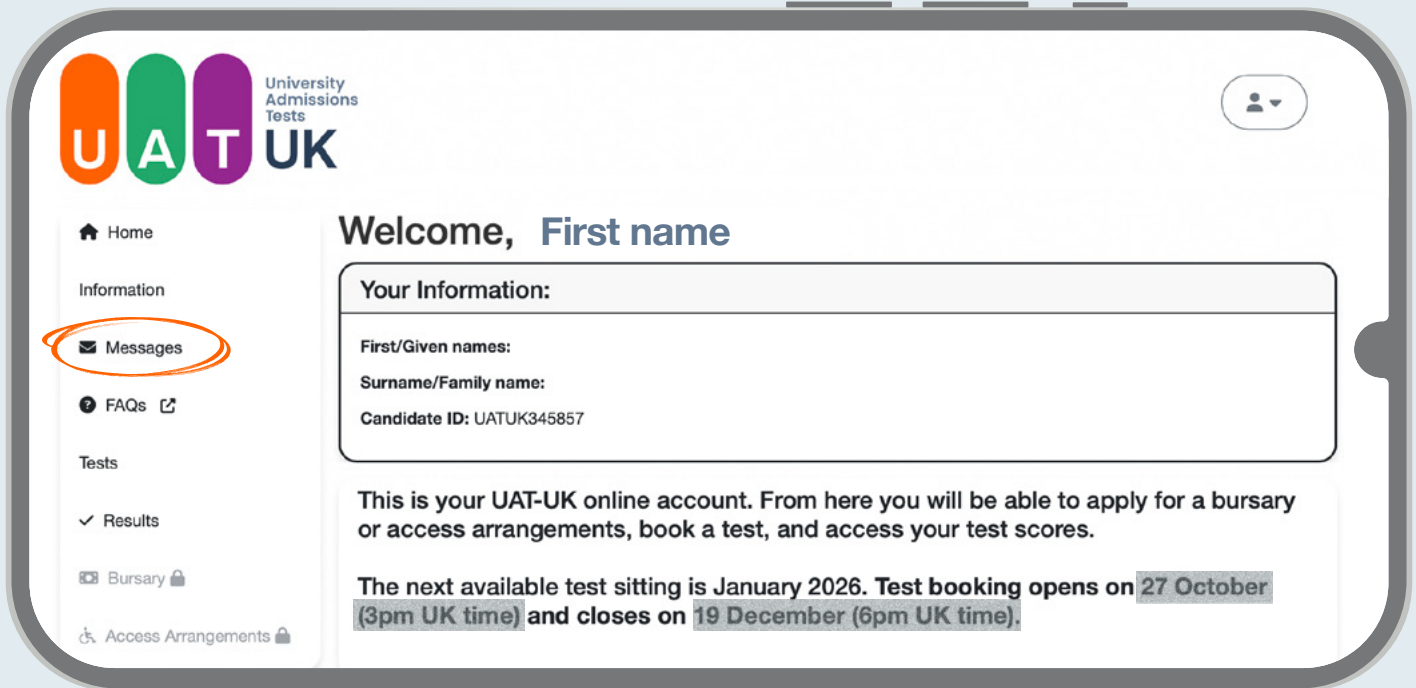
Our emails may arrive in your spam/junk folder if you do not do this, causing delays.



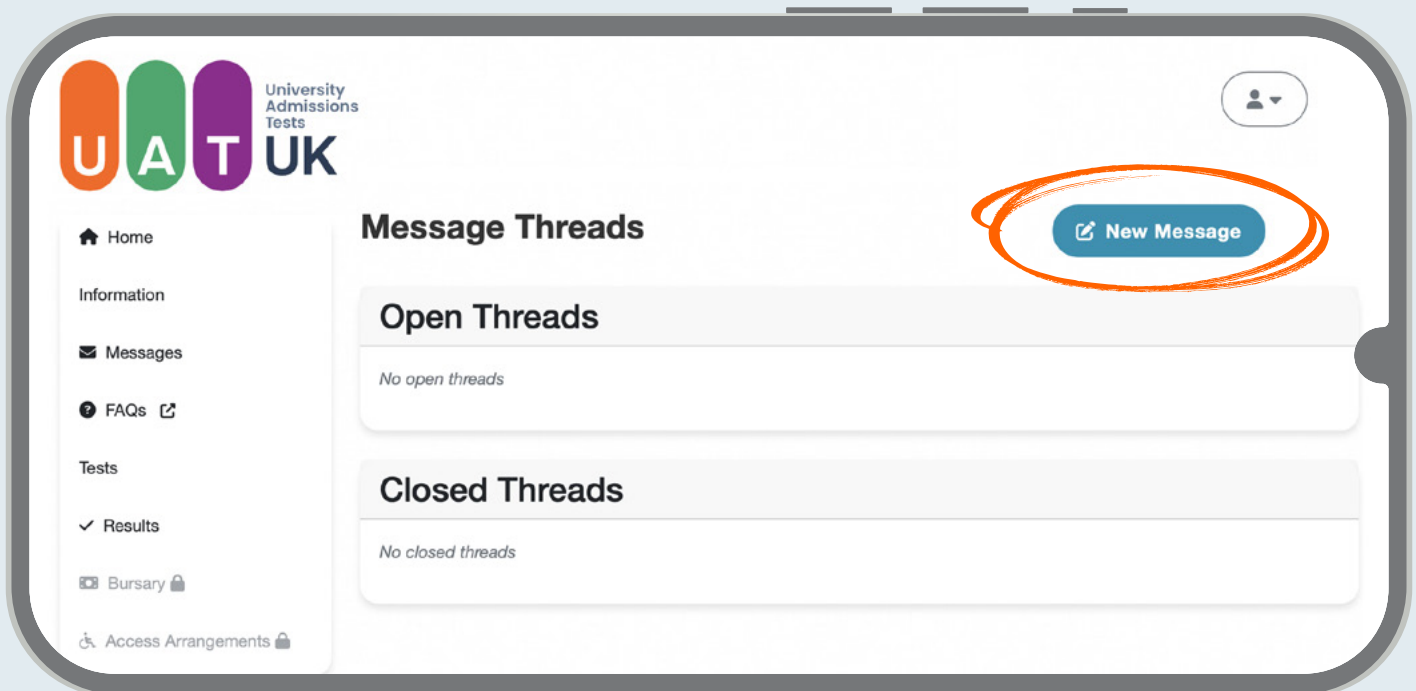
3.1 Using the UAT-UK dashboard

You can access your messages via the left-hand menu on your dashboard:

UAT-UK's candidate dashboard has a secure messaging function. This is the main way we communicate with you. The best way to stay updated on your booking status is to regularly check your secure messages. If you have a question about your test, you should send us a secure message.



You can then see your open message threads or start a new message. Questions that UAT-UK have answered are archived under 'Closed Threads'.



We will do our best to respond to secure messages within five business days. You will get an email notification once we have responded.

CHECKLIST ONE: Before you book your test



Make sure your details match your ID and UCAS account.

Any inconsistencies may mean you are turned away at the Test Centre, or there are delays in sending your test score to your university choices.



Make sure you know which test is required and which modules.

ESAT modules cannot be amended after booking – [see page 10.](#)



Be aware of deadlines –

UAT-UK will not be able to make exceptions to these – [see page 6.](#)



Apply for any access arrangements or bursaries, as applicable.



Add all UAT-UK and Pearson email addresses to your safe senders list. This will ensure you don't miss any key information about your booking – [see page 7.](#)



**TOP
TIPS**

Make sure you are checking your emails and secure messages frequently once you have set up an account and/or booked your test.

Do not try and contact UAT-UK through multiple channels at once, or open multiple message threads about the same issue. This will only increase the time needed to process your enquiry.

If you are a returning candidate, i.e. if you sat any of our tests last year, do not set up a new account. Log into your existing account to book a new test.

4. How do I book a test?

KEY RESOURCES

Pearson contact details

Find Pearson's contact information on their website.

Contact Pearson if you need to:

- book a test by phone, or
- get help finding a suitable test centre.

Course list requiring a UAT-UK test

A full list of courses that require a UAT-UK test is available on **our website**.

This includes:

- all participating institutions, and
- any modules required, where applicable.

4.1 The test booking process

You cannot start this process if you already have:

- a request for access arrangements under review, or
- a bursary application in progress.

Please wait until these are approved before booking.

Also, once you start the steps below, you will no longer be able to apply for a bursary or access arrangements.

For this reason, it is important to complete these first.

More information about bursaries and access arrangements is provided below.

Before you start, make sure your name and other personal details are correct. You can change most of these yourself on your profile page. If you cannot update your details, please **do not** set up a new account. Candidates are not permitted to have more than one account, and it can cause delays with UCAS matching. Please contact us using a secure message if you need assistance.



STEP ONE: Select a test



Make sure you have applied and been approved for a bursary or any access arrangements, if they are applicable to you, before you proceed in selecting your test.

- Log in to your UAT UK account and scroll down to find 'Test Applications'.
- Click to 'Apply for Tests'.

You will be prompted to confirm your personal details. Make sure your name is correct and exactly matches the ID you intend to present at your Test Centre.

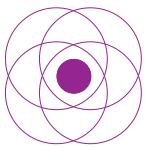
If you are taking the ESAT, you will need to confirm your module choices. Once done, click 'Submit Application'.



Test Applications

Apply for your upcoming tests. Select your preferred test center and date to secure your spot.

[Apply for Tests](#)



Note on ESAT modules:

Most candidates need to sit three ESAT modules (Mathematics 1 and two other modules).

Some courses have different compulsory modules. If you apply to these courses, you may need to take four modules instead.

If this applies to you, select the modules you think you need.

You will be asked to list the courses you are applying for. UAT-UK will check and confirm your choice.

Please note:

- UAT-UK will only approve four modules when they are required.
- Taking four modules when you do not need them does not improve your application.

If:

- one course lets you choose the modules, **and**
- another course has three compulsory modules,

you must choose the test modules required by the course with compulsory requirements.



STEP TWO: View your test card



If you have applied to sit the TARA or TMUA, your selection will be automatically approved. A test card will appear on your dashboard within minutes. **If you do not see this, or it says your details are being transmitted to Pearson, please refresh your screen.**

Your test card looks like this:

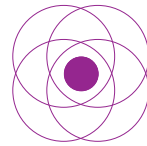
Test of Academic Reasoning for Admissions

Ready to book

Your application for the Test of Academic Reasoning for Admissions has been confirmed

Schedule appointment

X Withdraw Application



If you have applied to sit the ESAT, and have selected a valid combination of modules, a test card will also appear. Candidates who have requested to sit more than three modules will need to await human review. This can take up to two working days, and you will be notified by email when this is complete.

STEP THREE: Select your Test Centre and book an appointment

Press the 'Schedule appointment' button to open Pearson's booking portal.

You will be presented with a list of Test Centres nearest to your registered address, but you can look further afield by adjusting the location in the text box at the top of the page.

- Select the 'Schedule appointment' button to open Pearson's booking portal.
- You will see a list of Test Centres closest to your registered address. To see other locations, change the location in the text box at the top of the page.
- Choose your preferred Test Centre and available time.
- Complete the payment, unless you have already been approved for a bursary.
- After payment is received, your booking will be processed.
- You will receive a confirmation email with your appointment details, including any approved access arrangements.
- If you do not receive the confirmation email, please check that the card holder's bank approved the payment.



Note on Test Centre availability: We cannot guarantee you will be able to book in your first choice of Test Centre, particularly later in the booking window, and you may be required to travel to an alternative Centre. However, in the UK, that should be no further than 40 miles from your registered home address. If you cannot find a Test Centre within a 40-mile radius, you should contact Pearson for assistance. Their [customer service team](#) will be able to help arrange an appointment.

4.2 The UAT-UK bursary scheme

UAT-UK offers a **bursary scheme** for candidates in the UK in financial need. If eligible, you may be able to sit the test free of charge.

You must have a **UAT-UK account** before you can apply.

- You can use a bursary for either the **October** or **January** test sitting.
- You must provide appropriate documentary evidence showing that **you or your parent/guardian** receives one of the **approved benefits**.
- Applications **open in June each year** and you can apply up to **one week before the test booking deadline** for your chosen sitting.

Full details of the bursary scheme are available on the UAT-UK website. Also check the **key dates page** for upcoming bursary deadlines.

4.3 Access arrangements

Access arrangements refer to any reasonable adjustments to the test environment. They help remove disadvantage caused by a learning difference, disability, sensory impairment, or medical condition.

If you need access arrangements for your UAT-UK test, please tell us as early as possible.

Important information:

- Requests for access arrangements usually close two weeks before the test booking deadline. Make sure you know this date.



- Most candidates must provide a letter from their current school or college explaining any current adjustments made when they sit public exams.
- If your school is closed for the summer and you cannot obtain this letter, apply anyway. You can provide it to us when your school re-opens.
- Applying early increases the chance of being able to sit the test in a local Test Centre that meets your needs.

After your access arrangements have been approved:

- You will receive an email explaining the next steps.
- If you have time-based adjustments (such as extra time and/or rest breaks), you can usually book your test online.
- If you need a separate room, a reader and/or recorder, or other more complex support, Pearson will contact you by phone to complete the booking.



**TOP
TIPS**

- If you cannot find a convenient Test Centre upon bookings opening, you may wish to check back later. Depending on regional demand, Pearson may increase seat capacity in an area, or appointments might become available due to cancellations.
- Set up an account before test booking opens so you can log in and go straight to the booking task without needing to fill out your profile page and you can apply for any bursaries or access arrangements in advance.
- Let us know as soon as possible if you need any reasonable adjustments to your test environment.



4.4 Frequently asked questions about test bookings

If I cancel, or am absent from, my October booking, am I allowed to sit in January?

Yes, if you book a test for October and then decide you would rather sit in January, you can cancel and rebook later. If you cancel, or are absent from, an October test booking, your eligibility to sit in January will not be affected.

If I cancel, or am absent from, my October booking, can I still use my bursary in January?

If you cancel your test with more than 48 hours' notice, your bursary will be reinstated, and you can use it to rebook. If you cancel your test within 48 hours of your appointment, or you are absent from a booked appointment, your bursary will not be re-issued.


Is it better to sit in October or January?


There is no advantage to sitting the test in either session. However, if you are applying to Cambridge or Oxford, you will need to sit in October, with the exception of mature applicants applying to a mature College with a January admissions deadline at the University of Cambridge, or applicants to the Astrophoria Foundation Year at the University of Oxford.


My school is closed and I don't have a letter to support my access arrangements request. What should I do?

You can still apply without the relevant documentation. UAT-UK will provisionally approve your request so that you can go ahead and book a test. You will need to send your letter to us once your school has reopened. You will be given a deadline for this, after which, if we have not received your letter, your test may be cancelled.


CHECKLIST TWO: Before you take your test

 **Double check your booking confirmation** – make sure your details, including any module selections or access arrangements appear as expected.

 **Plan your journey** – You should aim to arrive 30 minutes before the start of your test as you will need to check in at reception and deposit your personal belongings in a locker. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will not be permitted to test.

 **Check the ID and admission policy** – your ID must comply with the requirements in [our policy](#) otherwise you may be turned away and you will forfeit your appointment. Make sure you read the full policy. **The name on your test booking must match your ID exactly. Your ID must have your photo and signature. It cannot be a photocopy, scanned copy or photograph and it must be in date.**

 **Apply for any access arrangements or bursaries, as applicable.**

 **Complete the practice tests** – familiarise yourself with the software as this is the test environment you will experience on the day.

5. Common issues and how to address them

5.1 I don't have any ID that meets the UAT-UK requirements. Can I still sit my test?

If you are a UK candidate without a passport or other acceptable form of photographic ID, UAT-UK can provide you with an ID exemption.

You must request this at least five days in advance of your test.

If an exemption is granted, you will be able to present a [Citizen Card](#), which you will need to apply for in advance, OR a letter, with a photograph, from your school.

You must get approval before you present one of these exceptional forms of ID at your Test Centre. If your exemption is not marked on your booking by UAT-UK, you will not be permitted to test.

Once approved, you must take the Citizen Card or a printed copy of your letter with you to your test booking.

ID exemptions may also be granted if you are seeking asylum in the UK, have refugee status, or are applying to stay in the UK as a stateless person. Please contact UAT-UK via your online account and you will be advised accordingly.

5.2 I am due to sit my test, but I want to let you know about my extenuating circumstances. How can I do this?

If you are still able to sit the test, but have an illness, injury, or personal circumstances that impacted your performance on the day, you can apply for special consideration via your UAT-UK dashboard. You should do this **before** you attend your test and upload any documentary evidence that you would like UAT-UK to consider.

5.3 My Test Centre closed unexpectedly, and Pearson has cancelled my test. What should I do?

If Pearson has cancelled your test in the few days leading up to the test, or the day of your test, do not worry. Although we do our best to avoid this, sometimes unexpected issues arise, such as severe weather events, power outages, or staff availability. In this case, we will work to reschedule your test. You will be given the opportunity to rebook a test, for a date which will still allow you to get your results on time and will not jeopardise your UCAS application. If Pearson cannot rebook your test immediately, shortly after the end of the standard test window, you will be emailed with instructions on how to book a new test.

5.4 There was a disruption during my test. What should I do?

When something goes wrong or disrupts your test in any way, this is covered by our [Test Incident Policy](#). A Test Incident can be anything from an unexpected fire alarm, or noise disruption, or a fault with your computer or test materials. **Make sure you report this to an invigilator or member of staff at the Test Centre and obtain a case ID number.**

You can then follow up with Pearson after the test via email and ask for the case to be investigated. Please do not report this to UAT-UK until Pearson has provided an outcome. If you are unhappy with the outcome, you can then submit an appeal via your UAT-UK dashboard. Unfortunately, Pearson will not be able to investigate anything that was reported more than 24 hours after testing.

5.5 I am due to sit the test, but I am not well enough to attend. What should I do?



6. How can I prepare for my test?

KEY RESOURCES

All of UAT-UK's preparatory documents can be found by visiting [this page](#).

The practice tests can be found [here](#).

There are four key elements to test preparation:

1. Run through Checklist 2 in this handbook ahead of your test booking
2. Read through the relevant [Test Specification](#) and see if there are any topics you may need to revise
3. Familiarise yourself with the style of questions, referring to our [comprehensive guides](#), notes, and any past paper or practice questions
4. Attempt one or both of the [practice tests in Pearson's test player](#) and make sure you are confident using the Pearson software – this is the same software you will use on your test day.

All necessary preparatory materials are available, free of charge, to all candidates. UAT-UK provides a specification for each of our tests. Test content typically draws on skills and knowledge candidates have already covered at school. For this reason, UAT-UK does not endorse any commercial tutoring services for any of our tests.



**TOP
TIPS**

- Check the test specification to see if there are any topics you need to revise.
- Complete one of the practice tests under timed conditions so you know the pace at which you need to work to finish the test in the allocated time.
- Make sure you know how to use the test functionality, for example, navigating to and away from the review screen.

7. How will my test day work?



KEY RESOURCES

[Click through these slides](#) to see what a typical Test Centre looks like.

[Watch this video](#) to see what you can expect at your Test Centre.

The Test Admissions and Photo ID Policy can be found [on this page](#).

7.1 Test rules and code of conduct

- Candidates are expected to be familiar with the [UAT-UK Misconduct Policy](#) and behave in line with the rules and regulations set out here. This extends to family and friends who represent you both at the Test Centre and in any communication with UAT-UK or Pearson.
- On the day of the test, you should aim to arrive 30 minutes before the start of your appointment. Upon arrival, check in at the Test Centre reception and follow their instructions. They will take your photo, ask you to sign the test rules, and inspect any comfort aids.
- You will be turned away and not permitted to test if you arrive more than 15 minutes late for your booking or you cannot present ID that meets all the requirements in our [Admission and Photo ID policy](#).
- Candidates cannot take anything into the test room that is not listed on [Pearson's Permitted Comfort Aids sheet](#). This includes food and drink. If you need additional items for any medical reason, make sure you let us know by applying for access arrangements.
- You are permitted to bring non-digital ear plugs into the test room. In some Centres these may be provided, however we advise you to bring your own if you think you may require them.

7.2 Test format

Timing of each test

- Each paper is timed separately.
 - ESAT and TARA: 40 minutes per module
 - TMUA: 75 minutes per paper
 - If you finish early, extra time does not carry over to the next module or paper.

Writing materials

- You will be given a whiteboard or laminated sheet and a marker pen for working out answers.
- Personal pen and paper are not allowed in the test room.
- If your whiteboard, or pen is not working properly, raise your hand. An invigilator will replace it as quickly as possible.

Test structure and breaks

- All papers or modules are taken one after another, with no automatic breaks.
- You will not get a break unless this is approved as part of an access arrangement.
- If you stop the test for any reason, the timer does not stop.
 - This includes going to the toilet.
 - We strongly recommend using the toilet before your test starts.

Reviewing your answers

- At the end of each module or paper, you will see a review screen listing:
 - all questions you flagged, and
 - all questions you did not answer.
- To return to a question, click “Review” next to a question to be able to navigate through the test.



All of our tests are computer-based tests. As you move through the test, you can flag a question for review if you would like to come back to it later.

Ending the paper or module

- When you leave the review, you will see a warning message that are about to end the module or paper.
- Once you confirm, the module or paper ends permanently. You cannot return to it later.
- Only click ‘Yes’ if you are sure you have finished that section.

Make sure you read each question in full and all the possible answers. If you do not scroll to the bottom of the question, when you try to move on, the computer will prompt you to take a look at all unseen content.

Unseen Content

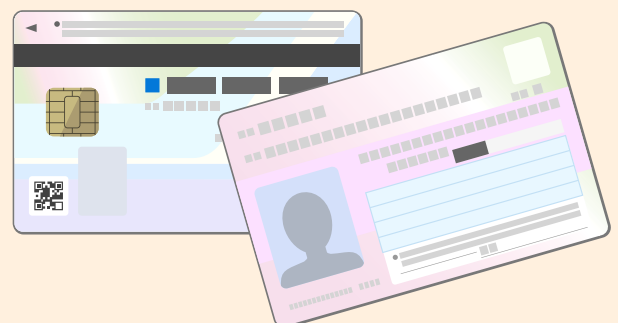


You have not yet viewed the entire screen. Make sure you play all multimedia content, select every tab and scroll to every corner.

OK



- Make sure you arrive early for your test and have the correct ID with you. The Test Centre will be unable to reschedule your test for later that day or later in the week.
- Make sure you are familiar with the functionality in Pearson’s test player.



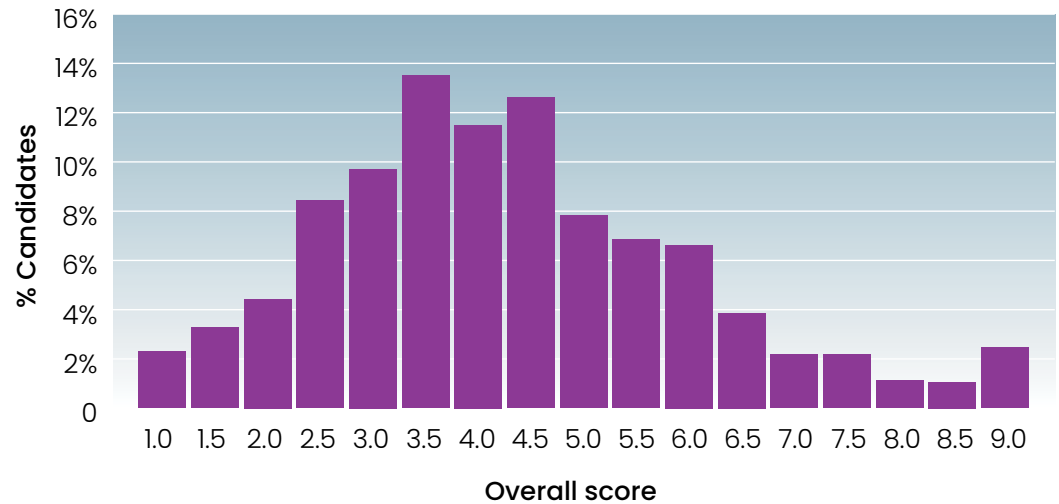
8. How is my test score calculated and given to my UCAS choices?

KEY RESOURCES

All [information on scoring](#), and [last year's explanation of results documents](#) can be found on our website. These show the score distributions for each module and test.

We publish an [annual report](#) each year, for each test, on our website. These are normally available at the end of July. This gives lots of useful insights into test performance.

8.1 Scoring: key points



- UAT-UK delivers tests over a window, which means for test security reasons, candidates sitting at different times and in different locations, see different versions of the test.
- Scores are statistically equated using Rasch analysis. This means the results of candidates taking different versions of the test can be reported on the same scale.
- The scale runs from 1.0 (low) to 9.0 (high) to one decimal place.
- The 50th percentile of the score distribution equates to 4.5 and the 90th percentile to 7.0.
- In summary, this means that the reported score will depend on the following:
 - The number of correct answers you selected
 - The version of the test you took
 - The performance of the cohort
- It is not possible to fail UAT-UK tests. You should focus on doing your best. UAT-UK does not make any admissions decisions, or implement any cut score. It is entirely up to each institution how they use your test score but it is normally considered amongst lots of other aspects of your UCAS application.
- The way your score is presented depends on the test you take. For the ESAT, you will receive a separate score for each module. For the TMUA, you will receive a single overall score. For the TARA, you will receive a score for the Critical Thinking and Problem Solving modules only. The Writing Task is assessed by universities and is not marked by UAT-UK.

Note on practice tests

The questions in the practice test match the scope and nature of questions from live tests, but practice scores are not Rasch-scaled and cannot be compared directly with live test results.

We do not publish scaled scores for practice papers as this would not be indicative of performance in any given year.

8.2 The release of scores

How scores are sent

- Your test scores are sent automatically to universities shortly after release.
- When you register for a test, you agree to your scores being shared.
- You cannot choose which universities receive your score.
- Your score is sent to all institutions where you have a UCAS-matched course that uses a UAT-UK.

UCAS matching process

- UAT-UK matches your test record to your UCAS applications at set points in the admissions cycle.
- UCAS matching uses the details you entered when setting up your account.
- You can add your UCAS Personal ID (PID) to your profile at any time before the test.
- Make sure your full name, date of birth, and email address in your UAT-UK account match exactly what you gave to UCAS.
- If you had not applied to your courses when you took the test, your score will be sent at the next matching round.
- Matching is done automatically so you do not need to do anything except making sure your personal details in UCAS and UAT-UK are the same.
- If a university is missing your score, they may contact you and ask for your UAT-UK candidate ID.

When scores are released

- Scores are released around 4 weeks after your test date.
- Check the UAT-UK website for key dates and deadlines.

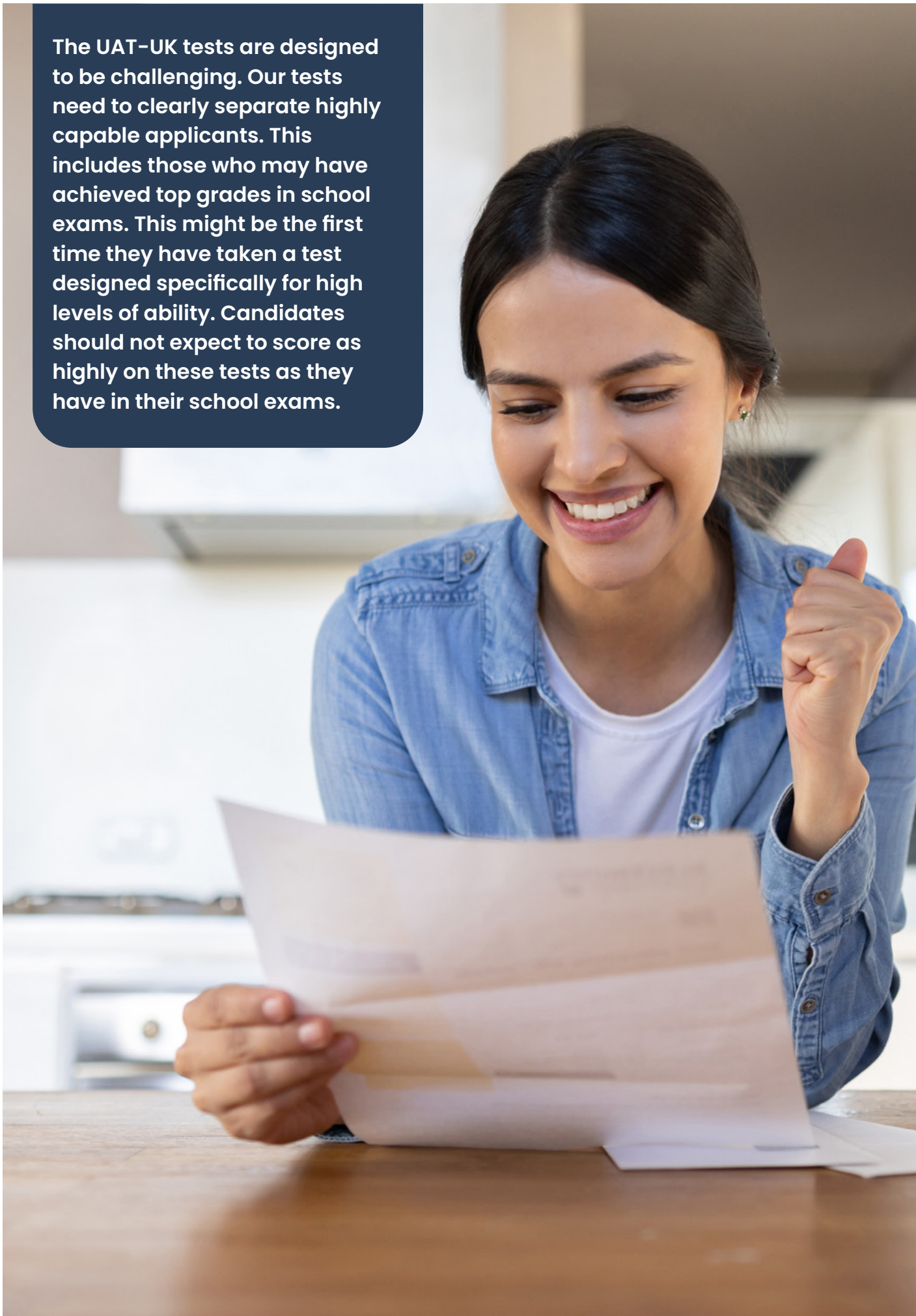
Which scores universities see

- You cannot hide your score from specific UCAS choices.
- Scores are matched to specific courses, not to universities in general.
- A university can only see your score if the course you applied for requires the UAT-UK test.
- This applies whether the test is optional or compulsory.



- Make sure your personal details on your UAT-UK profile match your UCAS application.
- You can make a change to your details at any point up until you sit the test. If for any reason you can't make a change, please send a secure message.

The UAT-UK tests are designed to be challenging. Our tests need to clearly separate highly capable applicants. This includes those who may have achieved top grades in school exams. This might be the first time they have taken a test designed specifically for high levels of ability. Candidates should not expect to score as highly on these tests as they have in their school exams.



For any questions relating to the information provided in this booklet, you can contact UAT-UK via your account.

If your question relates to the booking, rescheduling or cancellation of your test, please contact **Pearson Customer Services** using the number listed for your country or region.

E: **[pvemeacustomerservice@pearson.com](mailto:pvemecustomerservice@pearson.com)**

For urgent matters please call rather than email as this will take longer to get a response.