

# Everyone Makes UCAT Mistakes — Smart Students Learn from Them

The UCAT is designed to challenge even the most capable students — not through complex content, but by testing your ability to think clearly under pressure.

Every year, InMed Academy coaches thousands of students and sees the same mistakes hold people back from their true potential.

This guide reveals the 10 most common UCAT pitfalls — and more importantly, how to avoid them with the strategies used by top scorers.

## 1. Ignoring the Time Pressure

“I knew how to do the questions — I just ran out of time.”

Why it happens: Students focus too much on accuracy early on and don’t train with strict timing until the end.

How to avoid it:

Start timed practice early — even with short sets. Learn to guess strategically, skip difficult questions, and move on.

Remember: finishing 80% accurately beats attempting 100% slowly.

InMed Tip: Practise “speed-first, accuracy-second” drills each week — this rewires your pacing instinct.

## 2. Treating Each Question as Equal

Why it happens: Students try to answer every question perfectly instead of prioritising the easy marks.

How to avoid it:

Train to identify and skip time traps. In QR or DM, long wordy questions often yield only one mark — not worth the stress.

InMed Tip: During mocks, mark “slow” questions and review patterns — if they’re always low-yield, learn to move past them confidently.

## 3. Overthinking Verbal Reasoning

Why it happens: Students interpret passages like essays instead of analysing them objectively.

How to avoid it:

VR questions test evidence, not opinion. Base answers only on what's explicitly stated or logically implied — nothing more.

InMed Tip: Use the keyword and scan method — find key terms, read 1–2 sentences for context, then decide quickly.

#### 4. Not Learning Decision Making Logic Properly

Why it happens: Students memorise patterns but don't understand underlying logic (syllogisms, Venns, probabilities).

How to avoid it:

Practise breaking arguments down visually — use quick sketches or logic grids to see relationships.

InMed Tip: Learn one logical concept per week, and review it through real UCAT-style questions until you can explain why an answer is right.

#### 5. Treating Quantitative Reasoning Like a Maths Test

Why it happens: Students try to calculate everything exactly instead of working efficiently.

How to avoid it:

The UCAT isn't testing your math — it's testing your speed and decision-making. Use rounding, estimation, and common sense.

InMed Tip: Practise using mental shortcuts:

10% =  $\div 10$

25% =  $\div 4$

50% =  $\div 2$

These save minutes over a full section.

#### 6. Neglecting Situational Judgement

Why it happens: Students think SJT is "common sense" and leave it until last.

How to avoid it:

SJT is marked on professional values — empathy, integrity, and teamwork — not personal opinions.

InMed Tip:

Learn the four SJT pillars early:

Patient safety first

Honesty and accountability

Respect for others

Calm, appropriate communication

## 7. Waiting Too Long to Start Preparation

Why it happens: Students underestimate how long it takes to build skill-based improvement.

How to avoid it:

Start at least 6 months (12-24 is recommended) before your test, even if it's just 2 hours per week. You'll have time to learn strategies before ramping up mocks.

InMed Tip: Follow our free UCAT Study Plan

— it breaks preparation into clear monthly milestones.

## 8. Not Reviewing Mistakes Effectively

Why it happens: Students redo questions but don't understand why they got them wrong.

How to avoid it:

After each session, note down:

What type of question it was

Why your logic failed

What you'll do differently next time

InMed Tip: Use a UCAT Error Journal — an InMed-recommended method that helps you turn every mistake into a skill gain.

## 9. Ignoring Test Strategy and Endurance

Why it happens: Students can handle single sections but struggle in full mocks.

How to avoid it:

Build test endurance gradually. Sit full-length mocks regularly to practise concentration and stamina.

InMed Tip: Simulate exam-day conditions — no breaks, same timing, and realistic pressure.

## 10. Preparing Alone Without Guidance

Why it happens: The UCAT feels self-study friendly — but most students plateau without external feedback.

How to avoid it:

Join workshops or study groups with experienced mentors. Learning proven strategies from top scorers can save months of trial and error.

InMed Tip: InMed Academy's UCAT Workshops are designed to fast-track your improvement — from strategy to execution, all taught by elite UCAT achievers.

## Summary: Learn Smarter, Not Harder

Mistake	What to Do Instead
Focusing on accuracy only	Train under time pressure early
Ignoring weak sections	Rotate focus weekly
Over-preparing content	Prioritise strategy and pacing
Practising too late	Start small, stay consistent
Going solo	Get expert feedback

## Next Steps to Avoid These Mistakes

You now know what holds most students back — the next step is learning how to overcome those challenges through guided, expert support.

At InMed Academy, our workshops and online programs give you:

- Proven section-specific strategies
- Timed practice and live feedback
- Mock exams with expert review
- Personalised performance tracking

Whether you're just starting or fine-tuning your preparation, InMed will help you study smarter and score higher. Take the next steps:

- Download our free **'How to Balance UCAT and Year 12 Study'** for detailed preparation steps.
- Book a spot in one of our upcoming UCAT workshops.
- Speak with an InMed mentor to plan your study