

Parents' Guide to the UCAT

Introduction: Helping Your Child Take the Next Step Toward Medicine

Every year, thousands of Australian students sit the UCAT (University Clinical Aptitude Test) as part of their application to medical and dental degrees.

For many parents, it's unfamiliar territory — but understanding how the UCAT works and how to best support your child can make all the difference.

This guide breaks down everything you need to know — from what the UCAT is, to how preparation works, to how you can help your child perform at their best.

What Is the UCAT?

The University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) is an online exam used by many Australian and New Zealand universities to select students for medicine, dentistry, and clinical science degrees.

Find out more at: <https://www.ucat.edu.au/>

It measures skills such as:

- Logical reasoning
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Reading comprehension
- Situational judgement

The UCAT is not about school knowledge or science content — it's about how students think under pressure and make quick, accurate decisions.

When and How the UCAT Fits into University Applications

The UCAT is usually sat mid-year (around July) in Year 12, before university applications open. Scores are then sent directly to universities that use the UCAT as part of their selection process.

To enter medicine, students are usually assessed on three main factors:

- ATAR (academic performance)
- UCAT score
- Interview (at some universities)

Understanding this helps parents see that the UCAT carries significant weight — often making the difference between receiving an interview offer or missing out.

What the UCAT Tests

The UCAT is made up of four subtests:

- Verbal Reasoning (VR) – understanding and interpreting written information
- Decision Making (DM) – evaluating arguments and reaching logical conclusions
- Quantitative Reasoning (QR) – problem-solving using numbers and data
- Situational Judgement (SJT) – understanding professional behaviour and ethics

Each section is timed, challenging students to work quickly and accurately.

How to Prepare for the UCAT

Effective UCAT preparation is about building skills over time, not memorising content. The UCAT is not like a typical high school test or exam; which is mainly because of the significant time constraints.

Students who perform well typically:

- Begin preparation 12-24 months before the exam
- Learn section-specific strategies
- Practice using timed, exam-style questions
- Regularly review mistakes and track progress

At InMed Academy, our UCAT workshops teach students how to:

- Approach each question type efficiently
- Manage time under pressure
- Apply proven techniques to boost scores
- Build confidence through guided practice

How Parents Can Support Their Child

Even though parents can't take the test for their child, your role is vital. You can:

- Help plan a realistic study schedule
- Encourage balanced routines (study, rest, schoolwork)
- Provide emotional support during stressful periods
- Help your child choose the right preparation program

Students often perform better when they feel supported, understood, and guided by both their family and their tutors.

Common Myths About the UCAT

Myth: The UCAT can be crammed for in a few weeks.

Truth: The UCAT tests skills developed over time — early preparation is key.

Myth: High ATAR students always do well in the UCAT.

Truth: UCAT success depends on speed, strategy, and reasoning — not just intelligence.

Myth: Practice doesn't help much.

Truth: Consistent, strategic practice is the most proven way to improve scores.

How InMed Academy Helps

At InMed Academy, we've helped students enter medicine through targeted UCAT training. Our workshops are designed by tutors who scored in the top 5% of UCAT candidates and understand exactly what it takes to succeed.

We offer:

- In-person workshops for hands-on learning
- Online practice questions and mock exams via MedEntry
- Personalised feedback and progress tracking
- Study guidance

Whether your child is just starting or looking to refine their technique, our team is here to help them reach their potential.

Next Steps for Parents

If your child is considering medicine or dentistry:

- Download our free Student UCAT Guide for detailed preparation steps.
- Book a spot in one of our upcoming UCAT workshops.
- Speak with InMed director or coordinator to plan your child's study timeline.