

Understanding UCAT Scores and Percentiles

This guide is designed to **demystify UCAT scoring** for both students and parents — explaining what the numbers mean, how percentiles are calculated, and how universities use them in medical and dental admissions.

Introduction: What Your UCAT Score Really Means

Every year, thousands of students sit the UCAT — but few truly understand how it's scored.

You might hear students say things like:

“I got 2700, is that good enough?”

“What’s a Band 1 in SJT?”

“How do universities even use these scores?”

Let’s break it down clearly — so you know exactly **what your score means**, how to **interpret your percentile**, and how **universities make decisions** using them.

1. UCAT Structure and Scoring Overview

The UCAT is made up of **four scored subtests** (since Abstract Reasoning has been removed for 2025):

1. **Verbal Reasoning (VR)** – Reading comprehension under time pressure
2. **Decision Making (DM)** – Logical and probabilistic reasoning
3. **Quantitative Reasoning (QR)** – Mathematical problem-solving
4. **Situational Judgement (SJT)** – Ethical and interpersonal judgment (scored separately)

Cognitive Subtests (VR, DM, QR)

Each subtest gives you a **scaled score** between **300–900**. These are then added together to form your **total UCAT score**, ranging from **1200–3600**.

| Subtest | Score Range | Example Score |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Verbal Reasoning | 300–900 | 650 |
| Decision Making | 300–900 | 700 |
| Quantitative Reasoning | 300–900 | 750 |
| Total (VR + DM + QR + SJT) | 1200–3600 | 2100–2700 typical range |



InMed Tip:

Don’t get distracted by raw marks (how many you got right). UCAT uses **scaled scores** to fairly compare performance across different test versions.

Situational Judgement Test (SJT)

SJT is scored **separately** — not out of 900.

Instead, it’s reported in **Bands (1–4)**:

| Band | What It Means |
|---------------|---|
| Band 1 | Excellent judgment — very similar to experts |
| Band 2 | Good judgment — mostly aligned with experts |
| Band 3 | Modest judgment — some alignment, some errors |

Disclaimer: Values related to scores, rankings, percentiles, top %, etc are guides only and should not be taken as fact. These values vary year to year.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Band 4 | Low alignment — poor understanding of appropriate behaviour |
|---------------|---|

 **InMed Tip:**

Most universities **do not combine** SJT with your main UCAT score, but they may use it for **interview selection** or as a **tie-breaker**.

2. What Are UCAT Percentiles?

Your **percentile** tells you how your score compares to everyone else's. It answers the question: "What percentage of candidates scored lower than I did?"

Example:

If you're in the **80th percentile**, that means you scored **higher than 80% of candidates** who sat the UCAT that year. Example scores from previous years are outlined below:

| Total Score | Approx. Percentile (based on recent data) |
|--------------|---|
| 3000+ | 95th percentile or above |
| 2800 | ~85th percentile |
| 2600 | ~70th percentile |
| 2400 | ~50th percentile (average) |
| 2200 | ~30th percentile |
| 2000 | ~15th percentile |

 **InMed Insight:**

Percentiles change slightly each year based on candidate performance and changes to the test (most notably 2025) — but averages stay fairly consistent.

3. How Universities Use UCAT Scores

Every university uses UCAT results differently — some have **strict cut-offs**, while others **weigh UCAT alongside ATAR, interviews, and written responses**.

Here's an overview of the main models used by Australian and New Zealand universities — note actual values will change year to year. We recommend students and parents complete their own research of the university as this is purely a guide.

| University | UCAT Weight | Typical Cut-off Range | Notes |
|--|--------------|-----------------------|---|
| University of Adelaide (Medicine & Dentistry) | High | 2800+ | Competitive — high UCAT scores strongly preferred |
| University of Newcastle / UNE (JMP) | High | ~2700 | Combines UCAT with ATAR and interview |
| Western Sydney University / Charles Sturt Joint Program | High | ~2750 | UCAT used for interview shortlist |
| Monash University | Moderate | 2600–2800 | UCAT + ATAR + interview combination |
| University of Queensland | Moderate | 2600+ | Direct entry — balanced selection |
| University of Otago / Auckland (NZ) | Moderate–Low | Variable | UCAT used as part of admission weighting |

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 **InMed Tip:**

A “good” UCAT score depends on where you’re applying. For Medicine, aim for **top 10%**; for Dentistry, slightly lower may still be competitive.

4. What Is a “Good” UCAT Score?

There’s no universal definition — it depends on **your goals, the year’s averages, your ATAR and interview**. We recommend aiming to score in the top 10% as a general rule of thumb.

 **InMed Insight:** Universities consider **overall profiles**, not just scores. Strong interviews, academic results, and work experience all matter.

5. How Cut-Offs Work

A **cut-off** is the minimum UCAT score required to be considered for interview or admission.

Cut-offs **change yearly** depending on:

- The **difficulty** of the UCAT that year
- The **number of applicants**
- The **available places** in each course

 **InMed Tip:**

Cut-offs are **not published in advance**, so always aim higher than the average — ideally in the **top 10% of candidates** to stay competitive.

6. Common UCAT Score Myths (Busted)

| Myth | Reality |
|---|--|
| “A high ATAR can offset a low UCAT.” | ✗ Not true for most programs. UCAT is a separate screening tool. |
| “You can’t improve your UCAT score.” | ✗ Wrong — consistent, structured practice leads to major gains. |
| “All universities use UCAT the same way.” | ✗ Each university weighs and interprets scores differently. |
| “You only need to focus on one section.” | ✗ Your total score matters most; neglecting one section can cost marks. |
| “Band 3 or 4 in SJT means rejection.” | ✗ Some universities disregard SJT bands completely — context matters. |

 **InMed Insight:**

Understanding how scoring works is half the battle. With the right preparation, you can plan strategically and maximise your admissions chances.

7. Interpreting Your UCAT Results Report

After your UCAT, you’ll receive an online **score report** showing:

- Your **scaled scores** for each subtest (VR, DM, QR)
- Your **total score (1200–3600)**

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- Your **SJT Band (1–4)**
- Your **percentile rank**

 **InMed Tip:**

Keep a copy of this report — universities access results automatically, but it's useful for interview discussions and tracking improvement.

8. Using Your Score Strategically

Once you know your score, you can make smart university choices.

Example:

| Scenario | Recommended Strategy |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| You scored in the top 10% | Apply widely — all unis competitive |
| You scored in the top 20% | Focus on balanced-weight universities |
| You scored in the top 20-30% | Strengthen ATAR, interview skills and SJT — aim for programs that consider overall profiles |
| You scored below top 30% | Consider gap year and retake, or apply for health science pathways |

 **InMed Insight:**

InMed advisors help students **match their scores** to the right universities — maximising their interview chances with data-driven strategy.

9. How InMed Academy Helps

At InMed, we don't just teach question techniques — we teach **understanding**. That includes:

- How UCAT scoring works
- What cut-offs mean for your target universities
- How to interpret your percentile and plan next steps
- Strategic application guidance for Medicine, Dentistry, and beyond

 **InMed Tip:**

Our **UCAT Strategy Sessions** include a personalised score analysis to help you make informed, confident decisions.

 **Final Takeaway**

Understanding UCAT scoring removes anxiety and helps you focus on what matters: **improving performance strategically**.

When you know how the test is scored, you can prepare smarter — not harder.

And when you prepare with **InMed Academy**, you gain:

- Expert-taught strategies for every section
- Clear insight into scoring and cut-offs
- Personalised university guidance
- Confidence built on data, not guesswork

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Next Steps

1. **Download this guide** to keep your UCAT scoring reference handy.
2. **Read our 'UCAT Readiness Checklist'** to check if you're ready
3. **Book an InMed UCAT Workshop** to learn how to boost your percentile and interpret scores like a pro.
4. **Stay informed — prepare with clarity, not confusion.**

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