

Arya's ~~UKCAT~~ UCAT cram tips

(YOU REALLY LEFT THIS TOO LATE)

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Introduction (Skip this bit if you want)

Hi, I'm Arya Rassi, and if you're reading this you've somewhere between leaving this whole UCAT revising thing WAY too late or you're a massive nerd revising weeks in advance for basically a big IQ test (like me!!!). I got an 815 average in the UKCAT, doing around about 45 hours of revision (wayyy too much in my opinion, 30-40 is definitely enough, less for some people). The reason I feel qualified enough to give tips is the fact the variety and depth of my research. I searched Kaplan, Medify, Medicportal, thestudentroom and various UKCAT help books to find every tip I could to help me better my odds. I would recommend started preparing two months in advance from the test date and going on a Kaplan course a month in advance. The time you need to spend revising depends on you, and how fast you are improving, but the advice 'a little everyday rather than cramming' can readily be applied here. I would strongly advise using Medify on a computer rather than using a book and would advise doing a practice test right at the start of your preparation. My final scores were:

Verbal Reasoning- 740

Decision Making- 770

Quantitative Reasoning- 880

Abstract Reasoning- 870

In this guide I'll go over the most impactful, shorter tips for the UKCAT, but if you have any specific questions about it be sure to hit me up, my email is Charlesrassi.ary@gmail.com

Timing

Here are the time frames to try to stick to for each section, from here in I'll be abbreviating each section to 2 letters because it's getting late and I've procrastinated writing this for 2 weeks already. I would recommend revising 3 weeks in advance, at least, and revising on average 2 hours a day, especially on the later days (no, not all at once you numpty. Not unless you're doing a mock.)

VR- 30s per question, click an answer, flag and move on if you go a second over 50 seconds

DM- 1 minute per question, click an answer, flag and move on if you go a second over 1 minute 30 seconds

QR- 30 seconds per question, click an answer, flag and move on if you go a second over 1 minute

AR- 30s per stem, click an answer, flag and move on if you go a second over 50 seconds, 12 per type 2 and 3 questions (I'll explain later)

IMPORTANT

Check out the UKCAT guide on the actual website before looking at this guide, to get a basic feel for the whole test, at:

https://www.ukcat.ac.uk/uploads/ukcat-tutorials/2018/story_html5.html

This should NOT be your introduction to the UKCAT, these are tips when you have some basic knowledge to steer you in the right direction.

Now, let's get riiiiiiiiight into the tips.

Verbal Reasoning

1. Don't read the text first
2. Don't read the text first
3. I know it's interesting/weird but for bink's sake don't read the text first.
4. Read the question
5. Double check if it's a negative question (which of the following statements is false/which of these is least likely to be false) before marking, flagging and moving on (called MFM from here on) if you think it will take you longer than 30 seconds.
6. After reading the question skim the text for key words (any unique word in a particular answer), and DON'T FALL INTO THE TRAP OF READING THE TEXT. Reading the bit relevant to the question is one thing, but never read the entire text thoroughly (as much as you may want to), or you WILL run out of time.
7. Use your gut, if a passage looks too long and you don't understand the question very well, MFM.
8. The whole exam is aiming to try and trip you out, keep that in mind, this might be the first test you've taken that's actively made to make you score lowly, so keep that in mind. This leads to some ridiculousness, so stick to the rules, and look for very subtle words such as a question mentioning "coal miners" and the text just mentioning "miners" these can be very easy to ignore so watch out for adjectives in answers.
9. Never, ever, EVER, use outside knowledge (this can be as stupid as knowing when the two world wars were, and yes, this is a real example)

DECISION MAKING

This section is absolutely massive, so I'll outline each mini question type.

The five-box question

- If it's complex, and you're pretty sure you can't do it in under 1 minute, don't bother marking the boxes, just flag and move on, come back to it at the end.
- If it isn't explicitly said, assume it's false. E.g City A overlaps City B. People in this overlap all have no phone service, but outside this everyone in A and B do. Question: Does everyone outside of the overlap have phone service. NO, they only mention A and B and not many other possible cities, so you can't tell so concluding that they do is wrong- the conclusion does not follow.
- Drawing Venn diagrams of all the information can help, a lot. It summarizes everything nicely, just make sure to abbreviate names to single or 2 letters.

Logic Puzzles

- Draw simple diagrams- they help more than you would think.
- Start from what you know for definite, not data that changes e.g. Tom sits next to Sally if
- If there are many variables do a little table with one of the variables and just fill in in the definites and a choice of two possibilities when you run of definite things. Helps A LOT.

Venn Diagrams

Revise your GCSE maths work and these should be easy.

Strongest argument questions

Look at the question for boxes, such as:

Select the strongest argument for if **16-year-olds** should be allowed to **vote** in **local county elections**.

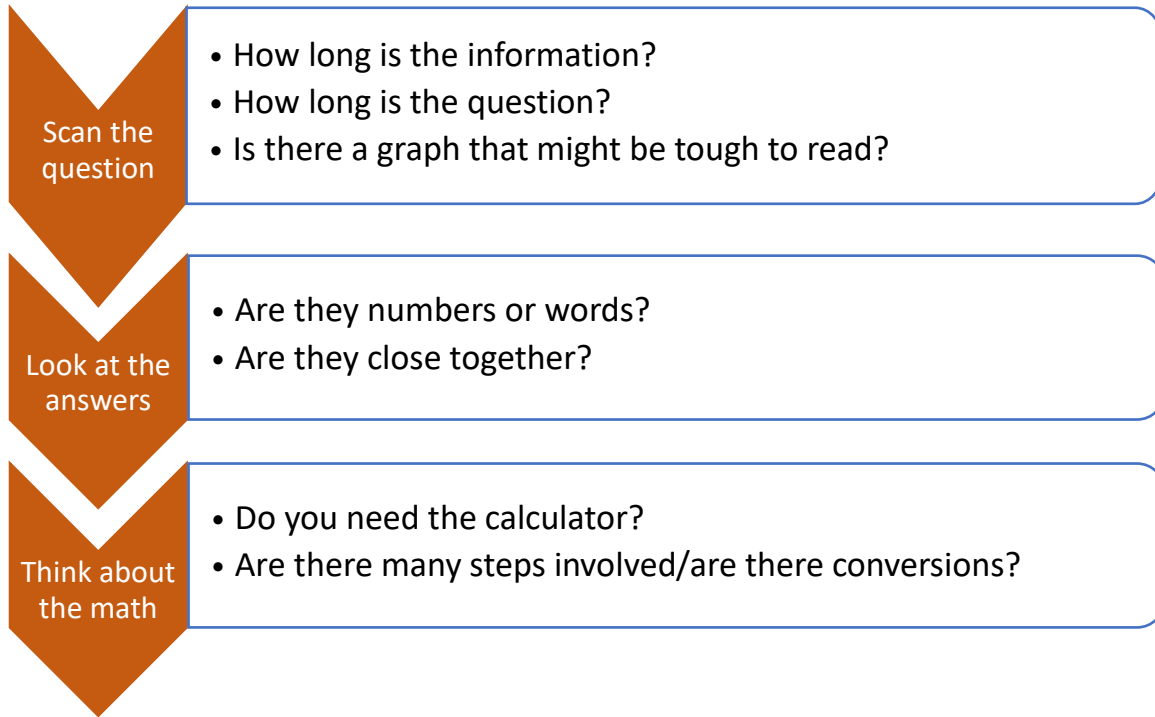
The red are your boxes. Look for answers specifically containing all of those and not too much extra. If you're stuck between two always compare them to the question and never each other.

Probability

Think positive 😊 Always put everything in the positive and this should be a piece of cake.
E.g. 0.84 fail rate becomes 0.16 pass rate.

Revise probability rules in GCSE maths and numeracy.

Quantitative Reasoning



This will be the section where you skip the most, so don't hesitate to MFM at any of the above steps or even midway through a question. Guaranteed. Usually you will be able to tell just by reading the question when the question is awful. There will be some questions here that take MINUTES to solve as a minimum. They will be rare, but still a problem, seeing as you need to average 30 seconds per question.

Eliminating is a valuable tool, as just by eyeballing, while you may not be able to find the right answer, you should be able to eliminate answers which are way off. If you end up guessing an answer this can boost your odds from 25% to 50%.

You will notice the calculator is clunky to use, and it takes a lot of time to use. The old saying "This is not a bug, it is a feature" is very true here, as the calculator is purposefully designed this way. Do not avoid it, as it is often needed, but be wary of using it, and write down the steps in your calculations. There are no marks for workings here, but you might find yourself needing to repeat a certain calculation as you progress through a question, and if you have it already written down it will save time.

Estimations. Estimating is a dangerous game. You will want to scan the answers after skimming the question for this reason. If the answers are close together then you'll not want

to estimate, even a little. If they're far apart then estimating can be a good tool to enable you to skip the calculator and use mental arithmetic.

Unit conversions are the straight up devil. Easy to get confused, easy to mix up, be wary of them. Even worse are surprise long questions. They look easy on the outside but once you get into it, they actually involve many steps. It can be tempting to want to get the right answer because it seems just a few steps away and you've already sunk a minute into this question so you may as well... MFM. There are some questions in this section that only take a few seconds to do. Make sure you've done all of them.

Abstract Reasoning

You'll be wondering what this question has to do with medicine. It doesn't. It has to do with logic, which affects your ability to practice medicine, sometimes, and that's the best answer you're going to get.

This was my worst section at the start, then I did this trick, and I got an 870. This trick may not work for everyone, but it sure did work for me, so here it is:

Write down the answers.

No, seriously, that's it. Write down a list of every pattern you see in every test you do. Many, many patterns are some variations of another, and it helps if you have an idea of the sort of things you can be facing. Let me address type 1 and 4 questions, as they are the most common type of question you will be facing. This question will present you with two patterns, next to each other. The pattern will be expressed in six little boxes (you'll see it once you start doing questions). At the bottom you will have to match the pattern to a box or 'set' or in the case of type 4 questions state if it might follow 'neither' set. This will be repeated up to 4 times for one pattern. The layout may sound a little strange, but you will soon get used to it. Write down the patterns you see, and you should be just fine.

Abbreviating shapes to 's', all the patterns I have seen so far are:

- More white s than black s.
- Even/odd number of s
- Number of lines crossing
- Number of sections enclosed by lines
- S in corners/center
- Particular s always to the left/right/up/down of particular s
- All s 'X' (present, upside down, spotted, lined, big, small, etc) unless a certain s is Y (present, upside down, spotted, lined, big, small, etc)

- Arrow points at something affecting something else (very common).
- If arrow points at X/is white/is black/is upside down/etc then s are Y
- Lines of symmetry
- Open/closed s (can another s fit through the gap?)
- Number of sides- total, individual s, correspond to number of X?
- Number of 90 degree angles
- Every box has X s
- Digital clock makes multipliers of 7
- Reflected s diagonal/in row or column
- POSITION OF S!!
- Reflection
- Enlargement
- Largest s is
- How many in a line?
- Where does the line touch on an s?
- Clock hands together/individual
- Equidistant points?
- Prime/not prime
- Overlapping areas?
- Curve/Straight sides?
- Bounding boxes
- S points to
- Edge passes through center
- Number of lines=sides on s1 (triangle for example)+/- sides on s2 (square for example) [most will not be as hard as this]
- S multiply to give number X
- Test s on small/large end of 3D s

- Parallel sides
- Curved lines
- White enclosed spaces
- Clockwise/anticlockwise progression
- Right branch on tree higher than left branch on tree
- X s nearest Y s
- Convex s/ concave s
- Vertices

That's all I got. Sometimes you can 'feel' the right answer without knowing the pattern. That's fine, it happens a lot. MFM when needed of course.

Type 2 and 3 questions are not sets of questions but lone questions. You have 12 seconds to answer them and basically if you cannot see an answer in the first 5 seconds start considering just guessing. They require predicting a progression. These can sometimes be the hardest. But make sure to let me know what the hardest pattern you see it! There can be some awful ones and I love seeing them, these questions can be fun when your future university/career doesn't depend on it.

Situational Judgement Test

I got a band 3 on this so I am really in no place to give advice on this. But I will anyway. Read the GMC guidelines for good medical practice (https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/good-medical-practice---english-1215_pdf-51527435.pdf) and act as ethical and moral as possible. This part tends to not like going to a supervisor without talking to a colleague/friend first. Most of the time.

Best of luck! 😊