

## Universities, subjects and tests

### Cambridge

#### BMAT (Biomedical Admissions Test)

This three-part examination for medical students comprises:

*Section 1: Aptitude (60 minutes)*. This tests verbal and non-verbal reasoning and data interpretation in 35 multiple-choice questions.

*Section 2: Science knowledge (30 minutes)*. This tests Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology at GCSE level of knowledge, but in more complicated *applications and situations*. It consists of 27 multiple-choice questions.

*Section 3: Essay writing (30 minutes)*. Choose one essay from a choice of four, with limited space to complete a discussion of complex ethical, philosophical or scientific questions.

#### LNAT (Law National Aptitude Test)

A test for law students which involves:

*Section 1 (95 minutes)*. Multiple-choice questions based on short passages which have a number of questions for each.

*Section 2 (40 minutes)*. Choose one essay from a choice of around four. You will be expected to complete a balanced and well-reasoned argument for and against the point before coming to a conclusion.

#### UKCAT

A multi-section psychometric examination for medical students, comprising:

*Section 1: Verbal reasoning (22 minutes)*. Reading passages and answering interpretative questions.

*Section 2: Quantitative reasoning (23 minutes)*. Consists of 36 multiple-choice questions on mathematics, data interpretation and numeracy skills.

*Section 3: Abstract reasoning (16 minutes)*. Consists of 13 questions which require you to identify patterns in groups of shapes. Students often find this the most difficult (and unusual format) – so practise, practise, practise!

*Section 4: Decision analysis (23 minutes)*. Students must use a coding system to decode and encode sentences, testing their interpretation and grammatical skills.

*Section 5: Non-cognitive analysis (30 minutes)*. Multiple-choice questions on ethical and situational dilemmas.

### Oxford

#### ELAT (English Language Admissions Test)

A test for students of English to demonstrate their ability with unseen texts. The student has 90 minutes to analyse two texts, which can be prose or poetry, in a discursive essay, comparing and contrasting them.

#### TSA (Thinking Skills Assessments)

A combination multiple-choice and essay-writing skills examination which is used for a number of different subjects including Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE), Experimental Psychology, Economics and Management, and Psychology and Philosophy:

*Paper 1: MCQ (90 minutes)*. Consists of 50 questions testing a variety of verbal reasoning and quantitative reasoning skills.

*Paper 2: Essay writing (30 minutes)*. Choose one essay from a selection of three; essays have a rather open format and can be approached in a number of different ways; the student is expected to show excellent organization and example choices.

#### Linguistic aptitude test for Oriental Studies or Modern Languages

This test explores the understanding of the fundamental grammatical and comprehension rules of the language. There is one 30-minute short-answer paper.

#### Linguistic aptitude test for Classics

This test is different from the aptitude test for other languages, and lasts one hour:

Part 1 explores basic grammatical knowledge;

Part 2 requires translation and composition;

Part 3 looks at literary analysis and interpretation of a passage.

### Mathematics aptitude test

A challenging examination of your mathematical ability:

*Section 1: Multiple choice (40 per cent).* Consists of 10 challenging questions with four possible answers.

*Section 2: Long questions (60 per cent).* A choice of four questions out of six, with marks given for showing working out.

### Physics aptitude test

A two-part exploration of your ability in Physics:

*Section A: Mathematical physics (1 hour).* Consists of 11 numerically based physics problems.

*Section B: Physics.* A mixed section consisting of multiple choice, short answers and a longer, multi-section answer.

### History aptitude test

A two-section examination based on historical text analysis:

*Question 1 (1 hour).* This is a multi-part question asking you to analyse a historical text before expressing your own ideas in the later sections.

*Question 2 (1 hour).* Interpretation of a piece of historical writing.

## Summary

- Aptitude tests are critically important in representing your academic ability.
- They can and must be well prepared for.
- The majority of them have an essay component; refer to Chapter 9 for details of how to go about creating excellent Oxbridge-quality essays.
- Clear your schedule and create a revision timetable.
- Discuss with your teachers about having homework extensions in the period running up to your tests.
- Find as many practice papers as possible.

- Use online resources to supplement this material.
- Become familiar with the format of the examination to gain extra performance marks.

## Further reading

For help with aptitude tests we recommend the following books, all published by Kogan Page:

*How to Master the BMAT* by Chris Tyreman;

*How to Master the UKCAT* by Mike Bryon, Chris Tyreman and Jim Clayden;

*How to Pass Numeracy Tests* by Harry Tolley and Ken Thomas;

*How to Pass Advanced Numeracy Tests* by Mike Bryon.