Bursary Scheme Policy 2025

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1 Overview

The UCAT Consortium is the operating name of the UKCAT Consortium. Admission tests are delivered by its business partner Pearson VUE (PVUE).

The UCAT Consortium has a number of official policies which guide its work in specific areas. Each policy is reviewed on an annual basis and any updates reflected in operational processes, website information and other communications to candidates. Where appropriate, policies are made available on the UCAT website.

UCAT policies are underpinned by its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Any substantial amendments to policies are considered in the light of their impact on EDI.

1.1 UCAT Bursaries

The UCAT Consortium recognises that the cost of the UCAT test may act as a barrier to some candidates required to take the test as part of university selection processes. In recognition of this, the UCAT Consortium provides full fee bursaries for test takers from low-income backgrounds who meet certain criteria.

Support for candidates from low-income backgrounds is core to the work of the UCAT Consortium and part of its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion which is further outlined in its EDI Policy.

In 2024, 17.1% of UK test takers were in receipt of a UCAT bursary (2023, 17.7%).

1.2 Candidate Data

The UCAT Office uses candidate data and evidence to assess applications for UCAT Bursaries. Candidates consent to this data being used for this purpose. Where evidence includes the data of any third party, candidates also confirm consent to share these data has been obtained. Candidate data is retained for the duration of the relevant admissions cycle (usually September the following year).

Information from candidates applying for bursaries is held in the strictest confidence unless the candidate agrees for information to be shared with third parties such as Consortium Universities.

Data collected may also be used for research purposes. Further details can be found in the Data Privacy Policy.

1.3   Consortium Universities and Bursary Candidates

When UCAT results are delivered to Consortium universities, a candidate's result is flagged to show they were in receipt of a bursary.

This will not disadvantage their application. Some Universities may use this information to help identify candidates from backgrounds under-represented at university.

Bursary vouchers must be redeemed by 17:00 (BST) on 20 October 2025 for results to be flagged in this way.

2   Applying for a UCAT Bursary

Candidates are advised to apply for a bursary before booking their test. Candidates who have already paid for their test may still apply.

Candidates must create a UCAT account as a candidate ID is required to make a bursary application. Returning candidates should use their existing candidate ID.

Candidates must complete an online application on the UCAT website and upload their supporting evidence (as a PDF, JPEG, PNG).

Applications (with correct supporting evidence) must be received by the published deadline, or they will not be processed.

Bursary scheme opens	13 May 2025 at 09:30 (BST)
Booking opens	17 June 2025 at 06:00 (BST)
Application and evidence deadline	26 September 2025 at 16:00 (BST)
Deadline for redeeming bursary vouchers	20 October 2025 at 17:00 (BST)

Once the application and evidence deadline has passed, candidates who have applied by the deadline with insufficient evidence may be given a short grace period (usually 1 business day after their application is processed) to provide additional evidence requested by the UCAT Office.

Applications are usually processed within 3 working days and candidates are emailed the outcome of their application.

Candidates are advised to contact the UCAT Office if they have not received an email within this timeframe (after checking junk/spam folders). UCAT will not normally take action if a candidate fails to follow this advice and misses a key deadline.

2.1   Candidate eligibility

The bursary scheme is open to UK candidates that meet the bursary criteria.

Candidates over the age of 21 and no longer in full-time education must be personally in receipt of a qualifying award or means-tested benefit to qualify for a bursary.

Candidates are only permitted one bursary voucher each test cycle. Additional vouchers will not be issued if a candidate misses their test for any reason.

2.2   Bursary criteria and supporting evidence

Bursary criteria are reviewed by the UCAT Office on an annual basis and are subject to change.

Candidates must be able to meet at least one of the bursary criteria detailed below and provide one piece of evidence to support their application.

UCAT reserves the right to request additional evidence if, in its view, the initial supporting documentation is not sufficient to verify eligibility. On occasion UCAT may consider alternative evidence on a case-by-case basis.

Eligibility	Criteria	Evidence Required
Candidate in receipt of:	Free School Meals	A recent letter (dated 2024 or 2025) from the candidate's school/college confirming they receive free school meals (Local Authority funded only).
	16 to 19 Bursary (England), or EMA (Scotland, Wales or NI)	An official award letter for academic year 2024/25 or 2025/26.
	Learner Support (FE 19+) or equivalent for Scotland, Wales or NI	An official award letter for academic year 2024/25 or 2025/26.
	Undergraduate Student Finance maintenance award (full rate)	An award letter for academic year 2024/25 or 2025/26. This includes a full rate (means tested) undergraduate: Student Finance England Maintenance Grant/Loan Student Awards Agency Scotland Young / Independent Students' Bursary Student Finance Wales or Northern Ireland Maintenance Grant Candidates who cannot take out student finance loans for religious or cultural reasons should contact the UCAT Office for advice on alternative evidence.
Candidate or Parent/Guardian (living at the same address) in receipt of:	Universal Credit	The first page of a Universal Credit statement, dated within the last 3 months, which includes the name and address of the claimant, the date, and the award amount.
	Working or Child Tax Credit	The first page of an award letter for financial year 2024/25 or 2025/26, which includes the name and address of the claimant and the date of the letter.
	Income Support, or Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA), or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	An award letter from a UK Jobcentre Plus, dated 2025. Parent/guardians in receipt of JSA or ESA must be entitled to the income-based benefit (e.g. means-tested) and not a contribution-based award.
	UK Government Asylum Support	An official award letter, dated within the last 12 months.

2.3 Awards/benefits or evidence not accepted
The following awards / benefits or evidence are not accepted under any circumstances:

- Scholarships, bursaries or free school meals at independent or fee-paying schools

- Postgraduate Loan
- Advanced Learner Loan
- Nursing and Midwifery Student Bursary
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Council Tax or Housing Benefit
- Child Benefit
- Annual accounts or a P60 end of year certificate

3   Processing Bursary Applications

Applications are usually processed within 3 working days.

3.1   Stage 1: Initial Application Outcome

Candidates will be advised of one of the following Initial Application Outcomes. These decisions are usually made by one member of the UCAT Office staff. On occasion, cases will be discussed with more than one member of staff and/or advice sought from the UCAT Board or externally.

3.1.1   Outcome 1:   Approved

Applications for bursaries supported by correct evidence in line with this policy will be approved.

Successful candidates are emailed a bursary voucher code which they can use to book their test. During the booking checkout process there is an option to 'add a voucher or promo code'.

Candidates may also obtain a refund if they have already paid for or sat their test by completing the email contact form on the website and quoting their voucher code.

The deadline to redeem a bursary voucher is 17:00 (BST) on 20 October 2025.

3.1.2   Outcome 2:   Rejected – Candidate is not entitled to a UCAT Bursary

If (in the opinion of the UCAT Office), a candidate is not entitled to a bursary, the application will be rejected. The candidate will receive a written explanation of the decision.

3.1.3   Outcome 3:   Rejected - Insufficient/Incorrect Evidence

Where a candidate has failed to provide sufficient evidence to support their application (in line with this policy), their application will be rejected by a member of the UCAT Office.

Candidates receive a written explanation of the decision. They are advised to email the UCAT Office with evidence that meets our requirements if they want the decision to be reconsidered.

On receipt of additional evidence, a final decision will be made, and the candidate will be responded to in full.

3.2   Stage 2: Review by the UCAT Office

If an application has been rejected the candidate will be advised to email the UCAT Office if they want the decision to be reviewed. They are advised to provide further evidence to support their claim.

The UCAT Office will review the original decision (made at Stage 1) in the light of additional information provided by the candidates, make a final decision, and respond in full.

More than one member of staff may be involved in the review if the Initial Application Outcome (made at Stage 1) remains unchanged.

3.3   Appealing a bursary application decision

If a candidate is unhappy with the final decision from the UCAT Office, they may appeal to the UCAT Board.

4   Missed tests (no-shows) paid for by bursary voucher

Candidates who book a test using a bursary voucher can reschedule their test (giving the required minimum notice) and re-use the same voucher code.

Candidates who book a test using a bursary voucher and then decide not to sit the UCAT, must cancel their test (giving the required minimum notice).

If a candidate misses a test ('no-show') paid for by bursary voucher for any reason they will have to pay the test fee to book another appointment. Failure to present correct ID and missing the deadline to reschedule/cancel a test counts as a 'no-show'.

UCAT will not issue another bursary voucher to cover this cost as UCAT will have incurred a charge for the missed test.

In these circumstances, UCAT reserves the right to request repayment from a candidate of the full test fee. UCAT may also prevent such candidates from applying for a bursary in future years.

UCAT Consortium   February 2025