



## Quality not quantity at the University of Malaya



### Raising prestige with the perfect fit

For the University of Malaya's Faculty of Medicine, recruiting students is a case of attracting quality rather than quantity.

So, the specialist test for would-be medics offered by Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing has been a perfect fit.

Its BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) has been used by top universities since 2003, helping identify people who will thrive on Medicine, Biomedicine and Dentistry degree courses.

The University of Malaya, based in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, is free to attend for most, with a few fee-paying students beginning their studies this year. More than 700 applicants sit the test every year, with 150 places offered.

Prof Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman, Dean of the Medical School, said the focus so far had been on appealing to students to consider the University of Malaya over the country's private universities. Currently, out of the 30 such schools in the country, it is the only one with an entrance exam.

She said BMAT emphasises the importance of applying to medical school – students feel having a selection test increases the course's desirability. She is also keen for the other medical schools to offer the test too.



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## About the University of Malaya's Faculty of Medicine

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The Faculty of Medicine has successfully trained 6,000 doctors and 5,000 medical specialists since its inception in 1962. As one of the few medical schools in Malaysia with its own dedicated teaching hospital, the Faculty of Medicine is fortunate to have a 1,000-bed fully equipped Medical Center, which provides excellent training facilities for both undergraduates and postgraduate students.

## About BMAT

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The BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) identifies applicants who will thrive on Medicine, Biomedicine and Dentistry degree courses. BMAT has been used by world-leading universities since 2003, helping admissions tutors to make objective selection decisions and allowing students to show their full potential.

## About Cambridge Assessment Admissions Testing

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We are part of the University of Cambridge and have been working with UK and worldwide universities, governments and employers for more than 15 years. Our admissions assessments are a global mark of excellence that set the quality standard. Backed by extensive research, our admissions tests give your applicants the opportunity to prove they have what it takes and help enhance your selection process. We have a global network of centres that spans 150 countries, making it easy to assess applicants wherever they may be.

'The selection of candidates is so important – and it's an expensive waste of five years of medical school if students then decide the career is not for them. This is also unfair on deserving students who might be denied a place.'

She explained that, in Malaysia, students focus a great deal on getting the right grades, through rote learning and memory. But she feels not enough attention is paid to critical and analytical thinking – something BMAT assesses.

'So obviously in selecting medical students, it's not just the academic criteria, there are many, many other considerations, such as attitude and behaviour, but some of those things can be very difficult to assess,' she explained. 'At least with BMAT, the academic performance – the application of science, Section 2 of BMAT – is standardised. The element of critical thinking, I think, is very important. This is not usually assessed in high school exams, and that is also provided for (in Section 1) – and, of course, the written communication task also helps us.'

## BMAT creates a level playing field

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In Malaysia, where there are so many different qualifications, BMAT creates a level playing field. According to Dr Kamarulzaman, it makes it easier to select the right candidates, as everyone has sat the same test. Before, selection was done by a computer, simply picking students with the top grades.

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The test was piloted for three years, and within that time the faculty saw a real difference in the progress of the students, which correlated with their BMAT test scores. It is now in its fourth year, and for Dr Kamarulzaman, there's no looking back.

The fact the test is in English is also critical, she said. Malaysia is a multilingual country, and any candidate has to have a level of English competency to study Medicine at the university.

She also praised the 'very accommodating and helpful' team in Cambridge, who, she said, offer great support.

### Find out more

 [admissionstesting.org](https://admissionstesting.org)

 [admissions-testing](https://www.linkedin.com/company/admissions-testing)

 [/admissionstesting](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCadmissionstesting)

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