



Preparation guide

Introductory tips

1

Visit the BMAT website

The BMAT website provides a wide range of **free resources** to help you prepare for the test. Find everything you need at admissionstesting.org/bmat-preparation

2

Download the **BMAT test specification and practice papers**

Reading through the specification and practice papers will give you a good understanding of the skills BMAT assesses. It also offers you the opportunity to:

- familiarise yourself with the test format
- examine the content of each section
- get to know the different types of questions that you may be asked in each section
- review, with worked answers, how to approach the different question types.

3

Practise under test conditions

Once you are familiar with the format of the test and understand the different types of questions, **practising under test conditions is an excellent way to prepare for BMAT.**

Remember, you will take the test in one sitting, within a time limit, with no breaks, and no calculator or dictionary, so practise under similar conditions. Time yourself: **this is REALLY important!**

Our research and feedback from successful candidates show that practising under test conditions is the best way to prepare. Do this with two or three of the past papers.

Tips for each section

The following tips outline ways to get ready for the three sections of the test. Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses, so only you can determine where you need to focus your preparation and how long you need to spend on it.

Section 1: Aptitude and Skills

This section tests your ability to understand arguments (critical thinking), solve problems and analyse data. No subject knowledge is needed and each question contains all the information required to answer it.



35 multiple-choice questions



60 minutes

Preparing for Section 1



Familiarise yourself with the different types of question and think how best to approach them:

- Read the **Section 1 question guide**, which provides an overview of question types and tips on preparing for this section.
- Download the **practice papers with explained answers** from the website. Try these questions without the answers, and then **look through the explained answers to help you review your own work**, particularly where you had trouble with the questions.
- Look at some of the **past papers** and, when you are ready, **try doing some of them under test conditions**.
- Pay attention to which questions you do well on and which you find difficult. **Use that to develop your strategy for sitting the test.**

Section 2: Scientific Knowledge and Applications

This section tests your ability to solve problems by applying the knowledge typically covered in non-specialist school Science and Mathematics subjects by the age of 16 (for example, GCSE in the UK and IGCSE internationally).



27 multiple-choice questions



30 minutes

Preparing for Section 2

While the topics and knowledge required are at a level typically covered in school, the questions require you to demonstrate your understanding by *applying* your knowledge to scientific problems. For this reason, you need to **revise your science and mathematics and familiarise yourself with how the questions get you to apply that knowledge.**



To help you understand the scientific knowledge that BMAT assesses, use:

- the **BMAT test specification**, which lists the topics that you may be tested on
- the **BMAT Section 2: Assumed Subject Knowledge guide**. This online guide covers the scientific and mathematical knowledge that Section 2 questions draw on.

Much of the content will have been covered in your school-based study of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. However, you may find some gaps in your knowledge, so **use these resources to plan your revision.**



Familiarise yourself with the way Section 2 tests your application of scientific knowledge:

- **Download the practice papers with explained answers** from the website. Try these questions without the answers, and then **look through the explained answers to help you review your own work**, particularly where you had trouble with the questions.
- **Look at some of the past papers** and, when you are ready, **try doing some of them under test conditions.**
- Mark your answers, and then **review where you have gaps in your knowledge, and revise these areas** using the Assumed Subject Knowledge guide or your own books. Note, some topics in past papers are no longer tested. Check which topics are relevant using the BMAT test specification and the Assumed Subject Knowledge guide.

Section 3: Writing Task

This section assesses your ability to communicate effectively in writing, organise your ideas, and present them clearly and concisely, supporting them with evidence. You are required to write a short (one A4 page) essay in 30 minutes.



1 writing task from a choice of 3

This task requires you to use skills you have already gained from your school work and have used in any report writing you may have done on your current science courses.



30 minutes

You can choose to answer any **one** of the three questions, which are on a general, scientific or medical theme. Select the question that most interests you, and for which you feel you can write the best answer. Do not feel obliged to answer the medical question just because you are applying for Medicine.

The questions always have the same format: a proposition (a statement or quote) – e.g. 'There is money to be made from not curing disease.' – followed by some instructions on how to respond.

The instructions will typically require you to explain your understanding of the statement, argue for or against the statement, and then explain your view and come to a conclusion.

Please note, from 2010 to 2016, Section 3 had a choice of four questions. From 2017 onwards it has a choice of three.

Preparing for Section 3



Practise considering both sides of an issue:

- **Practise analysing different opinions** and giving arguments for and against different viewpoints. Do this with articles or news stories you read, and get used to expressing your views about them – maybe by noting down your thoughts, then thinking about the reasons you have for holding your views.
- You will use many of the same skills that are assessed in Section 1 questions, such as drawing conclusions, strengthening an argument, and finding flaws in opposing arguments. Sometimes presenting an argument for a view you disagree with can help you find the weaknesses in your own arguments or help you to justify your own view.
- **You might also find it helpful to do some wider reading** on a variety of subjects, particularly ethics or the nature of science, and current debates in Medicine.



Find out how long it will take you to write your answer:

- Download a **sample answer sheet** from the website to see the space you will have to write in.
- Try answering one of the questions using the answer sheet and time how long this takes. This will help you establish how much time you will need to write your answer, and how long you can take to plan it out.



Familiarise yourself with the question format:

- Download the **practice papers with sample responses** from the website; these include marks and comments from examiners.
- Download **past papers and the marking criteria**, and practise writing some responses under timed conditions. This will give you a good idea of how to approach the question. You may find it helpful to ask a teacher or a friend to take a look at what you have written and give you feedback. You could also put your response to one side for a few days and then look at it again yourself, alongside the marking criteria.



Hear advice from the experts:

- Watch our **Section 3 videos** where BMAT markers provide an **overview of Section 3** and tips on **preparing for Section 3 and writing your essay**.



On test day

- You will need to bring a **black ink pen, a pencil, and an eraser** to complete the test.
- You are **NOT allowed to use a calculator, dictionary or correction fluid**.
- You can **write on the question papers** to mark key information, work out problems, make notes, draw diagrams and, for Section 3, plan your response.
- Each section has a time limit. You cannot use any time from one section to work on other sections.

Section 1 and Section 2

There is an element of time pressure in BMAT; however, you should try to **answer all the questions**.

If you get stuck on a question in Sections 1 and 2, **move on to another question and come back to it later**.

If you are not sure of an answer and are running out of time, **choose whichever option you think is most likely**. There is no negative marking – marks are not lost for wrong answers, so it's worth making a guess.

Section 3

Planning your answer is essential, as you have limited space. This will help you structure your answer and keep you on topic. Plan your answer on the question paper.

Make sure your answer has a clear structure in which you explain the question, present some discussion, and come to a conclusion.

If you include facts, make sure they are correct and support your argument. If you use examples or quotes, keep them short. You have only a small space for your whole argument, and anything written outside the box on the answer sheet will not be marked.

Answer every aspect of the question. If you do not address all parts of the question, your essay will not be able to score a 3 or higher for content.

Towards the end of the test, **take a minute to look over your answer** and ask yourself:

- **Have you addressed all parts of the question** in a relevant way?
- **Have you organised your thoughts** clearly?
- **Have you used your general knowledge** and opinions appropriately?
- **Have you considered other viewpoints and counter-arguments, and justified your opinions?**