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**Mathematics  
Admissions  
Test**

# The MAT Guidebook

All Your Questions Answered

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# **MAT Guidebook**

## Contents

General.....	1
Test Specifics.....	2
How to Apply.....	3
Results.....	3
Revision.....	4
Other.....	5

***For FREE MAT Revision Resources including worked through question answers created by expert tutors, visit:***

**[stepmaths.co.uk/free-mat](http://stepmaths.co.uk/free-mat)**

## General

### **What is the Maths Admissions Test?**

The Maths Admissions Test (MAT) is a pre-interview assessment for students applying to study Mathematics, Computing, or related joint degrees at the University of Oxford and/or Imperial College London.

### **What university courses require the MAT?**

The MAT is most commonly used as a part of conditional offers for the University of Oxford and Imperial College London.

University of Oxford Courses that require the MAT include:

- Mathematics
- Mathematics and Computer Science
- Mathematics and Philosophy
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Computer Science
- Computer Science and Philosophy

Imperial College London Courses that require the MAT include:

- Mathematics
- Mathematics, Optimisation and Statistics
- Mathematics (Pure Mathematics)
- Mathematics with Applied Mathematics/Mathematical Physics
- Mathematics with Mathematical Computation
- Mathematics with Statistics
- Mathematics with Statistics for Finance
- Mathematics and Computer Science

***For hundreds of MAT Video tutorials and in-person courses, go to:***  
**[stepmaths.co.uk/mat](http://stepmaths.co.uk/mat)**

If your course is not listed and you are unsure if you need to sit the MAT, it is best to check on the course website or contact the University directly.

## Why is the MAT needed?

Students that are applying and planning to start a degree which requires a very robust mathematical ability are required to sit the MAT. The MAT is designed to build upon the standard A-Level syllabus because at University the mathematics you will encounter is much more complex and rigorous than what you are exposed to in most schools via A-Levels.

Since the questions in MAT are harder than those at A-Level, any time preparing and practising for such papers should increase your confidence in answering more standard A-Level questions, enabling an easier and stronger A-Level performance.

## Test Specifics

### What is the structure of the MAT?

The MAT consists of 7 questions of which you must answer **5**. The 5 questions you have to answer depend on the course you are applying for and will be indicated on the front of your test paper. You do not gain any extra credit for answering more questions than 5. Question 1 is compulsory for all candidates and has 10 multiple choice parts, while the other questions are not multiple choice and have variable numbers of parts.

***STEP Maths has video tutorials covering how to approach the MAT, you can create an account and download FREE videos here: [stepmaths.co.uk/free-mat](https://stepmaths.co.uk/free-mat)***

### What content is covered in the MAT?

The content covered in the MAT includes:

- Polynomials: Quadratic Formula, Factorisation, Discriminant, Completing the Square, and Factor Theorem
- Algebra: Simultaneous Equations, Inequalities, Binomial Theorem, Combinations, and Binomial Probabilities
- Differentiation: Differentiation with Unknown Powers, Differentiation of Exponential Functions, Derivatives of Sums of Functions, Tangents And Normals, Second Order Derivatives, Maxima/Minima, First Principles
- Integration: Indefinite, Areas under a Curve
- Graphs: Quadratics, Cubics, Trig Graphs, Exponential and Log Graphs, Inequalities Solving
- Logs and Powers: Log and Exponential Laws, Solutions to Log Equations
- Transformations of Graphs
- Geometry: Coordinate Geometry, Vectors, Straight Lines, and Circles.
- Trigonometry: Identities and Solving Equations
- Sequences and Series: Defined Iteratively and by Formulae, Arithmetic and Geometric Progressions, Convergence Conditions

All this content should be covered by your Maths A-Level Syllabus, but some parts, especially that relating to sequences and series, may go beyond what you study in Year 12.

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## **Will I struggle with the MAT if I don't take Further Maths A-Level?**

Possibly. The MAT is intended to be approachable by students who have not taken Further Maths, but extra study can only be helpful.

### How to Apply

#### **Where can I take the MAT?**

The MAT can only be taken at an authorised test centre; you can ask the Examinations Officer of your current school or college to register you and you will be able to take the exam on site. If you have already left school or college, you could go back to your old school and sit the paper there. If neither of these options are available to you, then you will have to search for an authorised test centre to register you.

#### **When can I take the MAT?**

You will have to register for the MAT by the 15th of October in Year 13. You will sit the test just after the October half-term

#### **How do I apply for the MAT?**

You cannot register yourself to take the MAT for any of the universities; the test centre is responsible for registering you. If you are currently attending a school or college you can ask the Examinations Officer to register you.

If, however, you are not attending a school or college, then you can visit your old school and talk to the Examinations Officer there and they may register you for the MAT. If not, you may need to look for other test centres nearby and ask them to register you.

#### **Will I be charged to take the MAT?**

You will not be charged to take the MAT by the University but you may be charged an administration fee by your testing centre. may charge an administration fee.

### Results

#### **How will the MAT be graded?**

The MAT is graded out of 100. The number of marks per question will be detailed on the front of your exam paper but typically each of the 10 parts of Question 1 is worth 4 marks and the other 4 questions you must answer are 15 each. You are advised to divide your time according to how many marks each question is worth.

#### **Will I be penalised for wrong answers?**

The MAT is marked positively and therefore there are no penalties for incorrect answers. The non-multiple-choice questions are marked partially, so you do not need a final correct answer to gain marks for a question.

#### **When will I receive my score?**

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You will not receive your score back, but you can request it via the usual Oxford feedback procedure.

### **How important is my MAT score?**

The MAT is fairly important as it is one of the few quantitative measures of a student's academic potential used in the admissions process. Given that most applicants will have received high numbers of A and A\* grades, the MAT helps differentiate students who may otherwise appear very similar. Given the recent scrapping of AS exams, the MAT is even more important as a way to highlight your academic capabilities to Admissions Tutors. Alongside your personal statement and references, it helps provide a more holistic view of you as a student and your potential at university. However, it is important to remember that there are other indicators of your academic capability throughout your application and the MAT is only one of the parts.

A strong MAT score is often a good indicator of whether or not you will be called to interview.

### **What is a 'good' MAT score?**

Generally speaking, around 60% is seen as a respectable score. Given that Mathematics is such a competitive course, gaining a score of 60 is in no way a guarantee for an interview. There is no set score necessary to gain an interview, but some Admissions Tutors may set specific base scores for their college when calling applicants to interview. Obviously, the stronger your score the better, but it is designed to be difficult and for few applicants to achieve a perfect score.

## Revision

### **How do I prepare for the MAT?**

The best way to revise for the MAT is to do past papers in timed conditions. The MAT is unlike any A-Level Maths paper you may be sitting and so it is important to familiarise yourself with the style of questions well before you sit the exam.

***STEP Maths has video tutorials covering how to tackle past paper MAT questions and the best techniques to conquer the paper. You can create an account and download FREE videos here: [stepmaths.co.uk/free-mat](https://stepmaths.co.uk/free-mat)***

### **When should I start revising for the MAT?**

It is advised that you start your preparation well in advance, ideally before you start Year 13. It is much easier to prepare for the test if you practise little and often and so the summer holiday is an ideal opportunity to get to grips with the style of questions. It is counterproductive to cram just before the test given that it is skills-based and requires practice and test-taking skills rather than simply knowledge. However, don't panic if you haven't started yet - any practice you can put in now will be immensely helpful.

### **Where can I find past papers?**

***For hundreds of MAT Video tutorials and in-person courses, go to: [stepmaths.co.uk/mat](https://stepmaths.co.uk/mat)***

You can find all the past papers on our website: [stepmaths.co.uk/mat-past-papers](https://stepmaths.co.uk/mat-past-papers)  
Here you can also access full video solutions to a large number of past papers.

To get FREE access to some video solutions, please follow this link:  
[stepmaths.co.uk/free-mat](https://stepmaths.co.uk/free-mat)

It is recommended to work through past papers until you are familiar with the format and style of the test. It is best to work through past papers under timed conditions given that time pressure is a large part of the test.

## Other

### **What equipment can I use for the MAT?**

You will need a pencil, rubber and black ink pen to sit the MAT. Calculators, formula sheets, and dictionaries are **NOT** permitted.

### **Is extra time allowed for candidates whose first language is not English?**

No. Extra time is not permitted for candidates whose first language is not English.

### **What do I do if I need Access Arrangements?**

Access Arrangements are available if you have a disability or a special requirement entitling you to support for other exams.

You will need to inform the test centre of your condition before they register you for the MAT. You may need to provide details and medical evidence of your disability or special requirement.

### **What are the guidelines for laptop use?**

A candidate using a laptop must not be able to disturb the other candidates and the laptop screen must not be visible to them.

If the candidate requiring a laptop is taken to a separate room then they will require an individual invigilator.

Candidates using a laptop should format their work in Arial font, size 11, single-spaced. Automatic spell checkers and grammar checkers must be disabled.

At the end of the test, the candidate using the laptop must be present when their script is printed off, to confirm that the work is theirs. The candidate's name, candidate number, candidate initials and centre number should be clearly written on the printout.

### **Can I apply for Special Consideration?**

Should you feel that temporary illness, injury, or other issues affected your test score, you can ask for this to be taken into account as special consideration. A

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special consideration form must be completed within seven days of sitting the test. If you want to apply for special consideration, talk to the Examinations Officer at your test centre as soon as possible.

***Good luck with your MAT preparation; if you have any questions, please visit [stepmaths.co.uk](http://stepmaths.co.uk) and contact us!***

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