BMAT ADVICE

The BMATneeds to be sat if applying for **Medicine** or **Biomedical** **Sciences** at Oxford.

**Preparation**

**General tips:**

* Try to begin preparing several weeks before – **the more preparation the better**!
* Familiarise yourself with the test format by going through the test specification - [**hwww.admissionstesting.org/Images/535824-bmat-test-specification.pdf**](https://www.admissionstesting.org/Images/535824-bmat-test-specification.pdf)
* Arguably the best way to prepare is by **doing past papers** - [**www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/preparing-for-bmat/practice-papers/**](http://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/preparing-for-bmat/practice-papers/)**.** This gets you used to the style, content, and level of difficulty of questions, and how to best approach them.
* When doing past papers or practice questions, **learn from your mistakes**. Answers to the past papers can usually be found online; always go over your answers and **note down what you got wrong/how you went wrong/the answers to questions you guessed** so that you don’t make the same mistake next time. Look at this list of corrections regularly, but most importantly on test day!
* Once you’ve done a few initial untimed past papers, begin to practice **under timed conditions**, doing all sections back-to-back, within the 2 hour slot. The BMAT is tight for timing so this is really important.

**Section 1 – Thinking skills**

* For **section 1 and 2**, all questions are **worth the same** (1 mark), so if you feel yourself spending a lot of time on a particularly long/difficult question, flag the question and **move on.** This will allow you to answer more questions overall and you can always come back to the flagged question(s) at the end if you have time. But always put down an answer, even if it’s a complete guess.
* For more section 1 practice (**after** past papers), try out **TSA section 1 questions**, which are very similar - [**www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/thinking-skills-assessment/tsa-oxford/preparing-for-tsa-oxford/**](http://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/thinking-skills-assessment/tsa-oxford/preparing-for-tsa-oxford/)

**Section 2 -**

* Go over the **BMAT Section 2: Assumed Subject Knowledge** in the **test specification**: [**www.admissionstesting.org/images/47829-bmat-test-specification.pdf**](http://www.admissionstesting.org/images/47829-bmat-test-specification.pdf) Make sure you are comfortable with all the topics covered, and if not, spend time going through them
* The online **BMAT Section 2 guide -** [**www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/preparing-for-bmat/section-2-preparation/**](http://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/preparing-for-bmat/section-2-preparation/)**,** is a free online resource that covers all section 2 content. You need to make an account but it’s free and definitely recommended - useful to check your section 2 knowledge or make notes

**Section 3 – Writing task**

* Pick the **essay title** for which you think you can come up with an **balanced argument**, with **strong and interesting points**.
* You are given less than a side of A4 to write the essay so **planning is crucial** – spend at least **10/15 minutes** doing this. Use this time to think of as many points as possible, then pick your strongest (that argue both for and against the topic under discussion) and develop them with further explanations or examples.
* Whilst it is particularly important that you spend enough time planning your essay, make sure that you leave enough time to actually write the essay.
* **Make sure you address all parts of the question** – this usually includes an interpretation of the question, and giving your own opinion, as well as arguing for/against.
* During preparation, **read around**, keeping up to date with the latest developments in Medicine that you could include in essays as part of a point/example (this will also help for interviews). **BBC News Health** is a good place to start.
* A **good understanding of ethics** is useful, as the essay titles often delve into ethics (and again good practice for interviews). The BMA’s Ethics Toolkit for Medical Students is helpful [**www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/ethics/medical-students/ethics-toolkit-for-medical-students**](http://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/ethics/medical-students/ethics-toolkit-for-medical-students)
* **Practice writing essays** under timed conditions, and try to get them marked my teachers/other people who are sitting/have sat the BMAT.
* Equally, try to have a go at critiquing other students’ essays where possible, as this will help you understand what an examiner would be looking for in an essay, and, in turn, helps focus and plan your own essays. **Student Room** sometimes has **BMAT Section 3 essay forums** where people can post and mark each other’s essays, so have a look there.

**GOOD LUCK!:)**

You can never really tell how the BMAT went, and remember that your BMAT performance is just one part of the application process, alongside your GCSE results, personal statement, reference, (AS results) and A Level predictions.