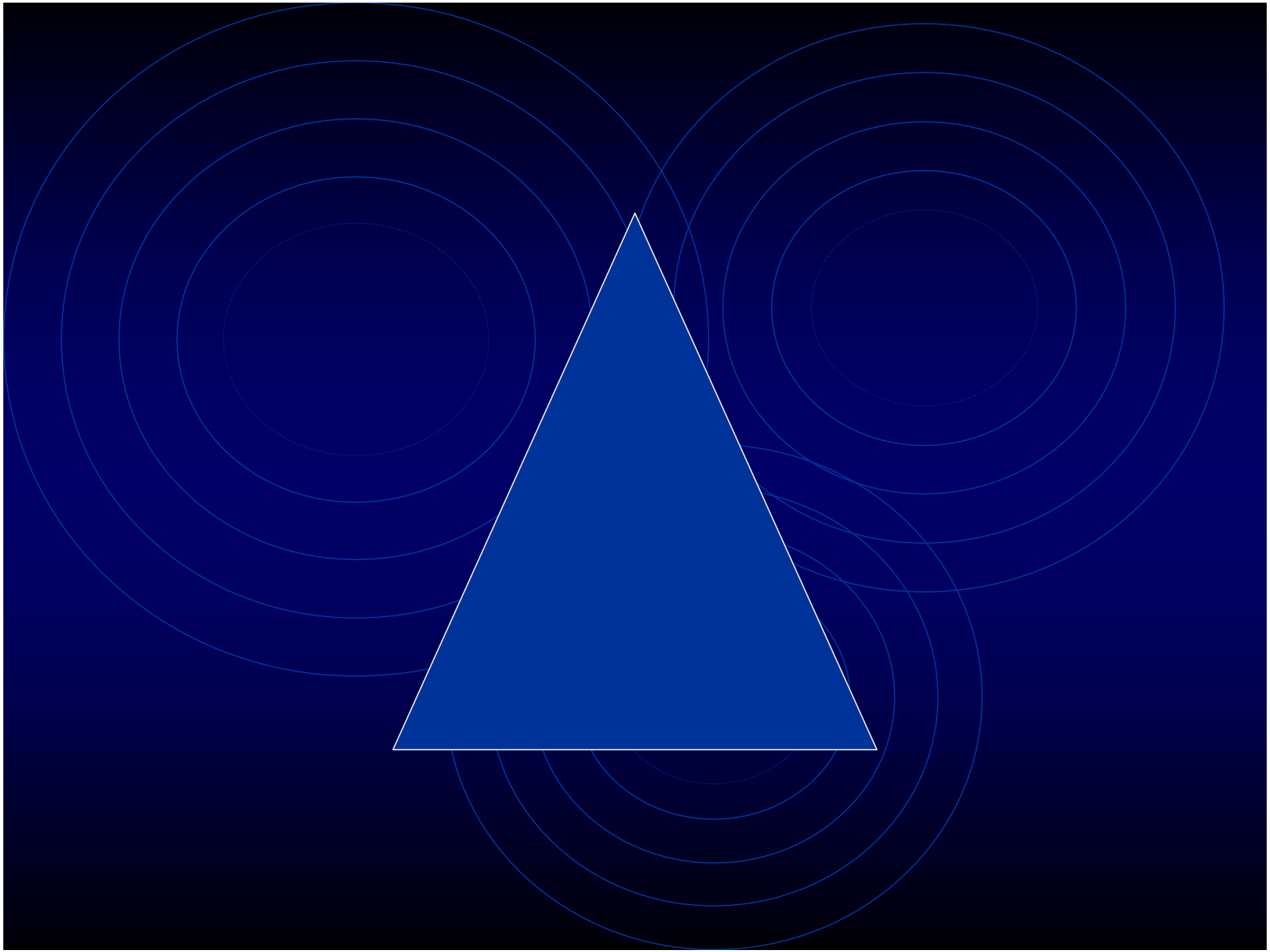
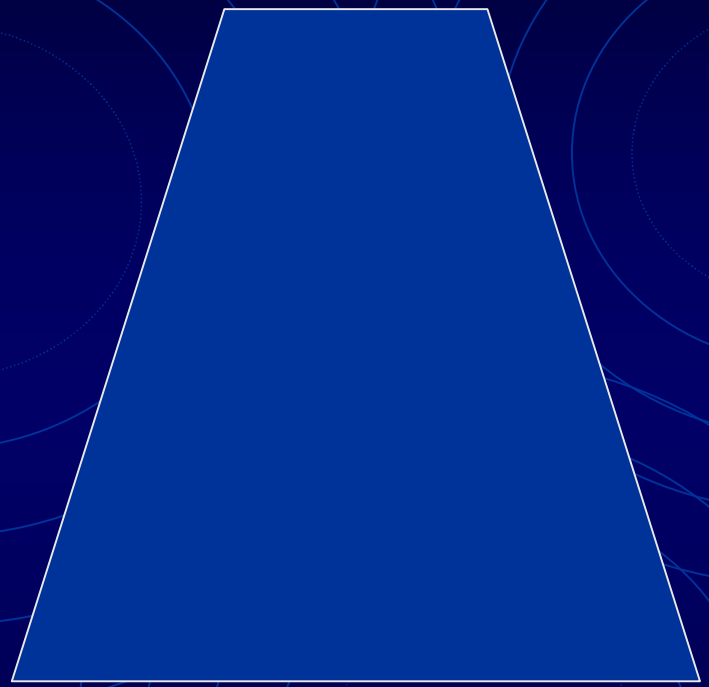
BMAT, LNAT and all THAT!
A Guide to Admissions Tests

Paul Teulon, Head of Student Recruitment
University of Oxford

Annie Doyle, SPA Senior Project Officer
Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Programme

Admissions to HE Conference - 6th November 2008




28,000
400,000

Why introduce Admissions Tests?

- Make admissions fairer
  - Why is it fairer?
  - Seen to be fairer?
  - Can it be proved?
- More information?
- Differentiate at the ‘top end’?
- Fewer applicants?
- Better quality applicants?

Why introduce Admissions Tests?

- **Schwartz Report**
  - www.admissions-review.org.uk
  - recommends single aptitude test
  - 'Mixed views on additional testing with 55% in favour…67% were in favour of aptitude testing…many advocated the use of existing tests.'
  - 'Concerns about the proliferation of additional tests with 63% …….. agreeing on greater **coordination** of admissions tests across the sector.'
- **14-19 White Paper**
  - '**8.23.** Research is also to be carried out on the usefulness of a single aptitude test, as recommended in the report of the Admissions to HE Steering Group (the Schwartz report).'

SPA Objective on Admissions Tests

- To audit the use of admissions tests, and consider issues relating to their rationale, purpose and validity from HE perspectives and issues to do with the costs, manageability and impact on the 16-19 curriculum for schools and colleges from pre-HE perspectives

- What does this mean?
- Approval and quality control mechanisms in HEIs
- What work has SPA done to date?
- How does SPA define admissions tests?

Admissions Tests – the SPA definition

- ‘…a timed unseen written paper based or on-line test normally taken in the academic year before admission to an HEI, the results of which can be used by that HEI as one element in decision making on an application’.

- Issues
- Test results
- Relative weighting
- Transparency

Timing of Tests

- Taken…in the summer/autumn in the academic year before admission or at interview, normally from November onwards in the academic year before admission

- Issues
- Timing
- SPA’s role in this
- Test venues – national tests/institutions own tests

A ‘good’ admissions test – check list from SPA

- Rigorous validation and reliability testing
- Supported by statistical and research evidence
- Ensure the minimum of bias
- Test valid for applicants from all backgrounds in a UK context
- Readily available and accessible to those with evidence of special requirements in a timely way
- Provide exemplar materials and tests with answers
- Fairly and professionally administered
- Fit for purpose and adds value as part of holistic decision-making

http://www.spa.ac.uk/admission-tests/index.html

Possible issues with Admissions Tests

- Negative affect on Widening Participation
  - Another barrier
  - £ - direct cost to the student
  - Bursaries
- Selection by ranking
- Coaching for exams
- Goodwill of the Schools and Colleges
  - Timetabling issues
  - Cost implications

Now your turn – TSA!

Thinking Skills Assessment - Short Sample Test

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Question 1

In order to succeed in academic examinations it is necessary to study. Therefore, if a student works hard in a particular subject, he or she should do well when it comes to the examination.

Which of the following best describes the flaw in the argument?

- A It assumes that it is necessary to study in order to succeed.
- B It overestimates the value of studying in preparation for examinations.
- C It ignores the fact that some subjects are more academic than others.
- D It assumes that studying hard is a sufficient condition for academic success.
- E It ignores the fact that some students do not need to study very much in order to succeed.

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Answer :

LNAT

National Admissions Test for Law (NATL!) – www.lnat.ac.uk
Introduced in 2004 now used by around 10 HEIs for entry to Law courses

- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Cambridge (not 2009+)
- University of Durham
- University of Exeter
- University of Glasgow
- King's College, London
- University of Nottingham
- University of Oxford
- University College, London

- List has varied from year to year

- From 2005 taken at on-screen testing centres across the UK and beyond
- Taken during the period September to January – deadlines vary between universities
- Bank of questions varying day to day
- 80minutes – 30 multiple choice questions & 40 minute choice of essay questions
- Cost of test £40 UK/EU - £60 rest of the world - (bursaries available)
- Students must register themselves – through PearsonVue website
- Used in the selection process in different ways by the participating universities
- Score for multiple choice provided at the end of January if taken before 15 January

BMAT

- **Bio-Medical Admissions Test – www.bmat.org.uk**

• University of Cambridge	Medicine and Veterinary Science
• University of Oxford	Medicine and Physiological Sciences
• The Royal Veterinary College	Veterinary Medicine
• University College London Medical School	Medicine
• Imperial College London	Medicine

- First completed in 2003 – also formerly known as the MVAT
- Test has 3 elements - a 60-minute test of aptitude and skills; a 30-minute test of scientific knowledge and applications; and a 30-minute writing task
- The cost in 2007 was £27.30 for UK students and £51.00 for international students
- The BMAT is conducted annually, in late October early November - 5 November 2008
- Used in the selection process in different ways by the participating universities
- Varies at some institutions for graduate programmes
- Results for each of the 3 sections returned to students in late November
- Separate registration required – late September 200X (late fees possible)

BMAT Scores at Oxford

% of A* at GCSE	% rank in BMAT
0	2
10	3.5
20	5.5
30	9
40	13
50	18.5
60	25
70	29
80	41.5
90	50
100	59

- Combination required to be automatically short-listed

UKCAT

- UK Clinical Aptitude Test – www.ukcat.ac.uk
- Used for Medicine and Dentistry courses at 24 UK HEIs

Aberdeen	Birmingham	Brighton & Sussex Med Sch
Cardiff	Dundee	Durham
East Anglia	Edinburgh	Glasgow
Hull York Med Sch	Keele	King's College, London
Leeds	Leicester	Manchester
Newcastle	Nottingham	Oxford – GRAD
Peninsula Med Sch	Queen Mary, London	Sheffield
Southampton	St Andrews	St George's, London
Warwick – GRAD	Imperial – GRAD	Queen's - Belfast

- First used for entry 2007 – run by PearsonVue
- Taken at on-screen test centres across the UK
- Cost -£60 UK/EU £95 ROW – late fees apply
- Date of test – June to October (various as per LNAT)
- Bank of questions – 5 sections: verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, abstract reasoning, decision analysis and non-cognitive – 4 x 20 + 30 mins

GAMSAT and HPAT

- GrAduate Medical School Admission Test - **GAMSAT** www.gamsatuk.org
- St. Georges Hospital Medical School - Medicine
- University of Nottingham - Medicine
- Peninsula Medical School – Medicine and Dentistry
- University of Wales, Swansea – Medicine
- Keele University – Medicine

- Entry deadline 31 October
- Test date September 200X-1
- Cost £188
- Duration 5 ½ Hours
- Entry via UCAS
- Results available February/March

- **HPAT** – used by University of Ulster – www.hpat.org.uk

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Question 2

A solid cube has twelve edges. If all eight corners are sliced away, while leaving part of each original edge intact, how many edges has the new solid?

- A 12
- B 24
- C 32
- D 36
- E 44

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Answer :

HAT – Institution specific

- **History Aptitude Test –**

- **http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/prosundergrad/applying/hat_introduction.htm**

- Oxford Only – History and all Joint Schools of History
- No need for extra registration
- Free of charge - Completed in schools and colleges
- Late October/Early November - same day as the BMAT
- The HAT is a two hour test
- Read two extracts and answer a total of four questions
- One of the extracts will be from a work of History
- One extract as a piece of historical writing
- One extract will be from a primary source
- Results provided to students
- UK and overseas

Oxford only tests

- History
- Mathematics
- Physics
- Computer Science

- English – ELAT – www.elat.org.uk
- PPE - TSA Oxford
- Economics and Management – TSA Oxford

Tests done at interview

- **MLAT** – Cambridge – Medieval and Modern Languages (French, German etc.) http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/prospectus/undergrad/applying/test.html

- **TSA** – Cambridge – Thinking Skills Assessment - Computer Science, Natural Sciences, Engineering, Economics, Land Economy and Mathematics

  http://tsa.ucles.org.uk/about.html (Not all colleges)

- Oxford and Cambridge – other subject specific tests at interview

- **STEP**- Sixth Term Examination Papers - Maths only
  - Cambridge required – Warwick preferred
  - After GCE A-level exams– 3 Papers – 3 hours each(1,2) Maths (2,3) Double Maths
  - Graded – **Outstanding S 1 2 3 Satisfactory**
  - http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/tests/step.html - www.ocr.org.uk

- There may be others out there!

There ARE!!

- SPA's research to date has identified a total number of 67 tests in use by UK HEIs
- Information updated for 2009 entry
- This number includes the national tests and Institutions' Own Tests
- Apparent increase on last year?

Types of tests

- Types of tests… aptitude tests, essay writing exercises, problem solving tests, critical thinking assessments, subject specific tests, cognitive and non-cognitive tests

- The type of test used depends predominantly on the course and the attributes deemed appropriate for the profession (if a vocational course) or subject skills (if an academically focused course)

Types of tests - more

- A test can be an HEI's own devised test or a test devised by an HEI or group or consortium of HEIs with one or more testing/awarding bodies
- A test may be used by one HEI for one or more subjects or may be used by many HEIs for the same subject

When is a test not a test?

- SPA’s definition
- Institutions’ definitions
- Never the twain shall meet?
- SPA’s work

Thinking Skills Assessment - Short Sample Test

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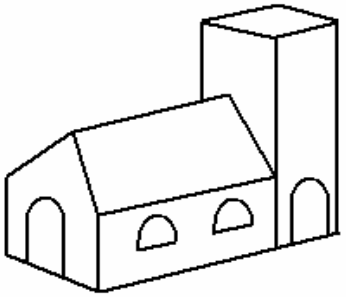
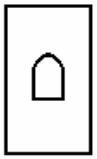
Question 4

The diagram shows a small village church. There is a door in the western end, which can be clearly seen in the diagram. There is a tower at the eastern end of the church with a window set in its east wall. This wall is hidden in the diagram. There is also a door in the tower.



Which of these is most likely to be the view of the eastern end of the church?

A



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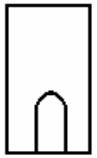

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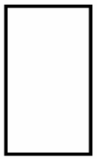

D

E

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Answer :

The future ….

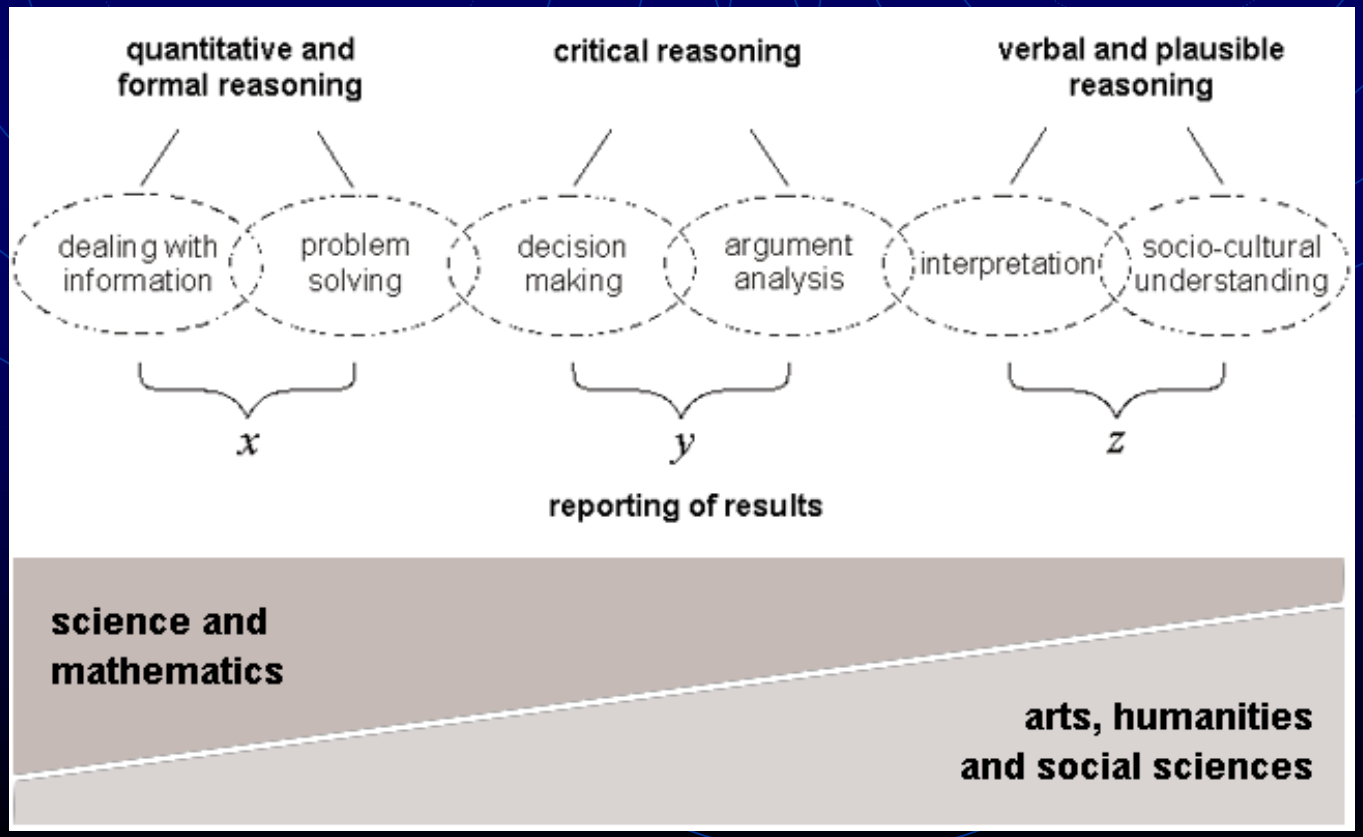
- Sutton Trust, NfER & DIUS - www.suttontrust.com

Scholastic Aptitude Test

- The SAT is the most widely used admissions test in the world, (1,475,000 pa)
- First taken in pilot in UK in November 2005 – up to 50,000 A-level students
- The study aims to provide information on:
  - how SAT can help predict HE outcome together with A Levels
  - whether aptitude tests can distinguish between the most able students who get straight As at 'A' Level
  - if they can help identify students from disadvantaged backgrounds who may have the potential to benefit from HE.

uniTEST

- ACER & Cambridge Assessment - www.unitest.org.uk
- Pilot project at the moment – small number of HEIs
  - 96 Multiple choice in 2.5 hours



Coaching for tests

- www.testprep.co.uk www.cataga.co.uk
- www.kaptest.com/uk www.oxbridgeapplications.com

COURSE SELECTIONS* (Please circle the selection that applies.)

	Special Earlybird Prices!†		
	Enrolments by 31st July	Enrolments on or after 1st August	BMAT or LNAT Booster*
❑ BMAT Classroom Course in August or September	£225	£265	£225
❑ BMAT Classroom Course in October	£255	£295	£225
❑ LNAT Classroom Course in August or September	£225	£265	£225
❑ LNAT Classroom Course in October	£255	£295	£225

*The Booster package consists of 3 hours of Private Tutoring at a discounted rate – only available with the purchase of a Classroom Course

❑ **5 hours Private Tutoring**** (BMAT or LNAT) £495

❑ **3 hours Admissions Consulting / Interview Preparation** £299

❑ **Repeat:** I enrolled in the BMAT or LNAT Classroom Course within the last year and would like to take another BMAT or LNAT classroom course £95

❑ **'Secrets of a Successful Admissions Interview' Seminar**..... £20

Using the course schedule, please fill in the following choice for your class sessions:

BMAT Code:_____ LNAT Code:_____

*All prices are inclusive of VAT and are subject to change without notice. Discounts, promotions and special offers may not be combined. Please see reverse for additional terms and conditions.
** Additional tutoring hours may be purchased at a discounted rate of £90/hr.
†Enrolments mailed to Kaplan must be postmarked by 29th July to qualify for the lower course price. Should a cheque be returned by the bank after 31st July, the higher course fee will be charged. Card payments not authorised by the bank by 31st July will be charged at the higher rate.

Please see reverse.

Makes even HELOA seem simple…

Thinking Skills Assessment - Short Sample Test

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Question 10

The Lemming Society has unusual membership qualifications. New members can only be introduced at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) and to be allowed to continue one's membership for the next year a current member must attend the AGM. However, to be allowed to attend the AGM a current member must bring along one new member to be introduced into the Society at the meeting.

Last year the Society had 240 members. This year it has 380 members.

How many new members were introduced at the last AGM?

- **A** 50
- **B** 70
- **C** 120
- **D** 140
- **E** 190

Previous

Finish Test

Answer :

And the future from SPA's perspective…

- Contact and meetings with organisations offering tests
- Evaluation of tests, particularly pilot tests
- Background to research evaluation of LNAT and UKCAT
- Views of schools and colleges
- Use of tests by HEIs – transparency and definitions, urge HEIs (and testing bodies) to consider the good practice checklist before embarking on developing any new tests
- Briefing Papers
- Research

so that's THAT

- www.ucas.ac.uk/tests
- http://www.spa.ac.uk/admission-tests/index.html
- For 46 more questions to ponder……..
  http://tsa.ucles.org.uk/full/res_1024.htm

Please do email for a copy of this presentation

Paul Teulon
paul.teulon@admin.ox.ac.uk
Annie Doyle
a.doyle@spa.ac.uk