

How Cambridge and Imperial actually use your ESAT score

Course by course, from three module scores to interview and offer decisions.

THE SHORT ANSWER

Cambridge uses ESAT before interview shortlisting, then keeps the score beside the rest of your application when deciding offers. Imperial says the score sits alongside your UCAS application when deciding interviews or offers. Neither publishes a universal cut-off. A high score helps; it does not become the whole application.

Checked against the sources named in this guide, August 2026. British English. Free to share.

1 The score moves through admissions, not around it

You receive one 1.0–9.0 score for each module. There is no ESAT total. UAT-UK automatically matches those module scores to every course on your UCAS application that requires ESAT. You cannot choose which participating institution sees them. That creates a simple sequence:

1. you sit the modules required by the exact course;
2. UAT-UK sends the scores to that course automatically;
3. the university reads them with the application, not as a freestanding pass/fail result;
4. where the course interviews, the score may help decide the invitation and remains evidence afterwards;
5. the final decision uses the course's complete admissions process.

1 The tell

Any claim beginning "Cambridge needs 6.5" or "Imperial ignores scores after interview" needs a university policy or department dataset behind it. Cambridge publishes no universal ESAT cut-off. Imperial now publishes historic department outcome data, but explicitly says it is not a requirement or prediction for another year.

2 Cambridge: four courses, one published policy

For 2027 entry, ESAT is the pre-registration test for four Cambridge courses. The University says Colleges use pre-interview test results to help decide whom to interview; a strong performance is usually needed, but there is no pass or fail mark. If shortlisted, your score is considered with the rest of the application before an offer decision.

Cambridge course	Required modules	Published use
Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology	Mathematics 1, plus two from Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics 2	Helps pre-interview shortlisting; retained for the offer decision
Engineering	Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2 and Physics	Same University policy
Natural Sciences	Mathematics 1, plus two from Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics 2	Same University policy
Veterinary Medicine	Mathematics 1, plus two from Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics 2	Same University policy

Cambridge does not publish a course cut-off, an offer-holder average, or a formula weighting one module against another. College pages may explain interview format, but they do not turn the ESAT into a guaranteed invitation. The honest reading is directional: stronger relevant-module evidence improves the academic case; the complete application decides what happens.

3 Imperial: the modules change by department

Imperial's central policy is unusually clear: ESAT is one aspect of the application; high does not guarantee success and low does not guarantee rejection. Scores are considered alongside the UCAS application when Imperial decides whether to invite an applicant to interview or make an offer.

Imperial department	Required modules	What that means
Aeronautics	Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2, Physics	Three separate scores enter selection
Chemical Engineering	Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2, Chemistry	Chemistry replaces Physics
Civil and Environmental Engineering	Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2, Physics	Three separate scores enter selection
Dyson School of Design Engineering	Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2	Two scores, not an invented total
Electrical and Electronic Engineering	Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2, Physics	Test performance can contribute to interview shortlisting
Life Sciences	Mathematics 1, Chemistry, Biology	Biology and Chemistry are the course-facing sciences
Mechanical Engineering	Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2, Physics	Three separate scores enter selection
Physics	Mathematics 1, Mathematics 2, Physics	Three separate scores enter selection

The interview interaction is department-specific. Aeronautics, Design Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering publish interview stages; their pages describe selection using the test with other evidence. Imperial's central dashboard distinguishes offered, interviewed-but-unsuccessful and unsuccessful applicants where a department interviews. It is historical context, not a live threshold.

2 Try it

On your course page, write three lines: "modules", "is there an interview?", and "what evidence is named before interview?" If the page names grades, statement, reference and ESAT, do not mentally delete the first three. If it names no interview, do not invent one from another department's process.

4 What an interview adds

The score records how you performed on fast, fixed, multiple-choice problems. An interview can reveal how you react to a hint, explain a choice, recover from a wrong turn and extend an argument. These are related signals, not substitutes.

Worked example The one-line answer and the interview answer

Let

$$f(x) = \frac{x^3}{3} - 3x^2 + 8x, \quad 0 \leq x \leq 5.$$

Where does f attain its greatest value?

First find every candidate, not just the first stationary point:

$$f'(x) = x^2 - 6x + 8 = (x - 2)(x - 4).$$

So compare $x = 0, 2, 4, 5$:

$$f(0) = 0, \quad f(2) = \frac{20}{3}, \quad f(4) = \frac{16}{3}, \quad f(5) = \frac{20}{3}.$$

Hence the greatest value is $20/3$, attained at

$$x = 2 \text{ and } x = 5.$$

Correct: For the multiple-choice mark, differentiate and compare stationary points with both endpoints.

Trap: Choosing $x = 2$ as soon as f' changes from positive to negative misses the equal endpoint maximum at $x = 5$.

The interview extension is the explanation: f' has signs $+, -, +$ across the interval, so $x = 2$ is a local maximum and $x = 4$ a local minimum; compactness means the endpoints must also be tested. This is an illustrative ESAT-calibre problem, not a recalled admissions question.

5 After results: what you control and what you do not

- **You see the scores in your UAT-UK account**, normally about four weeks after the sitting. You receive no script, item-level marks or appeal route for the score.
- **Universities receive matched results automatically.** Do not email screenshots unless a university asks; the official match is the record that counts.
- **Cambridge uses the result before interview.** If shortlisted, prepare to solve unfamiliar problems aloud. A strong ESAT is evidence already banked, not permission to coast.
- **Imperial timelines vary by department and sitting.** A later sitting can mean later shortlisting in departments that must wait for the score.
- **A disappointing decimal is not a private verdict.** Neither university publishes a universal pass mark. Keep meeting deadlines and prepare for the next stage until the university decides.

6 Sources

University of Cambridge

Pre-interview and offer use: [admissions-test policy](#). Four courses and module combinations: [ESAT course map](#).

Imperial College London

Application use and historic department outcomes: [score policy](#). Eight department groups and module combinations: [ESAT module map](#).

UAT-UK, Test Results

Separate module scores, automatic course-by-course UCAS matching and no UAT-UK pass mark. [Read the results page](#).

Policies and course requirements are time-specific. This guide was checked for 2027 entry in August 2026. UniGenius is independent of UAT-UK, Cambridge and Imperial.