



HEC-ETC/21/51  
06 December, 2021

### **Circular: Facilitating Undergraduate Admissions**

1. This is with reference to the earlier circulars No HEC-ETC/21/51 dated 12 July, 2021 and 06 October, 2021 on the subject. Due to postponement in implementation of the new undergraduate policy, the corresponding standardized undergrad admission test, **USAT**, offered by **ETC**, has now been adapted to multi-streams admissions. Important details about the six USAT versions are given in the **Annexure** to this letter.
2. ETC has been mandated to develop products in line with the international best practices that also measure up against the touchstones of standardization, quality, equity, reliability, and fairness. The first USAT was conducted nationwide on 12 September 2021. The test generated a lot of interest, both from the students and universities, as seen in the number of registrations that stood at, **33,500**. It has been encouraging for the dedicated team working at ETC. The universities' interest has come primarily due to the quality, fairness, and validity of the test. Whereas factors like standardization, inclusion of communication skills assessment in Urdu/ English by student's choice, across the board/ yearlong acceptance, and test center accessibility have definitely mattered with the students.
3. ETC now intends to conduct the USAT simultaneously, for the six academic streams currently in vogue, nationwide in the first half of January, 2022. It will be announced and managed through ETC's registration portal <http://etc.hec.gov.pk>. Depending on the interest and need of the universities and students, the test would be offered on a quarterly basis or even once every two months.
4. It is, therefore, a considered request for all universities/ DAIs to honor the applicants, with USAT result card, for inclusion in their respective merit lists. It would enhance the likelihood of choosing best of the best prospective students, with a higher probability of success, due to the validity and quality of USAT. The best course action however, would be to explicitly announce the acceptance of USAT in the prospectus and admission advertisements to avoid any confusion.

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CEO, ETC  
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Annexure

## **Undergraduate Studies Admission Test (USAT)**

Undergraduate Studies Admission Test (USAT) is a product of Education Testing Council (ETC) for admission at the undergraduate level in universities operating all over Pakistan. ETC is Pakistan's first public sector testing service which was established, in its present form, in 2019 by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to standardize educational and professional testing in Pakistan. ETC is an autonomous and self-sustained body governed by its own independent Board of Governors.

ETC is a project of national importance envisioned in the best interest of advanced and credible education in the country. Its services are offered countrywide including GB and AJK, whereby many national level organizations are benefiting from these. ETC facilitates standardized testing and authentic measurement of candidates' skills and knowledge. Keeping all the weaknesses of the traditional testing setups in mind, ETC is conducting tests for various institutions and professional bodies by specifically ensuring quality assessment through accuracy, credibility, and transparency.

Standard SOPs have been devised for every process involved in testing to ensure efficiency, fairness, reliability, and validity of the entire system under strict physical and software-based security measures. ETC has so far conducted paper-based tests for admissions, scholarships, and licentiate tests for various institutions. It is planned to eventually introduce online tests for Computer Based Testing (CBT) eliminating human involvement as much as possible from the testing process chain.

### **Introduction**

Due to the postponement of unified undergraduate program envisaged in the "Undergraduate Education Policy 2020" of HEC, the "Undergraduate Studies Admission Test (USAT)" has been redesigned. Six versions of the USAT are now being offered based on the various academic streams that are in vogue. The tests are valid for admission in all public and private sector universities/ Degree Awarding Institutes (DAIs) of Pakistan (other than Medical Colleges/ Universities). The candidates may appear in the USAT version relevant to their academic stream and stand eligible for admission to all universities offering admission in that stream. They are required to apply for admission as per the universities' respective announcements, along with a copy of the ETC USAT result card. The result of USAT is released within 4-5 weeks of the test administration and can be viewed online. The result remains valid for one year. There is no





restriction on the number of times a candidate can appear in a test. ETC shares its execution plan for conducting the USAT on its web portal: <https://etc.hec.gov.pk>.

### USAT Composition

The USAT is designed closely on the pattern of Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and covers all known disciplines of Engineering, Medicine, IT, Commerce, Arts & Humanities, and Social Sciences at the undergraduate entry level. The students after qualifying USAT stand eligible to all universities like the SAT. The test would help in establishing a fair, valid, reliable, and credible measure of determining the likelihood of a student's success. The test focuses more on the knowledge and skills at the heart of education. It is thus expected to measure what a test taker:

- 1) learns in secondary/ higher secondary education, and
- 2) needs to succeed in an undergraduate program.

The major portion of the test is designed to measure the cognitive abilities of the test taker which can predict how s/he is likely to perform in an undergraduate degree. In addition, a portion based on interpersonal skills is able to measure non-cognitive domain abilities of the test taker.

USAT spans following knowledge, skills, and behavioral areas:

**Verbal Reasoning:** This section measures the test taker's ability to analyze written material, synthesize information, and recognize relationships between words and concepts.

**Quantitative Reasoning:** It measures the ability to understand basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, equations, geometry, vectors, graphs, statistics, and problem solving. Quantitative reasoning ability is considered to be the most reliable predictor of future success.

**Subjects Knowledge of Academic Stream:** This section tests the student's knowledge of the subjects covered in his corresponding academic stream. It is reflected in the USAT version name for that specific stream.

**Essay Writing skills:** (Can be attempted either in English or Urdu) It is an assessment of the student's verbal ability and communication skills. Detailed rubrics are defined for as close an objective marking as possible. The structure of the essay, arrangement of ideas, logical analysis, vocabulary, and grammar – all have respective weightages.



### Test Structure of USAT

ETC has approached educationists, subject experts and psychometrician from the renowned universities who coordinated with ETC in finalizing the USAT structure, its curriculum, contents, and other procedures involved in conducting the test. Universities' nominees were requested to share their programs, disciplines, and suggestions. The USAT is divided into three parts:

1. Reading, writing, and mathematics.
2. Academic stream subjects
3. Essay writing.

Part-I is based on 75 multiple choice questions. Part-II of the test includes assessing essay writing skills with the option to attempt it in either English or Urdu. These two sections are scored for a maximum total score of 100. Any score above 50 will be considered as a qualifying USAT score. The maximum anyone can score on USAT would be the perfect score of 100. The break-up of USAT is shown in the tables below:

### Test Breakup/ Marks Distribution

#### Undergraduate Studies Admission Test – USAT

| Eligibility:<br><br>Having 12 years/<br>equivalent Education in a<br>discipline | Part I                         |                           |                    |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
|   | Number of Test Items (75 MCQs) |                           |                    |
|   | Time Allowed 100 Minutes       |                           |                    |
|   | Verbal<br>Reasoning            | Quantitative<br>Reasoning | Subjects Knowledge |
|   | 20                             | 25                        | 30                 |
| Part II   |                                |                           |                    |
| Time Allowed 40 Minutes   |                                |                           |                    |
| Essay Writing Skills  |                                |                           |                    |
| 400-500 words (Either in English or Urdu)                                       |                                |                           |                    |
| 25  |                                |                           |                    |



# Question Distribution for each USAT Version for Corresponding Academic Stream

## USAT – E

| Sr. No. | Title  | Criteria and Subject Division   | Subject 100% Weight |
|---------|--|---|---------------------|
| 01      | Undergraduate Studies Admission Test<br><b>USAT-E</b><br>Having 12 years/<br>equivalent Education<br>in <b>Pre-Engineering</b> | <b>Part I</b><br>Number of Test Items (75 MCQs)<br>Time Allowed 100 Minutes         |                     |
|         |  | A: Verbal Reasoning   | 20 MCQ's            |
|         |  | A1: Analogy   | 05                  |
|         |  | A2: Synonym/ Antonym  | 04                  |
|         |  | A3: Sentence Completion   | 06                  |
|         |  | A4: Comprehension   | 05                  |
|         |  | B: Quantitative Reasoning   | 25 MCQ's            |
|         |  | B1: Arithmetic  | 06                  |
|         |  | B2: Algebra and functions   | 04                  |
|         |  | B3: Geometry  | 03                  |
|         |  | B4: Equations   | 03                  |
|         |  | B5: Statistics  | 03                  |
|         |  | B6: Scenario Based/Mental Mathematics   | 06                  |
|         |  | C: Physics  | 10 MCQ's            |
|         |  | D: Chemistry  | 10 MCQ's            |
|         |  | E: Mathematics  | 10 MCQ's            |
|         |  | <b>Part II</b><br>Time Allowed 40 Minutes   |                     |
|         |  | A: Argument Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu  | 15 Marks            |
|         |  | B: Narrative Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu | 10 Marks            |



## USAT – M

| Sr. No. | Title  | Criteria and Subject Division   | Subject 100% Weight |
|---------|--|---|---------------------|
| 02      | Undergraduate Studies Admission Test<br><b>USAT-M (Allied Health)</b><br>Having 12 years/<br>equivalent Education in<br><b>Pre-Medical</b> | <b>Part I</b><br>Number of Test Items (75 MCQs)<br>Time Allowed 100 Minutes         |                     |
|         |  | A: Verbal Reasoning   | 20 MCQ's            |
|         |  | A1: Analogy   | 05                  |
|         |  | A2: Synonym/ Antonym  | 04                  |
|         |  | A3: Sentence Completion   | 06                  |
|         |  | A4: Comprehension   | 05                  |
|         |  | B: Quantitative Reasoning   | 25 MCQ's            |
|         |  | B1: Arithmetic  | 06                  |
|         |  | B2: Algebra and functions   | 04                  |
|         |  | B3: Geometry  | 03                  |
|         |  | B4: Equations   | 03                  |
|         |  | B5: Statistics  | 03                  |
|         |  | B6: Scenario Based/Mental Mathematics   | 06                  |
|         |  | C: Physics  | 08 MCQ's            |
|         |  | D: Chemistry  | 08 MCQ's            |
|         |  | E: Biology  | 14 MCQ's            |
|         |  | <b>Part II</b><br>Time Allowed 40 Minutes   |                     |
|         |  | A: Argument Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu  | 15 Marks            |
|         |  | B: Narrative Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu | 10 Marks            |





## USAT – A

| Sr. No. | Title  | Criteria and Subject Division   | Subject 100% Weight  |
|---------|--|---|--|
| 03      | Undergraduate Studies Admission Test<br><b>USAT-A</b><br>Having 12 years/<br>equivalent Education<br>in <b>Arts &amp; Humanities</b> | <b>Part I</b><br>Number of Test Items (75 MCQs)<br>Time Allowed 100 Minutes<br>A: Verbal Reasoning<br>A1: Analogy<br>A2: Synonym/ Antonym<br>A3: Sentence Completion<br>A4: Comprehension<br>B: Quantitative Reasoning<br>B1: Arithmetic<br>B2: Algebra and functions<br>B3: Geometry<br>B4: Equations<br>B5: Statistics<br>B6: Scenario Based/Mental Mathematics<br>C: Islamiat/ Ethics<br>D: Pakistan Studies<br>E: General Knowledge<br><b>Part II</b><br>Time Allowed 40 Minutes<br>A: Argument Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu<br>B: Narrative Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu | 20 MCQ's<br>05<br>04<br>06<br>05<br>25 MCQ's<br>06<br>04<br>03<br>03<br>03<br>06<br>10 MCQ's<br>10 MCQ's<br>10 MCQ's<br>15 Marks<br>10 Marks |



## USAT – CS

| Sr. No. | Title  | Criteria and Subject Division   | Subject<br>100% Weight |
|---------|--|---|------------------------|
| 04      | Undergraduate Studies Admission Test<br><b>USAT-CS</b><br>Having 12 years/<br>equivalent Education in<br><b>Computer Science</b> | <b>Part I</b>   |                        |
|         |  | Number of Test Items (75 MCQs)  |                        |
|         |  | Time Allowed 100 Minutes  |                        |
|         |  | A: Verbal Reasoning   | 20 MCQ's               |
|         |  | A1: Analogy   | 05                     |
|         |  | A2: Synonym/ Antonym  | 04                     |
|         |  | A3: Sentence Completion   | 06                     |
|         |  | A4: Comprehension   | 05                     |
|         |  | B: Quantitative Reasoning   | 25 MCQ's               |
|         |  | B1: Arithmetic  | 06                     |
|         |  | B2: Algebra and functions   | 04                     |
|         |  | B3: Geometry  | 03                     |
|         |  | B4: Equations   | 03                     |
|         |  | B5: Statistics  | 03                     |
|         |  | B6: Scenario Based/Mental Mathematics   | 06                     |
|         |  | C: Physics  | 10 MCQ's               |
|         |  | D: Computer Science   | 10 MCQ's               |
|         |  | E: Mathematics  | 10 MCQ's               |
|         |  | <b>Part II</b>  |                        |
|         |  | Time Allowed 40 Minutes   |                        |
|         |  | A: Argument Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu  | 15 Marks               |
|         |  | B: Narrative Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu | 10 Marks               |




## USAT – GS

| Sr. No. | Title   | Criteria and Subject Division   | Subject<br>100% Weight |
|---------|---|---|------------------------|
| 05      | Undergraduate Studies Admission Test<br><b>USAT-GS</b><br>Having 12 years/<br>equivalent Education in<br><b>General Science</b> | <b>Part I</b>   |                        |
|         |   | Number of Test Items (75 MCQs)<br>Time Allowed 100 Minutes                          |                        |
|         |   | A: Verbal Reasoning   | 20 MCQ's               |
|         |   | A1: Analogy   | 05                     |
|         |   | A2: Synonym/ Antonym  | 04                     |
|         |   | A3: Sentence Completion   | 06                     |
|         |   | A4: Comprehension   | 05                     |
|         |   | B: Quantitative Reasoning   | 25 MCQ's               |
|         |   | B1: Arithmetic  | 06                     |
|         |   | B2: Algebra and functions   | 04                     |
|         |   | B3: Geometry  | 03                     |
|         |   | B4: Equations   | 03                     |
|         |   | B5: Statistics  | 03                     |
|         |   | B6: Scenario Based/Mental Mathematics   | 06                     |
|         |   | C: Mathematics  | 10 MCQ's               |
|         |   | D: Statistics   | 10 MCQ's               |
|         |   | E: Economics  | 10 MCQ's               |
|         |   | <b>Part II</b>  |                        |
|         |   | Time Allowed 40 Minutes   |                        |
|         |   | A: Argument Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu  | 15 Marks               |
|         |   | B: Narrative Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu | 10 Marks               |



## USAT – COM

| Sr.<br>No. | Title  | Criteria and Subject Division   | Subject<br>100% Weight |
|------------|--|---|------------------------|
| 06         | Undergraduate Studies<br>Admission Test<br><b>USAT-COM</b><br>Having 12 years/<br>equivalent Education in<br><b>Commerce</b> | <b>Part I</b><br>Number of Test Items (75 MCQs)<br>Time Allowed 100 Minutes         |                        |
|            |  | A: Verbal Reasoning   | 20 MCQ's               |
|            |  | A1: Analogy   | 05                     |
|            |  | A2: Synonym/ Antonym  | 04                     |
|            |  | A3: Sentence Completion   | 06                     |
|            |  | A4: Comprehension   | 05                     |
|            |  | B: Quantitative Reasoning   | 25 MCQ's               |
|            |  | B1: Arithmetic  | 06                     |
|            |  | B2: Algebra and functions   | 04                     |
|            |  | B3: Geometry  | 03                     |
|            |  | B4: Equations   | 03                     |
|            |  | B5: Statistics  | 03                     |
|            |  | B6: Scenario Based/Mental Mathematics   | 06                     |
|            |  | C: Accounting   | 10 MCQ's               |
|            |  | D: Commerce   | 10 MCQ's               |
|            |  | E: Economics  | 10 MCQ's               |
|            |  | <b>Part II</b><br>Time Allowed 40 Minutes   |                        |
|            |  | A: Argument Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu  | 15 Marks               |
|            |  | B: Narrative Based Essay Writing Skills<br>(01 out of 03) Either in English or Urdu | 10 Marks               |



## **Proposed Test Schedule**

Test is held on a quarterly basis in the major cities of Pakistan simultaneously. More tests can however be arranged if the need existed. The yearly test calendar will be uploaded on the ETC website and candidates may register themselves through the online registration portal.

## **Role of Universities**

Universities will continue to announce their admission program independently. Students will apply to universities that accept USAT and will submit the USAT ETC score card for inclusion in the weightage-based merit determining formula.

## **Test Fee**

The test fee for all versions of Undergraduate Studies Admission Test (USAT) is PKR 1,200/- per candidate. Candidates deposit the fee amount in the HEC account with Habib Bank Limited.

## **Test Duration**

The total test duration is **140 minutes**.

## **Test Frequency**

Initially, the test is being planned to be held on a quarterly basis. However, the frequency may be enhanced to every two months (bimonthly).

## **Online CBT Plan Horizon**

ETC has initiated the development of its standardized question bank with a target of 100,000 questions by June 2023. Online CBT is expected to be rolled out much earlier, i.e., within the third quarter of 2022 for pilot testing.

## **Test Validity for Regular Admissions**

The USAT is now available for regular admissions based on academic streams. It truly offers a better and progressive approach in separating students with a higher chance of success at the undergraduate studies level through standardized testing.

## **Contact Us**

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