

# How universities actually read your LNAT

The same Section A score and the same essay can enter four very different admissions systems.

## THE SHORT ANSWER

The LNAT Consortium sends universities your mark out of 42 and your unmarked essay. What happens next is local. Oxford's 2024–25 shortlist rank used Section A and the essay. UCL gives the essay considerable weight. LSE normally uses Section A only. Bristol reads the essay, but its once-published 60/40 split is not restated in the 2027 admissions statement.

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

## 1 The test centre does not make the admissions decision

Pearson marks Section A. It does not centrally mark Section B. Both are released to your selected LNAT universities, which combine them with the rest of the application in their own way. The LNAT Consortium states that there is no fixed LNAT weight across institutions.

That is why “my LNAT went well” is an incomplete sentence. A 28 plus a precise essay may be read differently from a 28 plus a vague essay, and LSE will usually care about the first number while another university reads both.

### 1 The tell

Ask whether a claim describes *delivery*, *marking*, or *selection*. “Section B is unscored centrally” is about marking. It does not mean the essay is ignored by universities.

## 2 Four systems you should not blend together

| University | Section A                                       | Essay                                              | What the current evidence supports                                                              |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Oxford     | Externally marked, then used in rank            | Internally comparison-marked                       | In 2024–25, Section A, essay and contextualised GCSEs were equally weighted in the initial rank |
| UCL        | A benchmark stage precedes full academic review | Marked by an admissions tutor; considerable weight | No score guarantees an offer; both parts matter after academic eligibility                      |
| LSE        | Normally the only LNAT component used           | Usually not considered                             | A narrow exception is reserved for some non-traditional or less familiar qualifications         |
| Bristol    | Used with the academic record                   | Read and assessed by Bristol staff                 | Current 2027 statement confirms essay use; historic 60/40 formula is not republished            |

### 3 Oxford: the essay is not a decorative appendix

Oxford's 2024–25 report is unusually specific. Its initial shortlist rank combined contextualised GCSE results, the multiple-choice score and the internally marked essay with equal weight. The post-interview rank added a smaller interview component. Offer-holders averaged 30.96 in Section A and 65.41 on Oxford's essay scale (Oxford Law Admissions Report 2024–25).

Those figures describe a process, not a recipe you can reproduce at home. Oxford's essay score is an internal assessment, not the centrally reported LNAT mark. The practical lesson is simpler: a strong Section A score does not grant permission to improvise Section B.

### 4 UCL and LSE: neighbouring universities, opposite essay rules

UCL first checks academic requirements, then looks at Section A against a benchmark informed by previous cohorts. Files that proceed receive academic consideration, including an admissions tutor's assessment of the essay. UCL calls the essay a genuine piece of work under exam conditions and says it carries considerable weight.

LSE's current entry guidance says it will use only the multiple-choice score for most applicants. It reserves the right to assess the essay, including for applicants with non-traditional or less familiar qualifications. "LSE ignores the essay" is a useful shorthand for most standard applicants, but it is not literally universal.

#### 2 Try it

Make one row per university on your list: Section A use, essay use, published average and source date. If you cannot fill a cell from the university or a dated disclosure, write "not published". A blank is more honest than admissions folklore.

### 5 Bristol: what 60/40 does and does not mean now

Bristol's 2018 and 2020 admissions statements published a clear LNAT formula: 60% multiple choice and 40% essay. The 2027 statement still says staff read and assess the essay, looking for a sustained persuasive argument and strong language. It no longer publishes the numeric split.

The safe statement for a 2027 applicant is therefore: **both parts matter at Bristol; 60/40 is the last explicit published formula located, not a promised current weighting.** This is more useful than repeating an old number without its year.

### 6 Worked Section A: separate evidence from inference

#### Worked example A policy can be useful without being decisive

**Passage.** A university wants to remove personal statements from admissions because polished writing may reflect paid help. The concern is real, but removal would also discard evidence of sustained interest that grades cannot show. A better response is to reduce the statement's weight and compare it with supervised work. Admissions evidence is rarely pure; the sensible question is whether several imperfect signals point in the same direction.

**Question.** Which claim is most strongly supported?

- A. Personal statements become useless admissions evidence whenever any applicants receive outside help.
- B. Grades are the only fair evidence in university admissions.
- C. Imperfect evidence can remain useful when checked against other evidence.
- D. Universities should substantially increase the weight placed on personal statements in every admissions decision.

**Correct:** C. The last sentence states the general principle, and the proposed comparison applies it.

**Misreading:** Trigger-word capture, A: the opening concern is acknowledged, then qualified.

**Misreading:** False binary, B: the author rejects choosing one supposedly pure signal.

**Misreading:** Direction flip, D: the author proposes reducing, not increasing, the statement's weight.

The same discipline applies to admissions claims. “Oxford uses the essay” is evidence. “Therefore an average essay guarantees an interview” is an inference the evidence does not support.

## 7 What to do with this asymmetry

- If any choice reads Section B, practise it as a real selection document, not a cooldown after Section A.
- If LSE is your only LNAT choice, Section A deserves most preparation time, but you must still complete the required essay and should not rely on the standard-applicant rule applying to every case.
- If Oxford is on the list, plan for two scored performances: a stable Section A band and a concise essay with a defendable line.
- If Bristol is on the list, prepare both parts. Do not optimise to an unpublished 2027 percentage split.
- For every university, meet its exact deadline. A brilliant result taken too late is not a strategic result.

## 8 Sources

### LNAT Consortium, Results

Both components are released, universities choose how to use them, and there is no fixed LNAT weight. [Read the official page.](#)

### Oxford Law Admissions Report 2024--25

Equal initial rank weighting, internal essay marking and recent averages. [Read Oxford's report.](#)

### UCL Laws and LSE entry requirements

[UCL's staged process and essay weight](#); [LSE's Section A rule and essay exception.](#)

### University of Bristol admissions statements

Current essay use in the [2027 statement](#); explicit historic split in the [2020 statement](#).

Admissions policies change. Recheck the exact course page for your entry year before turning any published process into a study-time decision.