

Which past papers should you use?

The short answer

Use the **specimen** to learn the question language, save the timed **practice/sample test** for a dress rehearsal, then use the official 2016–2023 NSAA and ENGAA archives by module. Do not convert a legacy-paper mark into an ESAT score. No official table allows it.

There are two official practice sets, not two past papers

The ESAT first ran in October 2024, but UAT-UK has not released those live forms as past papers. Pearson currently provides two official practice versions for each module:

- a **specimen test** with explained answers;
- a **sample or practice test** in the Pearson player, intended for timed use and followed by correct/incorrect feedback.

Calling them “the two ESAT past papers” is understandable search language, but it hides their job. They show format, style, navigation and some accessibility features. They do not produce a scaled score, and UAT-UK warns that practice-test performance need not indicate performance under exam conditions.

1 The tell

If a website offers “2024 ESAT past paper” or “2025 recalled paper”, ask whether UAT-UK released it. A memory reconstruction is not an official paper, may breach test rules, and cannot carry an official mark scheme or conversion.

The honest module map

UAT-UK itself hosts the 2016–2023 ENGAA and NSAA archives and marks questions that are outside the ESAT specification. Use that annotation. The archive is evidence of useful question ancestry, not proof that every legacy item belongs in your plan.

The past-paper map does this for you: every Section 1 question placed in an ESAT module and topic, with UAT-UK’s crosses carried over and a timed set that marks itself.

ESAT module	Best official legacy source	Honest use
Mathematics 1	NSAA Part A Mathematics; ENGAA Part A mathematics	Closest archive match for short, no-calculator mathematics. Filter against the current M1 list.
Mathematics 2	ENGAA Part B Advanced Mathematics	Only direct legacy source for the advanced strand; skip every marked off-spec item.
Physics	NSAA Physics; ENGAA Part A Physics; selected ENGAA Part B Advanced Physics	Deepest archive. Part B is valuable for transfer but most likely to wander beyond today’s boundary.
Chemistry	NSAA Chemistry	Eight years of useful principles and quantities; audit every set against the current Chemistry list.
Biology	NSAA Biology	Best legacy source, but diagrams and data presentation do not recreate the Pearson screen.

What transfers, and what misleads

Transfers well	Misleads if left uncorrected
Multiple-choice elimination and distractor reading	Paper annotation instead of screen-to-noteboard working
No-calculator algebra and numerical estimation	Legacy section totals treated as an ESAT score
Roughly the same pace: $40/60 = 90$ seconds per legacy Section 1 item versus $2400/27 \approx 88.9$ seconds per ESAT item	Off-specification Advanced Mathematics or Advanced Physics mistaken for required knowledge
Applying school science in unfamiliar arrangements	A whole-paper order that does not match separately timed ESAT modules
Force, particle, graph and proportional reasoning	Confidence from a familiar archive set mistaken for readiness for a new live form

The near-identical average pace is the strongest reason to use the archive. The different delivery and module boundaries are the strongest reasons not to simulate your final score from it.

Worked transfer: keep the principle, change the wrapper

Worked example A spring question that survives the exam change

A spring of stiffness k is compressed by x and releases a block of mass m on a frictionless surface. A second launch uses a spring of stiffness $4k$, compressed by $x/2$, with a block of mass $2m$. Find v_2/v_1 .
For the first launch,

$$\frac{1}{2}kx^2 = \frac{1}{2}mv_1^2 \implies v_1 = x\sqrt{\frac{k}{m}}.$$

For the second, compare energies before expanding everything:

$$\frac{E_2}{E_1} = \frac{(4k)(x/2)^2}{kx^2} = 1.$$

The stored energies are equal, but the second mass is doubled. Since $E \propto mv^2$,

$$\frac{v_2}{v_1} = \sqrt{\frac{m}{2m}} = \boxed{\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}}.$$

Correct: energy conservation and proportional reasoning transfer perfectly from legacy physics to ESAT.

Trap: $v_2/v_1 = 2$ notices only the fourfold stiffness; it ignores the halved compression being squared and the doubled mass.

The topic is current ESAT Physics. The useful legacy habit is spotting the invariant before calculating. The unhelpful habit would be copying a paper-only diagram, using a legacy score table, or revising a neighbouring topic merely because an old Part B question contained it.

2 Try it

For one legacy set, label every attempted item **T** (transfers), **A** (adapt the delivery) or **S** (skip as off-spec). Your percentage is calculated from T and A only. The S items are not failures; they are successful filtering.

How to sequence scarce material

1. **Read the current specification.** It is the filter for everything else.
2. **Use the specimen early and untimed.** Learn the stem language, options, navigation and explained answers.
3. **Build topic sets from the archive.** Start untimed, then use nine questions in 13 minutes and 27 in 40.
4. **Match exam setup.** Put the PDF on a monitor and work on a separate sheet. Do not annotate the screen capture.

5. **Save the Pearson practice/sample test.** Take it on desktop in one uninterrupted timed sitting after you fix your core gaps.
6. **Do not convert legacy marks.** Record raw accuracy, reach and error causes; no published legacy-to-ESAT scale exists.

No live ESAT form or recalled question is reproduced here. The worked example is original. UniGenius is independent.