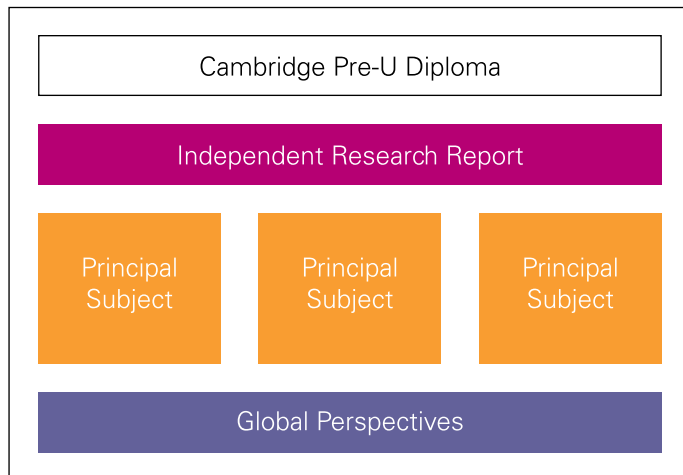


Cambridge Pre-U: A Guide for Higher Education US Admissions Staff

Why was Cambridge Pre-U developed?

Cambridge Pre-U was developed in response to requests from UK schools for an alternative to A Level that would fully support successful progression from school to undergraduate study and beyond. It was developed in consultation with schools, Higher Education and subject associations, and addressed the concerns expressed by UK universities regarding the fragmentation of learning in UK modular A Levels. Cambridge Pre-U was available for first teaching from September 2008 and is accredited by the UK regulator, OFQUAL.

What is Cambridge Pre-U?



Cambridge Pre-U Diploma

Full award for candidates gaining five components – comprising three Principal Subjects and the core components. Up to two A Levels can be substituted for Principal Subjects.

Cambridge Pre-U Certificate

Available in 26 individual Principal Subjects, certificated separately, assessed at the end of a two-year programme of study. Short Courses (one-year) available for Modern Languages.

GPR

Global Perspectives and Independent Research Report together constitute the compulsory core of the Diploma, but they can be taken as a freestanding package, and a separate qualification.

How do Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects compare with A Levels?

A Level	Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject
360 class contact hours	380 class contact hours
6 passing grades A*-E	9 passing grades D1-P3 with one grade higher than A*
Examinations are modular taken over the two year period of study	Examinations are linear with all examinations taken at the end of the two year study period
Individual modules can be retaken	Re-sits only available one year later by taking all the examination papers for the whole subject
Includes one paper that looks across the different modules (synoptic assessment)	Papers are taken at the end of the course with candidates expected to make links between topic areas

Full information on each of the 26 subjects can be found at www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/academic/uppersec/preu/subjects

What do students have to do to get the Diploma?

To qualify for the full Cambridge Pre-U Diploma a student must pass in three Principal Subjects and the Global Perspectives and Independent Research Report (GPR).

What is GPR?

In order to encourage all students to develop the skills targeted by GPR, it is available as a stand alone course/examination in addition to serving as the core for the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma. It comprises Global Perspectives (a taught course) and an Independent Research Report. Global Perspectives encourages breadth across the curriculum through the interdisciplinary study of a number of themes of global relevance, developing critical thinking and a range of study and research skills. The Independent Research Report promotes the exercise of the skills taught in Global Perspectives, and helps prepare students to cope with the demands of university study.

What are the Cambridge Pre-U Short Courses?

These are additional one year courses available in Modern Foreign Languages. These can be taken in the first or second year of study and are offered in order to encourage students to develop a broad subject portfolio.

How is Cambridge Pre-U graded?

The following table shows the grading structure for Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects, GPR and Short Courses:

Pre-U Band	Grade	
Distinction	D1	The D3 standard is aligned to that of A grade at A Level, in that the standard of work required to achieve a D3 will be the same as that required for an A grade. But note: a Pre-U candidate has to cover more ground (the syllabus is bigger), additional stretch is built into the question papers and students have to take all papers in one session.
Distinction	D2	
Distinction	D3	
Merit	M1	
Merit	M2	
Merit	M3	
Pass	P1	
Pass	P2	
Pass	P3	
Ungraded	U	
		The P3 standard is aligned to E grade in the same way.

The overall Cambridge Pre-U Diploma score is calculated by adding together the four individual components which are each given a numerical score out of 24 giving a maximum score of 96. The minimum passing mark for the diploma is 32.

Students will receive a certificate for the individual Principal Subjects, GPR and Short Courses and an additional certificate if they have met the requirements for the Diploma.

Cambridge Pre-U Applications

It is likely that the majority of applicants will be applying with a combination of Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects and A Levels or with Principal Subjects but without the Diploma. The first applicants will be applying in 2009 for the 2010 intake.

What is the UCAS Tariff?

In the UK all university applications are centralised through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). The UCAS Tariff is a points system that provides a benchmark for universities for objective comparison of examinations in terms of their utility for progression to higher education. The tariff is used by some universities in the UK to frame their offers of admissions – for example, 300 tariff points with a Grade A in Geography. Others make their offers in terms of specific subjects and grades but use the tariff in deciding how to frame their offers of admission. The tariff points awarded for Cambridge Pre-U reflect the fact that the standard of work required for a Distinction 3 will be pegged to that currently required for an A grade at A Level. However, the tariff awards 130 points to D3, against 120 for A grade at A Level. The Tariff thus takes into account several features that make Cambridge Pre-U distinctive: size, stretch and the linear structure.

Using UCAS Tariff Points as the benchmark for comparison, universities can translate Cambridge Pre-U grades in a straightforward way. Admission offers to study Law at Warwick, for example, require three A Levels with Grade A (360 tariff points) which translate into two Principal Subjects at D3 and one at M1(375 tariff points). As the table opposite shows, if a university gives academic credit for A Level grades B and above then Grade B (100 tariff points) should be translated as Merit 2 (which has 101

tariff points). At the top end, it is clear that the equivalent grade to A* is Distinction 2, and at the lower end that the equivalent grade to E is P3. Universities that normally give academic credit for A Levels of Grades C and above may decide to give credit to Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects of Grade M3 and above.

The following table below may be of help to universities in deciding their policy for academic credit for students applying with the Cambridge Pre-U.

How does the UCAS Tariff apply to Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects?

Band	Cambridge Pre-U Grade	UCAS Tariff Points	A Level Grade & Tariff Points	IB Higher Level	AP Group A
Distinction	D1	tbc			
	D2	145	A* 140		
	D3	130		7 130	
Merit	M1	115		6 110	
	M2	101	B 100		4 90
	M3	87		5 80	
Pass	P1	73			3 60
	P2	59	D 60	4 50	
	P3	46	E 40		

How does the UCAS tariff apply to GPR?

GPR has been awarded a tariff score of 140 points at D2, 126 at D3, down to 42 at P3. Grade for grade, it thus attracts a slightly higher tariff score than A Level.

How does the UCAS tariff apply to the Cambridge Pre-U Short Courses?

UCAS has awarded a tariff score for Cambridge Pre-U Short Courses equal to AS Level scores, from D3 = 60 down to P3 = 20. The tariff for the two higher grades, D1 and D2, will be confirmed after candidate evidence becomes available. Therefore universities that give credit for AS Levels might consider offering the same amount of credit for a Cambridge Pre-U Short Course.

University acceptance

The UK Russell Group has welcomed the academic rigour, retention of subject specialism and linear approach of the Cambridge Pre-U. Work has begun in the USA and Yale, Cornell and Princeton have all said they will welcome applications from students with the Cambridge Pre-U. Exemplar statements:

Yale University would be pleased to consider applications from students with Cambridge Pre-U examination results according to their merits, as is the case with A Level applicants. All candidates must submit complete applications to be considered for admission to Yale. Yale is in the process of reviewing what academic credit might be awarded for particular Pre-U grades.

Duke University accepts Cambridge Pre-U for entry to Undergraduate courses. In order to qualify for and receive Duke International Placement Credit (IPC), students must present with grades of A or B (or the equivalent). Accordingly, a student presenting with grades of M3 or higher (M2, M1, D3, D2, or D1) in acceptable subjects in the Cambridge Pre-U program would be eligible to receive IPA credit, up to our defined limit of 2 such IPC credits.

A full list of UK and US universities can be found at <http://recognition.cie.org.uk> by searching on UK/US, Higher Education and Cambridge Pre-U.

For more information visit the website at: www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/academic/uppersec/preu

Contact Details for Further Information

For further details about CIE pre-university qualifications, please visit our website at www.cie.org.uk, or contact:

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