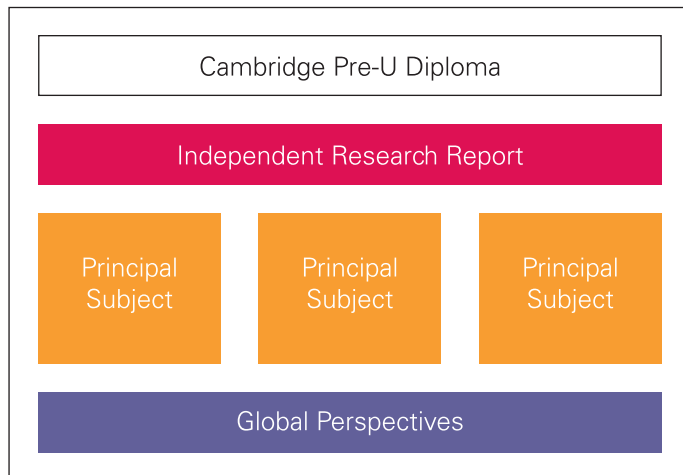


Cambridge Pre-U: A Guide for Higher Education US Admissions Staff

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 passing four components – comprising three Principal Subjects (chosen from 27 subjects) and the core component Global Perspectives and Independent Research (GPR). Up to two A Levels can be substituted for Principal Subjects.

Cambridge Pre-U Certificate

Available in 27 individual Principal Subjects, certificated separately and assessed at the end of a two-year programme of study. Short Courses (one-year) available for Modern Languages and Mathematics.

GPR

Global Perspectives and Independent Research constitutes the compulsory core of the Diploma, and can be taken as a freestanding package, and certificated separately.

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 27 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 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 and Mathematics. 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?

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

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.

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	The P3 standard is aligned to E grade in the same way.
Pass	P2	
Pass	P3	
Ungraded	U	



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

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 applied 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 D3 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 graph below shows, if a university gives academic credit for A Level grades B and above then Grade B (100 tariff points) should be translated as M2 (which has 101 tariff points). At the top end, it is clear that the equivalent grade to A* is D2, 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 graph below may be of help to universities in deciding their policy for academic credit for students applying with the Cambridge Pre-U.

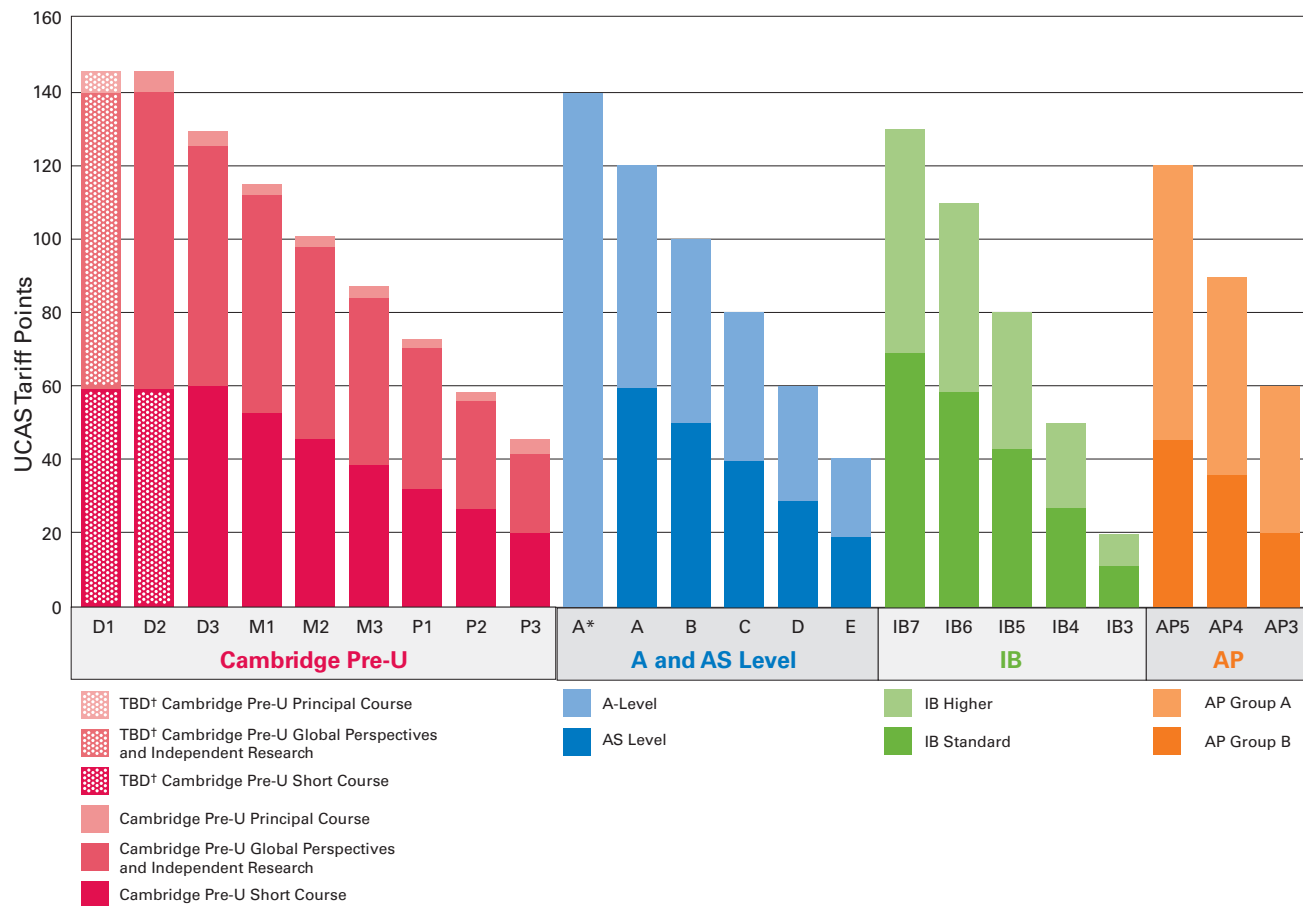
How does the UCAS tariff apply to GPR?

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.

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



TBD† = To be determined

University acceptance

The UK Russell Group has welcomed the academic rigour, retention of subject specialism and linear approach of the Cambridge Pre-U. Many US universities, private and public, including Harvard and Yale have said they welcome applications from students with the Cambridge Pre-U. Exemplar statements:

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 two such IPC credits.

Harvard will 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 Harvard. Harvard is in the process of reviewing what academic credit might be awarded for particular Pre-U grades.

University of Maryland welcomes applications from students with Cambridge Pre-U examination results and will consider them on their merits, as is the case with A Levels. Examinations in principal subjects with grades P1–D1 (Pass 1, Merit 1, 2, 3 and Distinction 1, 2, 3) are considered for possible advanced standing credits or course placement. No credit is awarded for Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research (GPR).

University of Michigan may consider the Cambridge Pre-U for possible advanced standing credit. Certificates with subject grades of D1, M3 and P1 (Distinction 1, 2, 3, Merit 1, 2, 3 and Pass 1) would be required for possible advanced standing credit consideration in appropriate Principal Subjects except for Engineering applicants, who would be required to present grades of M1–D3 in appropriate Principal Subjects for possible advanced standing consideration. These standards are tentative and are subject to change. Note: No advanced standing credit is granted for the Cambridge Pre-U GPR. Principal level subject examinations are optional and not required for entrance. (GCSE's are required for entrance.)

New York University welcomes applications from students with Cambridge Pre-U examination results and will consider them on their merits, as is the case with A Levels. NYU will award at least the same amount of credit for Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects as it does for A Level and for Cambridge Pre-U Short Courses as it does for AS Level. NYU is in the process of reviewing the exact Cambridge Pre-U grades required for credit.

Pennsylvania State University may consider the Cambridge Pre-U for possible advanced standing credit. Certificates with subject grades of D1, M3 and P1 (Distinction 1, 2, 3, Merit 1, 2, 3 and Pass 1) would be required for possible advanced standing credit consideration in appropriate Principal Subjects. These standards are tentative and are subject to change. Note: No advanced standing credit is granted for the Cambridge Pre-U GPR. Principal level subject examinations are optional and not required for entrance. (GCSE's are required for entrance.)

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. On the basis of high scores in the Principal Subjects, students may be placed in advanced courses in some subjects in the freshman year. Such students may be granted acceleration credits at the end of the freshman year if during the year they successfully complete appropriate advanced courses. These acceleration credits are in addition to course credits earned.

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

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