

March 2008

## First Principal Subjects receive QCA accreditation

**Physics, Economics, Psychology, Chemistry and Literature in English recently became the first Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects to receive QCA accreditation.**

'Working with QCA to complete this process was a very helpful stage in the development of the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma,' said Ann Puntis, CIE Chief Executive.

'This is a vital step in ensuring that the qualification is as accessible to schools in the maintained sector as it is in the independent sector. We know that many are interested in offering Cambridge Pre-U to their students.'

'The accreditation process has recognised the unique features of Cambridge Pre-U syllabuses: an additional demand, and a distinctive structure and marking approach.'

Richard Parrish, Headteacher, Archbishop Tenison's Church of England High School, a maintained school in Croydon, said: 'What makes Cambridge Pre-U particularly exciting is that it grows out of a genuine partnership between schools, universities and an examination board. I'm delighted



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progress is being made on accrediting and funding it for state schools. We face a wide range of qualifications post-16, and CIE is to be congratulated on offering us

an educationally interesting and coherent alternative which we can look at seriously.'



# QCA accredited Principal Subjects

## 'Real world' issues appeal in Cambridge Pre-U Economics



'Road pricing is the only realistic solution to the UK's transport problems'... 'To what extent has the UK government contributed to the pensions crisis?'

Students with a keen interest in current affairs, who watch the news and read the papers, will really enjoy Cambridge Pre-U Economics, with its topical focus and real world examples. Students will develop a sound understanding of events that have influenced the UK economy over the past ten years, and be able to compare the performance of the UK with other national economies.

The Cambridge Pre-U Economics syllabus has been welcomed by the Economics and Business Education Association, which finds much to recommend in the linear approach. The Association particularly liked Paper 3, a personal investigation into one of four topics — currently Transport and the Environment, China and the Global Economy, Expansion of the EU or The Pensions Crisis.

Download the **Cambridge Pre-U Economics** syllabus from [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu)

## Cambridge Pre-U Physics reaches for the stars



Cambridge Pre-U Physics gives teachers exciting opportunities for illustrating the use of physics in medicine, biophysics, engineering, space exploration, transport, architecture, robotics, communications, global energy solutions, environmental issues, geology and agriculture.

It is a wide ranging syllabus with a new focus on historical and philosophical perspectives. Students study the philosophy behind contemporary concepts like quantum physics and relativity, as well as developing essential computational skills.

Dr John Cullerne, Head of Physics at Winchester College, commented: 'My department and I believe that it is perhaps as close as can be to our ideal Physics course at this level of study. It appears to be excellent in so many ways; it is rigorous, involved and forward-thinking and paints a good picture of what undergraduate study is like in Physics.'

Russell Wallington, Senior Research Officer at the National Foundation for Education Research said: 'I must applaud the developers on producing an excellent post-16 Physics course. I particularly like the inclusion of contemporary issues as well as the emphasis on the historical perspective of the development of ideas.'

Download the **Cambridge Pre-U Physics** syllabus from [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu)

## Cambridge Pre-U Chemistry – a completely new approach



Cambridge Pre-U chemistry offers a completely different way of learning about chemistry. It

gives students who wish to apply to study chemistry, medicine or a related science at university an excellent grounding.

Developed by chemistry enthusiasts, the syllabus contains some entirely new topics that have not been examined at this level before:

- Van Arkel diagrams
- Function group level
- Carbon – 13 NMR
- Antibonding molecular orbitals

These new topics allow students to develop an important insight into chemical processes and unfamiliar compounds and reactions.

Cambridge Pre-U Chemistry supports the exploration of new topics, by stressing analytical and thinking skills as well as knowledge and understanding. It makes use of modern contexts, with a basis in practical chemistry.

Teachers are well supported with new resources for this course.

Download the **Cambridge Pre-U Chemistry** syllabus from [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu)

## Cambridge Pre-U Literature in English encourages wide reading



Cambridge Pre-U Literature in English liberates teachers from long lists of set texts, and enables them to choose

books, plays and poetry suited to their students' interests and enthusiasms. Students are enabled to develop the critical thinking and analysis skills required at university.

Students choose their own Personal

Investigation, a research essay of 3,000 to 3,500 words, on any theme. Suggested themes range from Political Drama or Post-1960 Poetry, to The Gothic Novel. Students compare the work of two authors and make connections between them.

The short list of pre- and post-1900 set texts includes Shakespeare, Harold Pinter, J. M. Coetzee and Sylvia Plath. Crucially, Cambridge Pre-U Literature in English encourages wide reading beyond the set works, particularly in preparation for the Personal Investigation and the Unseen Comment and Analysis.

Cambridge Pre-U gives teachers the opportunity to plan a coherent two-year course around the writers and texts they choose. The Personal Investigation in particular provides opportunities for the deepening of individual interests and enthusiasms, while allowing students to make connections between different authors.

Download the **Cambridge Pre-U Literature in English** syllabus from [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu)

## Cambridge Pre-U Psychology – Dynamic and relevant



What is the 'home advantage' given to English soccer teams? How does profiling serial killers differ

between UK police and the FBI? What were the psychological effects of the London bombing? What is Sports Psychology?

Psychological research is continually making new discoveries and

Cambridge Pre-U Psychology is a dynamic and coherent approach to a lively subject.

Starting with seminal studies, such as Milgram's *Obedience to Authority*, and covering the five core approaches to the discipline, students move on quickly to some fascinating new areas of research from five specialist topics: Abnormality, Crime, Environment, Health and Sport.

Sample areas of research include new methods used by police to identify liars; the effects of television adverts on smokers; how music results in

consumers spending more money; and the role of alcohol in spectator aggression in rugby union.

Cambridge Pre-U Psychology coursework includes an internally marked Personal Investigation, where students design, conduct and report a psychological investigation on a topic that interests them.

Download the **Cambridge Pre-U Psychology** syllabus from [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu)

# Working with schools to set the standards

CIE has worked hard to ensure that Cambridge Pre-U is accessible to all schools. One thousand students from thirty schools recently sat sample Cambridge Pre-U examination papers, and we were delighted to receive positive feedback from both students and teachers.

## Positive feedback from students

Those who thought students didn't enjoy exams should read the following comments from our 'guinea pig' students:

**The questions were well set out and I did prefer these papers.**

(Chemistry student)

**... allowed to give more depth and expansion on questions.**

(Economics student)

**I love Latin, so I guess these trial papers were really fun.**

(Latin student)

**A good mixture of techniques and content.**

(Mathematics student)

**More scope to 'prove yourself' – fewer 'hoops' to jump through. Better to be judged on the merit of your thinking and creativity than against a rigid mark scheme.**

(History student)

**I thought the grammar section of the exam was very enjoyable and a component of the language which is sometimes lacking in other exams.**

(German student)

**Content was more interesting, real business.**

(Business and Management student)

**Rather enjoyable.**

(History student)

## Positive feedback from teachers

**Easy to use mark schemes – no problems.**

(Chemistry teacher)

**Good opportunities for academic stretch in each section.**

(Economics teacher)

**I have enjoyed going through the papers with [students], particularly the multiple choice and the mathematical physics paper.**

(Physics teacher)

**Very good exam, congrats to those who devised it. Think you have managed to strike balance between ensuring breadth is covered on outlines without too much predictability, but reassuring that major topics will usually come up.**

(History teacher)

## The last word...

Of course, not all students enjoyed the experience. Comments from dissenters included:

'Did not like your experiment planning. Some people would be very good, others wouldn't. I also didn't like the enthalpy question and the calculations. I did, however, like the mining and scientific background questions, they were interesting to read about.'

(Chemistry student)

Dr Kevin Stannard, CIE Director, International Curriculum Development, said: 'Cambridge welcomes the feedback. We listen to both teachers and students.'

# Moving to the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma

**In talking to schools that are moving to the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma, we have identified a number of different approaches to managing the move.**

In the early stages, most schools planning to offer Cambridge Pre-U from 2008 will operate a 'mixed economy' of Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects and A Levels.

Some schools, like Charterhouse and Winchester College, will offer many more Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects to students than A Levels.

Others, including The Perse School and Shrewsbury School, are choosing a second model: offering Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects in specialised areas, simply as an alternative to the A Level specifications. These are subjects that are of particular interest to students, and often those which the school has helped to develop.

A third model, which gives students the opportunity to begin the Diploma immediately, is that shared by Dulwich College and Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks. Students are encouraged to undertake Global Perspectives and the Independent Research Report (GPR) alongside a mix of Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects and A Levels. This gives students the opportunity to complete the full Cambridge Pre-U Diploma, as students may substitute up to two A Levels for Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects.



Mrs Jill Milner, Headmistress of Walthamstow Hall, said: 'The Cambridge Pre-U Diploma will hone the independent study, debating and presentation skills, which students already develop at Walthamstow Hall.

Convent Girls' School, said: 'What appeals to me about the qualification is the change from the modular exam-factory nature of current examinations, towards more stretch and challenge, available through

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State maintained schools are waiting for their chance to move to the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma.

Andrew Corish, from Coloma

a linear syllabus. Universities are particularly keen on all comers taking this qualification. It has got to be acceptable and accessible for a wide variety of learners across the ability range.'

Find out more about other schools' models of adoption by speaking to Peter Monteath, UK Schools Manager, on 01223 553554 or [international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk).

# Global Perspectives and the Independent Research Report

- **Now available as a separate certificate for students who wish to take GPR in combination with A Levels**
- **Very attractive for schools looking for curriculum enrichment programmes**
- **An excellent alternative to Critical Thinking, General Studies and the Extended Project**

In response to requests from schools whose students are not meeting the requirements of the full Cambridge Pre-U Diploma, Global Perspectives and the Independent Research Report (GPR) is now available as a certificate in its own right for students who wish to take it in combination with A Levels.

GPR is an intrinsic element of the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma and has proved very popular. Universities have told us that the course is an excellent preparation for undergraduate study. It gives real evidence of independent, critical thinking.

The course is an excellent alternative to Critical Thinking, General Studies and the Extended Project, and is very attractive for schools looking for curriculum enrichment programmes. It will enthuse students by offering the opportunity for open debate and research on their own topic.



## Global Perspectives

This seminar-based, year-long course takes key themes of global relevance that are of interest to young people, and encourages students to explore them in an open, critical, disciplined way. Schools build their own programme by choosing topics from the different thematic groups: Ethics, Economics, Environment, Technology, and Politics and Culture.

**“The cross-curricular and global perspective will encourage students to address issues of interest to young people in a rigorous and stimulating way.”**

### The Independent Research Report

A student's Independent Research Report may well grow out of an area of study undertaken during the completion of Global Perspectives.

The course focuses on the ability to design, plan and manage a

Andrew Corish from Coloma Convent Girls' School said: 'We are particularly excited about the Global Perspectives unit, the international dimension and the seminar style programme approach of the course'.

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research project; to collect and analyse information; to evaluate and make reasoned judgements; and to communicate findings and conclusions. The student develops not just study skills, but enhanced subject knowledge and a more general self-discipline in independent self-directed study.

Jill Milner, Headmistress of Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks, said: 'The cross-curricular and global perspective will encourage students to address issues of interest to young people in a rigorous and stimulating way.'



Find out more about offering the Global Perspectives and the Independent Research Report by visiting [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu)



The Cambridge Pre-U Online Community is growing fast. Register your interest in Cambridge Pre-U by joining the Online Community. Visit [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu)

University of Cambridge International Examinations  
1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU, United Kingdom  
Tel: +(0)44 1223 553554 Fax: +(0)44 1223 553558  
international@cie.org.uk www.cie.org.uk

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