

Update for schools

Cambridge Pre-U is an exciting post-16 qualification preparing learners for university



Cambridge Pre-U leads the way

In our last Update, Cambridge Pre-U was hailed as a great success by the 60 schools whose students took the first examinations in June 2010. This confirms that our decision to create a pre-university qualification that offers an alternative to A Level and reflects a different set of underpinning educational values, is the right one.

We are following the Government's intended reforms to GCSEs and A Levels with intense interest. In respect of A Level, they mirror much of our trailblazing Cambridge Pre-U approach. In developing Cambridge Pre-U with our school and university partners, we were clear that it needed to provide opportunities for teaching, learning and assessment experiences which prepare young people both for immediate higher study, and for the demands of a fast-changing global environment.

In light of Government thinking about A Level, it is timely to reiterate how our first consultation with schools on our initial vision for Cambridge Pre-U

confirmed and supported the importance of designing qualifications which centred on:

- Developing well-informed, open and independent-minded individuals capable of applying their skills to meet the demands of the world as they will find it and over which they may have influence
- A curriculum that retains the integrity of subject specialisms and can be efficiently, effectively and reliably assessed, graded and reported to meet the needs of universities
- A curriculum that recognises a wide range of individual talents, interests and abilities and provides the depth

and rigour required for a university degree course

- A curriculum that encourages the acquisition of specific skills and abilities, in particular problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, team working and effective communication
- The encouragement of 'deep understanding' in learning achieved via the Cambridge structure and orientation
- The development of a perspective which equips young people to understand a range of different cultures and ideas and to respond successfully to the opportunity for international mobility.



'One of our big success stories has been those students who are not natural high fliers. They have enjoyed being able to study a subject and grow into it, without worrying about an imminent exam.'

Adrian Aylward, Headmaster
Leweston College

'Although the Cambridge Pre-U specifications are undoubtedly challenging enough for the very ablest, they have proved accessible to a broader spectrum of students than may be commonly imagined. Having two years to cultivate the skills and understanding, and the released extra teaching time available, more than compensates for the challenge of making the leap from Year 11 work.'

Mrs Jill Milner, Headmistress
Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks

The Schools White Paper 2010, The Importance of Teaching, contains the following rationale for the reform of A Levels:

'A Levels are a crucial way that universities select candidates for their courses, so it is important that these qualifications meet the needs of higher education institutions.'

and indicates that the Government wants 'to explore where linear A Levels can be adapted to provide the depth of synoptic learning which the best universities value.'

'... re-sits of modules [...] can be seen as undermining the qualifications and [are] educationally inappropriate.'

Did the advent of Cambridge Pre-U serve as a catalyst for new educational thinking inside Government? We would certainly like to think so.

And what do our schools say? A number have told us that their students have benefited from the linear structure of Cambridge Pre-U through:

- **More time for deep learning:** the opportunity to explore chosen subjects in greater depth through, in particular, the availability of more teaching time.
- **The benefits of synthesis and synopticity:** allowing a holistic approach to delivery, which facilitates a greater overall understanding of different topics within a subject, and enhances the opportunity to make connections between them.
- **Time to grow into a subject:** not having to take constant assessments allowing both high fliers, and very interestingly, those



learners who may be less confident, to mature academically over a longer period of time.

In respect of the latter benefit, our schools have remarked specifically on the way Cambridge Pre-U meets the needs of students.

So, where will Cambridge Pre-U lead the way in the future? From our perspective, it would be good to see Government looking in detail at the benefits of a core curriculum for A Level students – and, of course, Global Perspectives and Research would fit the bill admirably!

Support for students applying to university

At a time when applications to universities are increasing, and competition for places is even more intense, it is crucial that Cambridge Pre-U students receive as much support as we can provide to make sure the offers they receive are appropriate.

We assisted in a number of queries for 2010 entry, and are continuing our policy of active engagement with HE admissions staff. We are pleased to report that our efforts are paying dividends – there are very few problems being reported in the current applications

cycle. However, if any of your students taking any component of Pre-U encounter issues with their application, particularly the nature of offers, both within the UK or further afield, do not hesitate to contact us at international@cie.org.uk.

We have a team of staff in the UK and the USA at the ready to contact the university (or universities) concerned to try to iron out any misunderstandings and take all steps necessary to facilitate a successful outcome wherever possible.

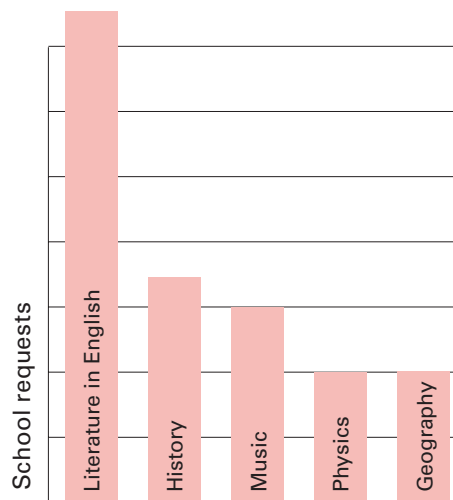
Making the most of Cambridge Pre-U interim assessment

Teachers and students want to know they are on track as they progress through their study.

That's why we offer interim assessment for most Cambridge Pre-U subjects, and can provide reports from Cambridge examiners on student answers. Assessment and reports are free of charge to Cambridge Pre-U schools.

We provide interim assessment for most subjects. You can use it when it suits you, e.g. at the end of year 12 or the start of 13. Also, our approach allows you to match the assessment and feedback to the syllabus content you have covered with your students. Our interim assessment reports comment on:

- The main characteristics of your students' performance in general
- The rank order of students as submitted by the teacher
- The application of the marking criteria by the teacher.



Most requests for Cambridge Pre-U interim assessment

We consulted closely with schools on how to support their interim assessment - and we're pleased to say the outcome has proved popular.

"The report on the Pre-U Literature in English Interim Assessment has proved exceptionally helpful as we prepare our candidates for the examinations. The feedback provided was detailed, clear, expert and prompt. Frankly, I cannot imagine how the service could be improved. Furthermore, I cannot imagine how a school engaged in the delivery of the Pre-U could afford not to take advantage of the offer."

Perry Mills, Assistant Head and English teacher,
King Edward VI School, Stratford-upon-Avon

Question papers and interim assessment reports are available for the following subjects

Biology
Business and Management
Chemistry
Classical Greek
Comparative Government and Politics
Economics
Geography
History
History of Art
Latin
Literature in English
Mandarin Chinese
Mathematics
Further Mathematics
Music
Philosophy and Theology
Physics
Psychology
Sports Science

Asking for Cambridge Pre-U interim assessment is easy

– email customer services at international@cie.org.uk and we will help you get started.

Building the Cambridge Pre-U community

The development of Cambridge Pre-U has always been characterised by a partnership with schools. Now the first exam session is behind us and the next one beckons, we are investing for the future growth and development of Cambridge Pre-U – and continuing to reach out to schools for feedback and advice.

We are using the valuable feedback from schools from the first exam session to help us ensure the content of our Cambridge Pre-U syllabuses meets the needs of teachers and learners.

Building on our partnership with schools, we have also formed an advisory committee to shape Cambridge Pre-U together with schools and education professionals. The committee, drawn from Directors of Studies and Heads of Curriculum at Cambridge Pre-U schools, also includes Directors of Studies from schools not offering Cambridge Pre-U, so that the views of a wider constituency of schools can be taken into account as we develop plans for the future.



New Director of Education, for Cambridge Pre-U

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Tristian Stobie as Director of Education. Tristian will take up his role in July leading the development of our educational strategies for schools, supporting Cambridge teachers and learners and working in partnership with those engaged in education reform. He replaces Dr Kevin Stannard, who worked closely with schools on the development of Cambridge Pre-U.

Tristian's career in education has spanned a wide range of international and educational contexts. Starting as a classroom teacher working in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Southern Africa and Western Europe, he moved into school administration with roles including Vice-Principal and Middle and Secondary Principal. Tristian completed a Masters and a

Doctorate degree at the University of Bath with research interests in schools administration, curriculum and pedagogy. He has also worked in a number of roles for the International Baccalaureate Organisation, most recently as the Head of IB Diploma Curriculum Development from 2006 to 2009.

“University of Cambridge International Examinations is an organisation committed to educational excellence”

Welcoming Tristian, Chief Executive, Ann Puntis, said: ‘University of Cambridge International Examinations is an organisation committed to educational excellence. We are delighted that Tristian is joining our strong leadership team that is working to ensure a world-

class education for young people in more than 160 countries.’

Speaking of his new role, Tristian said: ‘This is a pivotal role and a pivotal time to become part of the team. University of Cambridge International Examinations is an innovative and exciting UK based organisation transforming the educational landscape worldwide.’

‘A Cambridge international education and Cambridge programmes and qualifications are shaping the lives of young people all over the world, taking the educational values associated with the University of Cambridge into so many different teaching and learning contexts. I am extremely pleased to be able to contribute to an education agenda of such relevance and quality at such an important time for educators and policy makers.’

Universities boost demand for Global Perspectives and Research

Interesting feedback from Cambridge Pre-U schools has been that library use has rocketed where Cambridge Pre-U is being taught – and nowhere more so than for Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research (GPR).

Universities have been impressed, too. GPR – a preparatory Global Perspectives course leading to an Independent Research Report – is so well regarded by universities that they are starting to include it in offers. For example, an offer from York University to a student undertaking a mixture of A Levels and Cambridge Pre-U GPR specified, “two grade As at A Level and D3 in Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Independent Research Report”.

The global aspect is increasingly popular. A key skill for the 21st century university course or job will be the ability to work within a global context, collaborating with people from around the world in a meaningful way.

Schools are now also realising that adding GPR to their main subject portfolio can allow students to receive the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma.

“Bristol University values the GPR, and encourages admissions tutors to make two alternative offers to students offering this qualification, one of which specifies achievement in the GPR.”

Head of Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions, Bristol University.

Follow us on Twitter – news and views at www.twitter.com/cambridgepreu

Want to talk to a school teaching Cambridge Pre-U?

Let us know what subjects you're interested in and we'll put you in touch. Email us at: international@cie.org.uk



STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

To complement our existing subjects, we have developed a Cambridge Pre-U Short Course in Mathematics (Statistics with Pure Mathematics). It has now received Ofqual accreditation.

It will be available for first teaching in September 2011 and first examination in June 2012.

Full details, including information on INSET, will appear on our website. Email us to register your interest: international@cie.org.uk

Cambridge Pre-U community and INSET calendar

We have a growing programme of events reaching out to schools taking or interested in Cambridge Pre-U.

We want to provide as many opportunities as possible for you to speak to us in person and to each other about Cambridge Pre-U. Ask us to come and talk to your school or network, e.g. subject association, teacher association.

“An excellent opportunity to hear about experiences of other schools, both formally and informally.”

“Very useful insight into Cambridge Pre-U, and what it can offer, successes, issues etc. And very persuasive! I’ll be recommending to my Senior Leadership Team that we start GPR in September 2011.”

Schools comments on Directors of Studies seminar, November 2010

We take up as many requests as we can to come and speak to individual schools, and participate in conferences and seminars about education for 14–19 year olds.

Getting in touch is easy

Contact us via our website at www.cie.org.uk, email at international@cie.org.uk or call us on 01223 553554.

Find our stand at conferences, or attend our free INSET.

To register for training workshops or to find out more please visit the Events page of our website at www.cie.org.uk/events

To request training in other subjects please email us at international@cie.org.uk

Date	Event
3–4 March 2011	SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) Business and Enterprise Conference
8 March 2011	Cambridge Pre-U Advisory Committee
9 March 2011	INSET: Global Perspectives and Research, Literature in English, Mathematics, Further Mathematics
10 March 2011	INSET: Biology, Chemistry, History, Philosophy and Theology, Physics
11 March 2011	INSET: Economics
16 March 2011	INSET: French, German, Spanish
16 March 2011	ISC (Independent Schools Council) Annual Conference
23 March 2011	CILT (National Centre for Languages) 14–19 Language Conference
14–16 April 2011	University of Cambridge Teachers’ Conference
14–16 April 2011	Mathematical Association Annual Conference
14–16 April 2011	Geographical Association Annual Conference
18–21 April 2011	ATM (Association of Teachers of Mathematics) Annual Conference
19–20 April 2011	UCAS Admissions Officers Conference
20–21 May 2011	SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) Chinese Forum
20–22 May 2011	MMA (Music Masters and Mistress’s Association) Annual Conference
12 May 2011	Historical Association Annual Conference
June 2011	SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) Humanities Conference
8–9 June 2011	EBEA (Economics and Business Education Association) Annual Conference
June 2011	SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) Maths and Computing Conference
June 2011	SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) Science Conference
25–26 June 2011	Sunday Times Festival of Education
June 2011	Learn more! Cambridge Pre-U
June 2011	Learn more! Cambridge Pre-U
June 2011	Cambridge Pre-U Directors of Studies Forum – First Teaching
1 July 2011	Sixth Form Colleges Forum Summer Conference