

# Update for schools

Cambridge Pre-U is an exciting new qualification for 16-19 year olds

Cambridge  
**Pre-U**



## Schools report on the educational effectiveness of Cambridge Pre-U

**Praised by schools and universities and hailed as a success, the first full Cambridge Pre-U examination session took place in June 2010. Fifty-nine schools fielded candidates for the examination session, with 103 schools expected to enter candidates next year.**

'We are very pleased with our first set of Cambridge Pre-U results,' said John Witheridge, Headmaster of Charterhouse. 'Our pupils have benefited from a much richer sixth-form education and they are celebrating excellent grades.'

Angela Drew, Deputy Head (Academic) at Epsom College, said: 'We were delighted by the results achieved by our first cohort of Cambridge Pre-U students. The pupils enjoyed the challenge of the course and we were particularly pleased to see

that D1s and D2s really are obtainable with over a third of our candidates obtaining grades indicating achievement at or above A\*.'

Kevin Stannard, CIE Director of Education, said on results day: 'We are delighted to be able to recognise and reward the considerable achievements of this ground-breaking group of students. Teachers and students responded to the challenges and opportunities offered by Cambridge Pre-U very positively.

**"The course delivered the challenge and depth for which we had hoped."**

**Dr Ralph Townsend,  
Headmaster,  
Winchester College**

'We have been working with state maintained and independent schools to help make possible a deeper and more enriching learning

experience for students, giving teachers the space to explore and innovate, and the freedom to teach, rather than train their students. Universities were engaged from the outset, recognising that Cambridge Pre-U prepares students with the skills and dispositions, as well as the knowledge, necessary for successful study at university.

'The success of the first full examination session is a direct result of the hard work of confident teachers and confident students in schools that have collectively shown the way forward for pre-university education.'

# School responses to trailblazing Cambridge Pre-U exam session

**The first full Cambridge Pre-U examination session and results issue has been completed successfully.**



From what schools have been saying, it is evident that the ideals that inspire the Cambridge Pre-U are being achieved. Kevin Stannard said: 'It was clear that students genuinely appreciated the opportunity to find out what they were capable of, with the freedom to push the boundaries of the syllabus and to conduct personal enquiries into topics that especially interested them. Their high level of motivation and enthusiasm was clearly visible in the way they performed throughout Cambridge Pre-U.'

Nearly two-thirds of Cambridge Pre-U candidates received Distinction grades – a reflection of an atypically

able cohort. Andrew Jarman, Headmaster of Lancaster Royal Grammar School said of the school's results: 'In addition to A-levels in 25 subjects, we also trialled Cambridge Pre-U in Business and Management very successfully, with 17 Distinctions, 10 Merits and one Pass.'

Yarm School also celebrated its results. David Dunn, Headmaster, said: 'The results have been outstanding. Cambridge Pre-U was introduced for Philosophy and Religion and of those students who took the exam, all received distinctions.' Examiners were delighted by the quality of

**'Having two years to cultivate skills and understanding, and the released extra teaching time available, more than compensates for the challenge of making the leap from Year 11 work.'**

the work demonstrated by Cambridge Pre-U candidates, with many of the top-performing candidates already working at undergraduate level.

Ed Elliot, Headmaster at The Perse in Cambridge, said: 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and we were all a little anxious when the first Pre-U results were published this summer. We shouldn't have been – the students did well and in most cases better than expected. Just as important, examination justice was done and the Pre-U results accurately reflected the pupils' efforts and ability.' 'The Oxbridge offers we

received for our Pre-U boys back in December were better than in previous years, as our candidates had more to say in terms of cultural matters at the interview, and their language proficiency was considerable,' said Josep Lluís González, Head of Modern Foreign Languages, Eton College.

Jill Milner, Headmistress of Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks, said: 'I have no doubt that the excellent results achieved in the Pre-U, which is highly regarded by universities, have given our candidates the edge in what has been a particularly competitive year for university entry.'

**'Our students have relished the opportunity to shine and access higher grades than the traditional A Level could offer.'**

---

## Cambridge Pre-U growth beats projections

**The rapid growth of Cambridge Pre-U has been very encouraging, outstripping early projections that it could take as long as ten years for the qualification to become part of the mainstream educational landscape.**

There is no doubt that Cambridge Pre-U has been accepted as a popular alternative to UK A Level. Schools and universities asked for a qualification designed specifically for students who wanted to go to university – and have welcomed the development of Cambridge Pre-U.

Independent sector Cambridge Pre-U schools include: Canford, Charterhouse, Downe House, Eton, Leweston, Millfield, The Perse, Rugby, Walthamstow Hall (Sevenoaks), Westminster and Winchester.

Maintained sector schools include:

- Sixth Form Colleges (e.g. Newcastle, Central Sussex)
- Grammar Schools (e.g. King Edward VI Stratford, Colchester Royal Grammar)
- Comprehensives (e.g. Coloma Convent Girls' School, Wimbledon College)

We are interested in hearing from schools willing to take part in case studies, videos and media interviews. If you would like to share your story, email Geraldine Seymour at [seymour.g@cie.org.uk](mailto:seymour.g@cie.org.uk).



# The view from universities

**While admissions offices were anxiously predicting that record numbers of students could miss their first choice place at university, we were ensuring that all our staff were ready to help Cambridge Pre-U students.**

It's a tough environment for students getting into university. That's why we are supporting Cambridge Pre-U students by:

- Working with schools to make sure university offers for Cambridge Pre-U grades are fair.
- Talking to universities about the demands of Cambridge Pre-U and the grading structure.

'It is important for us to work as closely as possible with schools and university admissions officers,' said Peter Monteath, UK Schools Manager. 'The competition for university places has placed schools under additional pressure at results time this year.'

## Yale

**"Yale University would be pleased to consider applications from students with Cambridge Pre-U examination results."**

On the whole, students have been very pleased with their results and we have been able to deal with results enquiries quickly.'

Andrew Corish, Assistant Head Teacher at Coloma Convent Girls' School, said: 'We've been very supported by a tremendous amount of the top universities and it's made a difference to some of these students getting in.'

To date, 111 UK universities and 30 medical schools have published formal recognition statements, with a further 59 universities doing the same in the USA and Canada, including Yale, Stanford and McGill.

Roseanna Cross, Head of Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions at Bristol University, said, 'I have been pleased that we have been able to accept so many applicants offering Cambridge Pre-U this year.'

### Typical offers from selective universities 2009–10

Oxford - Medicine			
Standard A Level Offer:	A	A	A
Mixed portfolio:	D3	A	A
Nottingham - Geography			
Standard A Level Offer:	A	A	B
Mixed portfolio:	D3	A	B
Warwick - Chemistry			
Standard A Level Offer:	A	B	B
Mixed portfolio:	D3	M2	B
Cambridge - History			
Standard A Level Offer:	A*	A	A
Mixed portfolio:	D2	A	A

## York

**"Applicants offering the Cambridge Pre-U submitted exceptionally competitive applications in a challenging admissions year."**

At our Cambridge Pre-U Admissions Conference in September 2010, UK universities told us they are making offers as flexible as possible to include Cambridge Pre-U. One example: a student can obtain grades ABB in 3 A Level subjects including Chemistry; or grades BB at A Level in two subjects including Chemistry and a D3 in Cambridge Pre-U; or grades AB at A Level in 2 subjects including Chemistry and an M2 in Cambridge Pre-U.

The Dean of Admissions from MIT in the USA, Stu Schmill, praised the educational values of Cambridge Pre-U, saying that they are similar to MIT values:

- Deep understanding with depth and rigour
- Problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, team-work, independent learning and effective communication
- Promoting an international outlook cross-cultural awareness

Learn more about university recognition at [www.cie.org.uk/recognition](http://www.cie.org.uk/recognition).



## Cambridge

**"We welcome applications from students who are studying towards the full Cambridge Pre-U Diploma or certain Principal Subjects within the qualification alongside A levels. Conditional offers will be set on an individual basis but are likely to include achieving Distinction level grades."**

# Support for schools

We offer continued support for schools that are teaching or planning to teach Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects, Short Courses and the GPR.

To help teachers prepare for the 2011 examination session, past papers, mark schemes, standards booklets and examiner reports on the first full Cambridge Pre-U examination session are available – email us at [international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk).

Special subject-specific feedback sessions are being held on 4 – 8 October. This is an opportunity to discuss the first full session with other Cambridge Pre-U schools and with University of Cambridge International Examinations.

We also offer a full programme of INSET workshops and introductory seminars during the next 12 months. The programme is advertised on our website at [www.cie.org.uk/events](http://www.cie.org.uk/events).

## Key Numbers

**59** schools entered candidates for the June 2010 Cambridge Pre-U examinations

**2,246** examinations entries from **1,518** candidates

**Two-thirds** of candidates received Distinction grades

**103** schools are teaching Cambridge Pre-U (58 independent and 45 state maintained)

**111** UK universities and **30** medical schools have published formal recognition statements

**59** universities in the US and Canada have published formal recognition statements, including Yale, Stanford and McGill

The top **five** most popular Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects are: Literature in English, Mathematics, History, French and Physics

**Summer 2005** Schools and universities approach Cambridge with a development proposal



**2005 - 2007** Draft syllabuses produced in consultation with schools and universities



**Summer 2007** Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects, Short Courses and GPR submitted to OCA for accreditation and funding



**Spring 2008** 26 accredited Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects, Short Courses and GPR available. INSET activities, plus further support for schools.



**September 2008** 59 schools begin teaching



**Winter 2008** UCAS tariff awarded



**June 2009** First Cambridge Pre-U Short Course examinations.



**Autumn 2009** First applications to university



**June 2010** First Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject examinations



**August 2010** First full results issue



## Learn More!

If you would like to know more about Cambridge Pre-U – whether you are thinking of offering it for the first time, or adding to the subjects you already teach – getting in touch with Cambridge is easy: email us at [international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk) or telephone **01223 553554**.

We are also happy to attend parents meeting to answer questions about Cambridge Pre-U and to introduce teachers to colleagues at schools who have already started teaching Cambridge Pre-U.