

Cambridge International Qualifications Information for UK Admissions Tutors

Introduction

This fact sheet provides information on our international qualifications for UK admissions tutors. The University of Cambridge International Examinations is the world's largest provider of international qualifications for secondary and pre-university education and is part of Cambridge Assessment, a not-for-profit department of the University of Cambridge and is accredited by OFQUAL, the regulator of examinations in England. There are over a million entries for our examinations every year from over 160 countries. Our qualifications are renowned for their breadth of subject choice, academic rigour and the highest standards of assessment.

Key Facts: how our international qualifications differ from UK qualifications

- Specifically designed to suit the needs of an international student body.
 - Contexts or examples used in syllabuses and question papers are culturally sensitive in an international context.
 - In some cases, country-specific variants developed to meet local needs, for example in Brunei a suite of Religious Studies A Levels focussing on Islam and the Quran.
 - Used as the national qualifications in a number of countries, for example Singapore, Mauritius and Brunei.
- Much wider range of subjects available, for example the wide range of languages offered.
- With a few exceptions, retakes of individual papers components are not permitted - candidates must retake the whole A or AS Level examination, as it is essentially not modular. Most A Level syllabuses are divided into an AS part and an 'A2' part (which candidates typically cover in the second year of a two-year course), but they are not further fragmented into modules.
- Many of our candidates take all papers of the A Level course in the same examination session, usually at the end of the second year of study.

Our Pre-University Provision

Like A level in the UK, Cambridge's A Level has been available since 1951. During those 60 years, many thousands of international students have entered UK universities having achieved the required A Level grades. The qualification is officially recognised in the UCAS Handbook. Cambridge Pre-U focuses specifically on the skills required by HE. There are 27 syllabuses available in the Principal Subjects and the overall Diploma is made up of the core – Global Perspectives and Independent Research (GPR) – plus three Principal Subjects.

UCAS UK Qualifications Handbook Entry

Cambridge International A and AS Levels

Acceptable at grades A - E in lieu of UK GCE A and AS Level on a subject-for-subject and grade-for-grade basis. It should be noted that the Cambridge International A Levels are different in structure from the UK A Levels. Whereas the UK A and AS Levels are modular and students can retake individual components, the International A Levels have a linear structure which encourages a more integrated study of the entire subject. Most candidates take all their A Level papers in one session. Candidates who take AS Level first and then want to retake it must generally take the whole of the AS.*

The Cambridge Pre-U

The following UCAS Tariff points have been awarded as follows:

Grade	Principal Subject	Short Course	GPR
D1	TBC	TBC	TBC
D2	145	TBC	140
D3	130	60	126
M1	115	53	112
M2	101	46	98
M3	87	39	84
P1	73	32	70
P2	59	26	56
P3	46	20	42

The overall diploma score is calculated by adding together the individual components which are given a numerical score out of 24 giving a maximum score of 96. The Cambridge Pre-U Diploma currently attracts a maximum tariff score of 575 for 88 out of the 96 marks available – D3 will be awarded UTP after the candidate evidence from the 2010 examinations has been assessed. The minimum pass mark of 32 attracts 180 tariff points

English Language Requirements

The UCAS UK Qualifications Handbook also lists the following Cambridge qualifications as acceptable as evidence of proficiency in English:

- GCE O Level English Language (Syllabus numbers 1119, 1120, 1123, 1124, 1125, 1126) at Grade C or better
- IGCSE First Language English (Syllabus number 0500) at Grade C or better
- IGCSE English as a Second Language (Syllabus number 0510) at Grade C or better

Post 14 qualifications

Cambridge International Qualification	UK equivalent	Grading Notes	Qualification
Cambridge International GCSE (IGCSE)	GCSE	Passing grades A* – G with A* being highest. U is Ungraded. Grade C is required for Higher Education	
Cambridge O Level	GCSE	From 2010 passing grades are A* – E with A* being highest. U is Ungraded. In 2010 A* was introduced. Grade C is required for Higher Education	Generally suitable for higher ability students as grades lower than E are not available.
Cambridge International Certificate of Education (ICE) Group award – see notes	GCSE x 7 subjects	ICE is awarded with Distinction, Merit or Pass. A merit requires a grade C or better in five subjects and grade F or better in two subjects. Individual subjects (IGCSEs) are grades A* – G with A* being highest. Grade C is required for Higher Education	ICE is a group award, comprising of IGCSEs from five curriculum areas. It is awarded to candidates who have passed IGCSE in at least seven subjects; two from Languages, and at least one each from Humanities and Social Sciences, Sciences, Mathematics, and Business, Creative, Technical and Vocational.
Cambridge School Certificate Group award – see notes	GCSE x 6 subjects	The School Certificate is a group award comprising O Levels in different subjects. Each O Level is graded A* – E plus a numerical grade: A*1 & A2 – Very Good B – 3 & 4 – Pass with Credit C – 5 & 6 – Pass with Credit D – 7 – Pass E – 8 – Pass U – 9 – Fail An A*1 is higher than an A2, a B3 higher than a B4 and a C5 higher than a C6. Grade C is required for Higher Education.	Candidates must take at least six subjects including English Language and subjects from at least three other curriculum areas (General Subjects, Languages, Mathematical Subjects, Science Subjects, Arts and Crafts, and Technical and Commercial Subjects). School Certificate is awarded to candidates who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pass at least six subjects including English Language with Credit in at least one subject; or • pass in five subjects including English Language with Credit in at least two.

Pre-University qualifications

Cambridge International Qualification	UK equivalent	Grading Notes	Qualification
Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects and Short Courses	A & AS Levels	There are 9 passing grades – three each at Pass, Merit and Distinction – and Ungraded D1 D2 D3 M1 M2 M3 P1 P2 P3 U For the Principal Subjects the D3/M1 boundary is aligned to the A/B boundary at A Level. The P3/U boundary is aligned to the E/U boundary at A Level. Short Courses are aligned to AS in the same way.	Principal Subjects attract 380 GLH – and are slightly bigger than an A Level in terms of size and have additional stretch and challenge. They have an extended grading scale and so can differentiate and reward achievement at the top end. Principal subjects available in a wide range of subjects across the curriculum. All examinations are taken at the end of the two year period of study. Resits are only available at the whole qualification level at the next examination sitting. Short courses are only available in Languages and Mathematics and can be taken alongside the Principal Subjects or A Levels in the first and/or second year of study.

Pre-University qualifications (cont)

Cambridge International Qualification	UK equivalent	Grading Notes	Qualification
Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Independent Research (GPR)	A Level	There are 9 passing grades – three each at GPR is offered as a free-standing qualification Pre-U Global Pass, Merit and Distinction – and Ungraded D1 D2 D3 M1 M2 M3 P1 P2 P3 U	GPR is offered as a free-standing qualification and as the core of the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma. It comprises Global Perspectives and Independent Research. Global Perspectives encourages breadth across the curriculum through the interdisciplinary study of a number of themes of global relevance, develops critical thinking and a range of study skills. The Independent Research develops the skills taught in Global Perspectives and works on preparing students to cope with the demands of HE in terms of independent working and research.
Cambridge Pre-U Diploma	4+ A Levels	32-96 The overall diploma score is calculated by adding together the individual components which are given a numerical score out of 24 – giving a maximum score of 96	The overall Diploma is awarded to candidates who have passed in the Core – Global Perspectives and Independent Research (GPR) – plus three Principal Subjects from a free range of subjects.
Cambridge International A & AS Level	A + AS Levels	From 2010 passing grades for A Levels are A* – E with A* being the highest. From 2010 passing grades for AS Levels are A-E with A being the highest. U is ungraded.	Compensatory AS Level is awarded to candidates who have taken the A Level examination but not achieved the required standard.
Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE Diploma) Group award - see notes	A + AS Levels	Points are awarded for each examination in line with the UCAS tariff i.e. 140 points for a grade A* at A Level (double credit study), 60 points for a grade A at AS (Single credit study) and 30 points for a grade A at half credit study. An AICE Diploma with Distinction is awarded to candidates with 320 points or above, an AICE diploma with Merit to candidates with 120-315 points and an AICE Diploma at Pass Level to candidates with 120-215 points. Individual subjects at A level are graded A* - E, and subjects at AS level are graded A - E.	AICE is a group award comprised of double credit study (A Level), Single credit study (AS Level) and half credit study. To achieve the diploma a candidate must take the equivalent of 6 full credit examinations within a 13 month period. Candidates must take at least one examination from each of 3 curriculum areas: Mathematics and Science, Languages and Arts and Humanities.
Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC) Group awards - see notes	2 A Levels and 2 AS Levels or 3 A Levels and General Paper	Passing grades for principal subjects A* – E with A being the highest. U is ungraded. Numerical grades are also given as follows: A* – * A – 1&2 B – 3 C – 4 D – 5 E – 6 Compensatory AS - 7 – 12 U – 13 An A* is the highest achievable grade and an A1 is higher than an A2.	Principal subjects for HSC are A Levels. Subsidiary subjects are the General Paper and a local language and candidates who have not achieved the required standard for a principal subject may be awarded a compensatory AS Level. Students usually offer 3 principal and 2 subsidiary subjects.
Cambridge Higher IGCSE (HIGCSE)	AS Level	Passing grades 1-4 with 1 being highest. U is ungraded,	Introduced in Southern Africa to meet the needs of students seeking entrance to universities in South Africa. HIGCSE was an extension of the IGCSE curriculum and usually required an additional year of study. HIGCSE was withdrawn in June 2010.

NB Some students may have these Cambridge international qualifications with further requirements, specific to their own country. Please contact CIE if you need to know more.

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