

Update for schools

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

Results success for Cambridge Pre-U students

Congratulations to Cambridge Pre-U students who sat exams in the third full Cambridge Pre-U exam series in June 2012.

It's off to university for another cohort of Cambridge Pre-U students, following success in our third full exam series.

Schools that have offered the qualification since its launch in 2008 have built on their success, while others are celebrating their first ever set of Cambridge Pre-U results. The community of Cambridge Pre-U schools is growing – 26 per cent more schools entered candidates for June 2012 compared with last year, and more schools are coming on board.

Congratulations to all students on their results, and to their teachers who put so much hard work into planning and delivering Cambridge Pre-U courses. Cambridge Pre-U students can head to university knowing that they have had excellent preparation, ready to take on the challenges that lie ahead.



Charterhouse Cambridge Pre-U students on results day. Left to right: George Jameson, Marthe de Ferrer, Aleander Peattie, Charlotte Russell

Reactions to June 2012 results

“ The school's Cambridge Pre-U examination results were very good with some candidates gaining a D1, a Distinction grade equivalent to the A* level. ”

Hinchingbrooke School, Cambridgeshire

“ So many of our leavers this year have surpassed all their expectations in their A Level and Cambridge Pre-U exam results, enabling them to continue into their chosen university courses with confidence. ”

Downe House, Berkshire

“ I'm really pleased with my results and am enjoying getting ready for university. ”

Jonathan Poncelet, student, Central Sussex College, achieved a Distinction 2 in Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research

“ I've been so lucky to be able to combine my education with my sport. These have been two of the most challenging yet rewarding years of my life. ”

Marthe de Ferrer, student, Charterhouse, achieved Distinction grades at Cambridge Pre-U

“ Girls were highly successful in the newly introduced Cambridge Pre-U in which grades were awarded at Distinction level. ”

Queenswood, Hertfordshire

Spotlight on: Cambridge Pre-U History

History is one of the most popular and fastest growing Cambridge Pre-U subjects.

Cambridge Pre-U History prepares students for university-level study. Features such as an extended essay and source-based studies familiarise students with methods used by historians.

Teachers tell us the linear approach frees up more time for teaching and enables students to develop advanced study techniques over two years. Take a look at the syllabus and see for yourself.

Key features	Good for...
Two-year linear course	...developing students' holistic understanding of the subject, so they can make links between different historical periods.
Wide choice of historical periods	...encouraging students to identify patterns in, and connections between, apparently contrasting events and developments.
Themes studied, as well as chronological events	...developing awareness of wider economic, social, religious and cultural issues.
Personal investigation (extended essay)	...developing students' independent study and research skills. Students choose the title of their essay, so they can pick a topic that really interests them.
Source-based study	...developing students' skills in interpreting and evaluating evidence, ready for degree-level study.



Teaching resources

- Teacher guide
- Example candidate responses
- Online discussion forum

Exam preparation

- Interim assessment service
- Past papers
- Mark schemes
- Grade thresholds
- Examiner reports

Training and events

INSET workshops:

1 October 2012 – for teachers who are interested in teaching Cambridge Pre-U History, or have been teaching it for less than one year.

19 October 2012 – for teachers who have been teaching Cambridge Pre-U History for over a year.

‘Bridging the Gap’ seminar:

November 2012 – an inspiring event to give Year 12 history students insight into university study. Learn more on page 5.

My experience of teaching Cambridge Pre-U History

“ I have enjoyed teaching Cambridge Pre-U History so much because it provides students with the experience of studying the subject at a genuinely advanced level.

All students make much more rapid progress under the Cambridge Pre-U system – by lifting expectations of what students can achieve, the level of their attainment is greatly increased. Feedback from former students is that they are much better prepared for university-level history than their non-Cambridge Pre-U contemporaries.

Having linear exams means we get to teach much more history. Pupils learn transferable historical skills, are not restricted to any style of essay-writing and can think much more flexibly as a result.

We have also been very pleased with the outcomes achieved in Cambridge Pre-U History – grades are very much in line with what we would have expected from AS/A2 and the extra grades available are useful in differentiating between the good and the excellent. ”

Anne Murphy, History teacher, Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks, Kent

Top US universities call for more rigorous qualifications

Students should choose challenging qualifications that prepare them for university study, according to our US Higher Education Advisory Council. The Council, made up of senior admissions staff from leading US universities, met recently in Cambridge.

“One of the things we stress with high schools, and with our colleagues who teach in high schools, is the value of a rigorous curriculum in preparation for university studies,” said Philip Ballinger, Director of Admissions, University of Washington. Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, agrees: “The first aspect we assess in an application is the strength of the student’s curriculum.”

Our US Higher Education Advisory Council plays an important role in helping us raise the profile of Cambridge Pre-U and other Cambridge qualifications in the US. Take-up of Cambridge programmes is growing in US schools – over 35 000 US entries for Cambridge IGCSE® and Cambridge International A Level in June 2012 – and our programmes are being used in two national initiatives aimed at developing ‘college ready’ students. Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research is also being taught in a group of US schools.

These factors, combined with the growth of Cambridge programmes worldwide, mean that more and more Cambridge learners are applying to US universities – and evidence shows they are doing well.

“We have some students on our campus who have taken Cambridge Pre-U classes and they’re doing great,” said Stuart Schmill, Dean of Admissions, MIT. “Cambridge Pre-U students appreciate the fact that they



US Higher Education Advisory Council

have challenged themselves and it gives them a lot more confidence. When they go to university they feel like they’re really ready to take on the challenges that we’re going to offer them.”

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Stuart Schmill, Dean of Admissions, MIT

The Council members say students should stretch themselves in preparation for university. When considering applications, they look for evidence of particular skills, including the ability to analyse and synthesise information, to communicate



Watch our new videos

Find out why US university admissions staff value Cambridge Pre-U and the Cambridge approach to education. To watch our short videos go to www.cie.org.uk/countries/usa/videos

US Higher Education Advisory Council members:

Columbia University

Duke University

Florida State University

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

Pennsylvania State University

University of Maryland

University of Michigan

University of Southern California

University of Texas at Austin

University of Virginia

University of Washington

Yale University

effectively, to deconstruct and reconstruct arguments and to carry out good research. Cambridge Pre-U helps students develop these skills. In consultation with higher education, we have built features into syllabuses that are specifically designed to prepare students for university.

The Council members also look for evidence that students have taken advantage of learning opportunities – as it’s a sign they will contribute to campus life, both intellectually and culturally.

Philip Ballinger said: “All students realise that it’s easy to get a good mark in an easy course. To get a good mark in a more demanding course is something altogether different and is more preparatory for the studies they are going to do at university.”

In the news...

You can't miss the headlines – UK qualifications are the subject of much debate. There are calls for a more holistic approach to learning, for a move to linear assessments, for higher education to be involved in qualification development.

Among the turbulence, Cambridge Pre-U keeps to its path. Developed with input from schools and higher education, and designed to stretch students at all levels of ability, Cambridge Pre-U is a step ahead of reform.



“ Competitive pressure has generated some strong, effective qualifications such as the Cambridge Pre-U. ”

Dale Bassett, Research Director, Reform (June 2012)

Pursuing change to HEFCE admissions policy

In 2011 the government introduced a new policy intended to give universities the ability to expand. The policy allows them to make some additional offers outside of their student-controlled numbers to students who achieved AAB+ or equivalent. It is being implemented by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

The policy document produced by HEFCE to guide 2012 admissions unfortunately omitted Cambridge Pre-U, an omission since rectified by HEFCE for 2013. This meant that although offers were made to Cambridge Pre-U students as normal, some students experienced

a problem in the Clearing and Adjustment process. On behalf of our schools, we have worked with HEFCE to resolve this issue. While HEFCE was prompt in including Cambridge Pre-U on the equivalence list, they have been less responsive in recognising combinations of A Levels and Cambridge Pre-U as meeting the criteria. This is counter to the expressed views of the Russell Group, HMC, GSA and Cambridge International Examinations.

We continue to pursue this vital matter with HEFCE and will continue to keep schools informed. We strongly encourage any schools with concerns to contact us.

More choice for schools – new courses available

You now have even more choice of subjects at Cambridge Pre-U:

- Drama and Theatre – first exam in 2014
- Global Perspectives Short Course – first examined in 2012
- Mathematics (Statistics with Pure Mathematics) Short Course – first examined in 2012
- Further Mathematics Short Course – first examined in 2012

We offer Cambridge Pre-U in 28 subjects. Find the syllabuses on our website at www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu

Give us your views

We are reviewing syllabuses for 2014, and began consulting on Cambridge Pre-U with teachers in June 2012. If you haven't replied to our survey yet, please do so before the end of September 2012. Your views really do make a difference.

If you haven't received our survey, but want to contribute to our syllabus review, please contact us at info@cie.org.uk – putting 'Cambridge Pre-U syllabus review' in the subject line of your email. We also welcome views on syllabuses from teachers who have not yet started teaching Cambridge Pre-U.

Switching to linear qualifications

We have published a practical guide for teachers who are new to teaching linear courses, such as Cambridge Pre-U and Cambridge IGCSE. It includes example schemes of work to show how a course might be planned and taught over two years, and supports teachers in making the transition from modular qualifications (such as A Level). *Moving from Modular to Linear Qualifications* is free to download from our website at www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu



Students experiment with degree-level science

Cambridge Pre-U is all about preparing students to do well at university – so we've been holding events to get students on the right track for their degree.

We picked the University of Cambridge Chemistry Department as the venue for our latest 'Bridging the Gap' event, inviting Cambridge Pre-U science students to work in labs under the guidance of university tutors. They also gained insight into studying science at university from Dr Siân Owen, Physics Access Officer at the University of Oxford.

Dr Siân Owen stressed the need for students to gain plenty of lab experience before going to university. "The members of staff who run the chemistry and physics practicals at Oxford say that the biggest shock to students is the amount of practical work you will do at university," she said. Practical work is a key element of Cambridge Pre-U science courses.

The 'Bridging the Gap' events have been a huge success, with Year 12 students enjoying the chance to try out different learning styles and work alongside students from other schools. The events include workshops for teachers too.

"We've learnt new techniques which will be useful when we go to university. It's nice to do some high-level biology – it is more challenging and more enjoyable," said a Central Sussex College student after the science event.



Dr Peter Wothers, Director of Studies, Chemistry, at St Catherine's College, leading a lab session at the 'Bridging the Gap' event, June 2012. Dr Wothers helped develop Cambridge Pre-U Chemistry.

More 'Bridging the Gap' events – don't miss out

Our 'Bridging the Gap' one-day seminars build students' confidence as they prepare for university, and support teachers in transitioning students to degree-level study.

Register your interest in attending by contacting us at events@cie.org.uk

Don't miss our next events:

- History – November 2012
- English – November 2012
- Maths – early 2013.

Watch our video case study

"With Cambridge Pre-U we have a lot more time to spend on practicals," says Dr David Follows, Head of Chemistry, Winchester College. Watch a case study video about their experience of teaching Cambridge Pre-U Sciences at www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu

Case study: Oundle School, Peterborough



Oundle School is one of England's three largest boarding schools, offering co-educational boarding and day education. Since the beginnings of Cambridge Pre-U, the school has been adding more Cambridge Pre-U subjects to its curriculum each year. We spoke to Ben Evans, Director of Studies, to find out more.

Q. You have increased the number of Cambridge Pre-U subjects you offer. What do you like about Cambridge Pre-U?

A. We currently offer Cambridge Pre-U in nine subjects. Six subjects are offered at Cambridge Pre-U only, and three of the larger subjects are offered at Cambridge Pre-U and A Level.

Cambridge Pre-U allows pupils to gain real expertise in the subject they study, not merely to become experts in passing exams. Learning takes place in a coherent manner with a gradual and logical build-up of ideas. Knowledge is not compartmentalised and the Cambridge Pre-U course and approach allows us to take a holistic view of the subject. Terminal exams allow teachers and pupils to feel a sense of academic freedom without the pressure of modules and coursework occurring relatively early in the Sixth Form.

Q. How have you found the experience of integrating Cambridge Pre-U alongside A Level?

A. The mixed economy of modular and linear subjects works well. We do not believe in multiple re-sit opportunities, so all re-taken AS modules are sat in the summer of the Upper Sixth alongside A2 modules. This minimises the disruption to teaching. Pupils are generally best placed to be successful at the end of two

years of study, although we do understand that some subjects are more emphatically modular than others and we support the modular approach for a significant number of our Sixth Form courses. We have found a combination of Cambridge Pre-U and A Level courses has allowed a pupil to prioritise different subjects at different times to maximise achievement.

Q. How have your students performed in Cambridge Pre-U exams?

A. We will need to wait until summer 2013 for the first large-scale comparison between A Level and Cambridge Pre-U. We will have approximately 200 Cambridge Pre-U grades to analyse; this represents around 30 per cent of the total grades awarded. Although the Cambridge Pre-U sample is small, we have been very pleased with the results. Several D1 grades have been achieved – and given that over half of our pupils achieved three A grades or better at A Level last summer, it is good to have a grade that differentiates at the very top end.

There is no evidence to suggest that Cambridge Pre-U benefits only the strongest students. Our weaker pupils have scored in line with what we would have expected at A Level; they also have a very fulfilling learning experience.

Q. What benefits do you think Cambridge Pre-U offers your students?

A. Cambridge Pre-U is designed with university entry in mind. Almost 100 per cent of Oundle pupils go on to higher education and Cambridge Pre-U provides excellent preparation in the skills required to be successful at university.

For those subjects where we offer a choice between Cambridge Pre-U and A Level we usually recommend the Cambridge Pre-U course to pupils who wish to study that subject at university.

Q. Do you use our interim assessment service?

A. Yes – we have used this service for subjects we have newly offered at Cambridge Pre-U. It is useful to gain an independent perspective on our pupils' progress.



Cambridge Pre-U INSET

We are offering free professional development workshops in central London in October 2012. Come along to find out more about a Cambridge Pre-U syllabus, or develop your teaching practice. Introductory and intermediate courses are available.

To register, and for updates on more training workshops, go to www.cie.org.uk/events

Date	Subject
0–1 year experience of teaching Cambridge Pre-U	
5 October 2012	Business and Management
8 October 2012	Drama and Theatre
10 October 2012	English
1 October 2012	French
1 October 2012	Global Perspectives
1 October 2012	History
5 October 2012	Mathematics
5 October 2012	Physics
1 year+ experience of teaching Cambridge Pre-U	
8 October 2012	Art and Design
8 October 2012	Biology
8 October 2012	Chemistry
12 October 2012	English
12 October 2012	French
19 October 2012	Geography
12 October 2012	German
11 October 2012	Global Perspectives
19 October 2012	History
19 October 2012	Mathematics
19 October 2012	Philosophy and Theology
15 October 2012	Physics
12 October 2012	Research Report
19 October 2012	Spanish

Cambridge IGCSE INSET

Over 900 UK schools offer Cambridge IGCSE, finding the course content and linear structure to be good preparation for advanced level qualifications – including Cambridge Pre-U. We are offering subject-specific Cambridge IGCSE 'Getting Started' workshops in London in September and October 2012. Learn more at www.cie.org.uk/events



Are you attending these events?

We are attending the following network events. Come and talk to us about Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge Pre-U.

Date	Event
October 2012	SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) Humanities Conference
October 2012	SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) Annual Languages Conference
October 2012	9th Annual National Admissions to Higher Education Conference
October 2012	The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC)
January 2013	TES Resources London
January 2013	SSAT (Specialist Schools and Academies Trust) Arts Annual Conference
January 2013	ASE (Association for Science Education) Conference
January 2013	BETT 2013

More dates will be added. Check www.cie.org.uk/events

Interim assessment service available

Did you know we offer interim assessment? This free service gives teachers and learners reassurance that they are on the right track with Cambridge Pre-U.

We provide materials, on request, to help teachers set exam-style questions at the end of the first year. Teachers mark the scripts and send them to us for moderation. Our examiners then review the marked responses and write a report for your school, commenting on the marking and identifying work that exemplifies performance expected at different grade levels.

Cambridge Pre-U interim assessment is a really useful way to take stock of your students' performance, and identify where more support is needed. And you can set the tests at a time that suits you.

To find out more, contact us at info@cie.org.uk

Reminder: November exam series

The first November exam series for re-sit purposes will be held in 2013. Re-sits will be available for all Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects, except Art and Design. Some options may not be available as re-sits. Please contact us at info@cie.org.uk for details. Re-sits will not be available for Short Courses.

Facts and figures

152 UK schools registered to teach Cambridge Pre-U:
72 state
80 independent

Worldwide entries for June 2012 up **32%** on June 2011

UK entries for June 2012 up **28%** on June 2011

26% more schools entered candidates for June 2012 compared with June 2011

The most popular Cambridge Pre-U subjects are:

1. Literature in English
2. French
3. History
4. Mathematics
5. Global Perspectives and Research (includes an extended project)

Follow us on Twitter!



For the latest news and educational debate follow us [@cambridgepreu](https://twitter.com/cambridgepreu)

What next?

If you're thinking about Cambridge Pre-U but are not sure what to do next, we're here to help. Simply contact our UK Schools Development team and ask them to:



- arrange for a subject specialist to call you to discuss the syllabus
- put you in touch with a school teaching Cambridge Pre-U
- visit your school to talk to teachers about Cambridge Pre-U.

We will support you at every step. Get in touch at info@cie.org.uk

Learn more! Contact us via our website at www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu, email at info@cie.org.uk or call us on +44 (0)1223 553554. Find our stand at conferences, or attend one of our free INSET days.



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