

Achieve

Autumn 2007



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



Welcome to *Achieve*, which brings you the latest news from Europe's largest assessment agency, Cambridge Assessment.

Cambridge Assessment is a department of the University of Cambridge, and a not-for-profit organisation.

Brits in Baku research effort

Assessment experts from all over the world found they were all grappling with similar problems in their respective countries when they met at the 33rd annual conference of the International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) in September.

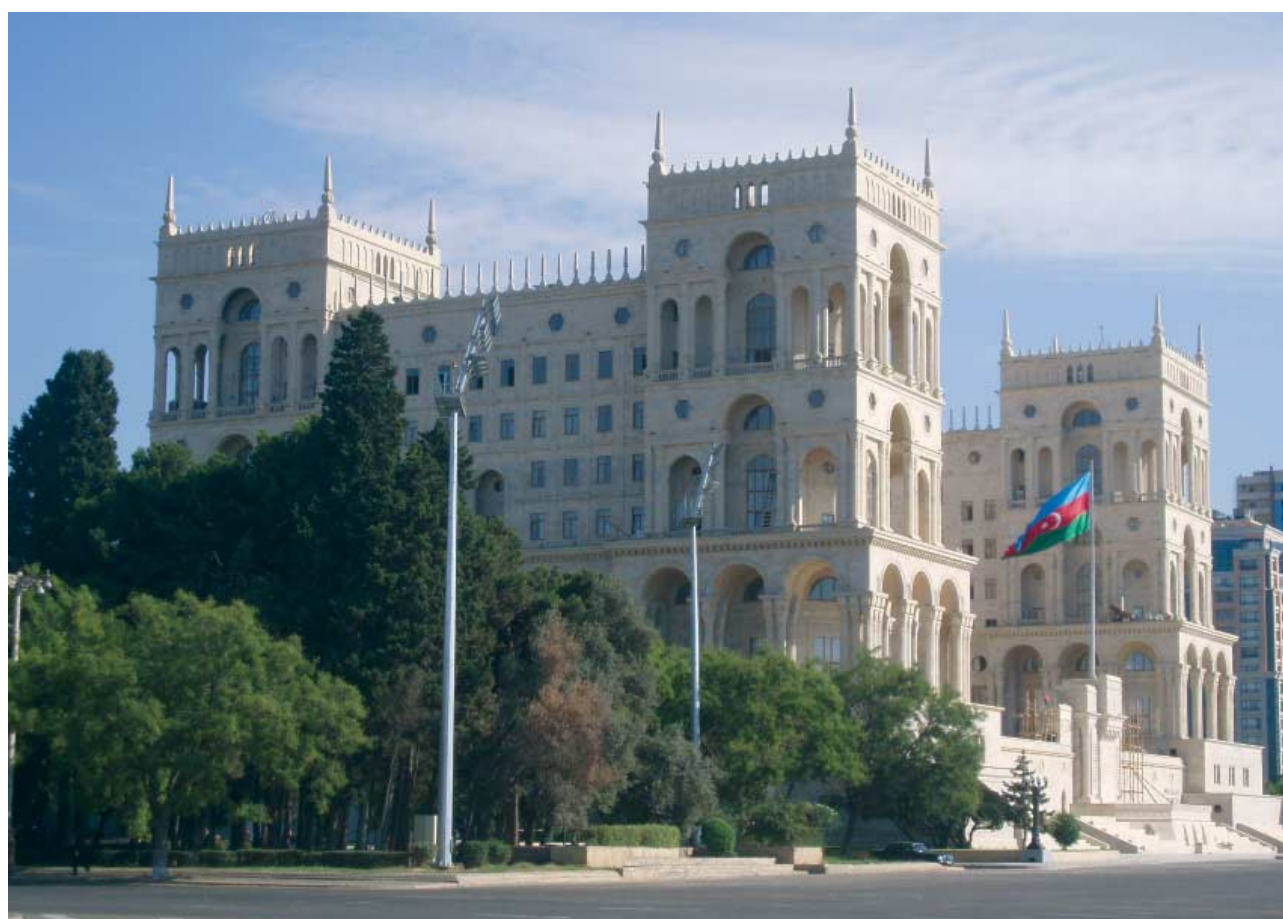
The focus on the need to raise educational standards through national testing led to Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment, and Sylvia Green, Director of the Research Division, presenting a key paper at the conference in Baku, Azerbaijan. A further five papers illuminating important aspects of assessment were given by other members of the team from the UK.

The event shares expertise in assessment with ministries of education and other education professionals from around the world. It assists educational agencies in the development and appropriate application of educational assessment techniques to improve the quality of education.

This year's conference was hosted by The State Students Admission Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan and attended by 343 delegates representing 43 countries.

Next year in Cambridge...

It was announced at the conference that Cambridge Assessment will be the host for next year's event which will take place at the University of Cambridge from 7–12 September 2008.



Conference organiser Jennifer Roberts, Cambridge Assessment, said: "We are hosting the conference as part of the celebrations for our 150th anniversary. The IAEA anticipates that next year's event could be its biggest conference yet and, even though registration does not

open until January, we have already received a lot of interest from delegates from around the world – from IAEA members and non-members."

More information can be found at www.iaea2008.cambridgeassessment.org.uk



Mike Baker is an award-winning journalist, author, broadcaster, and consultant, specialising in education.

Diplomas: less talk, more action

The clock is ticking fast. There is less than a year to lift-off. Yes, the new Diplomas are almost upon us. But are we ready for them?

The Diplomas are potentially the biggest qualification reform in English education since GCSEs replaced O levels two decades ago.

So, with so much at stake, why can no one agree what the Diplomas are meant to be?

They were initially described as 'Specialised Diplomas' because they focus heavily on job-related skills, such as Engineering or IT.

But then the Government got cold feet. Fearful that any identification with specific vocations would unleash the 'British disease' of snobbery towards non-academic qualifications, ministers dropped the 'specialised' descriptor.

So now they are plain old Diplomas. Moreover, the word has gone out that they are not to be called 'vocational', but rather 'academic', qualifications.

If you push for a clearer description, the thought police will admit you could call them 'applied academic qualifications' but definitely not 'vocational'.

Confused? You will be.

The Diploma, we are further told, is not a 'single' qualification but a 'suite of qualifications'. It will be offered at four different levels and will cover: principal learning, generic learning, additional specific learning and an extended project.

You can hear the students now: 'Bye Mum, I'm off for my "additional specific learning" classes but I'll have some "generic learning" homework for later'.

Yes, I know it is easy to mock. But I am worried this vital reform will get stuck in a morass of political correctness and defensive nervousness.

English education, with its long-term failure to value vocational learning, needs the Diplomas to succeed.

So let's stop worrying about the comparison with A levels and start selling them positively, without over-complicating the language that surrounds them.

Because if students and their parents remain confused about the Diplomas, you can bet your gold-standard A Level they'll not sign up for them.

Scholastica moves to Cambridge

Leading Bangladeshi education group, Scholastica, has signed an agreement to move its 3,000 students to Cambridge International O level, A level and the Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers.

Yasmeen Murshed, Chairperson, Scholastica, signed the Memorandum of Understanding. She commented: "University of Cambridge International Examinations will ensure our education remains relevant in future years. Our students will be able to rise to the professional challenges facing them in the future, and CIE's teacher training programmes will enhance the skills of teachers who train at Scholastica."

Ann Puntis, CIE Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted that Scholastica has chosen Cambridge. When any education group moves to us, we work together in a



Yasmeen Murshed, Chairperson of Scholastica signing the agreement with Ann Puntis, CIE Chief Executive.



Scholastica's move was announced at a CIE Global Best Practice conference in Dhaka, which included an address from the British High Commissioner, H E Anwar Choudhury.

very strong partnership. We offer practical support for schools, ongoing training and access to up-to-date resources."

All Scholastica students will study for CIE qualifications from September 2008.

During the signing, Ann Puntis paid tribute to the work of all CIE schools in Bangladesh. She said: "I welcome Scholastica to the Cambridge family, and hope that many students and teachers will benefit from this partnership."

Education research – Flood

Researchers from Cambridge Assessment presented 11 papers at the British Educational Research Association (BERA) annual conference at the Institute of Education in London, in September.

The team's presentations generated a lot of interest and led to some fruitful discussions within the research community.

The presentations reported on a wide range of issues from vocational grading to how question features relate to marking accuracy. An especially topical paper presented by Carmen Vidal Rodeiro focused on why students in England take the A levels they do and also on the patterns of uptake and factors affecting their subject preferences.

Victoria Crisp presented work on the effects of features of GCSE questions on the performance of students with dyslexia. This research explored fairness and equity issues in the context of question design.

The current debate on the use of admissions tests for Higher Education was enhanced by the contribution of Joanne Emery, whose research investigated how well admissions tests produced by Cambridge Assessment predict future degree class performance.

BERA is an important date in the assessment calendar as it is the main national meeting of educational researchers in this country. Cambridge Assessment continues to play a leading role in the research community by its major contribution to this event.

To learn more about the research and to view the full presentations please visit

www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

Diplomas... and more

- New A levels, incorporating stretch and challenge and the new A* grade, will be introduced in 2008
- New GCSEs will be taught for the first time in 2009
- The Cambridge Pre-U will begin to be adopted by some schools from 2008
- The Government is committed to increasing the number of schools able to offer the International Baccalaureate
- Increasing numbers of high quality vocational qualifications, such as OCR's Nationals, are being taken

...all in all, it's a real time of change in 14–19 education. It's vital that everyone in the sector works closely with teachers and learners to make sure that people are following the right courses for them.

Engaging in engineering

A practical 'hands-on' approach to engineering raises awareness, interest and enthusiasm among GCSE students.

TrackNAVCHALLENGE is aimed at 14–18 year olds – Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 students – and tasks them with designing and building (with a bit of help!) a radio controlled, four-wheel drive model vehicle that emulates the all-terrain capabilities of a Land Rover.

The Challenge, created by Land Rover Designers and Product Engineers, was designed to be delivered during lesson time or in an after-school club. To support delivery during lesson time, OCR worked with Land Rover to map the Challenge against OCR's GCSE Design and Technology, Manufacturing and Engineering specifications.

Bob White, Subject Officer for Technology & ICT, OCR, said: "The Challenge provides young people with a practical project that stimulates interest in engineering and gives them a real experience of the design process. In addition, it develops effective and efficient use of key skills in communication, numeracy, ICT and other areas."

Following the regional heats, OCR staff, including Bob, made up part of the judging panel at the finals held at the Heritage Motor Museum in Gaydon.

The winners of the competition were The 'A' Team from Chase Terrace Technology College, Burntwood. The Famous Stars and Stripes from Richard Hale School in Hertford won Best Electronics awarded by



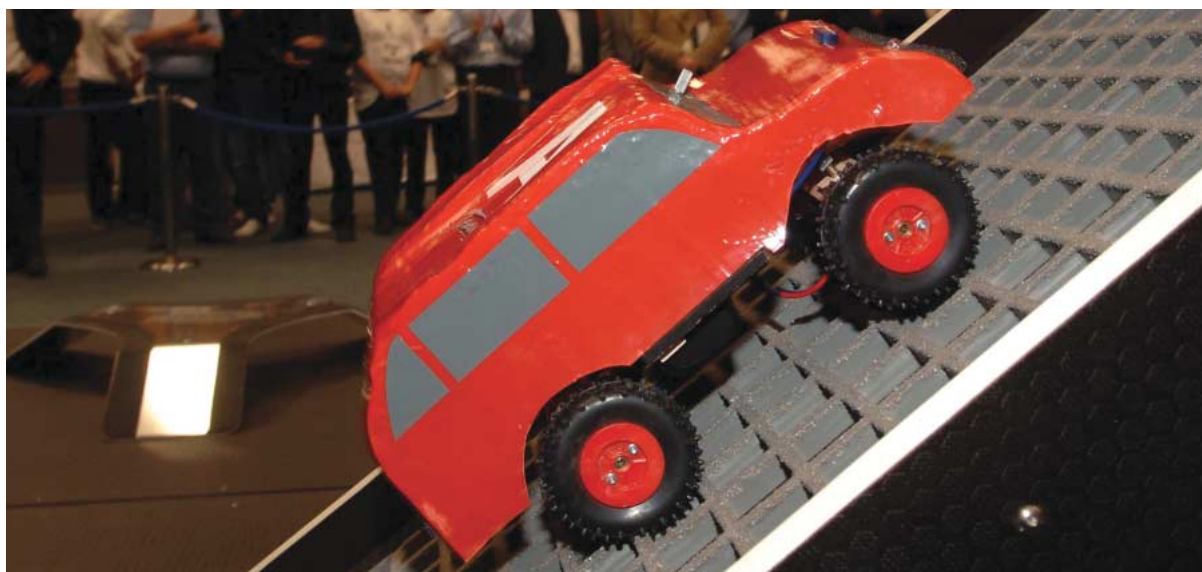
The winning team with John Edwards from Land Rover.

Rapid Electronics. The 'A' Team also won the award for Innovation and Creativity awarded by Ricardo.

For more information and to see additional photographs visit www.tracknavchallenge.co.uk

The Challenge:

- Students work in teams of 4–6 and have to design and build a vehicle which meets industry standards as well as educational requirements.
- Teams have to demonstrate the capability of their vehicle by navigating a specially designed indoor model track as well as submitting a portfolio detailing the experience, design and decision-making process.
- In addition to building the vehicle, learners have to give a questioned presentation to the panel of judges and provide financial information about their project.



The winning model on the track.

E-marking is a success

In excess of 1.5 million examination scripts were successfully marked on-screen within the Cambridge Assessment Group, at the height of the busy summer marking season. This included processing over 50,000 GCSE examination scripts per day.

This was achieved using a system called scoris®, a joint collaboration between Cambridge Assessment and RM that is widely acclaimed for providing a strong technical solution without losing the vital human element.

Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment, said: "This is the first year that we have deployed scoris® on such a wide scale. It has been a great success, allowing us to improve our management of the marking process and helping us to assure accurate and timely delivery of results to hundreds of thousands of candidates across the country.

"scoris® is also easy to use for the assessors, which has been one of our major concerns from the start. We have had high levels of acceptance and positive feedback from assessors and this reflects the careful thought and planning invested in the development of scoris® by both Cambridge Assessment and RM.

"I have been impressed too by the high levels of commitment shown and the easy and effective way in which both organisations have managed to work together. The hard work and spirit of collaboration have

been indispensable elements in making the project such a success."

Tim Pearson, CEO of RM, said: "Cambridge Assessment showed enormous confidence – both in technology and in RM – when it adopted our scoris® system. It's great news that we've come through the first major examination series successfully and we look forward to further developing our strategic partnership.

"Our congratulations go to all the pupils and students who worked so hard to achieve good examination results."

Online results rolled out

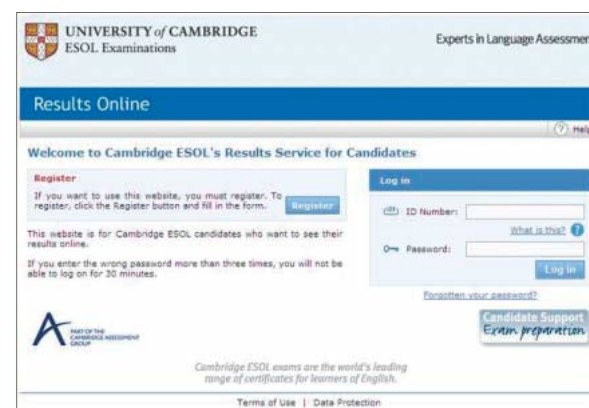
Cambridge ESOL is one of a number of exam boards rolling out online results. It has helped more than 130,000 candidates worldwide receive their results online.

This is the second year that Cambridge ESOL provided online results. Simon Fenn, Programme Manager for Cambridge ESOL, said: "On one particular day, the system coped with more than 80,000 unique visits and peak visitor flows in excess of 13,000 an hour. We tell people the date and time

we are going to release the results, so we know in advance there will be a surge in demand.

"There is a huge amount of checking that goes on behind the scenes to make sure all the information is there. We have a helpdesk for users experiencing any problems, and we constantly review the resources we need – before August we upgraded the servers so that we could be confident they could cope with the demand.

"Even with 13,000 people accessing the site in the same hour, we had no major problems with access."



The Cambridge ESOL online results website.

Reducing the burden of assessment

A family of tests could reduce the number of tests that students face, in addition to their A levels, as part of the University Admissions processes.

Cambridge Assessment's tests have a common core – thinking skills. The tests, which are used by a number of Britain's universities, currently include two generic variants, one for social sciences and another for medicine.

Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment, said: "University entrance tests are not just for the highly selective institutions around which the debate has hitherto crystallised. We believe that one of the family of tests in particular, uniTEST, could play a vital role right across the ability range in helping students and universities identify who and what is right for them. By spelling out that these tests belong to a single family, we believe that the burdens on students can be minimised while supplying universities with useful extra information to inform their important decisions."

Professor Steven Schwartz, then Vice-Chancellor of Brunel University, now Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University in Australia, undertook an independent review of the University Admissions processes for the Government in 2003/04. One of his recommendations was that candidates should not have to face an abundance of tests in addition to their A levels. There has also been much comment on the subjective nature of some universities' entrance procedures.

For the last 20 years, Cambridge Assessment has provided research-led and evidence-based solutions for major higher education institutions. It believes that each candidate should not have to sit more than one test and that, although the tests may differ from subject to subject, there should be common ground between them.

www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk



Colombia takes English tests

Around 500,000 Colombian school-leavers recently demonstrated their English Language skills as part of their school-leaving certificate by sitting a new Cambridge ESOL language test.



Colombian item writers and ESOL staff involved in the project L-R: Hugh Moss (Subject Officer), Alexis Lopez (Item Writer), Hanan Khalifa Louhichi (Senior R&V Coordinator), Annette Capel (ESOL consultant), Kenneth McIntyre (Item Writer), Moravia Elizabeth Gonzale (ICFES), Martha Galvis (BC), Nigel Pike (Asst Director AOG).

The new international standard testing comes as part of the bid by Colombia's Ministerio de Educación Nacional to equip the population with English skills for work and higher study. All the exams are linked to the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR).

The Colombian government has been working with Cambridge ESOL on a major initiative to produce new language tests for Colombian school-leavers.

The exams are part of a long-term project to provide training and support so that in the future, Colombia will be able to produce its own language tests incorporating CEFR standards and levels. Until then,

school pupils will need to demonstrate their English language skills by passing a Cambridge ESOL written exam as part of their *Examen de Estado*.

The development of the new English component of the *Examen de Estado* is just one element of the collaboration with Cambridge ESOL. The test for final year Colombian university students also includes an English language component from Cambridge ESOL. Meanwhile trainee English teachers have recently been entered for the FCE (First Certificate in English), fully sponsored by the Ministry of Education, and a new project has just been launched for the re-training of in-service English teachers which uses TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) as the final assessment.

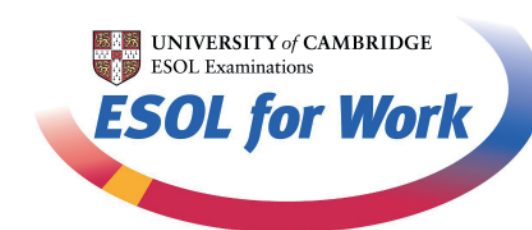
ESOL for Work

UK employers and learners will both benefit from qualifications being launched in October that will focus on the language skills needed for work.

The new Cambridge 'ESOL for Work' qualifications – which have a greater emphasis on reading, speaking and listening and less focus on writing – have been accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. They will also attract Learning and Skills Council funding for eligible learners.

The Cambridge certificates are a response to the Government's wish for new qualifications for learners of English who want to work in the UK but who do not wish to settle permanently and become citizens. The assessments measure candidates' language proficiency in terms of the English they need to use and understand in the workplace. Topics and tasks are work-focused and are relevant to the ways candidates need to use language in their working lives in the UK.

In order to ensure relevance and reliability, Cambridge ESOL is basing its 'ESOL for Work' provision on a well established, work-related ESOL assessment which has already had thousands of successful candidates around



the world. The new qualifications have been developed to meet the needs of employers in the UK, supporting migrant and settled workers who are in work or intending to work in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Cambridge 'ESOL for Work' has been designed to be as flexible as possible, fitting around schools' and colleges' needs and timetables – allowing them maximum control. Cambridge ESOL will, however, continue to provide comprehensive training and support to all its teachers.

What is the real impact of e-assessment on education?



Delegates at the Cambridge Assessment Conference.

The question "Is there more to e-assessment than new technologies?" was top of the agenda at the recent Cambridge Assessment Conference (15 October at Robinson College, Cambridge).

Cambridge Assessment believes that it is vital to identify and promote technological innovations that will create real educational benefits as well as valid assessments. The conference was attended by 182 assessment professionals and education experts.

Andrew Watts, Director of the Cambridge Assessment Network, said: "Do we recognise both the strengths and the limitations of the innovations we are proposing? It is often not a question of being clear about the technological solutions – we can all see those on a computer screen – but about what we want them to add to a learner's education."

The conference featured two main presentations. Professor Andrew Pollard of the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme, based at the Institute of Education in London, talked about *New technologies: promises and risks for education*; and Professor Richard Kimbell of Goldsmiths, University of London, on *Technology and the assessment of creative performance*.

The 12 discussion seminar sessions in the afternoon provided delegates with a wide choice of speakers from exam boards such as OCR, AQA, Edexcel, SQA and Cambridge ESOL, as well as educational technology charities Learning Lab and NFER.

Policy and progress

The British political party conference season saw Cambridge Assessment personnel helping politicians get to grips with the issues of the day.



Tim Oates, Cambridge Assessment's Group Director of Assessment Research and Development.

The first meetings were with key Liberal Democrats. Discussion centred on examination standards and research.

Working with the Fabian Society, a long-standing Labour think-tank, John Noel of OCR put science teaching and assessment in context as ministers, educationalists and business people discussed how to increase the number of scientists being produced in the UK. Bill Rammell MP, the Minister for Higher and Further Education, had a useful discussion informed by the hard data supplied by Mr Noel.

Another Fabian Society meeting featured Tim Oates, Cambridge Assessment's Group Director of Assessment Research and Development, on the knotty problem of 'soft skills'. Schools Minister Jim Knight MP, Headmaster Anthony Seldon and Professor Richard Pring of the Nuffield Foundation contributed to a discussion on what 'soft skills' actually were, whether they could be assessed and, more importantly, whether they should be assessed.

Mr Oates cautioned against the idea that soft skills should be tested routinely in all pupils. He pointed out that what are often called soft skills are closely associated with personal capital which is in turn closely linked to social background. But he added that there were good, workable ways of assessing soft skills and that there is almost certainly a role for those which measure a sample of students so that schools and policy makers were able to track development and monitor the impact of initiatives.

"It's clear from research that initiatives such as the extended school, multi-agency family centres in areas of deprivation and curriculum extension activities such as outward bound style activities all help with development of soft skills and personal capital" he said.

Mr Oates added that the challenge was to devise ways to integrate soft skills into the curriculum and not put them in their own discrete box – an approach which ran the risk of distorting the very reasons why we are interested in developing these skills in young people in the first place.

At the Conservative conference Bene't Steinberg of Cambridge Assessment joined Baroness Perry of Southwark, co-Chairman of the Party's Public Services Improvement Policy Group, in addressing the Conservative National Education Society. Topics such as regulation and the maintenance of standards were at the heart of the discussion.

Diploma developments

The content of the new Diplomas – one of the most exciting developments in UK qualifications for decades – is beginning to take shape.

OCR has just launched the principal learning components of three of the five Diplomas that are due to start in September 2008. These are: Information Technology, Creative and Media, and Engineering.

Having had to put together a new and complex style of qualification on a shortened timescale, OCR decided to concentrate on three areas where it can best engage with employers, provide high-quality support to teachers and learners, and build on its experience of other work-related qualifications such as OCR Nationals.

OCR's Chief Executive, Greg Watson, said: "Diplomas are a bold innovation, but they have to work from day one for the young people who choose them. To give schools and colleges time to prepare, we've developed Diplomas much faster than most other qualifications. We felt we would get the quality right by concentrating on three key sectors for the UK economy and building on existing good practice in qualifications design."

Diplomas

- New qualifications introduced to recognise achievement at ages 14–19.
- Developed to open up choices for young people, offer different ways of learning and alternative routes into higher education or employment.
- Nationally recognised, industry approved qualifications that combine general and applied learning.
- First teaching 2008.

OCR is also piloting functional skills units, offering the project units at all three levels, and contributing a wide range of qualifications which fulfil the requirements for either additional or specialist learning or both (depending on the line of learning).

Further details of OCR's qualifications, including Diplomas, and its support for schools, colleges and learners can be found at www.ocr.org.uk

Language experts flock to Cambridge

To mark the 150th anniversary of Cambridge Assessment, Cambridge ESOL is hosting the 3rd International Conference of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) in April 2008.

The conference theme, *The Social and Educational Impact of Language Assessment*, is designed to bridge the world of language assessment and educational, social, cultural and economic environments and contexts. There will be delegates from all over the world.

ALTE Cambridge 2008 represents a unique opportunity to take part in the interchange of ideas; to meet with other experts in the world of language assessment and linguistics; and to learn, to share and to develop knowledge.

ALTE Cambridge 2008 will be of interest to anyone concerned with language testing and its impact, and is of interest and importance to anyone working in the following fields:

- Migration policy and regulation
- Social policy and regulation
- Applied linguistics
- Language teaching
- Educational policy and regulation
- European language policy
- International business.

More details can be found at www.alte.org/2008

PPE joins family of tests

Students applying to the University of Oxford to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) will be taking a pre-interview admissions test, administered by Cambridge Assessment, for the first time this autumn.

Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment, said: "The need for additional methods to identify candidates' suitability and potential for success in higher education is gaining increasing importance, particularly in response to the widening participation agenda."

Margaret Stevens, University Lecturer in Economics, and Fellow and Tutor in Economics at Lincoln College, said: "The University of Oxford receives approximately 1,300 applications for a course that has around 250 places and the number of applications is growing annually. Admissions decisions are complex because candidates come from a wide variety of subject backgrounds, and the study of PPE requires a range of abilities, with different emphases in each of the three subject areas.

"The PPE Admissions Test will help admissions tutors to assess whether candidates have the skills and aptitudes that are required to study PPE - for example, the ability to think critically, reason analytically, and use language accurately and effectively - without having to rely on any particular subject knowledge."

www.tsa.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/ppe



Teachers supported online

CIE re-launched its Teacher Support website in September. The website is available to all full Cambridge centres and to other centres by subscription.



It provides a wealth of support materials for teachers, and is regularly updated. Popular downloads available include past question papers, mark schemes, examiner reports, schemes of work and discussion groups.

The new site includes all the resources that CIE teachers expect, but also provides great new features that are tailored to the user. Usability has also been improved so that it is more secure and more flexible.

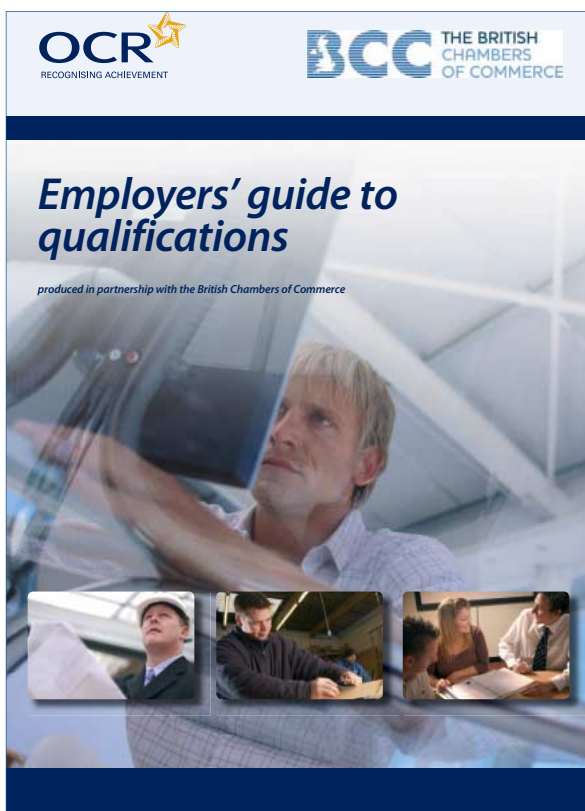
Events listings for conferences and face-to-face and online training events will be frequently updated and information that is targeted to teachers and exams officers is readily available. These include syllabus-specific announcements. Additionally, visitors to the website can now organise their own shortcuts to the resources for the syllabuses they teach and there is a built-in search engine to find key resources.

Teachers will find that the layout of the website has been changed, especially the way support materials are organised, making it much easier to find the materials they are looking for.

<http://teachers.cie.org.uk>

Business jargon buster

Help is on the way for employers who are confused about the range of vocational qualifications and training options now on offer.



Employers' guide to qualifications. Produced by OCR in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce.

OCR and the British Chambers of Commerce have jointly produced a simple to follow guide for employers.

Employers' guide to qualifications breaks down how vocational qualifications compare. It also shows which qualifications are at the same level as GCSEs and A levels.

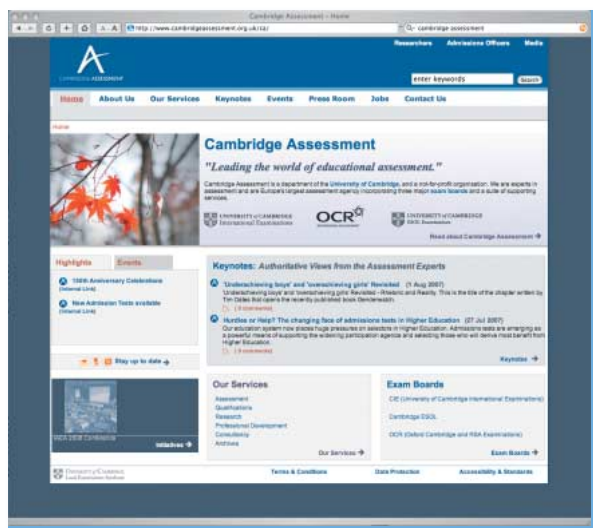
David Frost, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "A skilled workforce is crucial if a company is to grow and the overwhelming majority of employers recognise the need to provide training for employees.

"The major problem that employers face is that it is not clear what the plethora of training schemes available actually offer. This guide will help firms identify what schemes best fit their training needs."

The guide is available from local Chambers of Commerce and online at www.ocr.org.uk

New, improved website!

A new, improved Cambridge Assessment website has been designed to make it easier for users to find the information they need and to keep them up to date with the organisation's latest news and views.



The site, which was launched in late September, has new features including:

- Keynotes – take a look at the viewpoints on topical issues authored by assessment experts
- Spotlight – learn more about current activities from across the Group
- RSS feeds – stay up to date with the latest news, views and events from Cambridge Assessment.

To find out more, visit

www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

UK accredits world-leading English tests

A range of English language exams, taken by learners throughout the world, is now officially recognised in the UK.



Dr Michael Milanovic,
Chief Executive of
Cambridge ESOL.

Accreditation by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) covers the Cambridge ESOL certificates including world-renowned qualifications such as the First Certificate in English (FCE), Business English Certificate (BEC) and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). These have been taken by millions of learners and have valuable currency world-wide; including in the UK where a number of professional associations demand IELTS qualifications before allowing people to practice.

Dr Michael Milanovic, Chief Executive of Cambridge ESOL, said: "It is encouraging to see the Government recognising international qualifications and we are sure that the accreditation will have a positive impact on learners of the English language. We are committed to providing language qualifications for all learners of English and recognition of our qualifications continues to grow all over the world, giving learners the opportunity to have a truly valuable qualification."

A large number of language schools, further education colleges and educators wrote to the QCA to highlight the need for an international English language qualification to be certified within the UK. The Government recognised the need for assessment not only for people looking for permanent residency but also those wishing to live and work in the UK on a temporary basis. Many non-permanent residents want an English language certificate which will be recognised all over the world. The QCA responded to the requests by creating a new category of qualifications specifically for learners of English which could be accredited, while remaining separate from the 'Skills for Life'.

The accreditation also means new Government funding will be available for some learners at level 2. IELTS is taken by more than 700,000 people every year in over 120 countries worldwide. It is currently the only ESOL qualification within the new accreditation category for which funding will be available.

British bilingual education gives students an edge

CLIL is a little acronym which stands for a big idea – and one that is being taken up with enthusiasm around the world. *Content and Language Integrated Learning* is used to describe any educational programme in which the mainstream subjects are taught in a language other than the learner's mother tongue.

Many CIE schools and colleges already teach this way, with the same strategies being adopted by students and schools in countries all over the world.

They find that CIE qualifications, particularly IGCSE, provide a sound framework upon which a bilingual education programme can be built.

In Argentina, more than 100 schools follow a parallel track with Spanish-language teaching, following the national curriculum in the morning, and an English-language programme in the afternoon. The students sit Cambridge IGCSEs and many then go on to Cambridge International A levels.



History teacher Mónica Bruck with pre-IGCSE group.

Stephen Page, Principal of Belgrano Day School, Argentina, said: "Studying Cambridge IGCSE across a range of subjects definitely prepares pupils to handle the English language. It gives them a rich vocabulary and experience to express themselves in different situations."

Litty Mora, CIE Development Manager, says Argentina is part of a growing international trend: "The introduction of Cambridge IGCSE to Argentina 20 years ago opened up a new structure of learning for many schools: studying the national curriculum in Spanish alongside CIE qualifications in English."

"Cambridge IGCSE is the most popular CIE qualification to run alongside the Argentine national curriculum.

"Students gain qualifications in two distinct education systems in an integrated programme, and receive an extremely useful and relevant bilingual education in two of the most spoken languages in the world."

Students at Forum School in Nicosia, Cyprus, follow the Cypriot national curriculum, but are also given the option of taking certain subjects in English, including Cambridge IGCSE and International A level English, Maths, Physics and History. This is increasingly popular with students who wish to gain an official Cypriot leaving certificate – the 'apolyterion' – but who would also like to pursue higher studies abroad, especially at universities in the UK.

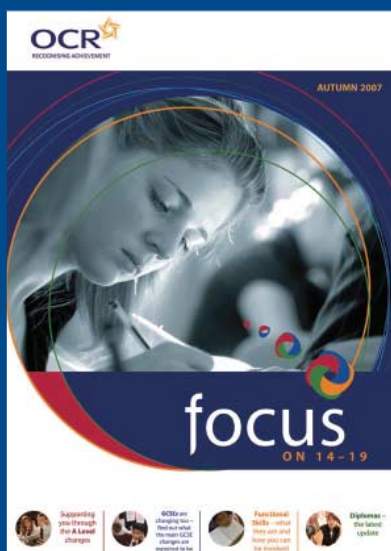
While individual schools are increasingly offering bilingual education, there is also growing interest in Cambridge IGCSEs from governments seeking a method of developing a truly bilingual national education system. Spain, the Netherlands and several Scandinavian countries are looking closely at Cambridge IGCSEs.



Teacher Adrián Altamira with pre-IGCSE Music students Julián Díaz, Gonzalo Ardisson, Nicholas Page and Soledad Martín.

Watch this space...

Focus on 14–19



Keep informed about the latest changes in 14–19 education with OCR's new, free publication, *Focus on 14–19*.

It aims to answer questions and explains how the forthcoming changes will affect those in education. The publication includes updates on A levels, GCSEs, Functional Skills and Diplomas, giving key information all in one place.

Contact us

Please feel free to phone, write or email at any time:

Bene't Steinberg or Paul O'Donnell
Public Affairs
1 Regent Street
Cambridge
CB2 1GG

Tel: +44 (0)1223 556018 (direct)
public.affairs@cambridgeassessment.org.uk



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English est arrivé

The French Ministry of Education has chosen Cambridge ESOL to provide up to 55,000 English language certifications a year in state secondary schools across France.

Dr Michael Milanovic, Chief Executive of University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, said: "We are delighted to have been selected to work with the Ministry of Education. Cambridge ESOL supports the increasing trend towards the mutual use and recognition of language certifications by partner European countries. We have worked with educationalists in France for many years, and have close relationships with French schools, universities and education authorities."

The certificates will be offered in schools currently running 'European Section' classes (where particular subjects are taught in a foreign language). The scheme is part of a nationwide project to improve French

school-leavers' second-language ability and to assess that ability within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Examinations will be taken by students in their final year of obligatory schooling (age 16) and will be of an equivalent level to the Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET), at CEFR Level B1. CEFR provides a practical tool for setting standards to be attained at successive stages of learning and provides a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications.

The project will initially run for a three year period and entrance to the examination will not be compulsory.

It's assessment, Jim, but not as we know it

A new course that allows students to submit their work via an e-portfolio, complete with video and sound clips, has just become available. The GCSE in Product Design from OCR had been piloted in 100 schools and colleges before full rollout in September.



A selection of work from OCR's GCSE Product Design candidates.

Learners are now able to explore and develop their own real-life design ideas, with the end result being delivered as it would be by professional designers in the creative industry.

Candidates assemble evidence of their achievements that can be submitted on paper, CD or via e-portfolio with video and sound clips. The assessments aim to acknowledge flair and imagination through innovative methods including e-assessment. A key aspect of OCR's new GCSE Product Design course is that candidates can submit work using only material they choose;

it encourages the use of new technology and new materials. It also has new content and a new unitary structure.

OCR's alternative approach to the teaching and assessment methods for GCSE Product Design was developed and piloted following feedback from tutors. They felt that the standard key stage 4 (KS4) methodology of lengthy coursework followed by end of course examination was not engaging learners sufficiently.