

Achieve

Summer 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.

Plugging the UK's languages gap?

According to a recent report by think tank Demos, which was compiled with help from Cambridge ESOL, the UK Government must act to address Britain's languages black hole.

As You Like It, Catching up in an age of Global English said the UK Government needed to put policies in place to address the UK's lack of speakers of second languages and called for better general interpersonal skills to enable people to communicate with people from other cultures.

Cambridge ESOL acknowledged some of the points made by Demos. But speaking on the back of the report, which was published earlier this year, Nick Saville, Director of Research and Validation, said: "Cambridge ESOL has already been involved in projects with the UK Government to develop multilingualism.

"The Asset Languages programme we developed for Government with OCR has provided a real platform for motivating and rewarding learners and people with other language skills. This is an important breakthrough in enabling people to get formal qualifications both in their community language and in key foreign languages – all of which add to the UK's skills base."

English has a vast role and influence in the world. It is spoken and used by 1.3 billion people across the world.

Cambridge ESOL has been working with the Beijing Municipal Government to help the city's population



improve its English in preparation for hosting next year's Olympics. And Colombia has just announced it will use Cambridge ESOL exams to test all its school-leavers against international standards.

Nick added: "The fact is, people want clearly defined standards in English. The more varieties and the greater the use of English for communication, the more government authorities want to establish reliable standards for their own purposes and their own populations, the more employers want solid guidance for recruitment – and

more than anything else, we know the learners themselves want to be measured against an acknowledged standard.

"This is not to deny the value and validity of any English variety. Varieties can help with the process of language learning, in encouraging and developing use of English; in any case, it would be to underestimate English learners to suggest they are somehow opting for a lesser form of the language. Proficiency levels of English in many countries are very high and rising."



Richard Brooks is Associate Director, Public Services, at the Institute for Public Policy Research. For more information on the IPPR visit www.ippr.org

The road to 2009

The long wait is over, Tony Blair has departed Downing Street, and Britain now has a new Prime Minister in Gordon Brown. Like his predecessor, he claims that education is his passion. So what are the priorities for him and his new education ministers?

Brown's top priority, of course, is to win the next general election. This is likely to be in 2009, and can be no later than May 2010. On the way there will be a Spending Review this autumn, and possibly one more squeezed in before the election itself.

His first priority will be to do no harm. The health service offers a terrifying lesson in how it is possible to pour resources into a public service, dramatically increase staffing levels, deal with some of the apparently most pressing problems (waiting lists, run down hospitals), and yet still end up with a mutinous workforce and an ungrateful public.

By contrast the education sector is a success story. This is partly because reforms here have been somewhat less rushed, and certainly more consistent than in the health sector. Brown will want to capitalise on this, not provoke an unnecessary revolt among either the workforce or the public.

Nonetheless, there are big challenges that Brown will want to address. Overall improvements in school standards, especially at the primary level have levelled off. Brown has already signalled his interest in 'personalised learning', and we can expect a shift in emphasis from parental choice as the driver of school quality to a focus on what happens within institutions over the coming years.

Meanwhile the attainment gap between pupils from lower income families and the rest has remained stubbornly wide under Labour. This will be a particular priority for Brown, the champion of social justice, and there will be a new high level target to close this gap as part of the forthcoming spending round. He has a particular interest in under-achieving boys. Expect a new focus on the transition from primary to secondary education, and on applied learning.

What about the hot potatoes: reform of the school assessment and admissions systems? This may require more appetite for risk. Perhaps they will have to wait until after the general election...

Richard Brooks
Associate Director – Public Services
Institute for Public Policy Research

UK's Home Office recognises language test for highly skilled migrants

The UK Home Office now recognises the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) in its new, points-based immigration system.



The Highly-Skilled Migrants Programme requires applicants to have proficiency in English to IELTS Level 6 or above to achieve the maximum points.

IELTS measures ability to communicate in English across all four language skills – listening, reading, writing and speaking – for people who intend to study or work where English is the language of communication.

IELTS is rapidly becoming the test of choice for immigration to English speaking countries and for higher education worldwide.

A number of international government agencies already require IELTS Band Scores for immigration and student visa application. This includes:

- ◆ Australian Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA)
- ◆ New Zealand Immigration Service (NZIS)
- ◆ Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)

Close to 5,000 organisations – such as the UK's Nursing & Midwifery Council, General Medical Council and Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons – and more than 700,000 test takers around the world trust and recognise IELTS as a secure, valid and reliable indicator of true to life ability to communicate in English for education, immigration and professional accreditation.

IELTS is jointly owned by the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) and is available through more than 350 locations in 120 countries.

On-screen system scores top marks

This summer around 1,500 examiners commissioned by OCR will be marking Maths, Science, ICT and Design & Technology GCSE papers on-screen.

They will be using scoris® – an e-marking system from RM who is a leading provider of educational products.

To date OCR has marked over 2.5 million candidates' scripts using scoris® and is planning to increase its use to make it an integral part of how it provides services to schools and centres in the UK.

Clara Kenyon, OCR's Qualifications Director, said: "scoris® enables us to scan and digitise candidates' exam papers, distribute them securely and anonymously to examiners and then collect the marks.

"It also gives us greater flexibility in the way work is allocated to examiners. During the marking session we can check markers as they are marking as opposed to waiting for papers to come back to us."



OCR has worked with RM since 2004 to find ways that technology can be best used to solve some of the practical problems that come with traditional paper-based marking, such as the sheer volume of paper involved.

Another advantage is the secure on-line system for examiners to communicate both with senior examiners and assessment staff at OCR.

Community cohesion celebration

New Cambridge IGCSEs in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India Studies have been launched at an evening to mark the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Plassey at London's City Hall.

Nobel Prize winning Indian economist and philosopher Professor Amartya Sen addressed the event which brought together Bangladeshi, Pakistani and the Indian communities in London to look at how extremism can be addressed in South Asian communities through education.

The new Cambridge IGCSE Bangladesh Studies and Pakistan Studies syllabuses have been developed by CIE in consultation with teachers in Bangladesh and Pakistan. They introduce students to the country's history, culture, geography, environment and development. Students learn about their rich heritage and cultural influences, and about events which have shaped national identity.

Through their studies, students also gain a deeper understanding of underlying skills and concepts, and examine different interpretations of historical events.

First examinations for Cambridge IGCSE Bangladesh and Pakistan Studies take place next year. Cambridge IGCSE India Studies is being developed in consultation with teachers in India during October 2007, and will be available for first teaching in 2011.

London Assembly Member Murad Qureshi, who hosted the event, said: "I strongly believe that offering pupils the opportunity to study these IGCSEs will help to strengthen community cohesion, tackle extremism in South Asian communities and raise aspirations among the South Asian youngsters in the UK. In the light of this, it seems clear that in order for the Government to achieve its own stated objectives, IGCSEs in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India Studies should be made available to schools in the maintained sector."

The Battle of Plassey was a pivotal event in shaping Britain's relationship with South Asia. It led to the establishment of British rule in Bengal, paving the way for the Raj and the subsequent 250 years of engagement between Britain and South Asia – something that has profoundly influenced both places.



Ann Puntis, CIE Chief Executive, Professor Amartya Sen (right) and Murad Qureshi (left), with the IGCSE India Studies Certificate.

Success for police promotions programme

Thanks to OCR, more than 70 qualifying officers from Merseyside Police have climbed the ranks to become sergeants and inspectors.

They have been taking key units from OCR NVQ Level 3 in Police Supervisory Management and Level 4 in Police Operational Management.

As part of a Home Office trial to improve the current system for assessing police officers for promotion, OCR has been working with Merseyside Police to offer work-based assessment solutions. It is one of seven forces taking part in the trial.

Sergeant Vin McGuinness, Team Leader of the Assessment Unit, said: "The principle of work-based assessment for promotion is that officers undertake the actual role i.e. as temporary sergeants or inspectors and are assessed against the National Occupational Standards appropriate to that role.

"We chose OCR as its policing qualifications have been especially designed for officers. The NVQ units are competence-based which means that they are linked to an officer's ability to competently perform a range of tasks connected with their work – perfect for demonstrating that they are eligible for promotion."

During the trial officers are only required to take half the units that make up the full NVQ but they do have the option to complete the course at a later stage.

The Home Office trial which started in 2004, is currently undergoing its second phase of



evaluation and impact assessment in preparation for recommendations to be made to ministers based upon these findings. This will take place during 2007.

For further information please visit <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/training-and-career-development/police-promotion-review.html>



Oxford seeks best of best

Help is on the way for Oxford admission tutors who are struggling to decide which applicants to call for interview.

The English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT), which is being developed by Cambridge Assessment, is aimed at students wanting to study English at Oxford University.

It has been designed to enable applicants to demonstrate their competence in the key skill of close reading and, with it, the ability to shape and articulate an informed response to unfamiliar literary material.

Dr Glenn Black, Tutor in English Literature at Oxford University, said: "The ELAT is just one element our admissions tutors will use to decide whether to invite candidates for interview. We are using it to try and

distinguish between applicants who are increasingly likely to be predicted or already have three A grades at A-level."

The ELAT is an aptitude test, rather than a knowledge test, and examines skills that A-level students will already have developed and need for further study. It is designed to be accessible to all students in their last year of a pre-university course of literary study.

Details of the new tests are available from www.elat.org.uk and will apply to students who plan to go to Oxford in 2008. The first ELAT test will be sat in October 2007.

Cambridge corpus reaches 26 million words

The most common errors made by foreign students learning English can be identified by the Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC).

A corpus is a database which can identify words, grammar and spellings which cause difficulties for English language learners and highlights those which are most common according to a learner's first language. The use of corpora has transformed the world of linguistics.

Developed to inform test development and publishing activities, CLC is an electronic database which provides empirical analysis of what language learners actually know and how they use language. It is jointly owned by Cambridge ESOL and Cambridge University Press.

Did you know?

The most common spelling errors among learners whose mother-tongue is Greek are:

1. advertisement (advertisement)
2. accomodation (accommodation)

In France however, candidates often misspell 'beginning', 'future' and 'negotiate', in India, 'receive' and 'trainees' caused problems, whilst in Germany it was words such as 'department', 'course' and 'programme'.

It is also possible to track common grammatical errors using a corpus. Learners often confuse common verbs in English such as 'make', 'do', 'take' and 'have'. Examples include 'do a mistake' or 'make some shopping'.

For the last 14 years, evidence has been gathered from Cambridge ESOL candidates' papers from all over the world and around 2,000 scripts are added each year.

The CLC is being used as part of the 'English Profile' project, a long term programme of research, consultation and publication designed to enhance the teaching, learning and assessment of English worldwide. Its main aim is to produce Reference Level Descriptors for each of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels. The CEFR levels describe what a language learner at each of the levels can do. The English Profile will show what these levels actually mean in terms of grammar, discourse and vocabulary in English.

The project will provide huge benefits for teachers, curriculum planners and textbook writers. Teachers will have empirical evidence of which areas of a language students are likely to find challenging. Textbook writers will be able to incorporate the new knowledge into textbooks, with students also subsequently benefiting. The corpus will also be used for the ongoing development and revision of Cambridge ESOL exams.

New 'Cambridge Pre-U' syllabuses unveiled

The arrival of the new pre-university qualification, the Cambridge Pre-U, came a step closer with the publication of eleven more syllabuses for consultation.



The new syllabuses follow the 15 that have already gone through consultation and are now being finalised.

The 11 new Cambridge Pre-U subjects are Mandarin Chinese, History of Art, Sports Science, Psychology, Greek, Music, Latin, Philosophy and Theology, Comparative Government and Politics, Russian and Italian.

More than 1,000 teachers in the UK and abroad have been involved with the development of Cambridge Pre-U, one of the biggest consultations with teachers on a new qualification. Their expertise has been central

to making the new syllabuses exciting for both teachers and students alike.

Kevin Stannard, CIE's Director of International Curriculum Development, said: "Both CIE and the teachers who have worked on these subjects believe that these syllabuses will ignite a real passion for studying and teaching in these areas. It will encourage students to experience the joy of studying a subject in depth."

The new syllabuses can be found on CIE's website at www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu

Watson warns reforms are 'silting up'

The latest qualification reforms are 'silting up', OCR has told a House of Commons inquiry in relation to vocational skills and skills-based qualifications.



Greg Watson, OCR Chief Executive.

Greg Watson, OCR's Chief Executive, said to the Education and Skills Select Committee: "I think we can see a paradox emerging. It seems to me if you put these two trends together, on the one hand the growing and regularly failed attempts to try and create a formal architecture [for qualifications] and set that against the greater diversity and the more rapid rate of economic change that we have a mismatch here."

The system has become increasingly complex and bureaucratic and the latest reforms are silting up.

There is a danger that Lord Leitch's concept of Sector Skills Councils endorsing public expenditure on qualifications will add yet another layer to existing processes.

OCR is also concerned that skills policy in the UK is taking too utilitarian a turn. As Greg Watson told the Committee: "I do not think we will get to the 2020 targets simply by linking everything which goes on in the education and training system to short-term needs defined by particular employers."

Pakistan Education Secretary visits Cambridge

Pakistan's Federal Secretary of Education, Mr Jahangir Bashir, met with CIE to discuss education developments in the UK and the role played globally by organisations concerned with establishing equivalence between qualifications.

Ann Puntis, CIE's Chief Executive, said: "The links between Cambridge and Pakistan are both long-standing and strong. It was a privilege to welcome senior educationalists from Pakistan to our CIE offices in the UK."

Mr Bashir along with Commodore Muhammad S Shamshad, Chair, Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Mr Ramzan Achakzai, Secretary, Inter Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC), and Dr Tom Christie, Director of Aga Khan awarding body in Karachi, attended the meetings.

Both CIE and the IBCC indicated warm support for working together to ensure that information provided to universities was transparent, accurate and equitable to all.

Later this year, CIE will open an office in Lahore and appoint an officer to work more closely with the IBCC, with universities and senior educationalists in Pakistan.

The University of Cambridge's Director of Admissions, Geoff Parks, also welcomed the visiting dignitaries.



Pakistani delegation visiting Newnham Croft Primary School in Cambridge.

Success for online GCSE

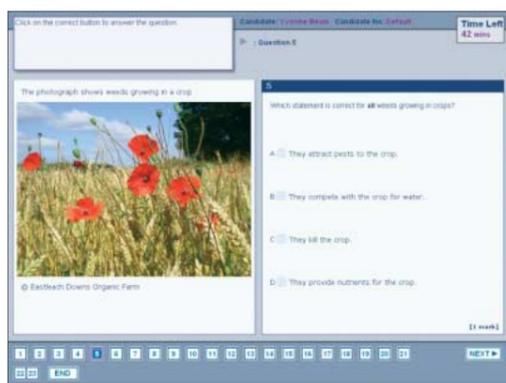
A solution to the problem of devising valid e-assessment without reducing everything to multiple choice has been successfully piloted.

OCR's GCSE Environment and Land Based Science (ELBS) was taken by 23 centres and over 400 students. The first ever fully e-assessed GCSE was created, scheduled and delivered using Connect – Cambridge Assessment's internally developed Computer Based Testing System.

On the day of the exam, the student accesses the test by using their unique password and the invigilator monitors progress with the help of a central administration screen. Within hours of completing the test, OCR is able to establish which centres have already uploaded their responses.

Although current question types are broadly similar to those being used in traditional paper and pencil tests, the use of new technology is already being introduced and is opening up alternative ways for students to communicate their responses and interact with assessment stimuli. OCR is undertaking further research to explore the extent to which new knowledge, understanding and skills domains can be assessed through this medium.

Patrick Craven, Head of e-Assessment at OCR, said: "An important feature of the ELBS tests is that they



have not simply reduced the nature of the test to a series of multiple choice questions – a criticism that has been labelled at other CBT initiatives in this area. Instead the test maintains a balance between multiple choice and free response questions and therefore the integrity of the test itself remains intact."

This innovative application of technology continues with question responses being routed through to scoris® – a system used by OCR for on-screen marking. scoris® enables examiners to recall questions and responses for the marking to complete the technology loop.

The full potential of ELBS will be realised next summer when ELBS centres will be able to use an online submission portal to upload their digital coursework evidence. This will see the completion of the UK's first totally digital GCSE experience and confirm OCR's position as an innovative and forward thinking awarding body – advancing new ideas through controlled research and development.

Nationals work nationally

OCR Nationals have proved to be hugely popular qualifications since their launch in 2004 and are recognised as meeting the vocational needs of learners. There are now over 850 schools and colleges approved as centres for OCR Nationals and 61,000 registered candidates.

OCR Nationals are work-related qualifications that provide learners with a taste of a vocational area, without restricting their future options. They are primarily aimed at 14-19-year-olds, but are also suitable for adult learners. Both high and low ability learners will find OCR Nationals interesting, fun and achievable. OCR Nationals also offer excellent progression routes and with the introduction of UCAS points for OCR Level 3 Nationals, learners can use them to get into University.

In June OCR held a national conference in Sutton Coldfield to give centres the opportunity to learn more about OCR Nationals. Gerry O'Keeffe, Customer Support Director, said: "The event resulted in a real buzz and a day highly valued by attendees, watch this space for more events like this!"

Schools and colleges are able to register online as well as via the traditional paper form and becoming an approved OCR centre is free. Visit www.ocrnationals.com/approval3 for further details.

e-Assessment and its impact on education



A broad view of the potential of new technologies to improve assessment will be debated at the third Cambridge Assessment Conference.

e-Assessment and its impact on education is due to take place on 15 October 2007 at Robinson College in Cambridge.

The purpose of the conference is to identify and promote new innovations that will create valid assessments as well as educational benefits.

The conference will introduce two main speakers and 12 discussion seminars, covering a range of subjects within the main conference theme. Delegates will have opportunities to comment and ask questions to the discussion panel, to network at lunch and tea time, and

to debate issues during their choice of seminar sessions in the afternoon.

The morning will include two plenary sessions from Professor Andrew Pollard and colleagues of the ESRC Teaching and Learning Research Programme, based at the Institute of Education in London, who will speak about *New technologies: promises and risks for education*, and from Professor Richard Kimbell of Goldsmiths, London, on *Technology and the assessment of creative performance*. The afternoon seminar sessions provide delegates with a wide choice of speakers from exam boards such as AQA, Edexcel and OCR, educational technology charities Futurelab and Learning Lab, plus other exciting sessions from NFER, SQA and Cambridge ESOL.

For more information about the conference, please go to www.assessnet.org.uk or email the conference team at thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk

Plenary speakers announced for ALTE 2008

The plenary speakers for The Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) 3rd International Conference in 2008 have been announced.



The theme of the conference, which will be held in Cambridge University from April 10–12 2008, will be *The Social and Educational Impact of Language Assessment*. The following speakers will be appearing: Professor Micheline Chalhoub-Deville, Professor John A. Hawkins, Professor Tim McNamara, Dr Brian North, and Dr James E. Purpura.

Also, Cambridge ESOL's Assistant Director of Research and Validation, Dr Lynda Taylor, will be presenting her paper: *Setting language standards for teaching and assessment: a matter of principle, politics or prejudice?*

For further information about registration or any other aspects of this multilingual conference, visit: www.alte.org/2008 or contact the ALTE Secretariat: alte2008@ucles.org.uk

Vive la difference!

Tougher laws on religious belief, gender and sexual preference have prompted a big growth in diversity training according to The Psychometrics Centre at Cambridge Assessment.

Last year alone, large businesses in the UK spent £150 million on diversity training and Human Resources practitioners identify diversity as one of most important issues facing organisations today.

Diversity impacts on recruitment, selection and development practice in particular.

The Psychometrics Centre believes the growth in this area can be attributed to three factors:

- ♦ stronger laws on areas ranging from disability, religious belief, gender and sexual preference to ethnicity
- ♦ organisations' desire to be ethical – and to be seen to be ethical – in their activities
- ♦ hard organisational advantages: diverse organisations are better prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing environment.



Left to right: The Psychometrics Centre's Director, Professor John Rust, Psychometrician, Li Xiao, Paula Cruise and Psychometrician, Vikas Dhawan at the Diversity training course.

Paula Cruise, an occupational psychologist, who worked with the Centre to design and deliver its Diversity Training course, said: "Diversity is a good investment. It provides a wider range of skills. A diverse workforce, coming at issues from different angles, results in innovative solutions. We show how to identify different skills, build diverse teams and embrace difference. Identifying, understanding and valuing individual differences is what psychometrics is all about.

"Instead of seeing diversity as a worrying constraint – something you have to pay lip service to but handle with care – we treat it as an opportunity. The Psychometrics Centre develops hands-on, work-based skills needed to manage diverse work expectations, work orientations and unique approaches to performance."

For more information about the course and The Psychometrics Centre, please visit: www.thepsychometricscentre.co.uk

International debate

International delegates had the chance to debate the role and responsibilities of public examinations providers in today's society, at a tailored study programme in May.

The two-week programme, hosted by The Cambridge Assessment Network, was attended by senior education professionals from across the world.

Andrew Watts, The Cambridge Assessment Network Director, said: "Although we had delegates from several different countries, they had many interesting concerns in common. Some of the most popular sessions were those on: e-assessment, standardisation of examiners, an item-based approach to question paper production and school-based assessment."

Key issues addressed included: what stake-holders need and require; how to fulfil responsibilities regarding accountability and the impact of assessment in society; where to make radical changes to improve quality and effectiveness; compromise – if so, why and when; and how new technologies can help.

The Cambridge Assessment Network will offer the programme again next year. For more information, please contact Jill Grimshaw, the course director, at thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk



Back row, left to right: Shakeh Manassian, Network Consultant; Andrew Watts, Director, Cambridge Assessment Network; Emmanuel Adenku, West African Examinations Council, Ghana; Pierre Valois, Université Laval, Canada; Newman Burdett, Head of International Education, CIE; Nicki Little, Network Consultant; Philip Mulwa Kimanthi, Kenya National Examinations Council; Sahruddin Sahrin, Malaysian Examinations Council; Peadar Ó Máille, State Examinations Commission, Ireland; Zodwa Shongwe, Umalusi, South Africa; Victoria Masasanya, Independent Examinations Board, South Africa. **Front row, left to right:** Joyce Ndege, Kenya National Examinations Council; Jill Grimshaw, Programme Manager, Cambridge Assessment Network, Sukai Jobarteh, West African Examinations Council, Gambia; Bong Muk Shin, Malaysian Examinations Syndicate; Mohamad Shafii, Malaysian Examinations Council; Bríd Uí Riordáin, State Examinations Commission, Ireland.

Arabian days – teachers & trainers benefit

Teachers in Kuwait are now being trained using Cambridge professional development qualifications – but with an Arabic twist.

The pilot project has been developed by CIE in partnership with the Kuwaiti Public Authority for Applied Education & Training (PAAET). It will see a number of PAAET trainers studying for Cambridge professional development qualifications.

CIE has customised the Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers and the Cambridge International Certificate for Teachers and Trainers to meet the specific needs of teachers in Kuwait. The qualifications aim to improve the knowledge and skills of that country's instructors. All syllabuses and support materials are being made available in Arabic.

John Brenchley of OCR, who visited Kuwait with CIE for the project launch, said: "It was great to be able to share best practice from the UK with colleagues in the Middle East. Their experiences were fascinating and I've been able to take useful things away with me too."

This represents the first stage of a long-term relationship between CIE and PAAET. Initially 578 instructors will undertake the qualifications, but more trainers may join the scheme next year. Additionally, PAAET and CIE intend to offer further professional development programmes for managers across all PAAET's institutes.

CIE provides qualifications to help teachers and trainers around the world to develop their thinking and practice, in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Completion of the qualifications can lead to higher study in the UK, either through the new Cambridge International Advanced Diploma for Teachers and Trainers, or through a higher degree at other UK universities.

Developing students internationally

A new programme for 11–14 year olds, offering a flexible, external, international benchmark of student achievement, has been launched by CIE.

The Cambridge Lower Secondary Programme is intended to allow progression from CIE's popular Cambridge International Primary Programme (CIPP) and covers the core subjects of Mathematics, English and Science over three years.

The programme follows the same pattern as CIPP by providing a coherent and comprehensive curriculum package, including detailed syllabuses, schemes of work, teaching and learning resources, and teacher training support. Annual progression tests allow for formative assessment, with detailed analysis tools allowing teachers to take account of particular strengths and weaknesses at an individual pupil level. The Cambridge Lower Secondary Programme



Icon designed for Lower Secondary Programme.

also provides a solid foundation for the next stage of education. At the end of Lower Secondary, students can sit Cambridge Checkpoint tests which provide detailed feedback on students' strengths and weaknesses and serve as a good indicator of suitability for embarking on Cambridge IGCSE and other qualifications beyond age 14.

The programme is based around a framework of learning outcomes and encourages the development of skills as well as knowledge. It reflects current understanding of teaching and learning and includes activities which reflect the different styles in which students learn.

Watch this space...

Over two million test takers choose Cambridge ESOL

More than two million people, in 130 countries around the world are now taking University of Cambridge ESOL certificates each year. In response to candidate demand and the increased collaboration with governments around the world, Cambridge ESOL has opened offices in Argentina, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Spain, Taiwan, Turkey and Vietnam.

Dr Michael Milanovic, Chief Executive of Cambridge ESOL, said: "More than ever before there is a need for a 'gold standard' of English language assessment for employers and educational institutions throughout the world. Our growing local operations in different regions of the world will help us better meet the particular needs of each country, providing support for governments, teachers and candidates."

Contact us

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Raising standards globally

CIE and the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education have embarked on a new venture to develop teaching skills in schools around the world.



Left to right: Simon Lebus, Cambridge Assessment Group Chief Executive signing the Memorandum of Understanding with Kate Pretty, University Pro-Vice Chancellor and Mike Younger, Head of Faculty of Education.

CIE's professional development qualifications for teachers, such as the Cambridge International Certificate and Diploma for Teachers and Trainers, will now be accredited within the Faculty's Practitioner Professional Development framework, as stages towards a Masters degree.

Paul Beedle, CIE's Manager of Professional Development Certification, said: "CIE's expertise in assessment, added to the outstanding teaching and research of the Faculty makes an ideal partnership, which will offer significant benefits to teachers around the world.

"This collaboration strengthens our joint capability to help ministries of education and other public authorities in education reform projects, in which the development of teachers and teaching is such a crucial factor. Joint research into critical international education issues will be another important facet of our work together."

CIE and the Faculty of Education will also develop new courses and qualifications. Work has already begun on the Cambridge International Advanced Diploma for Teachers and Trainers and on a Masters in International Education.

China's best

Three students from China won a chance-in-a-lifetime opportunity to study in Cambridge after getting top scores in their Cambridge ESOL Business English Certificate (BEC) tests.



Left to right: Duncan Rayner, South East Development Manager for Cambridge ESOL with students Duan Zhixiang, Xin Zhang and Chai Liang.

Chai Liang of Beijing, Duan Zhixiang, of Xi'an and Xin Zhang of Harbin, won a two week course at an Embassy CES summer school in Cambridge, after entering the competition organised by Cambridge ESOL, sponsored by the school and Cambridge University Press.

All three winning students said they were enjoying the opportunity to study in England and had decided to take BEC because they felt it would help their careers.

BEC is currently taken by tens of thousands of people in China every year and the number is increasing.

Chai, who since taking BEC has found work with international accountants, PricewaterhouseCoopers, said: "I don't have an economics or finance background, but being able to speak English well has been very helpful as English is the language of international business."