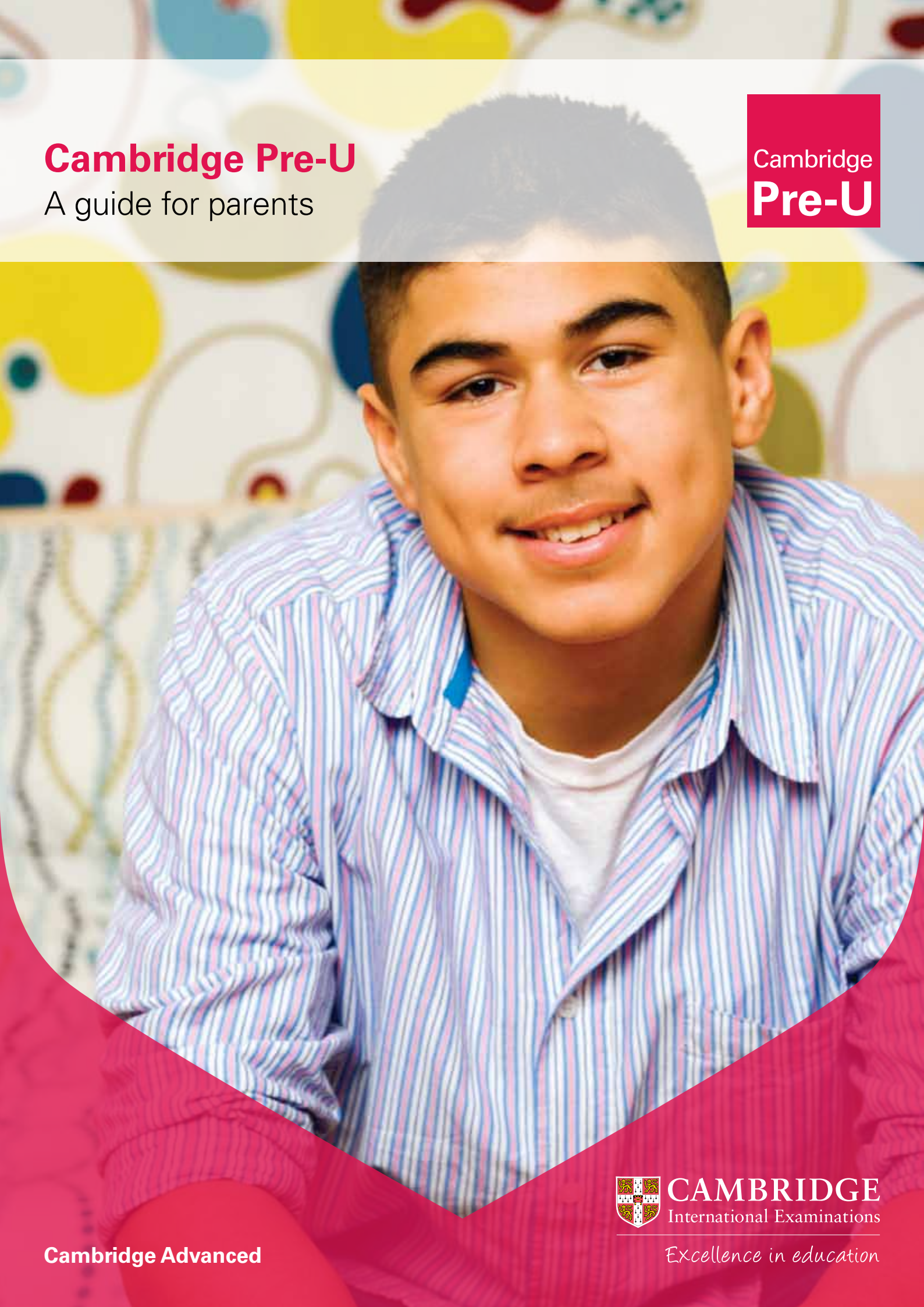


Cambridge Pre-U

A guide for parents

Cambridge
Pre-U



Cambridge Advanced



CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Excellence in education



Overview

About Cambridge International Examinations

Cambridge International Examinations is the world's largest provider of international education programmes and qualifications for 5 to 19 year olds. Our qualifications are taken in over 160 countries and recognised by universities, education providers and employers across the world.

We are part of the Cambridge Assessment Group, a not-for-profit organisation and a department of the University of Cambridge. We share in their mission of providing excellence in education. Our programmes and qualifications develop successful learners and support the economic performance of countries where we work at national level.

Learn more! Visit www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu

Cambridge Pre-U is an exciting qualification for 16 to 19 year olds who want to go to university.

Cambridge Pre-U is innovative and stimulating. It has been developed by Cambridge International Examinations, the world's largest provider of international education programmes and qualifications for 5 to 19 year olds, and a department of the University of Cambridge.

Cambridge Pre-U prepares students with the knowledge, skills and in-depth understanding they need to make a success of their studies at university.

The qualification has been designed to inspire, challenge and reward students. It takes individual learning seriously and enables students to study a programme tailored to suit their own interests, enthusiasms and expertise.

Andrew Corish, Deputy Headteacher, Coloma Convent Girls' School, said: "We believe our girls have high aspirations and want to succeed. We believe that Cambridge Pre-U offers a 'gold standard' qualification in terms of stretch and challenge."

What do students enjoy about Cambridge Pre-U?

- **Fewer exams:** Students prepare for exams at the end of the two-year course. This means they can spend more time exploring topics that really interest them in class, instead of preparing for modular exams; they have longer to mature and develop subject knowledge before they are examined; and exam stress is reduced.
- **Choice:** Cambridge Pre-U syllabuses give students freedom to choose some of their own topic areas, so they can develop their own interests and ideas.
- **Greater reward:** Subjects are explored over two years. Every syllabus has been carefully designed with schools to enthuse students and teachers alike.
- **Emphasis on skills:** Students develop lifelong skills such as enquiry, critical thinking and independent research. They are better prepared to reach their future goals.
- **Fair grading:** Cambridge Pre-U has a grade scale that represents students across the full ability range. The most able students can gain grades above A* grade at A Level.
- **Recognition:** Students gain confidence from knowing that universities helped to develop Cambridge Pre-U. UK universities accept and welcome Cambridge Pre-U applicants.

“Teachers provide us with articles and after explaining their opinion on the topic, they will open the floor to discussions. Most of the time students tend to take the lead in the discussions.”

Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research student

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

Jill Milner, Headmistress
Walthamstow Hall

A distinctive approach

Cambridge Pre-U is linear and does not have any modular exams during the course, unlike the current modular UK A Level. Students taking Cambridge Pre-U prepare for one set of exams at the end of the two years, rather than for module exams throughout the two years.

This means schools can teach subjects in depth, without having to hold exams at frequent intervals. Students start to see the subject as a whole, instead of studying isolated modules and missing the links between them.

Teachers find that the linear structure helps them plan teaching better, to meet the needs of the class and individual students. Teachers decide the order, the pace and the depth of teaching and learning most appropriate for their students.

Educational expertise

We have developed Cambridge Pre-U through extensive collaboration with schools, university specialists and subject experts.

Principal Subjects

There are currently 26 subjects available at Principal Subject level.

Each Principal Subject is a two-year course, examined at the end, and gaining a separate certificate. The syllabuses are innovative, stretching and accessible. Principal Subjects are the equivalent of A Levels. There are also one-year Short Courses available.

What students study

Students can take up to four Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects. They can be taken in combination with A Levels. Students have a free choice of subjects, so they can follow a course tailored to their own interests. As well as subjects like Mathematics or History, Cambridge Pre-U also offers Psychology, Literature in English, Latin, and Business and Management.

Students can complete the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma by taking any three Principal Subjects (or a combination of A Levels and Principal Subjects) and Global Perspectives and Research (GPR).

Cambridge Pre-U subjects

English

Literature in English

Humanities

Classical Heritage
Geography
Global Perspectives and Research*
History
Philosophy and Theology

Languages

Classical Greek
French*
German*
Italian*
Latin
Mandarin Chinese*
Russian*
Spanish*

Mathematics

Mathematics*
Further Mathematics*

Science

Biology
Chemistry
Physics

Social Sciences

Business and Management
Comparative Government and Politics
Economics
Psychology

The Arts

Art and Design
Art History
Drama and Theatre
Music

*Certified Short Courses are also available in these subjects



“ The pupils doing Cambridge Pre-U Economics are really enjoying it – we are in such interesting times at the moment, as far as Economics is concerned. The whole linear nature of the course has allowed us to look at recent events without any fear of ‘getting behind’ with the syllabus. ”

Andrew Ireson, Oundle School, UK



Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research

The core of the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma is the Global Perspectives and Research (GPR) course, which prepares students for the independent thinking and research work they will do at university.

The Global Perspectives element of the course helps students to explore the challenges that will face them as young people – wherever they live and work.

Students choose from within five broad themes: Ethics, Economics, Environment, Technology, and Politics and Culture. The emphasis is on giving them the tools to identify, evaluate and explore competing arguments and perspectives.

Mastering these tools involves high-level skills, which are valued in all subjects and in employment.

The Research Report is an extended project and gives students a number of options:

- Digging deeper – going into a chosen topic in greater detail.
- Crossing boundaries – focusing on a topic that overlaps several school subjects.
- New departures – looking into non-school subjects, for example, anthropology.

The Research Report is a single piece of extended writing, based on individual reading and research on a topic that students can choose themselves.

Students who want to take the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma can study any three Principal Subjects with GPR. Alternatively, up to two A Levels may be substituted for Principal Subjects.

Cambridge Pre-U GPR is also available as a standalone qualification that can be taken alongside A Levels.

“ I am studying in the UK but come from a different culture. I believe in the idea of looking at different views and considering other people’s opinions about them before developing my own. I think it’s a very good course to take up. ”

Cambridge Pre-U GPR student



Cambridge Pre-U Diploma

Full award for candidates gaining five components – comprising three Principal Subjects and the core components. Up to two A Levels can be substituted for Principal Subjects.

Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects

Twenty-six Principal Subjects are available, certificated separately, assessed at the end of a two-year programme of study. Short Courses are available in some subjects.

Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research (GPR)

Global Perspectives and Research together constitute the compulsory core of the Diploma, but they can be taken as a separate qualification.

“ Ex-pupils report that they feel much better prepared for university study than their peers because of the nature of the Pre-U course. ”

Val Joyce, Head of English, Watford Grammar School for Girls, UK

“ We are happy to accept Cambridge Pre-U for entry to the School of Medical Education... we believe it will offer an appropriate preparation for university-level study. ”

University of Liverpool, UK

The ‘mixed portfolio’

Some schools that are moving to Cambridge Pre-U have begun by offering a ‘mixed portfolio’ of Principal Subjects and A Levels, depending on which syllabuses they prefer. Others may offer mostly Principal Subjects and just a few A Levels. A third model popular with schools is to start by offering GPR in combination with A Levels.

Compatible with A Levels

One of the strong messages we received during our consultation with schools is that different qualifications suit different students.

Cambridge Pre-U is fully compatible with A Levels. Students can take any combination of subjects they like. They can specialise or diversify, depending on where their strengths and interests lie.

Students who want to work towards the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma may substitute one or two of the Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects for A Levels.

Grading

Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects have three grade bands: Distinction, Merit and Pass. In the table below, you will see how each grade, from Distinction 1 to Pass 3, relates to the six A Level grades A* to E.

Cambridge Pre-U is suitable for all students who currently achieve a pass at A Level. For the very brightest students, Cambridge has an extra grade (Distinction 1) above the A* Grade at A Level. Students who would currently get an E Grade at A Level could expect a Pass 3 for Cambridge Pre-U.

The full Cambridge Pre-U Diploma mark will be based on the total of scores for three Principal Subjects or A Level substitutions and the core component, GPR.

University recognition

Universities were involved at every stage in the development of Cambridge Pre-U and helped shape the qualification. They value the knowledge and independent study skills it develops.

Cambridge Pre-U UCAS tariff points

| Cambridge Pre-U grade | Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject UCAS tariff | A Level grade | Equivalent A Level UCAS tariff | Cambridge Pre-U GPR UCAS tariff | Short Course UCAS tariff |
|-----------------------|---|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Distinction 1 | tbc | n/a | n/a | tbc | tbc |
| Distinction 2 | 145 | A* | (A*) 140 | 140 | tbc |
| Distinction 3 | 130 | A | (A) 120 | 126 | 60 |
| Merit 1 | 115 | | | 112 | 53 |
| Merit 2 | 101 | | (B) 100 | 98 | 46 |
| Merit 3 | 87 | C | (C) 80 | 84 | 39 |
| Pass 1 | 73 | | | 70 | 32 |
| Pass 2 | 59 | D | (D) 60 | 56 | 26 |
| Pass 3 | 46 | E | (E) 40 | 42 | 20 |

| Typical offers from universities 2011–12 | | | |
|--|----|----|----|
| Oxford – Law | | | |
| Standard A Level offer: | A | A | A |
| Mixed portfolio: | A | D3 | D3 |
| York – Politics | | | |
| Standard A Level offer: | A | A | B |
| Mixed portfolio: | A | A | M2 |
| Bristol – Mathematics | | | |
| Standard A Level offer: | A | A | A |
| Mixed portfolio: | A | A | D3 |
| Exeter – Sociology | | | |
| Standard A Level offer: | A | B | B |
| Mixed portfolio: | A | M2 | M2 |
| Leicester – Chemistry | | | |
| Standard A Level offer: | B | B | B |
| Mixed portfolio: | B | M2 | M2 |
| Cambridge – English | | | |
| Standard A Level offer: | A* | A | A |
| Mixed portfolio: | D2 | A | A |

“ We welcome applications from students who are studying towards the full Cambridge Pre-U Diploma or certain Principal Subjects within the qualification alongside A Levels. ”

University of Cambridge, UK

Universities told us that it is difficult to select the best students – those who are going to do well at university. They have welcomed the clarity of the Cambridge Pre-U grading system, which allows the most selective universities to distinguish between students who may receive the same grade at A Level.

Universities around the UK accept Cambridge Pre-U as equivalent to other pre-university qualifications. It is also recognised by a range of US universities, including all Ivy League universities.

A full list of universities who have confirmed their recognition of Cambridge Pre-U can be found at <http://recognition.cie.org.uk> by searching by country, higher education and Cambridge Pre-U. We work closely with university admission staff to explain the distinctive features of Cambridge Pre-U, and with schools to support applications of Cambridge Pre-U students.

We ensure that universities who receive our students’ applications have all the information they need about Cambridge Pre-U.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) has awarded a tariff value to Cambridge Pre-U. UCAS tariffs help universities to understand how one qualification compares to another, for example, Cambridge Pre-U and A Levels.

For example, for admission a student could obtain:

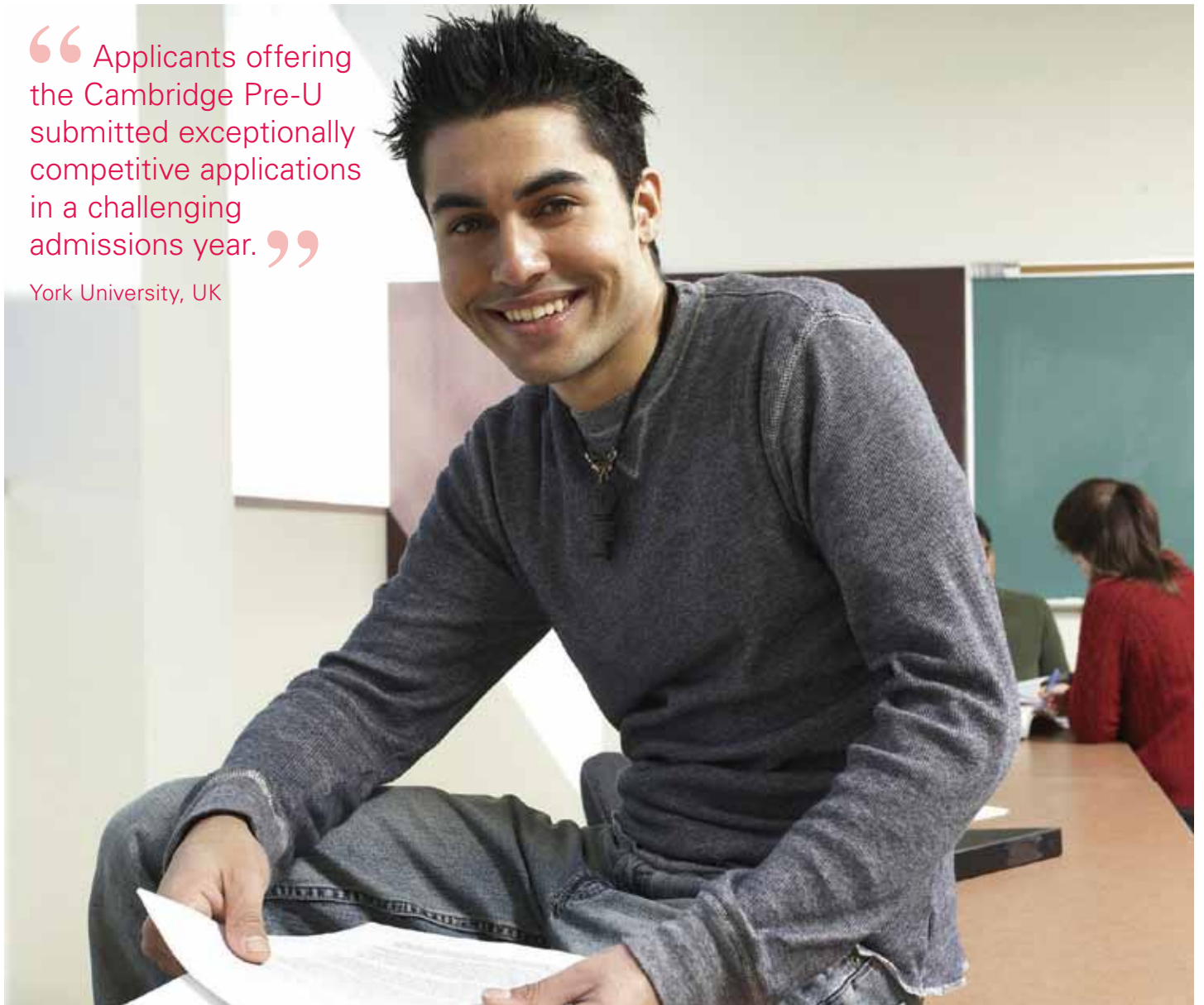
- grades ABB in three A Level subjects including Chemistry
- or grades BB at A Level in two subjects including Chemistry and a D3 in Cambridge Pre-U
- or grades AB at A Level in two subjects including Chemistry and an M2 in Cambridge Pre-U.

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

- deep understanding with depth and rigour
- problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, team-work, independent learning and effective communication
- promoting an international outlook and cross-cultural awareness.

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

York University, UK



For more information about UK and international university admission policies for candidates with Cambridge Pre-U grades, please go to our recognition database at www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/recognition

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. Ask your school about their plans for post-16 education.

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