

# Update for schools

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



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## And more!

## Schools congratulate their Cambridge Pre-U students

**As candidates in over 100 UK state and independent schools receive their Cambridge Pre-U exam results, we take a look at what principals and teachers have been saying about their students' achievements.**

The fifth full exam series for Cambridge Pre-U took place in June 2014. When students received their results in August, schools across the country posted congratulatory messages on their websites and on social media.

King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford is celebrating another year of strong performances in Cambridge Pre-U. For the first time their students took Cambridge Pre-U Literature in English rather than A Level, and 75 per cent of them gained Distinctions. All 15 of the school's students taking Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives & Research

(GPR) gained Distinctions. The school commented: "We are delighted with all of the results, which are a reflection of the superb efforts of the students, their committed teachers, and not forgetting support from parents."

Downe House in Berkshire congratulated three of its leavers as top-scoring candidates in three Cambridge Pre-U disciplines – Geography, Politics and Global Perspectives & Research.

Oakwood Park Grammar School Cambridge Pre-U students were celebrating as well, "with 72 per cent of all grades at A\*–B equivalent in Pre-U subjects (Literature in English,

History and Philosophy & Theology". Headteacher Kevin Moody commented: "I am delighted for our students who have worked so hard to get these results against a backdrop of ever increasing changes to our exam system."

The North London Collegiate School website also celebrated accomplished results. "There were particularly excellent results in modern languages in the Pre-U qualification, which was sat for the first time, with 59 per cent of entries graded D1 or D2. This is fantastic news and a very positive start to the new academic year. Congratulations to all pupils and staff."

Leweston School in Sherborne also had cause to be proud of an outstanding set of results, with Cambridge Pre-U students in Art History, Literature in English and History all achieving Distinctions and Merits. Headmaster Adrian Aylward said: "Once again Leweston sixth-formers have excelled across the whole ability range, generating some



Rosalie Wells, James Allen's Girls' School

truly outstanding results, particularly given the changes to the examination system and the downward trend in results nationally. I am delighted that their hard work and dedication has paid off and would like to congratulate them all on their incredible achievements."

James Allen's Girls' School offered their congratulations to student Rosalie Wells who gained a D1 in her Cambridge Pre-U Literature in English course as well as A\* grades in A Level History, Philosophy and Politics. Rosalie has a place to read

English at Worcester College, Oxford. "The English Pre-U was the biggest academic challenge I've had so far," she is quoted as saying. "It gave me the chance to do a personal investigation of four novels; I can't wait to do more independent research and more things in depth."

In 2013/14 the total number of entries in the UK for Cambridge Pre-U was 4288, increasing by 11 per cent from the previous year.

There are now over 160 state and independent schools in the UK registered to teach Cambridge Pre-U.

## Congratulations to all Cambridge Pre-U Award winners

**We congratulate the students who achieved the highest marks in each Cambridge Pre-U subject.**

Thirty students from state and independent schools across the country received a Cambridge Pre-U Award in September 2014. Students were awarded a certificate in recognition of their having achieved the highest standard mark for a single Cambridge Pre-U subject.

As Michael O'Sullivan, Chief Executive, Cambridge International Examinations, told the successful students: "Topping the list of candidates in a Cambridge Pre-U subject is a performance of the very highest calibre."

Honours were shared in Italian, with Dimitri Harrison and Ameya Vaidyanathan, both at Eton College, named joint winners. William R C Clark-Maxwell at Eton College and Callum Russell Anderson at Bedales School were joint winners in Music.

Callum chose the Cambridge Pre-U as Bedales no longer offers A Level Music, but he said: "I would have chosen it anyway if there had been the option to do A Level Music because it is more challenging and a better qualification to have." He enjoyed the greater freedom to develop his own skills. "There were no text books, which was better as text book teaching makes courses less open to other sources we can learn from." Callum has gone on to study Music at the University of Bristol.

Andrew George Lee from Lancaster Royal Grammar School took the top prize in Business & Management. "As the course covered two years the workload was much more than my other A Levels," Andrew said. "The range of topics somewhat dwarfed my other A Levels as we could spend more time looking at the



various facets of business. The coursework greatly developed my presentational skills and ability to produce concise analysis and evaluation.

"The course influenced me 100 per cent to continue with Business at university. The universities I applied for fully acknowledged the qualification and understood the grading system." Andrew is going on to study Business and Management at the University of Bath.

**Congratulations to all 30 winners.**

# Spotlight on: Physics

Cambridge Pre-U Physics gives students the opportunity to engage with intellectually stimulating modern concepts, including special relativity, quantum physics and astrophysics. Dr Anton Machacek, outgoing Head of Physics at The Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, explains why he felt the time was right for the Cambridge Pre-U, and Jenny Crowter, the incoming Head of Physics tells us how the students are doing.

Established in 1550 and achieving academy status in February 2011, The Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, is a selective grammar school for boys aged 11 to 18.

Dr Machacek introduced the school's only (so far) Cambridge Pre-U course in 2012. "Having secured the interest of my department, we made a request to our Senior Team that we be allowed to teach one class for the Pre-U," he says. "They were enthusiastic, and allowed us to proceed. Year 11 students were briefed on the

difference between Pre-U and A Level, and they chose the course which suited their learning style. Accordingly we had about 17 students starting the Pre-U and a further 60 studying AS Level when we started.

"My colleagues and I took a risk in using the excuse of the extra depth and breadth to develop a different approach to teaching, to bridge the gap between school and university styles."

The differences were noticed right away. "The classroom atmosphere and commitment to independent study were transformed compared with

previous experience with A Level.

"We used the opportunity presented by the larger syllabus to teach the course in a similar style to university, with different lessons having different flavours – mini-lectures, problem sessions, tutorials, laboratory sessions and so on. This enabled a much more efficient use of time, gave the impetus for students to read more widely, and provided time for exploring the tangential questions which would inevitably arise. It also enabled students to gain better time management and note-taking skills,



## Spotlight on: Physics continued

and the revision techniques they were using by the end of the two years were much more akin to undergraduate revision methods.”

Did Dr Machacek have any concerns about introducing the new curriculum? “My one nagging fear was that the students might not get the high grades they would have expected from AS/A2, and indeed that they deserved after the effort they put into their study,” he explained. However, his fears were unfounded. “I am delighted with their results (more got Distinction 1 than any other grade, and the vast majority achieved D1/D2). Not all of the students had top grades at GCSE, and those who didn’t were among those who made the most progress and were most appreciative of what the course had taught them about learning.”

Students past and present had nothing but positive words for the Cambridge Pre-U. “A past student visited us fresh from his engineering degree placement in a Formula One team and on hearing of the activities of our Year 12 Pre-U students he could not praise the course too highly,” says Dr Machacek. “One of our current Year 12 students commented that he felt this course was the most worthwhile learning experience he had ever taken part in.”

This academic year, Dr Machacek has left The Royal Grammar School to take up a place as Assistant Head & Director of Sixth Form Studies at Westcliff High School for Boys. Jenny Crowter is the new Head of Physics at The Royal Grammar School. “The Royal Grammar School continues to offer the Pre-U course to its sixth-formers,” she said, “and while it is early days yet, the new Year 12 students are tackling their studies with verve. The Year 13



students have returned after the summer holidays full of enthusiasm and are currently thrusting Oxbridge personal statements towards their teachers for advice.

“I have noticed a significant difference in the Pre-U students compared with those doing A Level. By being given more scope in the course itself, they have been empowered and enthused to explore for themselves and have developed far more independence in this than I have previously encountered in sixth-formers.

“ My colleagues and I took a risk in using the excuse of the extra depth and breadth to develop a different approach to teaching, to bridge the gap between school and university styles. ”

Dr Machacek  
The Royal Grammar School  
High Wycombe

“This is evident in the quality of the personal statements – normally I have numerous conversations with candidates about how they need to talk about physics more and show that they have taken their learning further. With the Pre-U students, it’s hard to fit in all the extra physics-related lectures, courses, independent research and reading that they have done (off their own back) with the limited word count, and they are buzzing with ideas about trickier extension problems they could ponder, and ways to apply the concepts in a more fundamental way.

“Pre-U has created the kind of student who wants to form a group to make a cyclotron from parts they order off the internet. (Unfortunately the practical outworking of this was hampered by the expense and availability of said parts, but they did get as far as obtaining dry ice and making their own cloud chamber in their free time.) It is truly a privilege to be able to teach a group of students who are so eager to learn and excited by physics.”

# Reregulation success for Cambridge Pre-U

## Ofqual has now approved all of our revised Cambridge Pre-U qualifications.

Over the summer, Cambridge International Examinations heard that the final Cambridge Pre-U syllabus had been reregulated by Ofqual (the UK regulatory body), completing the full set.

'Reregulation' means that Ofqual has approved a revised qualification after we have submitted the syllabus and specimen and materials to them. The great majority of Cambridge Pre-U subjects got through on their first submission.

Consultation is a significant part of any redevelopment. We worked closely with teachers on the revision of the Cambridge Pre-U qualifications, both face-to-face and through online and telephone surveys. They told us that they were happy with the qualifications, but that some things could be even better. Members of our Qualifications Development team held meetings about science and maths at Rugby School, and major consultation meetings on the sciences (at the Royal Society),

languages (at Churchill College, University of Cambridge) and Geography (at the Royal Geographical Society).

In a typical year, we revise around 50 qualifications to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of learners, schools and higher education organisations around the world. In the last year 27 Cambridge Pre-U qualifications were reregulated and four were extended to June 2018. The quickest turnaround was for Philosophy and Theology, which took under 27 hours from submission to reregulation!

"We are extremely pleased that the Ofqual reregulation process went so smoothly," said Dr Helen Eccles, Director, Development, Cambridge International Examinations. "It's a real reflection of the academic rigour of the qualifications. Schools, teachers and students can be confident that Cambridge Pre-U continues to offer an interesting, well-established curriculum, high-quality assessment and reliable results."



## What's available

Here's a list of subjects for examination in 2016. Subjects marked with an asterisk (\*) are also available as Short Courses.

Mathematics\*  
Further Mathematics\*

Literature in English

Biology  
Chemistry  
Physics

French\*  
German\*  
Italian\*  
Mandarin Chinese\*  
Russian\*  
Spanish\*

Art History  
Classical Greek  
Comparative Government & Politics  
Geography  
History  
Latin  
Philosophy & Theology  
Psychology

Business & Management  
Economics

Art & Design  
Drama & Theatre  
Music

Global Perspectives & Research (a two-year extended project qualification). A Global Perspectives Short Course is also available.

*Please note: Classical Heritage and Sports Science have been withdrawn.*

*The last examinations for these subjects will take place in 2015.*

# Plan your curriculum with Cambridge Pre-U

**Well established and recognised by leading UK universities, Cambridge Pre-U offers stability, consistency and flexibility with a rewarding UCAS tariff.**

At Cambridge we know that in times of change stability, consistency and flexibility are important considerations when developing a school's curricula. Now that all of our revised Cambridge Pre-U qualifications have been approved by Ofqual, schools can plan their curriculum with confidence. Cambridge Pre-U is a linear-structure qualification that is tried, tested and proven. It is funded for use in state schools.

Cambridge Pre-U has gathered a significant following among leading schools in the UK for the last six years. With five years of examinations completed, across 25 Principal Subjects, Cambridge Pre-U promises schools, teachers and pupils a well-established qualification with a high quality of assessment and reliable results. It is an exciting and distinct programme for 16 to 19 year olds.

## **A holistic, linear approach**

Cambridge Pre-U follows a linear structure with assessment at the end of the programme of study. It offers a framework that enables teachers to develop coherent courses, taking a holistic approach to the curriculum, linking together topics from different parts of a syllabus.

It also allows achievement to be differentiated more finely due to the grading scale, which is under three bands: Distinction 1–3, Merit 1–3 and Pass 1–3. The lowest Distinction grade (D3) is equivalent to 'A' grade at A Level, with the highest Distinction grade (D1) reporting achievement above 'A\*' grade. The most outstanding students can benefit from extended reporting, as universities can identify them.

“ We have had four years of excellent results... It is the best, most flexible and most interesting post-16 course. ”

Tim Whitehead, Head of French, Shrewsbury School

## **Find out more**

To support your decision making, we invite you to Learn More about Cambridge Advanced at our free event in London on Thursday 27 November.

- The morning session (10:30 for 11:00 start, until 13:00) will cover Cambridge Pre-U.
- The afternoon session (13:00 for a 13:45 start, until approx. 15:30) will cover Cambridge International AS & A Level, our international staged qualification which is not accredited or funded for use in state schools, but growing in popularity in the independent sector.

You are welcome to join us for the morning only, the afternoon only, or for the full day. Lunch will be served at 13:00 and will be available for all. To book your place, go to our events and training calendar at [www.cie.org.uk/events](http://www.cie.org.uk/events)

## **University-level skills**

Developed in consultation with leading universities, Cambridge Pre-U closes the gap between sixth form and undergraduate-level study. The syllabuses develop in-depth subject knowledge and skills in problem solving, critical thinking, team working and effective communication. There is a focus on developing skills

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

Val Joyce, Watford Grammar School for Girls

alongside knowledge, equipping students for university-level study, as well as promoting independent and self-directed learning through a chosen research project. Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives & Research (GPR) is also available as an excellent alternative to Critical Thinking, General Studies and the Extended Project. This enhancement to the curriculum is welcomed by universities.

## **University recognition**

Universities around the world have accepted Cambridge Pre-U as a pre-university qualification. The Russell Group, which represents leading UK universities such as Cambridge, Oxford, Bristol and UCL, has welcomed the academic rigour, retention of subject specialism and linear approach of Cambridge Pre-U. There is also growing recognition across the US, including MIT, Stanford and Ivy League universities.

## **Continuity of study**

Cambridge Pre-U gives excellent progression from Cambridge IGCSE® and GCSE study. It is also highly flexible. Students can choose any combination of subjects and can combine Cambridge Pre-U with A Level qualifications.

# Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives & Research recognised by universities

**A growing number of universities are recognising the qualification, both in the UK and overseas.**

An increasing number of UK universities, including Sheffield, Oxford, Bristol, Exeter and York, now recognise Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives & Research (GPR) as part of their entrance requirements. Most of these accept the qualification as the equivalent of a Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject and as an alternative to A Level.

The qualification's features make it an excellent preparation for university. In Cambridge Global Perspectives®, students examine real-world issues, developing their critical, research and problem-solving skills, while the Research Report gives candidates the chance to explore a particular subject deeply, and prepares them for exactly the sort of challenges they will face at university.

In their recognition statements, universities have specifically referred to the importance of these skills. The University of Manchester

welcomes the opportunities the qualification provides "for applicants to develop independent study and research skills". The University of Birmingham's statement says that the course "develops students' independent learning and critical thinking skills and prepares them well for post-secondary education".

International universities also recognise Cambridge Pre-U GPR. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) praises the qualification, saying that its values are similar to those of MIT, including "deep understanding with depth and rigour", "problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, team-work, independent learning and effective

communication" and "promoting an international outlook and cross-cultural awareness".

Duke University in North Carolina also welcomes students who have taken the qualification. "GPR puts an emphasis on a number of the skills that students need in order to be successful in their university education. We particularly value the independence of thought, critical thinking and research and inquiry skills that GPR develops."

The recognition database on our website gives full details of which universities recognise Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives & Research (GPR). The database is at [www.cie.org.uk/recognitionsearch](http://www.cie.org.uk/recognitionsearch)

“ The course develops students' independent learning and critical thinking skills and prepares them well for post-secondary education. ”  
University of Brighton



# Introductory Cambridge Pre-U professional development courses

## November 2014, London

Cambridge International Examinations is holding a series of free full-day introductory face-to-face professional development courses in London.

Introductory courses are designed for teachers who are new to teaching, or who are considering teaching, our Cambridge Pre-U qualifications.

Course content will vary for each syllabus, but typically includes:

- an overview of syllabus design and examination
- detailed information about examination papers, marking procedures and standards
- an introduction to our published and endorsed resources
- ICT and curriculum resources
- the opportunity to share good practice.

Teachers will also get the opportunity to try marking activities relating to standards. For science syllabuses, a practical laboratory session may also be included.



Date	Subject
Friday 7 November	Cambridge Pre-U Mandarin Chinese (9778)
Tuesday 11 November	Cambridge Pre-U English (9765)
Tuesday 11 November	Cambridge Pre-U Biology (9790)
Wednesday 12 November	Cambridge Pre-U Philosophy and Theology (9774)
Thursday 13 November	Cambridge Pre-U French (9779)
Thursday 13 November	Cambridge Pre-U Chemistry (9791)
Thursday 13 November	Cambridge Pre-U Physics (9792)
Wednesday 19 November	Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives & Research (GPR) (9777)
To be confirmed	Cambridge Pre-U History (9769)

To learn more and to book your place, please visit the events and training calendar on our website at [www.cie.org.uk/events](http://www.cie.org.uk/events)

### Learn more!

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