

# Update for schools

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



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## A pathway to university

**Cambridge Pre-U is specifically designed to prepare students for university application and study – but what does this mean in practice? And do students appreciate the skills Cambridge Pre-U delivers?**

“Cambridge Pre-U is a bridge between school and university, even between school and life,” comments Anne Needham, Cambridge Special Advisor for Global Perspectives and former sixth-form tutor to Cambridge Pre-U students at Walthamstow Hall.

“The academic approach and broad syllabus content give students both in-depth and subject-specific knowledge, while also developing their higher-order thinking skills. These skills not only enhance their learning at Cambridge Pre-U, but are also essential for university study, and can even improve a student’s performance at degree level, thereby accelerating their progress.”

“ Cambridge Pre-U subjects such as Global Perspectives & Research laid the foundation on which to build my essay-writing skills, and through the teaching of critical thinking, citing references and researching alternative viewpoints, I was already ahead of my peers when producing work at university. ”

Amber Small, former Cambridge Pre-U student

In terms of university selection, having Cambridge Pre-U on an application form can also provide important differentiation, comments Anne. “Gaining a university place, especially at a prestigious institution, is becoming increasingly competitive,

and students need an ‘edge’ if they are to stand out,” she says. “Cambridge Pre-U study tells admissions tutors that students have been stretched and challenged while at school, and have gained intellectual and study skills of real value and

## A pathway to university continued

relevance to the university context. In addition, Cambridge Pre-U success at the highest level also brings extra UCAS points, and provides recognition for the brightest students as they can achieve grades above A\*.”

For Anne, the higher-order thinking skills encouraged by Cambridge Pre-U are of particular relevance to all future university students, irrespective of



subject. “Critical analysis, the evaluation of sources, knowing how to sustain and justify an argument – these skills underpin all Cambridge Pre-U qualifications, and ensure both an in-depth understanding of the subject and the ability to challenge and analyse what is being taught,” she says.

“Cambridge Pre-U also encourages an enthusiasm for lifelong learning, which is so important in the 21st century. Skill sets are now constantly changing and evolving, with the result that continuous development has become increasingly important to every profession. Having a grounding in the study skills required for lifelong learning is a career advantage in the longer term.”

As a cross-curricular subject, Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives & Research (GPR) is particularly relevant to higher education, she adds. “Cambridge Pre-U GPR develops core degree-level skills – such as analytical research, source evaluation, and presentation. Such skills help students transition from school to university, while also building their confidence as independent thinkers and presenters. These are the skills universities are looking for in students. As a result, Cambridge Pre-U can really give students an advantage when they apply to university courses around the world.”

“ Having now graduated, and being able to reflect on my experience, I found Cambridge Pre-U study extremely beneficial both when it came to applying for university, and when preparing for study. Cambridge Pre-U gave me a variety of skills that proved to be very important, as they would for any future student; Cambridge Pre-U allowed me to show my ability to research, write and sustain an argument in depth, and this gave me experience of independent learning and critical analysis of arguments, the basis of any university degree. ”

Suzanne Picot, former Cambridge Pre-U student



## New online resources for Cambridge Pre-U schools

A range of resources for Cambridge Pre-U school leaders and teachers is now available on our website. Designed to support teaching and learning, the resources address theoretical and practical issues ranging from curriculum design to classroom activities.

The resources cover four key areas:

- **Implementing the curriculum** – how to design, implement and evaluate a curriculum focused on Cambridge qualifications, including Cambridge Pre-U
- **Developing your school with Cambridge** – how to improve classroom-level activity
- **Education briefs** – short summaries of current themes in education, ranging from active learning to education standards
- **Getting started with... guides** – practical advice on how to link theoretical understanding to classroom practice.

The resources are available at [www.cie.org.uk/learning](http://www.cie.org.uk/learning)

# World-class research at Cambridge Assessment

**Cambridge Assessment hosts regular open events focusing on current research in the field of education and assessment, such as their recent Gender Differences Conference.**

Research is an important activity for Cambridge Assessment, and the Group as a whole (including Cambridge International Examinations) fields the largest research capability of its kind in Europe. Eighty researchers are currently working on projects designed to validate, improve and develop

assessments, and to influence international thinking and policy. You can find more information about future research events on the Cambridge Assessment website at [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk), along with details of current expertise, and the Group's research archive.



## “Boy-friendly teaching will not tackle gender divide”

**Tackling boys’ underachievement by teaching them differently to girls is “absolutely wrong”, says Tim Oates CBE, Cambridge Assessment Group Director of Assessment Research and Development.**

At the recent Cambridge Assessment Gender Differences Conference, experts from across the organisation challenged the assumption that gender-specific teaching strategies can help address the growing gap in school performance between girls and boys.

In his keynote speech, Tim Oates argued against moves towards a “boy-friendly” pedagogy, arguing that

the strategies which work so well for girls could work equally well for boys. “The kind of strategies that girls use – ‘I’m not innately good at this, so therefore I have to work hard’ – have been empirically shown to benefit boys as well, so it’s actually through the examination of what optimises attainment and making it available to all groups by which we will reduce these differences,” said Mr Oates.

The conference also heard from education ministers from Mauritius and Namibia who explained how they were facing similar challenges over gender differences in their countries.

Videos and resources from the event are available at [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/events/gender-differences-conference-2015](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/events/gender-differences-conference-2015)

# Professional development opportunities

**The growing popularity of Cambridge Pre-U has led to more opportunities than ever before for enthusiastic, qualified teachers to take on the roles of trainers and examiners. We welcome applications across all Cambridge Pre-U subjects.**

## Become a Cambridge Pre-U teacher trainer

### Key facts

- Applications invited twice yearly – the next recruitment window opens in March 2016
- Teachers must have experience of teaching or examining Cambridge Pre-U subjects
- Most Cambridge Pre-U training is delivered in the UK, and can fit around other commitments

If you are an experienced Cambridge Pre-U teacher or examiner, then why not consider becoming a Cambridge Pre-U teacher trainer? Training is a valuable and rewarding role, and ensures our Cambridge Pre-U teacher community is equipped with the high-quality skills and understanding it needs to improve students' learning, thereby preparing them for further study and for life. Becoming a trainer is also an important career development opportunity – a chance to extend your own knowledge of best practice while developing invaluable training skills.

We have opportunities for subject trainers at both introductory and development levels – Cambridge Pre-U teaching experience is essential for both roles, and development trainers must also have Cambridge Pre-U examining experience.

“Probably the most enjoyable interview-type event I've ever been to – I was really pleased to come away feeling I had learned from the people around me and from the sessions.”

Shortlisted trainer

We welcome applications from prospective trainers twice-yearly, and the next recruitment window opens in March 2016. The application process is straightforward, engaging and informative. Those shortlisted are invited to a selection event at which they will showcase their skills in short presentations; successful applicants then undergo a programme of training to ensure they feel happy and supported in the training role, and are able to deliver valuable and informative training of the highest quality.

For more information on the training process, visit [www.cie.org.uk/cambridge-for/trainers](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridge-for/trainers)

## Become a Cambridge Pre-U examiner

### Key facts

- Applications welcomed all year
- Examiners must be available during one (or both) exam periods – mid-October to end December, and mid-May to end July
- Teachers must hold a degree-level qualification – specific Cambridge Pre-U experience is valuable but not essential
- Opportunities to progress to senior and freelance roles

As a Cambridge Pre-U examiner, you can play a valuable role in maintaining the quality and reputation of Cambridge Pre-U qualifications while also developing your own professional experience and network of contacts across the Cambridge Pre-U community. Examining is also a highly respected professional role – one that can even develop into a career. As an examiner, you will gain a real insight into the teaching and assessment of Cambridge Pre-U qualifications, supporting your own knowledge as a subject teacher, and building your understanding of education and assessment.

Once you have gained examining experience there are also many opportunities to progress to more senior positions within the examining team, and to take on freelance roles to support the examination process.

To be considered as an examiner you must be educated to degree level and have experience of teaching the

“Examining gave me an expertise that many of my senior colleagues did not possess and I found that my advice was often sought, despite being the youngest member of the department.”

Helen Rees-Bidder, Cambridge examiner

subject you want to examine to either Cambridge Pre-U or Cambridge Advanced students. Examiners hoping to work primarily from home must also have access to broadband and a PC so they can access the Cambridge on-screen marking systems.

You can apply through our website. Successful applicants will become part of an examiner team, and after an initial induction period, a Team Leader will be on hand to provide support and guidance, and regular feedback during and after each marking session. Examiners also attend occasional meetings in Cambridge, but these are scheduled well in advance.

For more information on becoming an examiner, and further details on how to apply, visit [www.cie.org.uk/cambridge-for/examiners](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridge-for/examiners)

## New posters promote Cambridge values



Thought provoking and challenging, our latest posters underline the skills, attributes and values associated with Cambridge learners, helping explain the philosophy and approach behind qualifications such as Cambridge Pre-U. Encouraging classroom debate, while also promoting respect and responsibility, the set of seven full-colour posters is ideal for display around school, and at open-day exhibitions.

You can download the posters (A4 or A3 size) from [www.cie.org.uk/toolkit](http://www.cie.org.uk/toolkit) or an A1 size set is available by post. To order the full-size set, just contact us at [outlook@cie.org.uk](mailto:outlook@cie.org.uk)

**Communications toolkit**

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Welcome to our Communications toolkit, full of materials to help your school explain Cambridge programmes to parents, students and other audiences.

Registered Cambridge schools can access versions of our logo for use in their own communications, such as brochures, advertisements and posters via the link below. Please read our [logo guidelines](#) for instructions about how to use our logo.

**Factsheets and guides**

Use our factsheets to give parents an overview of Cambridge International Examinations and our programmes and qualifications for 5 to 19 year olds.

**Presentations**

This series of PowerPoint presentations will help schools explain the features of Cambridge programmes and qualifications to parents. They can be used at parent evenings and open days.

**Posters**

**Videos**

## Syllabus updates

### Subjects available for examination in 2018

Mathematics Further Mathematics	Art History Classical Greek Geography History Latin Philosophy & Theology Psychology
Literature in English	
Biology Chemistry Physics	
French German Italian Mandarin Chinese Russian Spanish	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.	

### Withdrawal of Cambridge Pre-U courses

We regularly review our qualifications to make sure they meet the needs of students and schools. After careful consideration we have decided to withdraw a number of Cambridge Pre-U qualifications, as listed below. The last examination series will be June 2018.

Code	Cambridge Pre-U subject
1341	Short Course Mandarin Chinese
1342	Short Course French
1343	Short Course German
1344	Short Course Spanish
1345	Short Course Russian
1346	Short Course Italian
1347	Short Course Mathematics (Statistics with Pure Mathematics)
1348	Short Course Further Mathematics
9801	Drama & Theatre

These withdrawals focus mainly on Short Course subjects with very low entry volumes. Universities are telling us that increasingly their offers will be based on Principal Subjects and/or full A Levels, with AS Levels and equivalents being removed from offers in light of qualification reform changes.

# Spotlight on Art & Design

In every issue of our newsletter we shine a spotlight on a particular Cambridge Pre-U subject. For this issue we've spoken to two examiners of Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design to find out how students are getting on with the course.

**Paul Tomlinson** is Director of Art and Design at The Oratory School, Reading, where they began teaching Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design in 2012. He is the principal examiner for Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design.

**Elizabeth Hand** is a retired Head of Art and Faculty Leader and now a senior examiner for Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design.

## What are the key benefits of Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design?

**PT:** Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design is a return to a more traditional approach while still harnessing all that is good in 21st-century art education. Time and ownership are therefore two of the most important benefits of Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design. Over the two-year course, the syllabus gives students the time to develop a personal pathway, make mistakes and learn from them, and to develop a range of learning skills. That students are given ownership of their pathway is vital, but ownership is also an important benefit for the art and design department. Heads of department, together with their staff, can dictate how to run the course and therefore can maximise the potential of their facilities – essential given that not all schools can give art the same level of resources or financial support.

## Why is the course structure so appropriate for the subject, and for the ambitions of the students who take it?

**EH:** The linear structure has several distinct advantages, and the delivery of the three interrelated components enables students to progress seamlessly through the course, building skills and gaining confidence. Component 1 (Portfolio) encourages experimentation and an



Artwork by Sam Yaxley, Cambridge Pre-U student at The Oratory School.

understanding of materials and approaches. Component 2 (Critical and Contextual Study) asks for an in-depth academic research study, and this extends student knowledge while also building the high-level research skills much welcomed by universities, irrespective of degree subject. Component 3 (Project) asks students to work towards an outcome or cohesive body of work, and, echoing Paul, to take ownership of their ideas. This structure embodies all that is good in art education by encouraging and supporting ambitious work with genuine engagement and understanding, resulting in both challenge and satisfaction for students and teachers.

## How does Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design prepare students for higher-level art study?

**EH:** Prospective visual arts students will gain a comprehensive foundation for the subject based on knowledge, understanding and achievement. Many of our Cambridge Pre-U

students are accepted directly onto arts degrees without the need for a foundation course, as admissions tutors are impressed by their high-level, rigorous and individual portfolios.

**PT:** Universities seem to embrace Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design both for its creative emphasis and the inclusion of the compulsory 'academic' study which comprises Component 2, and, if an art department is committed, Cambridge Pre-U can be delivered in the same way as a foundation course.

## And how does it prepare students of other subjects?

**PT:** The emphasis on lateral thinking, ownership and individuality prepares all students for university study, whatever the course.

**EH:** The qualification also encourages independent, creative and original thinking, sharp analysis and the sustained pursuit of themes and ideas, giving students the satisfaction that can result from marrying creativity with intellectual engagement.

### In the classroom, how do students respond to the Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design syllabus?

**PT:** Students welcome the opportunity Cambridge Pre-U gives them to spend more time exploring the subject and the chance to focus on perhaps a single artistic subject, or discipline – anatomy of the figure, for example, or computer-led imagery – for a significant period of time. They respond positively to the emphasis on exploration which is the basis for the first year of the course. This removes the pressure to make a ‘final decision’ too early, as at the end of the first year progress is assessed in terms of primary sources and experimentation.

In the second year, the emphasis shifts towards factual research, contextual development and final outcomes. Students – and staff – find this approach much less stressful, especially towards the end of the academic year.

**EH:** Because Cambridge Pre-U encourages this accumulative acquisition of skills and confidence, students start their second year with a genuine sense of excitement, direction and purpose, and they can

make the most of the time available to produce an exciting body of cohesive work.

### You both recently spoke about Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design at an event hosted by The Prince’s Teaching Institute – what was the reaction of delegates?

**PT:** They seemed very interested in Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design as a ‘way forward’ for the subject, and teachers from other disciplines also wanted to know more about Cambridge Pre-U qualifications.

**EH:** I agree. Delegates were genuinely impressed to hear about a qualification which gives an art department the opportunity to work to its strengths, and which allows staff to work closely and supportively with students to harness their creative potential.

### You are also both Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design trainers and examiners – why did you decide to get involved in this way?

**EH:** I’ve been a trainer and examiner for five years as I wanted to engage more and help develop a qualification which celebrates creative potential within the context

of a rigorous and intellectually demanding course.

**PT:** Being a trainer and examiner has, I hope, also given me the opportunity to make a difference and to champion a qualification which addresses some of the shortcomings I have seen in other equivalent courses.

### From your trainer’s perspective, can you give us a brief summary of some of the changes to this year’s syllabus?

**EH:** In summary, the qualification is still based around the three components, but the weighting of assessment objectives has changed to reflect the different component demands, so teachers must make sure they understand the distinct nature of each component. In addition, the syllabus now includes opportunities for students wanting to focus on design, rather than fine art, and Component 2 (Critical and Contextual Study) allows for a wider range of presentation types, but without loss of rigour or intellectual engagement.

For more information on Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design, visit:  
[www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu)



Artwork by Oliver Davies, Cambridge Pre-U student at The Oratory School.

# Training and events

## Forthcoming training

We are holding training courses for the following Cambridge Pre-U and Cambridge International AS & A Level subjects.

For more details, go to [www.cie.org.uk/events](http://www.cie.org.uk/events)

### March 2016 – introductory level training

- Cambridge Pre-U Art & Design
- Cambridge Pre-U History
- Cambridge Pre-U Mandarin Chinese
- Cambridge International AS & A Level Applied ICT
- Cambridge International AS & A Level Business
- Cambridge International AS & A Level English Language
- Cambridge International AS & A Level Global Perspectives & Research

### March 2016 – intermediate level training

- Cambridge Pre-U Chemistry
- Cambridge Pre-U Classical Greek
- Cambridge Pre-U French
- Cambridge Pre-U Latin
- Cambridge Pre-U Philosophy & Theology

### June 2016 – intermediate level training

- Cambridge Pre-U History (Online Self Study Course)
- Cambridge Pre-U Literature in English
- Cambridge International AS & A Level Geography
- Cambridge International AS & A Level Mathematics

## Are you attending these events?

Come and talk to us about Cambridge Pre-U, Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge IGCSE® at the following events:



Date	Event
11–12 March 2016	Language World 2016, Rugby
29 March – 1 April 2016	ATM (Association of Teachers of Mathematics) Conference, Warwick
7–9 April 2016	Geographical Association Conference, Manchester
22–23 April 2016	Academy Conferences: Religious Studies Teachers Residential, Oxford

For the latest information about our events, go to: [www.cie.org.uk/events](http://www.cie.org.uk/events)

**Learn more!** Find us at [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu), or contact us at [info@cie.org.uk](mailto:info@cie.org.uk) or on +44 (0)1223 553554. Find our stand at conferences, or attend one of our free INSET days.

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