

Cambridge Pre-U: Guide for Higher Education Admissions Staff

Available in the UK since September 2008, Cambridge Pre-U is a rigorous academic programme and qualification which aims to better prepare students for higher education. It is designed to help students gain an in-depth knowledge of the subjects studied and to develop the skills needed for university study.

Why was Cambridge Pre-U developed?

Cambridge Pre-U was developed in response to requests from UK schools for an alternative to A Level that would fully support successful progression from school to undergraduate study and beyond. It was developed in consultation with schools, higher education institutions and subject associations. Cambridge Pre-U has been accredited by Ofqual (UK regulatory body) and is funded for teaching in state-funded schools. The first cohort graduated in 2010.

Cambridge Pre-U Certificate (Principal Subject, Short Course and GPR)

There are over 20 individual Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects, certificated separately and assessed at the end of a two-year programme of study. Cambridge Pre-U Short Courses (one-year) are available for Modern Languages, Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Global Perspectives. A Short Course can be taken in the first or second year of study and is offered in order to encourage students to develop a broad subject portfolio. GPR (Global Perspectives & Research) is taught as two successive one-year courses and aims to develop students' critical, analytical and research skills.

Cambridge Pre-U Diploma

Research Report		
Principal Subject	Principal Subject	Principal Subject
Global Perspectives		

Students who have passed four components comprised of three Certificates (Principal Subjects) plus the core component, **Global Perspectives and Research (GPR)**, can obtain a Cambridge Pre-U Diploma. Students will

receive a certificate for individual Principal Subjects, GPR and Short Courses **and an additional certificate** for the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma if they have met the necessary requirements. Up to two A Levels can be substituted for Cambridge Pre-U Certificates (Principal Subjects).

How do Cambridge Pre-U Certificates (Principal Subjects) compare with A Levels?

A Level	Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject
360 class contact hours	380 class contact hours
6 passing grades A*-E	9 passing grades D1- P3 giving greater gradation with one grade higher than A* at A Level
Examinations are modular taken over the two-year period of study	Examinations are linear with all examinations taken at the end of the two-year period of study
Individual modules can be retaken	Re-sits only available one year later by taking all the examination papers for the whole subject
Includes one paper that looks across the different modules (synoptic assessment)	Papers are taken at the end of the course with candidates expected to make links between topic areas

Full information on all Cambridge Pre-U subjects can be found at www.cie.org.uk/qualifications/academic/uppersec/preu/subjects

What is GPR?

Global Perspectives and Research (GPR) constitutes the compulsory core of the Diploma, and can also be taken as a stand-alone qualification and certificated separately. It is comprised of Global Perspectives (a taught course) and a Research Report.

Global Perspectives encourages breadth across the curriculum through the interdisciplinary study of a number of themes of global relevance, developing critical thinking and a range of study and research skills. The Research Report promotes the application and development of the skills taught in Global Perspectives, and helps prepare students to cope with the demands of university study.

What are the UCAS Tariff recommendations?

The UCAS (Universities & Colleges Admissions Service) Tariff is a points system used to report achievement for entry to UK higher education in a numerical format. It shows how different types of qualifications compare, and provides comparisons between applicants with different types and volumes of achievement.

The UCAS Tariff reflects the fact that the standard of work

required for a Distinction 3 will be aligned to that required for an A grade at A Level. However, the Tariff awards 130 points to D3, against 120 for A grade at A Level. The Tariff thus takes into account several features that make Cambridge Pre-U distinctive:

Size: The Cambridge Pre-U Certificate (Principal Subject) covers more subject material than an A Level and has been assigned 380 Guided Learning Hours by Ofqual (compared with 360 for A Level). With more teaching and learning time available, students can delve even deeper into the subject.

Stretch: All the examinations must be taken together at the end of the two-year period of study. Modules cannot be taken separately, nor can they be retaken, without retaking the entire qualification. The assessment also includes more open and challenging questions.

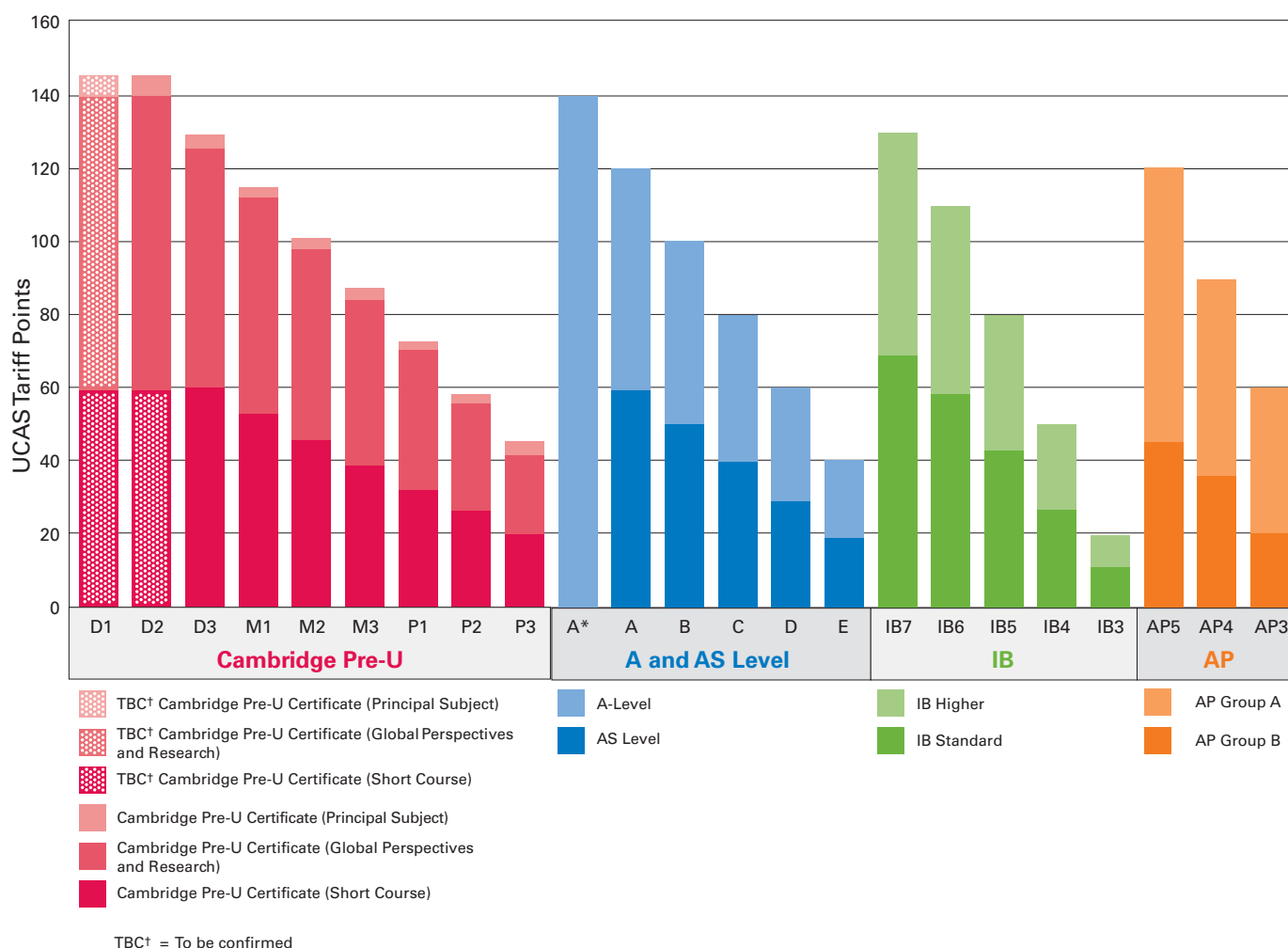
Structure: The 'linearity' of the assessment allows for a more coherent and synoptic experience of the subject.

While many universities do not use UCAS Tariff Points in framing their offers, they may nevertheless use the tariff to provide a benchmark for fair and objective comparison with A Levels.

Using UCAS Tariff Points as the benchmark for comparison, universities can translate Cambridge Pre-U grades in a straightforward way.

Cambridge Pre-U Band	Cambridge Pre-U Grade	Cambridge Pre-U Certificate (Principal Subject) UCAS Tariff	Cambridge Pre-U Certificate (Short Course) UCAS Tariff	Cambridge Pre-U Certificate (GPR) UCAS Tariff	Comparable A Level grades and comments
Distinction	D1	TBC	TBC	TBC	D1 represents a standard of excellence across all papers in the subject.
Distinction	D2	145	TBC	140	D2 has a UCAS tariff slightly higher than the A* at A Level.
Distinction	D3	130	60	126	The D3 standard is aligned to that of an A grade at A Level, in that the standard of work required to achieve a D3 will be the same as that required for an A grade. But note: a Pre-U candidate has to cover more ground (the syllabus is more extensive), additional stretch is built into the question papers and students have to take all papers in one session.
Merit	M1	115	53	112	M1 has a slightly lower tariff score to the A grade at A Level, reflecting the bigger syllabus and the fact that individual components cannot be retaken.
Merit	M2	101	46	98	M2 has a tariff score slightly higher than a B grade at A Level.
Merit	M3	87	39	84	M3 and P1 have tariff scores which are equidistant from that of a C grade at A Level.
Pass	P1	73	32	70	
Pass	P2	59	26	56	P2 has a tariff score similar to a D grade at A Level.
Pass	P3	46	20	42	The standard of work required for P3 is aligned to that of an E grade at A Level. The higher tariff reflects the characteristics described above.
Ungraded	U				

How does the UCAS Tariff apply to Cambridge Pre-U?



How is Cambridge Pre-U Graded?

Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects, Short Courses and GPR are reported on a **nine-grade** scale, reflecting three broad bands of achievement: **Distinction**, **Merit** and **Pass**.

Each broad band is sub-divided into three grades: Distinction 1, 2, 3 that is D1, D2, D3; Merit 1, 2, 3 (M1, M2, M3) and Pass 1, 2, 3 (P1, P2, P3). Students achieve one score upon completion of the qualification, for example, D3.

The intention of the nine-grade scale is to differentiate more finely and extend reporting of achievement at the top end, while keeping the grading scale accessible to the full range of ability.

Cambridge Pre-U Applications

The majority of applicants will be applying with a combination of Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects and A Levels, and an increasing number with the overall Cambridge Pre-U Diploma. A small number of applicants will be applying with GPR alongside A Levels.

Sample certificate

CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Cambridge International Level 3 Pre-U Certificate

This certifies that in June 2013 examination series
A SPECIMEN
of CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL SAMPLE CENTRE
was awarded the following grade(s) in the syllabus(es) shown:

Cambridge Pre-U Level 3 Principal Subjects Biology 500/3807/2	Grade Merit THREE(M3)
Cambridge Pre-U Level 3 GPR Global Perspectives & Independent Research 500/4010/8	Merit THREE(M3)
SYLLABUSES REPORTED: TWO	

Sir Leszek Buszyński
Vice-Chancellor
University of Cambridge

Michael O'Sullivan CMG
Accountable Officer
Cambridge International Examinations

Regulated by

Uywoodaeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Rewarding Learning

Candidate Number: xxxxxxxx
Certificate Number: xxxxxxxx
Date of Issue: 00000000
ULN Number: xxxxxxxx

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University acceptance

Many universities around the world have accepted the Cambridge Pre-U as equivalent to other pre-university qualifications.

United Kingdom

Over 145 universities have given formal recognition of the Cambridge Pre-U including the **University of Cambridge** and **University of Oxford**.

United States of America

Over 60 US colleges and universities including all the **Ivy League** universities, **MIT** and **Stanford** have provided formal recognition statements confirming that they would welcome applications from students with Cambridge Pre-U qualifications.

Canada

14 universities in Canada including **McGill University**, **University of Toronto**, and **University of British Columbia**, have stated their acceptance of Cambridge Pre-U for entry to the undergraduate (Bachelor) degree courses.

Australia

University Admissions Centre (UAC) considers the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma as comparable to the Australian Year 12 standard from 2012 admissions. UAC also consider Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects and the Cambridge Pre-U GPR in lieu of A Levels. 21 of Australia's universities are members of UAC.

Hong Kong

University of Hong Kong (HKU), **Hong Kong University of Science and Technology** and **Hong Kong Baptist University** have confirmed their acceptance of Cambridge Pre-U.

South Africa

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) have confirmed their recognition of the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma. HESA also recognise the same Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects which they recognise at A Level. All universities in South Africa follow the guidelines set by HESA.

Europe

Recognition statements for Cambridge Pre-U have been received from universities in **Belgium**, **Ireland**, **The Netherlands**, **Germany**, **Denmark** and **Switzerland**. Three examples of such statements are:

Germany

The **Central Office for Foreign Education**, an institution of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs, issued a resolution stating that all universities in Germany will recognise Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects, Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research (GPR) and the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma.

The following equivalencies were agreed upon:

- a Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject is the equivalent of a GCE Advanced Level
- a Cambridge Pre-U Short Course is the equivalent of a GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

The Netherlands

Nuffic, the Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education, has issued the following recommendations with regard to Cambridge Pre-U and its acceptance by Dutch universities:

- A Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subject is considered equivalent to a GCE Advanced Level.
- A Cambridge Pre-U Short Course is considered equivalent to a GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level.
- Combinations of Principal Subjects and A-levels are also acceptable.
- The full Cambridge Pre-U Diploma is considered equivalent to the Dutch VWO diploma.

Denmark

The **Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation** has confirmed that higher education institutions in Denmark will accept the full Cambridge Pre-U Diploma **or** 3 Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects with at least 5 (I) GCSE subjects as comparable to the Danish upper secondary school-leaving certificate. A combination of Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects and GCE A-level subjects (3 different subjects) with at least 5 (I) GCSE subjects will also be accepted. Specific entry requirements set by the higher education institutions must also be met.

Recognition of the value of GPR

Universities have also commented on the value that Cambridge Pre-U GPR adds to a student's university application. For example, a number of UK universities such as the Universities of **Exeter**, **Sheffield** and **York**, accept GPR as equivalent to an A Level or a Pre-U Principal Subject.

The **University of Toronto** may grant transfer credit for academic Principal Subjects and Global Perspective & Research. Please note that The Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering does not grant credit.

Who else accepts Cambridge Pre-U?

A full list of universities who have confirmed their recognition of Cambridge Pre-U can be found at [http:// recognition.cie.org.uk](http://recognition.cie.org.uk) by searching on *Country*, *Higher Education* and *Cambridge Pre-U*.

Learn more! For more information on Cambridge Pre-U visit www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu or contact Customer Services on +44 (0)1223 553554 or email info@cie.org.uk