



## Cambridge Pre-U: Guide for Higher Education Admissions Staff in North America

**Available in the UK since September 2008, Cambridge Pre-U is a rigorous academic program and credential which aims to better prepare students for higher education and is designed to help them 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 program 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.

### 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** if they have met

the requirements for the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma. 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?

UK 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](http://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 credential and certificated separately. It is comprised of Global Perspectives (a seminar style 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.

For further information regarding GPR, please refer to our *GPR:Information for Universities* document.

## What are the UCAS Tariff recommendations?

The UCAS (Universities & Colleges Admissions Service) Tariff is a points system used to report achievement for entry to higher education in a numerical format. It shows how different types of credentials 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) curriculum is more extensive 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.

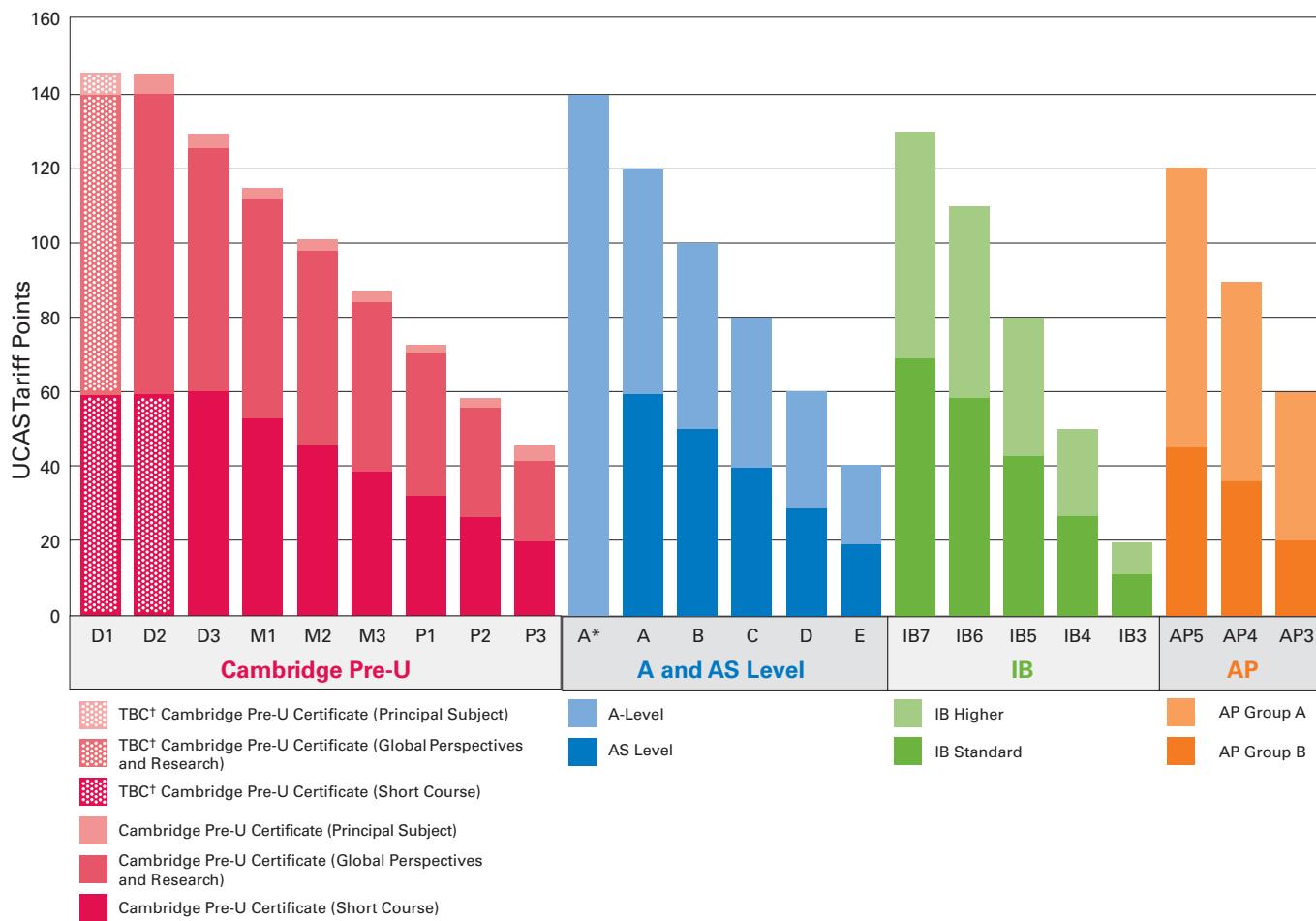
**Stretch:** All the examinations must be taken together at the end of the two year period of study. Modules cannot be taken separately, nor can they be retaken, without retaking the entire credential. The assessment also includes more open and challenging questions.

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

While many UK 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. <b>But note:</b> 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?



TBC† = To be confirmed

## 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.

## Sample certificate



## 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.

## University acceptance

The UK Russell Group has welcomed the academic rigor, retention of subject specialism and the linear approach of the Cambridge Pre-U. Over 70 universities in North America, private and public, including all the Ivy League universities, have said they would welcome applications from students with the Cambridge Pre-U.

**Duke University** accepts Cambridge Pre-U for entry to undergraduate courses. In order to qualify for and receive Duke International Placement Credit (IPC), students must present with grades of A or B (or equivalent). Accordingly, a student presenting with grades of M3 or higher (M2, M1, D3, D2, or D1) in acceptable subjects in the Cambridge Pre-U program would be eligible to receive IPA credit, up to our defined limit of two such IPC credits.

**Harvard** will consider applications from students with Cambridge Pre-U examination results according to their merits, as is the case with A Level applicants. All candidates must submit complete applications to be considered for admission to Harvard. Harvard is in the process of reviewing what academic credit might be awarded for particular Cambridge Pre-U grades.

**Pennsylvania State University** may consider the Cambridge Pre-U for possible advanced standing credit. Certificates with subject grades of D1, M3 and P1 (Distinction 1, 2, 3, Merit 1, 2, 3 and Pass 1) would be required for possible advanced standing credit consideration in appropriate Principal Subjects. These standards are tentative and are subject to change. Note: No advanced standing credit is granted for the Cambridge Pre-U GPR. Principal level subject examinations are optional and not required for entrance. (GCSE's are required for entrance.)

**Yale University** would be pleased to consider applications from students with Cambridge Pre-U examination results according to their merits, as is the case with A Level applicants. All candidates must submit complete applications to be considered for admission to Yale. On the basis of high scores in the Principal Subjects, students may be placed in advanced courses in some subjects in the freshman year. Such students may be granted acceleration credits at the end of the freshman year if during the year they successfully complete appropriate advanced courses. These acceleration credits are in addition to course credits earned.

**McGill** will consider for admission and advanced standing (subject to Faculty policies and appropriate course evaluations), students from the new Cambridge Pre-University program, including those completing:

- the full Cambridge Pre-U Diploma;
- a combination of Cambridge Pre-U subjects and A-Level and/or Advanced Subsidiary subjects.

## 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. 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.

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** welcomes students who have taken the new curriculum from Cambridge, 'Global Perspectives and Research Report' (GPR). 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. Although the university does not currently assign academic or placement credit for this course, we believe that it is a promising addition to the courses of study that prepare students well for post-secondary education, and would consider it an appropriate part of a rigorous and challenging curriculum.

Other US universities which have provided a similar statement regarding GPR are: **Duke University, Florida State University, Pennsylvania State University, University of Maryland, University of Michigan, University of Southern California, University of Virginia** and **University of Washington**.

## Who else accepts Cambridge Pre-U?

Universities around the world have confirmed their recognition of Cambridge Pre-U. Recognition statements from universities in the UK, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands can be found at <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](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu) or contact Customer Services on +44 (0)1223 553554 or email [info@cie.org.uk](mailto:info@cie.org.uk)

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