

# Annual Review

## 2008–2009



1858 | 2008 INFLUENCING THINKING AROUND THE WORLD





*The Cambridge Assessment Group influences thinking around the world on the development of assessment and delivers excellence through its three exam boards.*

The Cambridge Assessment Group is a department of the University of Cambridge and a not-for-profit organisation. We are the largest assessment agency in Europe and we play a vital role in both developing and delivering assessment across the globe. We offer qualifications through our three exam boards; Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR), University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) and University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (English for Speakers of Other Languages).



# Introduction

This year has been another significant and successful one for the Group in many ways, which is especially encouraging when set against the current backdrop of not only the present uncertainties in the global economy but also the forthcoming first awards of several new UK qualifications.



We've seen the introduction of a new national curriculum, structural changes to A levels, new content and criteria for GCSEs and the beginnings of the implementation of the 14–19 Qualifications Strategy which introduces Diplomas, transforms Apprenticeships and ushers in Functional Skills and Projects. Legislation has already been passed to raise the age at which people in England can leave education and training, from 16 to 17 in 2013 and to 18 in 2015.

We saw the sudden abolition of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. Their functions have been absorbed into the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform to create a new department, for Business Innovation and Skills.

We continued to celebrate our 150th anniversary with a series of highly successful events, culminating in the 'best ever' IAEA conference, according to delegate feedback, attended by over 500 delegates from around the world. And we have been busy around Westminster sharing our concerns that the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill – which establishes the new English qualifications regulator Ofqual – will fall short of delivering an independent, effective and accountable new regulator.

Our reputation as experts in assessment has been augmented with the launch of the Cambridge Approach which acts as our manifesto, setting out our principles for designing, administering and evaluating assessment in an accessible and succinct format. It has already received a very positive reception from staff and its external endorsement from two leading academics would suggest that it is timely as well as pertinent.

Internationally we continued to be involved in a number of education reform projects to help raise standards of education around the world.

We also celebrated and had time to reflect on the sheer pace of change in assessment in the UK with the 10th anniversary of our UK exam board, OCR, which was formed in 1998 when UCLES and the RSA Examinations Board joined forces.

**Simon Lebus**  
**Group Chief Executive**  
**Cambridge Assessment**

# Group Aim:

To reinforce our position as a recognised and respected world-leading authority on assessment

We continue to influence education policy and strategy around the world as we strive towards our ambition of ensuring that individuals are able to access the benefits of their education.

As part of our 150th anniversary celebrations, we hosted a major international conference attended by almost 500 assessment and education experts from 58 countries. The 34th International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) annual conference took place in Cambridge from 7–12 September 2008. We challenged internationally recognised education experts to present views on the way assessment is changing as well as to exchange the latest research, ideas and experiences of their countries' education systems.

More than 140 parallel presentations ran alongside the main conference, which featured a total of 72 hours of presentations. Our research divisions presented 14 papers. Topics ranged from the reliability of on-screen essay marking, evaluating the rank-ordering method for maintaining standards, to whether emotional and social abilities predict differences in attainment at secondary school.

The opening of IAEA 2008 also attracted a flurry of media coverage as comments from the Group Chief Executive, criticising political interference in the exam system, resonated with the education community.

We continue to be highly vocal about the damaging effect political interference has on the examination system. Although we welcomed the Government's intention to formally institute the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) as the independent regulator of qualifications, we believed the Bill – as drafted at the time of writing – will fall short of delivering an independent Ofqual that can maintain public confidence in examination standards.

Consequently over the last year we have been actively involved in offering suggestions on areas of the Bill which,

in our view, require attention and/or change to help ensure that Ofqual fulfils its stated education mission effectively. We held a series of meetings, including several fringe events at the main political parties' conferences, and briefing papers were circulated to highlight matters of concern to a range of MPs, Peers, officials and stakeholders. In addition, the CEO of our UK exam board gave evidence and answered MPs' questions on the written submission made by the board at a public Committee hearing.

Elsewhere around the UK Parliament, we answered MPs' questions and gave evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Children, Schools and Families to inform its enquiry on School Accountability. We shared our concerns about the use of qualifications data for attainment tables and pointed out that qualifications designed by the Group's exam boards are designed for the purpose of recognising individual students' achievements, not for the purpose of measuring schools' performance. We also called for a greater emphasis in looking at classroom interaction for accountability purposes.

We were pleased that our views on functional skills – the new practical skills qualifications in English, Maths and ICT designed to help learners gain the most out of work, education and everyday life – have been heard. We provided strong advice to Government and Ofqual against the creation of an artificial 'hurdle' within GCSEs and very much welcomed the Government decision to remove this requirement. Functional skills are going to be crucial to young people and their employers in a time of economic turbulence; by allowing them to stand independently from GCSEs the Government will ensure a particular focus on them within the curriculum.

We signed the Joint Council for Qualifications' strongly worded letter to the Education Secretary asking for a delay to the original timeframe for the development of Phase 4 Diplomas in Humanities, Languages and Science. We are already on record as having expressed concerns about the current vision and design of these three diplomas, through our consultation responses and at forums such as the

DCSF's own Diploma Sub-programme Board. Ministers did announce that one of the Diplomas, the Advanced Diploma in Science, will be delayed by a year; taught in schools from September 2012, rather than 2011.

And as part of our engagement with the wider skills agenda, our UK exam board explained the importance of training and skills as the economy emerges from recession at the *World Class Skills 2009: Delivering new opportunities for employment* conference. We explained how qualifications need to be different when countries are coming out of a recession than when they are entering one.

Our voice also continues to be heard within the international arena where our overseas exam boards maintain their role as trusted advisors to foreign ministries in helping them reform their educational systems, as well as promoting global best practice.

We have been able to help reform the education system in Bahrain by developing and delivering new national tests. During the year more than 21,000 pupils in 133 government schools took the exam which we produced as a result of winning a competitive tender to work with the Bahrain Economic Development Board and Ministry of Education to establish a new National Examinations Unit as part of the Kingdom's National Education Reform Project created in October 2007.

Working in partnership with Bermuda's Ministry of Education, we implemented new methods of teaching English, maths and science in public schools to raise standards and improve students' life chances. The Cambridge International Curriculum will be adopted in Bermuda's state schools from 2010.

Continuing to use our expertise in international education, we worked with the Ministry of Education in Egypt on a new curriculum for its Nile Egyptian Schools project. And following our involvement in the development of the course, the first students in Zambia graduated from the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women Programme with a Certificate in Young Women's Leadership and Enterprise.

The Group's exams continue to achieve global recognition and respect. During the year, the Greek civil service officially recognised our Business Language Testing Service (BULATS) as proof of knowledge of English. Further east, the Taiwan Ministry of Education recognised a range of our general, professional business and academic English language exams. In addition, the Vietnam National University in Hanoi recognised our Preliminary English Test and the First Certificate in English as benchmarks of English language ability for all non-English majors.

## 1858 | 2008 CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF ASSESSMENT

Our 150th anniversary celebrations, which included a programme of 40 special events and activities during 2008, provided a unique opportunity to demonstrate the full range and breadth of our expertise in assessment to a wider audience. The campaign generated widespread media coverage in a range of titles including both national and regional newspapers and education magazines as well as featuring on an array of broadcast programmes.





Approval was also granted by the UK Home Office for a range of our English certificates which now count towards the UK's points-based immigration system. Across the water the Irish Department for Education and Science added our exams at various levels to its list of courses recognised for non-European Economic Area students seeking work.

We were selected by the regional government in Brittany, France, to provide English language certification in state schools in the region. This adds to the series of adoptions by national and regional governments around the world, who increasingly see Cambridge certificates as a valuable addition to their national qualifications.

The public Spanish university, the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, began offering its students and teaching staff our First Certificate in English (FCE) exam giving it an internationally recognised benchmark of language ability. FCE is aimed at those who can use everyday written and spoken English at an upper-intermediate level and want to use English for work or study purposes.

A global leader in aerospace, defence and related services chose to integrate our BULATS exam into its worldwide strategy for language training. EADS Defence and Security

– which comprises high-profile companies such as Airbus, Eurocopter and MBDA – will now use our BULATS exam to assess the initial language level of its employees in English, German, Spanish and French before they begin language training courses.

We also received accreditation in the UK for two of our English exams, the International Legal English Certificate and International Certificate in Financial English. In addition BULATS was officially recognised as part of the UK's National Qualifications Framework.

In the UK we signed an agreement with the JCB Academy – an alternative to the traditional school environment for students aged 14–18 years who are interested in engineering, manufacturing, and business. The academy will be open from September 2010 and is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and JCB, global manufacturers of construction equipment. Our UK exam board will work in partnership with academy staff to develop the curriculum. This coordinated and managed programme of work will directly connect employers and employees allowing us to build an informed view of the teaching, curriculum and assessment requirements.

BRINGING TOGETHER GLOBAL PRACTITIONERS



The multinational technology corporation, IBM, chose our UK exam board as its partner to carry out a mapping exercise of its training programmes to establish which of these are in line with nationally accredited qualifications already provided by OCR and can therefore be awarded in accordance with the rules of the Qualifications and Credit framework. This has the backing of the National Employer Service and work has already started on mapping one area of IBM's training provision with an agreed implementation plan by December 2009 which will then be delivered throughout 2010. Once the model has been established it is intended to roll out to other disciplines within IBM's extensive UK infrastructure.

We promoted global best practice on the role of technology in education at our 4th Cambridge International Advisory Seminar. The event brought together representatives from schools in 15 countries. During the event international delegates had the opportunity to visit a local school to gain insight into how UK schools are implementing new technologies.

Best practice was also shared with over 300 educators from 120 schools across the sub-continent who attended one of our conferences in India to discuss the benefits of the student-centred approach to education.

Our House of Commons Research seminars continue to attract a lot of interest. Over 140 teaching professionals, including researchers and practitioners, attended the *Better Training: Better teachers?* seminar which prompted immense discussion on the national state of initial teacher training and continuing professional development in the UK. The seminars are part of a series designed to bring together a wide range of professionals in education to look at 'big picture' topics and enable policy makers to access the knowledge of leading experts.

We also continue to widen debates on key assessment issues. We hosted an event to discuss the issue of emotional intelligence following our research which revealed that certain aspects of emotional intelligence can lead to higher attainment at GCSE. The debate gave a

platform to our panel of educational experts and attracted a substantial amount of media coverage.

We brought together key global practitioners involved in policy design and the development of English in the compulsory education sector overseas to discuss English at primary school. The conference, attended by international delegates from education authorities and ministries, provided an opportunity to hear from presenters from Europe, Latin America, Russia and North Africa who outlined the positive impact of assessment in the classroom and the successful integration of English language teaching into the primary curriculum.

We continue to attract high profile speakers to our Network events including Kathleen Tattersall, Chair of Ofqual, the new regulator of exams in England, who presented a historical perspective of the relationship between examination boards with schools and colleges, to discuss whether the experience of the past could help provide a direction for the future.

The Network continues to reinforce our position as a leading authority on assessment issues through its outreach and training activities. We supported the popular International Study Programme for those involved in assessment in other countries. Twenty two delegates from around the world attended this year's two-week course and heard presentations on the various aspects of developing and administering examinations around the globe.

Our research division continues to demonstrate that we have a strong research base from which to influence thinking, highlighting the organisation's academic integrity and educational values. In addition to sharing our research via our own publications, the Group also contributed articles to a wide selection of books and journals that are published around the world. We also published two more issues of *Research Matters*, three more issues of *Research Notes* and two more volumes of SiLT – a series which addresses a wide range of important issues and new developments in language testing and assessment.

**We brought together key global practitioners involved in policy and the development of English in the compulsory education sector overseas to discuss English at primary school.**

# Group Aim:

## To effectively use and deploy modern technology

Technology is transforming both learning and educational assessment and continues to be one of the areas of greatest change in education. Concepts including virtual learning environments, on-screen testing systems and electronic portfolios have now become integral in modern education, helping to drive personalised learning. This provides benefits for learners, teachers and those involved with the administration of assessment within schools, colleges and training providers.

Our focus is not to make existing paper-and-pen tests electronic but to explore ways that computers can add real value to assessment – i.e. to assess things that can't be assessed on paper.

For instance we have increased the number of computer-based tests. The Cambridge IGCSE Geography assessment, first piloted in international schools in June 2006, had nearly 800 entries from 27 countries worldwide during the May 2009 exam session. This meant that entry volumes went up by 60 per cent. Without such online developments students in remote parts of the world would not be able to carry out simple practical geographical activities that students in the UK take for granted – such as the study of rivers or hedgerows. It was also the first time that this test was marked entirely online. This is something we will build on and we aim to increase our offering of computer-based tests in the next five years.

We also increased the number of our English language exams available as computer-based tests as they offer greater choice to those students who are more comfortable working with a keyboard than paper and pen. It also means we can offer more dates, faster results and greater flexibility. Over the coming year nearly 50 per cent of our English language exams, both in terms of the exams covered and the number of dates available, will be available to take on-screen. Schools in Italy, Switzerland, Mexico and Argentina proved particularly quick to take up this new way of delivering tests and feedback from candidates and their teachers has been overwhelmingly positive.

However, we haven't completely taken out the human element in some of our e-assessments. The speaking part of the BULATS test for instance uses a human examiner as our research shows this is the best way of assessing that skill, enabling candidates to get the best from their performance.

Over the year we also ramped up our e-working across the Group to provide an even more efficient, speedy and secure service. Enhancements to the Electronic Script Management service have significantly improved both its scalability and performance. E-marking is now business as usual. As a result we significantly increased the number of tests that are managed by on-screen marking. Over half of this year's scripts were marked online.

In addition to the launch of the on-line submissions system, OCR Nationals in Science will be involved in a trial of the 'Virtual classroom' – an interactive online delivery channel that enables teachers to log onto live or recorded training sessions. The virtual classroom trial sessions will give teachers the opportunity to engage with OCR examiners and leading practitioners, gaining advice and information on selected qualifications.

During the year we rolled out e-moderation – an electronic process where we look at a sample of work to check the internal assessment to ensure that the appropriate mark has been awarded and the relevant national standard has been applied. This marks a significant step forward in removing some of the time-consuming paper-based administration both for schools in the UK and the Group.

The web-based processes are already delivering greater levels of consistency and efficiency, with more long term benefits to follow. This development is complemented by the launch of the redeveloped repository by our UK exam board, which will open up the opportunity to submit moderation evidence that is not limited to the traditional paper format. Schools will benefit from the facility to easily and more conveniently manage the digital submission of moderation evidence that could include video and sound as well as more familiar assessment evidence.



And e-awarding is coming. Developments in technology have enabled the introduction of remote awards in the UK. This has been a major challenge for the organisation due to its significant difference to traditional awarding meetings. Awarders can now work from home and at their own pace. UK pilots were carried out for GCSE science and maths over the year and proved to be very successful. We hope that this change to awarding will save thousands of pounds each year and will make the system more efficient for all those involved, including; no need for scripts to be moved, reducing logistical costs, and allowing staff to attend meetings remotely.

We have also been able to increase our international reach through the development of web portals that allow better interaction with candidates, schools and teachers. By offering access in an easy and intuitive manner we have been able to support all stakeholders in a timely and efficient way that meets their needs no matter where they are located in the world.

For instance, online results for overseas candidates were extended to cover most of our ESOL exams. Nearly 80 per cent of candidates took advantage of this service to access their results on the day of their release. Our modernisation drive is underpinned by an extensive research programme as we are determined to ensure that technological advances do not distort educational imperatives.

Our *Active Results* service, designed to help teachers review the performance of individual students or whole schools, has been adopted by 1,500 centres following the successful pilot last year. Subjects covered were also extended with all GCSEs and A levels being included by the end of 2010.

We continue, wherever possible, to reduce the heavy paper burden on exam officers and tutors that comes with the administration of some qualifications. In the UK, we piloted a new online claims process to replace the existing paper-based system of confirmation and moderation sample lists, and certification record forms for our Nationals qualification. Having successfully piloted the scheme with 160 centres we hope to roll it out for all Nationals qualifications for all schools late 2009.

The effective use of technology is also being demonstrated through the deployment of our new print facility at our state of the art warehouse, DC10, which is now operational and already delivering new efficiencies.

Other modernisation programmes are on-going across the Group. For example, the authorisation of suppliers' invoices by our Finance team changed to an online process. This replaced the existing paper based procedure and is designed to make the process more streamlined and efficient for all those involved.

## EFFECTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY



# Group Aim:

To continue to expand the organisation by delivering a broad, attractive and innovative portfolio of assessments and qualifications, and related services

We continue to develop, design and deliver assessments that truly reflect our commitment to providing qualifications that engage and inspire learners around the world and help them to achieve their full potential.

At a time of intense reform in qualifications in the UK, we made unprecedented efforts to provide information, support and guidance to schools and colleges with regular newsletters, training and free events about the changes.

In the UK we have been working closely with teachers on the development and delivery of new Maths, English and ICT GCSEs for 2010. We submitted draft specifications and specimen papers to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for accreditation and made them available to teachers for feedback.

The redeveloped GCSEs will build upon the new key stage 4 programmes of study and every subject except English Literature will include the relevant functional skill. This aspect of the qualification will be assessed and certificated separately. These changes follow the redevelopment of the majority of GCSEs for first teaching in September 2009.

The publication of our new Religious Studies 'C' GCSE draft specification featured widely in the press. The new exam will be piloted in 50 schools from September 2009 until 2015 and includes humanism in three of the four units available. The specification attracted interest from many schools, both state and independent, including an independent Quaker school.

We redeveloped the Entry Level certificates in line with current GCSE specifications and timelines to comply with regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework rather than those for general qualifications, which they are subject to at present.

This year we saw the first teaching of the reformed A levels which incorporate 'stretch and challenge' and bring in an A\* grade for exceptional performance. It was re-constituted to reduce the burden of assessment on learners and to incorporate greater challenge for the most able.

It was also the very first awarding of Diplomas for those students who embarked on a one year course instead of the two-year programmes which the majority of learners are following. As well as being a Diploma Awarding Body, our UK exam board is accredited for the Principal Learning component for four out of the first five lines of learning and for functional skills and the Extended Project.

We responded to consultations for all three of the new Phase 4 lines of learning – Science, Languages and Humanities – as we remain deeply concerned overall by Phase 4, and in particular the compressed timescale within which qualifications development must take place. We made the decision to continue with our application to be a Diploma Awarding Body for Phase 4. However, we will not proceed with our submissions for Principal Learning in Languages at all levels and in Humanities at Level 3 and will keep under review our position in relation to all Level 3 Diplomas in Phase 4. We also decided to proceed with our submissions for Principal Learning in Science at Levels 1 and 2 and in Humanities at Levels 1 and 2.

**Nationals continue to be the fastest growing work-related qualifications in 14–19 education.**

Nationals continue to be the fastest growing work-related qualifications in 14–19 education. Over 250,000 students achieved OCR Nationals during the year. The qualification is a leading vocational programme in schools and is now the fourth biggest qualification of all 14–19 offerings. Its practical approach to learning and assessment is a popular choice with schools as it suits a range of learning styles.

We had particular success with Nationals in ICT and Science at Level 2 – the latter helped in part by a successful awareness raising campaign which resulted in 400 schools requesting more details.

However, 2009/10 will be a challenging period for OCR Nationals as they are all re-developed to meet the requirements laid out by the Qualifications and Credit Framework. As a precursor to the redevelopment, a significant piece of “voice of the customer” market research was undertaken to provide the redevelopment team with feedback from teachers. From the research a number of recommendations have been put forward, some of which have already been acted upon, namely the launch of an on-line submissions system. However, perhaps the most pleasing outcome from the research was the high satisfaction that teachers and students reported, which is reflected in the loyalty to OCR Nationals.

In the UK we are also undertaking additional pilot activity to help the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority comprehensively evaluate the suitability of functional skills qualifications for adults. This follows the need identified by the then Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills for further research before a final decision is reached in respect of replacing the current Skills for Life qualifications. We have also been involved in the running of a three year Government pilot for functional skills in all three subjects at all levels – Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2.

We developed a suite of vocationally-related qualifications in Retail Knowledge for launch (subject to QCDA approval) in September 2009. The new credit-based qualification at Levels 2 and 3 will provide vital knowledge and understanding of key generic areas of the retail sector for current and future employees. It will also address the Technical Certificate aspect of the Retail Modern Apprenticeship programmes, meaning they are ideal for the Apprenticeship audience.

Our qualification offering in the UK was enhanced with the development of four new Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses – International Mathematics, Global Perspectives, Enterprise

QUALIFICATIONS THAT ENGAGE AND INSPIRE LEARNERS





and India Studies. This follows a successful year where we saw worldwide entries for the Cambridge IGCSE June 2009 session increase by almost 25 per cent on last year.

UK schools are increasingly interested in Cambridge IGCSE as a means of extending choice in the curriculum. It is currently offered in more than 300 independent schools. During the year Ofqual accredited 16 of the most popular Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses, including Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics. And following conversations with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, nine subjects are now funded in state schools and will be included in school league tables from 2010.

Nearly 50 schools began teaching one or more Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects – our alternative to A level – in September 2008 and more than 200 are already planning to begin Cambridge Pre-U within the next two to three years. Fifteen of the schools that started teaching this year are from the state maintained sector and funding for the qualification is on a par with A levels. Also the first ever Cambridge Pre-U exams were taken this year by students sitting the short courses in Modern Foreign Languages.

Cambridge Pre-U has now been awarded UCAS tariff points. Unlike A levels, the qualification's grading scale is divided into three bands; Distinction, Merit and Pass, each of which is sub-divided into three grades (Distinction 1, Distinction 2, Distinction 3 and so on). A Distinction 2 grade (roughly aligned to A\* at A level) will earn 145 UCAS points, Distinction 3 (benchmarked to the standard required for an A grade at A level) will earn 130, and there are 46 points for a Pass 3 (benchmarked to the border between E and U at A level). The tariff for a Distinction 1 pass will be announced after the first Cambridge Pre-U examination entries have been assessed in 2010.

The growth of English as a global language is prompting an increase in the provision of English language learning in state school systems. This is impacting the private language school sector, traditionally the source of much of ESOL's revenue, and it is responding by developing new services and products for the state sector. ESOL is also having to manage the impact of changed levels of overseas students studying at English speaking Universities.

We launched our new Employability Skills (Ready Steady Work) qualification to encourage learners to enter and progress in employment. Entry Levels 1–3 are suitable for

all age groups and enable learners to develop a range of core skills from effective interviewing to financial competency.

We continue to offer support to students and teachers with our *Top Tips* series of revision guides. We launched the first *Top Tips* last year for First Certificate in English and have since developed two more titles to benefit students preparing for different exams. The books are proving very popular in Europe and Latin America and we are also seeing a large take-up in other markets around the world. The series now covers titles that support learners preparing for First Certificate in English, Preliminary English Test and Certificate in Advanced English – and we are currently working on *Top Tips* for our International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam.

More students also had access to English language qualifications via the global schools network following collaborations with EF, the world's largest language training organisation, and Kaplan Aspect, which offers English courses worldwide.

During the year we celebrated the 20th anniversary of our IELTS exam, marking its unprecedented international growth and success in setting the standard of English language proficiency for Higher Education and migration. Since its introduction in 1989, annual candidate numbers rose to well over one million in 2008 and it is now accepted by over 6,000 organisations worldwide.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority formally accredited our professional English exams from the World of Work range as part of the UK's National Qualifications Framework. Official accreditation in the UK of our multilingual Business Language Testing System exam opens the way to recognition in other countries for employment in the state sector. It will also make it easier for employers to understand the value of the test.

Given the national decline in numbers studying languages at Key Stage 4 (14–16 yrs), we have seen an uptake at Key Stage 3 (11–14 yrs) where the freeing up of the curriculum and the end of SATs is letting schools experiment more. Asset Languages – our flexible assessment scheme designed to reward the progress of language learners – is fulfilling the need among language teachers to recognise achievement in KS3. The qualification received nearly 175,000 test entries in 08/09. Our research shows that approximately three quarters of all our tests are taken by KS3 pupils.

During the year the Asset Languages qualifications at Advanced Stage were awarded UCAS tariff points. The points for Asset Languages will come into effect for entry into higher education from 2010 onwards.

At the other end of the spectrum – in Higher Education – two new schemes of scholarships to the University of Cambridge was launched exclusively for undergraduate students from India and Pakistan respectively. The scholarships, funded by Cambridge Assessment, will enable students to study at the University without the worry of creating a financial burden for their families. As the programme develops there are expected to be 12 undergraduate scholars from India and Pakistan studying at the University at any one time.

For the first time in the region, three Palestinian universities collaborated with the British Council to take our Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) – ideal for all current and potential teachers of English who are teaching English to speakers of other languages.


Uptake of our Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA) test increased over the year, underlining its usefulness in differentiating between highly able candidates for

university courses where critical thinking skills are crucial. The TSA is part of the Group's suite of Higher Education admissions tests which in 2008 were taken by 13,000 candidates on behalf of five leading UK universities.

The University of Oxford also expanded its use of TSA. Applicants wishing to study Experimental Psychology or Economics and Management are now required to take the admissions test. Oxford uses the TSA as a pre-interview admissions test for six of its undergraduate courses and more than 3,000 Oxford applicants took it in 2008. In addition, during the year the TSA was adopted by University College London for its European Social and Political Studies course.

Due to growing demand, we increased our item bank of TSA questions enabling us to accommodate and explore adaptive on-demand testing. We also began to replace paper based results for admissions tests with an online results system. For the first time candidates, centres and universities taking our Sixth Term Exam Paper (STEP) Mathematics exam were able to access their results online.

## UK SCHOOLS INTERESTED IN CAMBRIDGE IGCSE

A young boy with light brown hair and blue eyes, wearing a maroon school jacket over a white shirt and a maroon tie. He is looking slightly to the right with a thoughtful expression. The background is dark and out of focus, showing parts of other school uniforms.

UK schools are increasingly interested in Cambridge IGCSE as a means of extending choice in the curriculum. It is currently offered in more than 300 independent schools.

# Group Aim:

To maintain efficient and economic processes to support world-wide delivery of examinations

We maintain our reputation for quality of service and world-wide delivery of examinations. Our exam board's relationships with schools and centres are acutely valuable and we are extremely active in helping teachers and partners replicate those high standards through our wraparound and support services.

The number and spectrum of UK training events over the year was larger than ever before, to match the unprecedented level of change and the numerous waves of new qualifications being introduced. For example, around 10,000 teachers attended our events while attendees at our free introductory training events for new qualifications doubled to a record 14,000.

We also held a very popular series of free regional events called Talk English and Maths aimed at teachers and local authority advisors – regardless of which exam board they work with. The events provided teachers with tips, techniques and practical content about the changes to GCSEs in 2010. It also offered them the chance to ask questions and to network with others in their field.

A series of free events to explain what's happening to GCSEs for first teaching in 2009 were hugely popular. More than 1,500 teachers attended the regional events where they met subject experts and took part in presentations covering all aspects of our 93 newly accredited GCSE qualifications in 52 different subjects.

With changes in teachers' Continuous Professional Development plans we saw an increased trend for requests to host events within UK schools. We were able to customise events to offer schools precisely what they needed at a time and place that suited them. The most popular topics we covered at over 200 such events were Functional Skills and the Project and Extended Project.

We continue to review and develop systems to support UK and international schools, from tools to assist with the administration of exams to online professional development for teachers. E-learning tools such as virtual learning environments and our range of online professional development courses, led by subject-specialist tutors, proved to be incredibly popular. In the last 12 months more than 6,000 teachers took part in our online courses and shared learning and ideas with colleagues.

Internationally we held a wide range of training workshops and many other events including conferences, award ceremonies and exhibitions. We also began using social media channels, including Twitter – a free social networking and micro-blogging service – as a way of communicating with students and teachers.

In addition we set up a new Compliance Unit to maintain the fairness and integrity of our examinations overseas, which is fundamental to ensuring their global recognition as valid and reliable assessments. Part of the Unit's responsibility is to conduct centre inspections during examination sessions and to investigate concerns about malpractice and maladministration.

We also continue to use interactive technologies to allow real-time online participation for some of the conference events for those who could not be there in person. Online forums on conference themes also proved to be incredibly popular, enabling the debate to continue after the event.

Overseas we are making some significant changes to exam timetables to improve security across time-zones. The programme of change will take at least a year and further changes will be seen in the 2010 sessions.

**We began using social media channels, including Twitter, as a way of communicating with students and teachers.**



Once again, our IT operations and systems passed British Standards Institution (BSI) inspection to maintain ISO 20000 and ISO 27001 accreditations – an international standard for quality management systems. Following a successful BSI six monthly audit of ISO9001 in the early part of 2009 our ISO9001 accreditation was upgraded to ISO9001/2008 from ISO9001/2003. This means that teachers, candidates, examiners and employees can continue to have confidence that our IT operations and systems are managed to the highest levels in terms of quality and security and that we continue to have a comprehensive strategy in place to protect our people, processes and systems.

Supporting and delivering assessment by digital means is playing an increasingly significant role in examining.

Our greater reliance on technology and need for future capacity to keep pace with our growth led to a doubling in space at our Data Centre. Similarly we have also extended the use of our Print and Operations facility so that we can

accommodate the new digital print capability and further automation in a number of key areas such as collations and despatch. Also the improved automation of our warehousing facility has given us the ability to respond more rapidly to opportunities around the world where speed is essential.

We continue to redevelop our overall Business Continuity Plans (BCP) and a new framework for BCP was adopted. This included plans for Print and Operations function to attain BS25999 certification – the best-practice standard for certifying business continuity management plans.

Our Print and Operations function has now incorporated the new digital managed print service and the benefits of this are already being realised. Further enhancements will include the online submission and management of new question papers which will improve consistency and turnaround times.

**SUPPORT FOR UK AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS**





# Group Aim:

To pursue internal synergies to achieve economies of scale and maximise educational impact

We consolidated our position as experts in assessment with the launch of the Cambridge Approach – a landmark document which sets out the Group's principles for designing, administering and evaluating assessment. It is intended both to reflect the best practice in assessment that we seek to follow as an organisation and to be a practical guide for those involved in the development of new assessments.

We wanted the Cambridge Approach to be different – succinct and readable. It demonstrates international good practice and enables us to lead the assessment debate through the progressive use of the concept of validity. It provides an overarching structure for individual qualifications and tests but is not designed to relate to every aspect. The Cambridge Approach covers the full lifecycle of an assessment and will be kept up to date with the latest developments.

Our approach emphasises the need for manuals for individual assessments: detailed criteria and requirements linked to specific tests and examinations, with these reflecting their different purposes, measurement models, modes of assessment, and modes of operation. Although these detailed criteria and requirements will change over time – as measurement practice improves, legal regulation changes and solutions to operational problems are devised – they will be maintained by the Group to ensure that all its assessments are fair and have sound ethical underpinning according to the highest technical standards.

The Advantage programme – established to ensure that we create competitive advantage from our investment in IT – is now 'business as usual'. A great deal of progress

was made over the year which was reflected in the results of the 'trust' questionnaire. Feedback showed that the programme has helped us to instil a more efficient and collaborative way of working with our Information Management team. In all areas, excellent progress has been made and the most significant change has been a cultural one with more positive behaviours being demonstrated by all.

We put in place a new research team to focus on supporting comparability work across the Group. The team will utilise state of the art methods to examine issues of comparability between qualification specifications, between subjects, and over time. This work is essential to effective standards setting, standards maintenance and public trust. It will increase the transparency of the processes used by the Group in awarding and testing, and is designed to meet the demands of the new regulatory requirements which Government is putting in place.

We also continue to research the way in which markers interact with the new technologies being developed for electronic management of scripts. This research confirms the benefits which electronic script management is bringing to the Group. Our work on the marking of extended text shows that although markers need to adapt to the new marking processes, reliability is not affected by their introduction.

New quality systems are now possible within electronic script management and prototype work on statistical detection of malpractice has now proved itself operationally effective.

**We consolidated our position as experts in assessment with the launch of the Cambridge Approach – a landmark document which sets out the Group's principles for designing, administering and evaluating assessment.**



# Staff Training

CAMBRIDGE



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CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

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CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

Welcome

We

# Group Aim:

To ensure that staff have the right skills and to provide training and development opportunities

As a leading world authority on assessment, it matters to us that people rise to bigger challenges, reach their potential and gain new skills. Our training and development plans are also there to make sure staff across the Group have the necessary skills and abilities to perform to their full potential.

In recognition of the increased collaboration and sharing of resources within the Group, many of this year's development sessions were on relationships, team management and communication. 'Effective Team Working' and 'Team Management' proved to be popular additions to our 2009 schedules.

We also introduced a second level of our 'Building Personal Confidence' programme following positive feedback regarding level one.

However the most significant change during the last year has been how we deliver staff training courses. For the first time we have been able to offer staff a range of e-learning courses they can do at their desks. This gives staff a more flexible and convenient way to learn. Whilst these packages are not designed to replace facilitator-led programmes or face to face learning, they offer a substantial back-up to existing courses available and as a short refresher. The first e-learning courses, available via our intranet, were interview techniques, objective setting and performance management.

We held our first highly successful Knowledge Matters event called 'Mind the Gap'. The focus of the event, which was attended by over 50 staff, was current policy and practice with regard to educational technology in learning and assessment. The aim was to bring together a collection

of speakers selected from conferences/seminars attended by the Assessment Research and Development Division to present directly to staff and stimulate dialogue between work colleagues from across the Group. This included speakers from the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Becta – a Government agency driving the use of technology in learning, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, the Open University and various technology suppliers from across the country.

Almost two thirds of staff took part in our first Group-wide staff survey, 'Your Work, Your Say!' to give their thoughts on aspects of working life at Cambridge Assessment. Overall results were very positive; working relationships and peer support in particular were highly praised, and we have been working on initiatives to make improvements where these are necessary.

The Cambridge Assessment Network continues to offer formal and informal professional development activities for people working in assessment, both within the Group and externally. Throughout the year it ran a comprehensive programme of 45 events, seminars and courses. The Group maintains close links with the Association of Educational Assessors in Europe (AEA) and completion of the Certificate in the Principles and Practice of Assessment courses that we offer can assist in the process of gaining professional status with AEA.

During the year, 14 people completed the Certificate in the Principles and Practice of Assessment course. Participants included five members of our own staff alongside students from organisations such as the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Ofqual, Institute of Legal Executives and Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

**As a leading authority on assessment it matters to us that people rise to bigger challenges, reach their potential and gain new skills.**

# Highlights 2008–2009

## August 2008

Thousands of ESOL candidates are able to access their results online on 1 August thanks to a new system. A total of 135,000 candidates are able to access the site on the day – up from 84,000 last year.

CIE launches a new interactive community area on its Teacher Support website enabling teachers around the world to share ideas, materials and resources.

## September 2008

We host the 34th International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) annual conference in Cambridge, 7–12 September 2008. The theme is 'Re-interpreting Assessment: Society, Measurement and Meaning'.



Six high-flying students from the West Midlands receive bursaries from OCR towards their fees at Cambridge University. This is the fifth successive year we have awarded bursaries to the region's students.

The first teaching of Cambridge Pre-U courses start.

## October 2008

OCR celebrates its 10th anniversary. Staff celebrate ten years of success in recognising achievement with celebrations held in Coventry, Cambridge and Birmingham.

Almost two thirds of staff take part in a Group-wide staff survey, 'Your Work, Your Say!' to give their thoughts on various aspects of working life at Cambridge Assessment.

## November 2008

We launch an e-recruitment service to make it easier for staff and external candidates to find out about and apply for jobs.

Cambridge ESOL examinations certificates are accepted by the UK Border Agency and can be used as proof of English language ability under the new Tier 2 of the points-based system for immigration.

## December 2008

Cambridge ESOL and the Department of Education and Training (DOET) in Ho Chi Minh City celebrate two years of offering students the opportunity to improve their English language skills.



We place our Time Capsule Box into the Group Archives at 1 Hills Road on 15 December, the 150th anniversary of the day our first school exam was sat, to mark the end of our 150th anniversary celebrations and to provide a legacy for future generations.

## January 2009

Cambridge ESOL marks the 20th anniversary of the International English Language Testing System as the leading benchmark of English language proficiency for higher education and migration.

The Gujarat Government in India revises its education policy on international education, and formally recognises international examination providers, with state universities now accepting CIE students.

BULATS goes online. The new online version of the test has been developed in response to significant customer demand. It gives businesses a reliable language solution with greater flexibility.



### February 2009

E-learning, e-assessment and e-administration are on top of the agenda at the 4th Cambridge International Advisory Seminar – hosted by University of Cambridge International Examinations.

### March 2009

OCR hosts successful series of Talk Maths and English regional events to provide teachers with tips, techniques and practical content that can be taken away and used in the classroom. The events are aimed at teachers and local authority advisors – regardless of which exam board they work with.



Cambridge Assessment researchers investigate the number of students who achieved three grade As at A Level on behalf of the University's Outreach Steering Group. They find that, contrary to some media suggestions, only a very small proportion of students who got these grades had taken less traditional subjects. They also find that the rates of achievement mirrored the socio-economic background of the local authority and that differences in outcomes between them could be stark.

### April 2009

Cambridge ESOL increases its *Top Tips* revision guides series. The new books have been developed to offer candidates advice and tips for each part of the exams in an easy to use format.

Group Chief Executive Simon Lebus answers MPs questions and gives evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Children, Schools and Families to inform its enquiry on School Accountability.

### May 2009

More than 21,000 pupils in 133 government schools in Bahrain take the new national tests developed and delivered by CIE as a result of winning a competitive tender to work with the Bahrain Economic Development Board and Ministry of Education to establish a new National Examinations Unit as part of the Kingdom's National Education Reform Project in October 2007.

We take a look back at our IT systems over the years and give staff a unique insight into '25 years of IT' at Cambridge Assessment with a short film shown in the Archive Reading Room as part of the Group Archives Service's Open Day series.

### June 2009

Candidates doing the Cambridge Pre-U Short Courses in Modern Foreign Languages are assessed.

Cambridge Assessment exhibits at the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (17CCEM), in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Cambridge Assessment stand promotes one of its exam board's excellent work with ministries worldwide as well as its portfolio of international qualifications.

### July 2009

Following a successful trial last year, the University of Oxford announces that applicants to their undergraduate courses in Experimental Psychology and Psychology, Philosophy and Physiology will be required to take Cambridge Assessment's Thinking Skills Assessment admissions test November 2009.



In partnership with Bell International, Cambridge ESOL, gives a group of 30 English Language teachers from Thailand the opportunity to enhance their skills by participating in a four week training course in Cambridge.







## Cambridge Assessment

The Cambridge Assessment Group influences thinking around the world on the development of assessment and delivers excellence through its three exam boards.



For more information about our three exam boards, visit:

[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

[www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk)

[www.cambridgeesol.org.uk](http://www.cambridgeesol.org.uk)

To find out more about Cambridge Assessment, please visit:

[www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk)

You can keep up to date with our activities by subscribing to *View* – our e-newsletter designed to inform education debates.

Email [expertview@cambridgeassessment.org.uk](mailto:expertview@cambridgeassessment.org.uk) to join our mailing list

You can also follow us on Twitter

[www.twitter.com/Cam\\_Assessment](https://www.twitter.com/Cam_Assessment)





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