

Achieve

Summer 2006



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



Welcome to *Achieve*, bringing you the latest news from Europe's largest assessment agency
Cambridge Assessment is a non-teaching department of the University of Cambridge, and a not-for-profit organisation

Cambridge Assessment exhibits in Parliament
Pages 4 & 5

Air travel essay lands first prize in worldwide competition

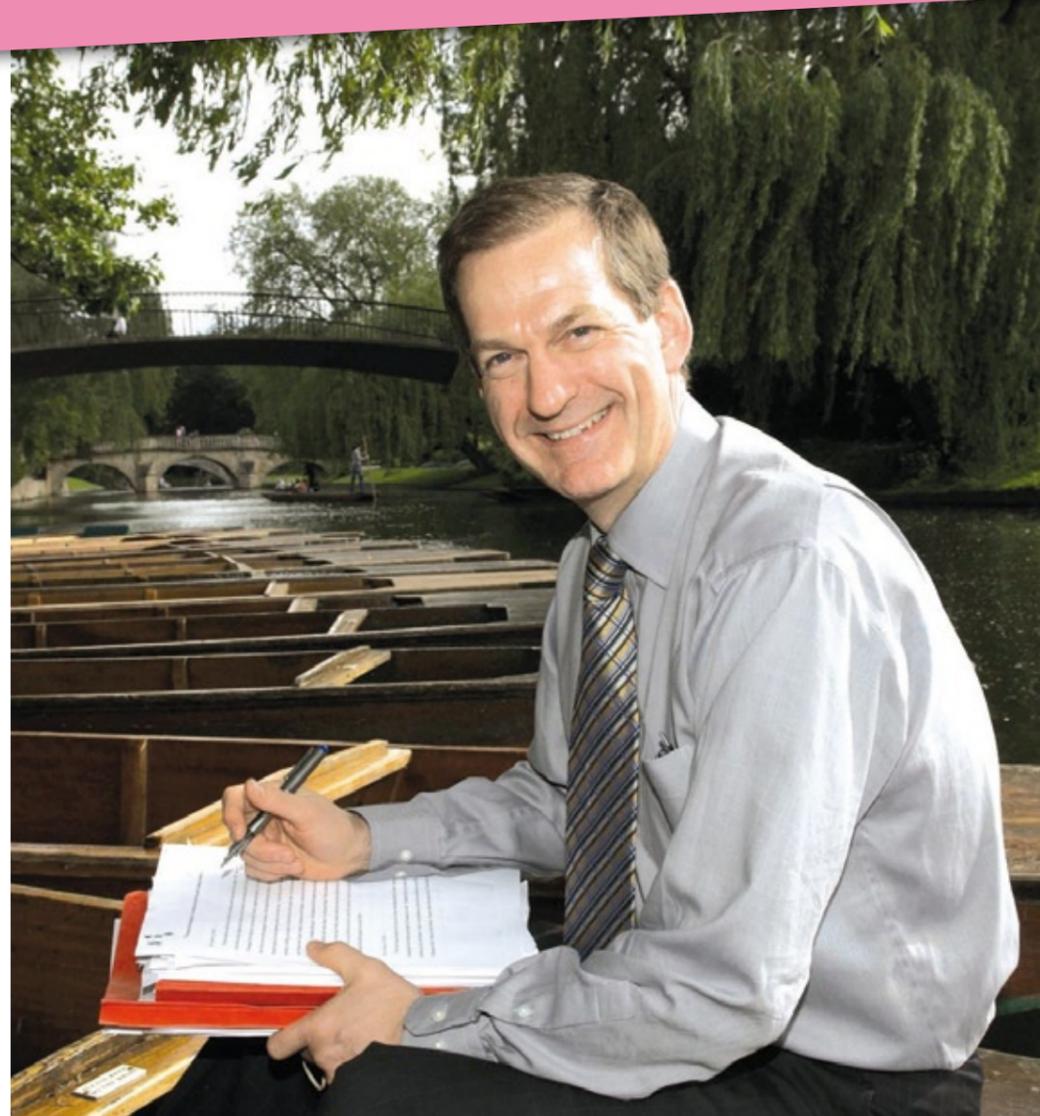
More than 150 Cambridge International GCSE (IGCSE) students from around the world have battled it out to win CIE's prestigious essay competition. Students from over 30 countries wrote essays to celebrate the 20th birthday of the Cambridge IGCSE.

The overall winner was Natalia Sánchez Thompson from Hastings School, Madrid, Spain, whose winning essay looked at the impact of air travel on culture and countries.

Mike Baker, BBC Education Correspondent and a competition judge, said: "Natalia's essay was a very mature piece of writing and for me a clear winner. It's an imaginative idea and really stood out."

For her outstanding essay, Year 10 student Natalia has won educational vouchers worth £500 as well as a host of other prizes. In addition, her school will receive an educational package that includes an electronic interactive whiteboard from Hitachi Interactive.

www.cie.org.uk



Mike Baker, BBC Education Correspondent, reads the winning essay on the river Cam



Dr John J Guy, OBE

Principal of Farnborough Sixth Form College and Member of the Ministerial External Advisory Committee on 14–19 Reforms

Jerome Bruner described Newton's research as "a voyage on a sea of ignorance to find the islands of truth". For Newton, it was about trying to establish laws to make sense of observations, and subsequently sensing coherence between them. How different is it for today's learners?

Journeying through a subject is like swimming between different islands. The water is often turbulent and learners can be completely at sea as they struggle to understand a new idea. But as an idea begins to make sense, an island does emerge, giving a feeling of security before moving on to the next stage of the voyage.

The islands, of course, don't exist in isolation; it is in navigating between them that coherence is achieved, recognising their inter-dependence and seeing alternative routes. The role of the teacher is crucial, giving confidence to learners and repeatedly pointing out and recalling the landmarks they have visited. The islands need to be understood in context.

In education, that understanding is often measured by assessment which, if it is too mechanistic and atomised, may discourage good teaching. The teacher is tempted to teach to the assessment requirements and learners may feel that knowledge can be reduced to a few key words to acquire marks.

Good assessment, however, will reward those who have developed coherence across a subject; it should encourage not only good teaching but also recognise and encourage scholarship.

So, does assessment in public examinations in the UK encourage scholarship as a matter of course? The time has come to appraise its success as we move into the next phase of curriculum reform; I believe Cambridge Assessment is ideally placed to lead the way.

CIE pioneers computer-based testing

Geography coursework is now interactive after 300 students across the world took CIE's IGCSE Geography computer-based test as part of their examinations.

The examination requires students to carry out virtual fieldwork using interactive software that incorporates video, images and sound. During the examination, students carry out a variety of tasks including traffic surveys and interviews.

'As technology evolves, so does the future of assessment'

Berndaette Gregerson of Bjørns International School in Denmark, said: "The students found the exam exciting, they were motivated to engage in the variety of activities and they found the content very hands-on."

Sarah Maughan, Deputy Director of CIE's International Curriculum and Development Division, added: "As technology evolves, so does the future of assessment. Computer-based assessment has devel-



oped as a direct result of working closely with schools, and meeting their specific assessment needs in an innovative and practical way."

The groundbreaking technology has been developed in partnership with BTL Group Ltd.

www.cie.org.uk



Thousands of UK students trialling new university admissions test

Students from hundreds of schools and colleges across the UK are participating in a full-scale validity study of uniTEST, a new generic admissions test designed by Cambridge Assessment and the Australian Council for Educational Research.

Thousands of students took the two and a half hour test which has been designed to assess the kinds of reasoning and thinking skills that underpin studies in Higher Education and that students need

for success at this level. Students from a wide range of disciplines have been nominated by seven leading universities to take part in the year-long validity trial where student performance at university will be compared with their uniTEST scores.

Paul Lewis, Director of New Developments at Cambridge Assessment, commented: "This is an exciting time for uniTEST. The results of the test will be released to students in October via a secure

website. Then in 2007, once students have completed their first year examinations at university, we plan to carry out a comparison study to explore the predictive validity of the assessment."

uniTEST will provide extra information on which hard-pressed admissions tutors can base their very important decisions.

www.unittest.org.uk



From left: Alfred Ilukena, Under Secretary of Education; Willy January, Chief Education Officer of Curriculum and Language R&D at the National Institute for Education Development; Ann Puntis, CIE Chief Executive; and Cowley van der Merwe, Director of National Examinations and Assessment

Namibia to launch own exam system thanks to CIE

CIE welcomed visitors from the Namibian Ministry of Education in May who had come to finalise plans to implement the Ministry's own exam system.

CIE has worked with the Namibian Government for the past 16 years to

reform its senior secondary education and, as a result, next year the country will run its own Senior Secondary Certificate exams for the first time in its history.

Dr Newman Burdett, CIE's Head of International Education, added: "It is a

privilege to work closely with a Ministry that takes such a long term view to the lives and futures of their citizens and to work alongside people who have that foresight and passion to make a real and pragmatic difference."

Namibia isn't the only country where CIE has aided education reforms and localisation of examinations—it is also currently working in the African countries of Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho.

Parlez-vous français?

Thousands more people in the UK can now "parler français" and "sprechen Deutsch" thanks to an innovative new languages assessment scheme.

Over 10,000 linguists ranging from primary school children to adults have taken the opportunity to improve their language skills with Asset Languages over the past year.

Barrie Hunt, Director of Asset Languages, said: "As the global economy continues to boom and cross-country working increases, the need to speak more than one language is becoming more important. It is fantastic that so many people are taking the opportunity to have their language skills recognised in the UK. The most popular language qualifications so far have been in French, but with Spanish, German, and even Mandarin Chinese gaining more entries there could soon be competition for the top spot."

Asset Languages has been developed by Cambridge Assessment through OCR and Cambridge ESOL as a part of the UK Department for Education and Skills (DfES) National Languages Strategy.

To find out more about Asset Languages, why not visit our exhibition at the House of Commons Upper Waiting Hall on 19 July? For further details see pages 4 and 5.

www.assetlanguages.org.uk

Mice scuttle onto site

More than 36,000 mice have scuttled onto OCR's CLAIT 2006 website, thanks to a successful interactive game aimed at encouraging people to get online.

Visitors to www.clait2006.co.uk have been flocking to draw a picture of a mouse online to find out what their drawings say about them.

E-Marketing Manager Michelle Hughes explains: "The game is a bit of fun. It is based on a psychometric test for personality profiling. The mouse serves as a useful test of the personality traits of the individual."

"After you've drawn your mouse, you answer some questions and the site will reveal some things about your personality."

CLAIT 2006 is a package of three computer qualifications which provides a one-stop shop for learners looking to develop, improve or advance their computer skills.

To try the mouse game visit www.clait2006.co.uk/clait_game.php





CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

at the House of Commons Upper Waiting Hall Exhibition 2006

Learners in every part of the country will benefit from Cambridge Assessment's expertise this year. From teenagers taking OCR GCSEs and A Levels to those learning English as second language, Cambridge Assessment ensures that every learner is fairly and accurately assessed.

'Examining world-wide at all ages in the 21st century'

From Monday 17 until Thursday 20 July, Cambridge Assessment, Europe's largest assessment agency, will provide Parliamentarians and other visitors to the House of Commons with a unique insight into the world of assessment. The exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall will showcase examples of "Examining world-wide at all ages in the 21st century".

Cambridge Assessment plays a leading role in researching, developing and delivering assessment across the globe, through our three major examining bodies: OCR, CIE and Cambridge ESOL.

Our qualifications, delivered through our three examining bodies, are taken in 150 countries by a diverse range of students, including members of the British Armed Forces, the Police, and the Prison Service.

People

For MPs and Peers interested in finding out more about the work we do both in the UK and worldwide, the Chief Executives of the three examining bodies will be available on the following days.

Monday 17 July



Dr Michael Milanovic

Chief Executive of University of Cambridge ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Examinations

Dr Michael Milanovic, Chief Executive of Cambridge ESOL, has been involved in language education and assessment since 1977 and has worked for Cambridge Assessment (formerly the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate) since 1989.

Cambridge ESOL exams are the world's leading certificates for English language learners with over 1.75 million people in 135 countries sitting them every year.

Michael has both an MA and a PhD in Applied Linguistics. He is also the Manager of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), co-editor of Studies in Language Testing, and an official advisor to the Beijing Speaks to the World Campaign, a crucial part of the city's preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games.

Tuesday 18 July



Greg Watson

Chief Executive of OCR

Greg Watson has been OCR's Chief Executive since May 2004.

OCR, one of three UK awarding bodies, offers qualifications including GCSEs, A and AS Levels and a wide range of vocational qualifications to learners of all ages through 13,000 schools, colleges and other institutions.

Greg graduated in Modern and Mediaeval Languages from Queens' College, Cambridge, and worked for ten years in the Shell Group in a variety of marketing and business development roles across retail and business-to-business sectors.

Wednesday 19 July



Ann Puntis

Chief Executive of University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)

Ann Puntis, CIE's Chief Executive, has worked for Cambridge Assessment (formerly the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate) since 1977.

CIE is the largest provider of 14-19 qualifications in the world, offering a wide range of qualifications including International GCSEs, A and AS Levels. CIE also advises and works with a number of governments on education issues.

Ann has extensive experience in education and assessment. She obtained a BSc (Econ) with First Class Honours at Cardiff University before obtaining a PGCE at Cambridge University. She has previously worked as a teacher, Centre Principal and a policy maker in national education.



Simon Lebus

Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment

Simon Lebus has been Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment for four years. A Bye-Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Simon has spent his career operating in complex and competitive business environments, where the drive for excellence and quality, good teamwork and the need for continuous improvement are essential for success—all characteristics that have made Cambridge Assessment a world leader in educational assessment.

Simon originally graduated from Oxford where he spent six years studying history, first as an undergraduate and then as a research student. After that he worked for eight years in the City as an investment banker, where he was involved in corporate finance and capital markets advisory work specialising in then-communist Eastern Europe. In 1989 he moved to the food processing industry, spending several years in a number of different senior management positions, before coming to Cambridge Assessment in 2002.

Assessments

The following modern assessments are being demonstrated at the exhibition, and experts in them will be available for further discussion if needed.



Accurately assessing a job candidate's language ability can be a difficult task.

Cambridge ESOL's Business Language Testing Service (BULATS) provides a multilingual assessment service for companies that require an accurate, rapid means of assessing language skills in English, French, German and Spanish.

Throughout the exhibition a trial version of BULATS will be available for you to test your skills.

Expert Sharon Jordan will be there to tell you more about BULATS on Monday 17 July.



Cambridge Assessment and Harcourt, a leading educational publisher, have developed *achieve*, an interactive "assessment for learning" system that supports teachers in the implementation of formative assessment in the classroom.

achieve can be used for informal tests that can be set as homework or formal tests under controlled conditions, allowing teachers to compare and monitor performance over time.

To learn more about how the system works for both students and teachers visit our exhibition stand on any day.



New technologies have enabled CIE to develop an innovative coursework tool for International GCSE Geography students.

As profiled on page 2, the new computer-based testing package allows students from all over the world to experience the same "real life" situations.

Students carry out virtual fieldwork that incorporates video, images and sound. Interviews with tourists, maps, and traffic counters are among the wide range of resources contained within the package. Throughout the

exhibition, visitors may try the interactive coursework assignment.

IGCSE Geography expert Matthew Richards will be in the Upper Waiting Hall to answer questions and provide a brief overview of the programme on Tuesday 18 July.



Asset Languages is a new way of motivating language learners and rewarding them for their language skills.

Developed by Cambridge Assessment through OCR and Cambridge ESOL, as a part of the DfES' National Languages Strategy, the assessment scheme is for language learners of all ages and abilities: from primary school through to further, higher and adult education.

Expert Barrie Hunt will be on hand to answer any of your questions on Wednesday 19 July.

Sharing knowledge with the world

Researchers from Cambridge Assessment have been influencing thinking on assessment at an international conference attended by leading assessment and education experts and providers of examinations throughout the world.

Cambridge Assessment led seven presentations at the conference, which was themed 'Assessment in an Era of Rapid Change'

Over 420 people from more than 40 countries attended the 32nd Annual Conference of the International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) which took place in Singapore in May.

Cambridge Assessment personnel led seven presentations at the conference, which was themed "Assessment in an Era of Rapid Change". One of the most attended sessions was delivered by Sylvia Green, Director of Research, in which she shared knowledge about the implementation of *achieve*, a new assessment for learning system.

Other popular presentations included one by Andrew Watts, Director of the Cambridge Assessment Network, entitled "Fostering communities of practice in examining: A rationale for developing the use of new technologies in support of examiners".

The annual IAEA conference is recognised as one of the leading events in educational assessment. It was recently announced that Cambridge Assessment will host the 34th annual IAEA conference in 2008.



Introducing English Profile

A ground-breaking research programme was launched at the British Council English Language Testing Conference in Bologna, Italy, in March. English Profile is a dynamic, collaborative project run by Cambridge ESOL and other organisations with unrivalled knowledge and expertise in language education and assessment worldwide.

The long-term project will produce a set of detailed descriptions of what each level of the Common European Framework actually looks like in terms of vocabulary and grammar used.

The Profile will be a fundamental tool for language teaching, material development, assessment and research for many years to come.

The organisations that will run the project include: University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council, Cambridge University Press, English UK, the Research Centre for English and Applied Linguistics (University of Cambridge), and the University of Luton.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment

Published by the Council of Europe, the framework sets out six clearly-defined levels of language qualifications which are internationally recognised. Both employers and educational institutions can then compare international exam results with those from their own country.

Students offered a sporting chance to gain Key Skills

Thousands of people every year will now gain Key Skills qualifications thanks to a new initiative developed by OCR and Sports Leaders UK. The 'Key Skills through Sports Leadership' scheme was officially launched on 27 March at White Hart Lane—Tottenham Hotspur's ground.

People working towards a Sports Leaders UK award will now have the opportunity to achieve an OCR Key Skills qualification by completing a Log Book to demonstrate their competence at Level 1 and Level 2.

The initiative supports the Government's 'Skills for Life' strategy, which will help 2.25 million learners gain a nationally recognised qualification by 2015.

Ian Crees, OCR Senior Manager, said: "The Key Skills through Sports Leadership initiative makes Key Skills more accessible for students by encapsulating the qualification into an active sport-based learning programme. As they work towards the Sports Leadership award, they can collect evidence to gain OCR Key Skills."

www.ocr.org.uk



Lewisham College wins top award

OCR has awarded Lewisham College the OCR Beacon Award for Partnership in Basic Skills. The college won the award, of £4,000, for its work in helping 140 prison officers in Belmarsh Prison achieve certification for their literacy skills.

'A commendable example of how learning providers can work in tandem with other organisations'

Ian Crees, OCR Senior Manager, presented the prize to the college. He said: "The partnership between Lewisham College and Belmarsh Prison is a highly commendable example of how learning providers can work in tandem with other organisations in the community to really encourage participation in Basic Skills programmes."

"The traditional stigma attached to literacy learning was overcome by Lewisham College, who offered training to prison officers in essential customer care skills and the opportunity to gain a qualification in Basic Skills at the same time."



Ian Crees, left, presenting the cheque to Lewisham College

Beacon Awards

The Association of Colleges' Beacon Awards were launched in 1994 to recognise and promote the interdependence of further education colleges and businesses, professional and voluntary sector organisations to their mutual advantage.

New leader for research



International research leader Tim Oates has joined Cambridge Assessment to spearhead the rapidly growing Assessment Research & Development division.

'Tim is ideally qualified to make sure that research is at the heart of Cambridge Assessment'

For most of the last decade Tim was the Head of Research and Statistics at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), advising the UK Government on

both practical matters and assessment policy.

Tim Oates said: "Cambridge Assessment has an outstanding reputation for the quality of its research and development activities and I welcome the opportunity to support its wide-ranging programme of work."

Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment, added: "Tim is ideally qualified to make sure that research is at the heart of Cambridge Assessment and to take the Assessment Research & Development division forward as we respond to the challenges and opportunities that face us in a time of great change."

Inquiry into ESOL funding for the UK

As concerns grow around the provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes in the UK, leading language assessor Cambridge ESOL has voiced its concerns on the issue.

The National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is holding an inquiry into ESOL provision in the UK and has recently reported its interim findings.

Cambridge ESOL has contributed to the inquiry and raised major concerns:

- There is a distorted demand for Skills for Life qualifications that were originally intended for ESOL learners who also had basic skills needs. Due to the funding arrangements, other learners are filling these spaces. If funding at a national base rate was available for non-Skills for Life qualifications these candidates could take more appropriate qualifications, ensuring the training goes to those who need it the most.
- There is currently insufficient support and funding for ESOL teachers. Observed teaching practice should feature more developmental feedback by skilled and experienced teacher trainers.

www.niace.org.uk

OCR educates Ofsted

Roles were reversed at Ofsted recently as its employees had their own learning and skills assessed by OCR.



The Government inspectorate for children and learners in England gave their employees the opportunity to achieve OCR's iTQ—an NVQ for IT Users—and gain formal recognition for their computer skills.

In total 40 members of staff from across the organisation gained the accreditation in record time. Most candidates take 12–18 months to complete iTQ Level 2, but staff at Ofsted managed to complete it in just 12–18 weeks.

Paul Carter, Professional Officer at OCR, said: "We are delighted that the implementation of the scheme has been so successful at Ofsted, and feel that it is testament to the qualification's flexibility that it has been so useful to those working in so many different jobs throughout the organisation."

Neil Park of Ofsted's Corporate Learning and Development team added: "Providing staff with iTQ has really boosted confidence, and fits in very well with Investor in People principles, recognising and valuing our staff."

www.ocr.org.uk

Contact us

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Simon Lebus signs a commemorative scroll

Cambridge ESOL helps Beijing speak to the world

The first of five million Beijing citizens have taken examinations to prepare themselves for the 2008 Olympics. The 'Beijing Speaks to the World' project brings Cambridge ESOL's language testing skills to the people of Beijing.

A new suite of exams, exam handbooks in Chinese and teacher training materials have all been developed by Cambridge ESOL. In addition, hundreds of Oral Examiners have been trained in China in preparation for the evaluation of the Speaking components of the test.

To celebrate the launch Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive, Mike Milanovic, Cambridge ESOL Chief Executive, and Alison Richard, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, attended inaugural meetings with the British Council and Beijing officials.

Global Thinking takes a step forward

An understanding of global issues and how these affect both you and people at home and overseas is an important area of study in the rapidly changing world we live in.

'The idea of working with other schools is brilliant and could help our language skills too'

CIE is developing an IGCSE in Global Thinking to enhance students' under-

standing and analysis of a number of issues that affect our world such as deforestation, terrorism and urbanisation.

The draft syllabus was presented at the first Global Issues Network Conference held in Luxembourg, where both educators and students contributed to a lively debate on the topic.

Simon Bailey, a student at Collège du Léman in Switzerland, said: "I like the idea of the portfolio and different forms the evidence might take, like video clips and PowerPoint presentations—it makes it more personal. The idea of working with other schools is brilliant and could help our language skills too."

