

Group Update



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Simon Lebus
Group Chief Executive
Cambridge Assessment

This has been a busy year across the Group as we continue to respond to the challenges of a rapidly-changing global education environment.

With change comes opportunity, and the move towards Cambridge Assessment has given us the ideal platform to position ourselves as a leading world authority on assessment, our stated Group vision.

As Europe's largest assessment agency, we are in an ideal position to build on our reputation as the body people naturally consult first on all matters of assessment, influencing thinking on the development of assessment.

Our aim is to be respected everywhere for quality, innovation and delivery, while maintaining the highest educational standards. This reinforces the message that we can be trusted to deliver our promise of driving access to the benefits of education. In doing so, we make a positive difference to the life chances of people around the world.

Facing the future with confidence

The enormous pride we all share in the social and moral aspect of the work we do was one of the key themes that emerged from the brand workshop programme which was completed in May. Thanks to the candour and commitment of those who took part, we have learned much more about how the values we embrace as an organisation—collaboration, openness, innovation, and taking responsibility—are reflected in our day to day work, and the part we can each individually play in really bringing them to life.

Our strategic challenges reflect the changing world in which we operate, and can broadly be defined as technology, increased competition, innovation and new products, changes in 14–19 education, and thought leadership. While there is still much to do, we are making great strides in many of these areas.

I am proud to say that it is thanks to the experience, expertise and dedication of all our staff that we are able to face the future with real confidence.

'Our aim is to be respected everywhere for quality, innovation and delivery, while maintaining the highest educational standards'



New opportunities for OCR

We are heading towards an unprecedented upheaval in qualifications in the UK. The government ultimately didn't accept Mike Tomlinson's 14–19 proposals as a whole, but still backed some of his ideas, particularly in the form of specialised (vocational) diplomas and functional skills. At the same time, QCA is trying to build yet another national qualifications framework, with the aim of enabling learners to build up credit over time in manageable chunks of learning, though also with every possibility of wrapping qualifications up in even more bureaucracy. In parallel to all of this, the devolved administrations of Wales and Northern Ireland are doing their own thing, both 14–19 and post-19.

The opportunities for OCR are substantial. In 14–19, where 80% of our business lies, we have been gaining market share in recent years, more so since we introduced OCR Nationals. Right across our product range, we have taken great

strides in creating qualifications based on what schools and colleges want for their learners; delivering a reliable, quality-assured service; and being a customer-friendly, approachable service provider, rather than a faceless exam board. Recent market research says that we are starting this new phase in a much stronger competitive position than during the Curriculum 2000 changes.

So far, so good, but good products and good service are not, in themselves, enough to make OCR successful in the highly political world of UK education and qualifications. OCR can—and does—push back against badly crafted government policy and excessive regulation by QCA, but being part of the Cambridge Assessment group gives us extra leverage. Ministers who are nervous of being seen too close to awarding bodies are happy to talk to Cambridge Assessment, a respected and independent world leader in the field; civil servants wrestling with difficult policy issues welcome input from Cambridge Assessment with its experience in many other countries and its extensive research base; and regulators trying to marginalise awarding bodies like OCR fear Cambridge Assessment, whose authority and global perspective they cannot match.

If we use the strength of the group brand well, it will help us win back from politicians the freedom we need to serve our centres and their learners.



Greg Watson
Chief Executive



'We have taken great strides in creating qualifications based on what schools and colleges want for their learners'

Since the inception of Cambridge Pre-U, CIE has not only been consulting with schools closely and helping them clarify their needs; but also guiding their debate, and leading, very publicly, what is a pioneering development in a competitive environment.

CIE has brought together subject panels of experienced teachers to help design each syllabus. Subject associations are taking part, too. Universities will advise on how to shape Cambridge Pre-U so that students hit the ground running in their first year as undergraduates.

Confidence in our own expertise—and our determination to get Cambridge Pre-U right—has been crucial. Ideas need time to take shape and that means temporary uncertainty while we exchange ideas and distil them into good proposals. Uncertainty can feel uncomfortable without the reassurance that being part of Cambridge Assessment can give.

Our strength is not only the expertise of our staff, our global reach and our reputation. It's also our confidence in our ability to lead and consult our stakeholders to make sure we get things right first time.

Cambridge Assessment is influencing thinking in assessment. In turn, Cambridge Pre-U is contributing to debate and widening the choice schools and students have.



Ann Puntis
Chief Executive



CIE pioneers Cambridge Pre-U

In times of uncertainty, good leaders thrive. At this time of growth and change in international education, many people need education to serve them well—students, parents, teachers, employers, even politicians. Leaders in the field like CIE and Cambridge Assessment have both opportunity and responsibility.

Like any organisation, CIE must also stay close to its stakeholders if it wants to serve them properly and fulfil its mission. Getting the balance right between leading and consulting has been absolutely vital in shaping a fresh qualification like Cambridge Pre-U.

Cambridge Pre-U is a ground-breaking development—an exciting post-16 qualification that will prepare students for university. Our aim is that Cambridge Pre-U will be exciting to learn and satisfying to teach. The syllabuses will be brand new. CIE schools across the world—and in the UK—will for the first time have a genuine alternative to A Levels (including CIE's own International A Levels) and the IB Diploma.

'Cambridge Pre-U is contributing to debate and widening the choice schools and students have'



Sue Durham
Group HR Director

The change in identity from UCLES to Cambridge Assessment is far more significant than a change of name.

It heralds a new focus and ambition for our Group: that of becoming a leading world authority on assessment.

It was our desire to share that vision that led to the brand workshop programme. We wanted to ensure that each member of staff has an understanding of what we are trying to achieve as a Group.

Workshops

The Cambridge Assessment workshops took place between December 2005 and April 2006, with pilots held in September 2005. The principle behind them was to 'inspire, inform, involve'—to provide everyone with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of what the change of name to Cambridge Assessment means, and how we can all personally contribute to the success of our organisation. Among other things, this means understanding and reflecting our internal values: being open, collaborative and innovating, and taking responsibility in our daily work.

To make the process as inclusive as possible, we ran workshops across the whole organisation, and offered everyone the opportunity to attend.

This means that we held around 100 workshops in total. These included 25 directors, three facilitators, and 1,350 staff, representing a substantial investment of time and resources.

Objectives

The objectives of the programme were that at the end of each workshop staff would:

- » know what makes a successful brand.
- » know what the Cambridge Assessment brand is all about and why it's happened.
- » understand the relationship between the Group and the business streams.
 - » feel reassured and positive about the change, and part of it all.
 - » understand our values, and what they mean for how the organisation does things.

Format

Each workshop followed the same format to ensure that everyone had the same experience. However, the dynamics were very different, depending on the participants, and there were some extremely open and lively discussions, with a wide range of views expressed.

The workshops explored the following areas:

- » What makes a successful brand?
- » What's happening and why—what Cambridge Assessment is and is not.
- » Cambridge Assessment: values and best practice.
- » What does success look like?
- » What do we have to do differently?
- » Summary and personal action plan.

Outcome

The programme achieved its objectives well, at the same time as highlighting some important issues for the organisation.

Reports from all the workshops can be found on INsite, under 'Responses' in the Cambridge Assessment Brand section.

Feedback from attendees shows that:

- » most participants left feeling positive about the brand.
- » people understood the brand and the organisation much better.
- » the values were well explored and generally well understood.
- » people appreciated why the change was necessary for our successful future.

This has been confirmed by the results of the online survey completed by participants. 92% of respondents agreed with the statement: "I am aware of the values of Cambridge Assessment", while 90% agreed that: "I am aware of what Cambridge Assessment is trying to achieve". (A full report of the online survey will be featured in the next issue of Group Update.)

This provides a positive position from which to move forward.

Key themes

Several key themes emerged out of the workshops and, interestingly, many of these were consistent throughout the organisation, irrespective of business stream or business area.

One of the main themes was communication, both internal and external, and the need for more open and effective two-way communication between us all. However, it was felt that genuine listening and exchanging of ideas do already take place.

The sharing of knowledge was also raised as something we should do more of. In addition, reward and recognition were seen as very important motivators for staff.

Pleasingly, the workshops showed a high level of pride and a deeply felt sense of worth in what we do, both as individuals and as an organisation.

Taking the programme forward

What are we going to do differently? This is the question we will be answering over the coming months as we prepare an action plan, based on detailed analysis of the outcomes of the workshops. Once approved by the Corporate Board, the plan will be rolled out across the Group.

For people who are new to Cambridge Assessment, or who were unable to attend a workshop, more information is available on INsite. Copies of the laminated card featuring our values are available from Human Resources, and we are looking at how best to incorporate information about the values into our induction process.

Our challenge now is to ensure that these values are reflected in everything we do.

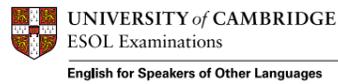


'The workshops showed a high level of pride and a deeply felt sense of worth in what we do'

Exploring the Cambridge Assessment brand



Dr Michael Milanovic
Chief Executive



ESOL the innovator

Within a vast and complex global market of change and competition in English language, Cambridge ESOL remains a byword for quality. Its high standing in so many countries around the world has meant continued growth and excellent potential to further expand into emerging markets.

But while Cambridge ESOL has always been recognised as a stalwart of English language assessment, it is now increasingly becoming known as the innovator. This is not just a matter of seizing market opportunities. New products and services are being developed to suit particular purposes, rooted in Cambridge Assessment's wider educational role to uphold standards and make what we do more relevant and supportive of people's actual needs.

Cambridge ESOL is committed to leading change and to being inclusive, working and consulting with partners and stakeholders. The success of this approach has been shown most recently in terms of the creation of specific tests for professionals, alongside TransLegal for the International Legal English Certificate and the ACCA for the forthcoming International Certificate in Financial

English. We are working with the Beijing Municipal Government in its bid to improve the English language skills of up to five million people in preparation for the 2008 Olympics; and in the UK we are providing support to the Government's Skills for Life campaign, where Cambridge ESOL runs 60% of the testing for programmes.

The English Profile project is an example of a long-term commitment alongside English language experts—the British Council, English UK, Cambridge University Press, the University of Luton and Cambridge University's Research Centre for English and Applied Linguistics. It will provide detailed descriptions of what English language use at each level of the Common European Framework actually looks like, creating an indispensable tool for academics, publishers, teachers and test takers alike. And the success of TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) is a demonstration of a product created specifically to meet the demands from the profession, supporting efforts to raise standards among governments, schools and teachers themselves.

Our challenge will continue to be the sheer range of opportunities—a situation only intensified by the rapid emergence of new technologies such as computer-based testing, which we are exploiting to the full. Progress in recent years has demonstrated that the expertise and knowledge of Cambridge ESOL staff is also matched by flexibility and an ability to work very effectively with global networks of stakeholders. They are qualities that are ensuring a bright future for Cambridge ESOL.



Project focus Recognising languages as an asset



In today's global economy, language skills are becoming increasingly important for UK business. Cambridge Assessment is playing a strong strategic role in forging a path in language assessment as part of the National Languages Strategy.

Launched by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in 2002, the National Languages Strategy aims to improve the teaching and learning of languages and introduces a voluntary national recognition scheme for languages.

The Languages Ladder was created by the DfES as the foundation of this recognition scheme—the ladder is a scale of six stages and 17 grades which describe communicative language abilities in terms of simple Can Do statements. Cambridge Assessment successfully bid for the contract to develop the formal assessment for the Languages Ladder and created the Asset Languages brand for the scheme.

The project has proved an excellent example of cross-business-stream working, combining the research and language assessment development skills of ESOL with the market knowledge and operational strength of OCR. The Asset Languages team has worked incredibly hard to deliver assessment materials in eight languages and three stages in a little over two years, with a further 15 languages and three stages still to come.

Cambridge Assessment has collaborated closely with the DfES to deliver this challenging multi-million pound government contract on time. Through tight management we have demonstrated our ability to deliver a complex project, a strength that can be highlighted to target other potential markets. The Welsh Assembly Government has recently decided to adopt Asset Languages qualifications for use in schools in Wales.

Asset Languages helps position us as influencing thinking on assessment by offering a new direction in language qualifications for learners in the UK. The separate skills assessment and range of languages covered opens up opportunities for learners of all ages to have their abilities recognised. By the end of this first year of live assessments over 25,000 external assessment grades will have been awarded to over 10,000 learners from primary school age linguists to adult language learners, delivering measurable results against the DfES strategy mantra of 'Languages for All, Languages for Life'.

'Cambridge ESOL is committed to leading change and to being inclusive, working and consulting with partners and stakeholders'

The Cambridge Assessment difference

It is the quality of the people and of the things which Cambridge Assessment achieves that make it such an attractive organisation to work for. In my previous role as Head of Research with the national regulator, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), I watched with interest as Government laid claim to things which had actually originated in awarding bodies—modular qualifications, new forms of assessment, innovative curriculum projects linked to examinations. Being able to join an organisation which sets such store by well-grounded processes and innovations is a considerable privilege.

I believe profoundly in evidence-based policy and practice, and am committed to ensuring that well-designed research enhances operational work as well as influences policy and public debates. But there's so much more to do in getting it all right. I still attend conferences and

seminars where poorly-designed research is quoted as definitive, where policy positions are rolled out without consideration of the findings of key research projects, and where people fail to integrate research from different disciplines. On such occasions, I take a deep breath and then dive in to the discussion—at least it means that the debates aren't dull, even if they do get a little testy! But it highlights the extent to which it's important not just to do sound research but to get it into the right places and to help people to understand it fully, and this is where Cambridge Assessment has a positive point of difference.

In framing and undertaking research into assessment we have to take account of social and educational benefit, and we need to be ever-aware of the unintended consequences of the systems we run—and particularly of the new things we, and others, introduce. Research usually requires highly disciplined and technical work, but we must never lose sight of its social and moral purpose, nor of its fundamentally practical orientation: to enhance understanding of the way in which things work and, wherever possible, to make them work better. This all sounds very high minded, but to lose sight of this is to lose focus on how to design, run and disseminate sound research and, as assessment experts, it is our role to lead the way.



Tim Oates
Group Director
Assessment Research & Development

'I believe profoundly in evidence-based policy and practice'

The project has proved an excellent example of cross-business-stream working

Product focus New Developments Division



achieve is Cambridge Assessment's online formative assessment system, produced in conjunction with Harcourt Education, a publisher with an excellent track record in developing electronic resources. It is designed to help classroom teachers with the implementation of assessment for learning at Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 2 (KS2). Modules have already been published in Maths and Science, with English modules due to be released in 2007.

achieve grew out of a research project carried out in 2004–2005 which concluded that a web-based

low-stakes assessment system could be used effectively to support classroom teaching. In addition, market research indicated a strong demand for such a system in the KS2 and KS3 market. This has subsequently been fuelled by increasing interest from government and teaching organisations, following the popularity of research by Wiliam and Black on assessment for learning. The *achieve* system also supports the current 'personalised learning' agenda, as well as the QCA's national testing framework.

achieve features a number of innovations, demonstrating Cambridge Assessment's leading role in both computer-based testing and formative assessment. These include:

- » real-time online adaptive testing.

- » expansion of on-screen item types, including the use of item cloning.
- » automated pre-testing and item calibration.
- » linking assessment outcomes directly to teacher support materials and learning resources.

Through *achieve*, Cambridge Assessment is able to tap into the potential of formative assessment and support the positive use of assessment in the classroom. The partnership with a major publisher has proved to be a very effective one, pooling resources and expertise to steal a march on large multinational competitors. *achieve* presents a number of exciting opportunities for Cambridge Assessment to explore innovations in assessment and demonstrate our leading-edge thinking in an increasingly competitive arena.



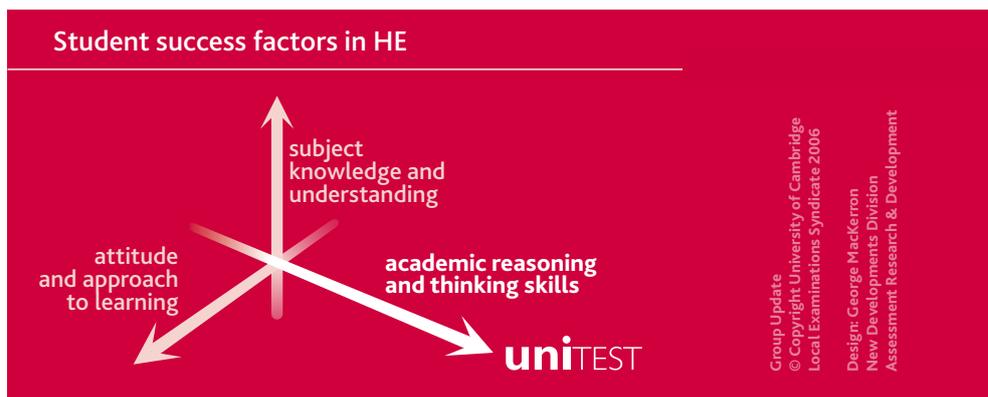
uniTEST

uniTEST is a generic university admissions test, developed by Cambridge Assessment in association with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), which assesses critical thinking skills in a 150 minute paper test. ACER was chosen because it has a proven record in critical thinking assessments designed for Higher Education (HE).

The uniTEST project comprises three elements:

- » A small-scale 'proof of concept' trial in September 2005.
- » A validity study, with pilot tests taken in May 2006 in collaboration with the universities of Bristol, Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Hertfordshire and Warwick
- » A research report based on analysis of the undergraduate data in 2007 from the pilot test cohort, plus interim reports after the September 2005 trial and May 2006 pilot.

uniTEST was developed in response to four key market factors:



- » The HE sector's need for better selection tools for university admissions.
- » A desire to widen participation in HE by identifying potential in candidates who might not be identified by more traditional means.
- » A competitive move by the Sutton Trust and College Boards to pilot the American SAT.
- » Interest from the DfES in supporting the evaluation of such tests (also see recommendations in the Schwartz report).

Cambridge Assessment has seen a large growth in the requirement for HE admissions testing and is keen to take advantage of the opportunity to capitalise on the expertise gained

in developing the Cambridge Thinking Skills Assessment and the Biomedical Admissions Test. uniTEST will ensure that we continue to play a leading role in supporting the HE sector, whilst also providing us with an opportunity to capitalise on current educational policies.

Your views. Your feedback is important to us. We'd love to hear your views on Group Update, plus any suggestions for future issues. Email Amanda Hepton-Patchett: hepton-patchett.a@cambridgeassessment.org.uk