

Annual Review

2005–2006



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
Local Examinations Syndicate

Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, a department of the University of Cambridge. Cambridge Assessment is a not-for-profit organisation.

The influence that each of the two areas of activity within Cambridge Assessment exert on one another results in mutual benefits that enable the organisation to operate from an increased position of strength in the areas of research and assessment delivery.

Influencing Thinking

Research
Sharing knowledge
New developments

Delivering Assessment Services

International qualifications
Qualifications for teachers and learners of English
Mainstream UK qualifications

Introduction

Welcome to our second Annual Review. 2005–2006 was our first full year operating as Cambridge Assessment; successfully establishing a clearer identity and positioning ourselves more effectively as independent experts on a range of assessment issues.

Our aim is to influence education policy and strategy around the world to ensure individuals can reap the benefits of education. At the heart of this aim is our research which is highly valued and shared among assessment professionals at major events such as the annual International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) Conference. During the year we hosted more than 40 seminars and workshops which focused on different aspects of assessment and attracted more than 1,700 people within the world of assessment.

During 2005–2006 we successfully launched our Electronic Script Management (ESM) systems to more than 4,000 examiners for the collection of marks for over 1.5 million live scripts. Activity in this area continues to be a major priority for the Group, with the volume of scripts processed in this way expected to double next year. More resources were also allocated to computer-based testing with an extension of the in-house online test delivery engine, Connect, to support a range of qualifications.

To meet the challenges posed by UK 14–19 educational reforms, we created a single qualifications

division in OCR. We have also established a Psychometrics Centre, dedicated to the furtherance of scientific rigour in both pure and applied aspects of psychological measurement and educational assessment. The centre provides scientific principles for fair, accurate assessments used in interviews and other situations.

The first full year of the Asset Languages scheme was encouraging, with in excess of 15,000 entries and over 1,400 centres registering their interest in taking the qualifications in 2006–2007. Our qualification helps raise the status of the diverse languages used across Britain's multicultural society and meets the global demand for flexible learning.

Please take a look through our Annual Review for an overview of highlights from the last year. If you would like to find out additional information about us and the work we do, please visit: www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk.

Simon Lebus
Group Chief Executive
Cambridge Assessment

2005–2006 Highlights

• Winter 2005

The Psychometrics advantage

The Psychometrics Centre joins the Cambridge Assessment Group. The UK's only Professor of Psychometrics, John Rust, became Director of The Psychometrics Centre to develop new techniques for testing. Psychometrics is the science of psychological assessment and includes the measurement of knowledge, abilities, attitudes and personality traits.



International audience at Cambridge

The first annual Cambridge Assessment Conference was held by the Group's Network, attracting more than 200 delegates, including teachers, politicians, journalists and examiners. Internationally recognised education thinkers, including Baroness Onora O'Neill of Newnham College, Professor Barry McGaw of the OECD, Dr Nicholas Tate of the International School of Geneva, and Professor Alison Wolf of King's College London, presented their views on trust and assessment, raising fundamental issues about national assessment systems. Delegates also participated in discussion seminars about topics including: maintaining standards; teacher assessment; vocational qualifications; IT in assessment; and working with the mass media.



Writing skills improved

Our research hit the headlines, "Variation in Aspects of Writing in 16+ Examinations between 1980 and 2004" study revealed improvements in writing in GCSE English. Researchers also detected a welcome improvement in the standards attained by less able candidates and the closing of the gender gap in some key areas.



Electronic PET

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations trials a computer-based version of its Preliminary English Test (PET) – a valuable qualification for those who wish to show that their English is at B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Taken by over 19,000 people each year in more than 80 countries, the electronic version of PET will offer centres more flexibility and a faster turnaround time for candidate results.



• Spring 2006

Assessment for learning

achieve is launched at BETT. Developed in conjunction with Harcourt Assessment, *achieve* supports teachers in delivering formative KS3 assessment both in the classroom and at home. Teachers can compare and monitor performance over time and it provides diagnostic reporting, targeting and detailed teaching plans.

Creative industries take a step forward

OCR launches iMedia, a new qualification for the creative interactive media industry. It enables specialisation and entry into a wide range of interactive media jobs and is suitable for both students and professionals.



Cambridge ups the ante on education research

Growth leads to the largest education research capability of its kind in Europe. Following a recruitment drive, our Research Division increased by a third. The enhanced research programme is designed to help exam boards, government and regulators make better informed decisions on assessment related issues.

English competency skills

Fair language testing for migrants is championed, as Cambridge ESOL assists policy makers in ensuring that suitable language tests are chosen, used and reported appropriately for migrant workers to formally prove their "English competency skills".

• Summer 2006

Cambridge Assessment in the House of Commons

Politicians got an insight into the world of assessment by Cambridge Assessment exhibiting in the House of Commons. The purpose of the display was to inform and update members of parliament and civil servants about the work of the Group around the world. Demonstrations included BULATS, *achieve*, CIE's IGCSE Geography and Asset Languages.



New leader for research

Former Head of Research and Statistics at the QCA, Tim Oates, joins Cambridge Assessment as Group Director of the Assessment Research and Development division which incorporates The Psychometrics Centre, Cambridge Assessment Network, Research and New Developments. Tim's arrival signals an enhanced programme of the Group's activities in influencing thinking on assessment issues.



Sporting chance

New initiative – 'Key Skills through Sports Leadership' is developed by OCR and Sports Leaders UK. 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.



Going global

CIE develops Cambridge IGCSE in Global Thinking Perspectives. The qualification will enhance students' understanding and analysis of a number of topical issues 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.



Autumn 2006

Cambridge Pre-U previewed

CIE's Cambridge Pre-U specification is previewed by Heads and Deputies. Around 100 head teachers from across the UK gathered to hear about the new qualification. Cambridge Pre-U aims to give post-16 students the skills and knowledge they need to make a success of their university studies and to prepare them for their first year at university.

The future's online

The first fully e-assessed GCSE in the UK is developed by OCR and will combine both e-testing and e-coursework. OCR's GCSE Environmental and Land-Based Science examinations are delivered entirely electronically and taken on screen using Connect – the Group's internally developed Computer Based Testing System.



Warehouse opens

Opening of giant warehouse on the outskirts of Cambridge consolidates the Group's logistical capabilities and introduces state of the art processing and security systems.

It's all about choice

CIE's Cambridge IGCSE is the world's most popular international qualification for 14–16 year olds – and is still growing. It provides a progression route into advance level study. The Cambridge IGCSE is an internally based curriculum allowing teaching to be placed in a localised context, making it relevant in different regions. It is also suitable for students whose first language may not be English.

On the horizon

We celebrate our 150th anniversary in 2008. Although there have been many changes to the education system over the years, the ethos that sparked the creation of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations

Syndicate (the original name of Cambridge Assessment) still drives our work today. We continue to strive for the ongoing improvement to assessment systems and methodologies used around the world to ensure learners access the benefits of their education.

We are going to use the 150th anniversary celebrations to illustrate the full range and breadth of our expertise in assessment – building on our history to take us into the future – with a full programme of activities planned.

Underpinning the year will be the launch of a book in February, entitled "Examining the World". This has been compiled, using archive materials and chapters by educational historians as well as previous and current employees, to commemorate and officially record our Group's heritage.

During the spring, we will host the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) 3rd International Conference in Cambridge. We will also hold an international Education Attaché reception at the Foreign Commonwealth Offices, Lancaster House, in London.

We are proud to host the 34th Annual International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) Conference in the autumn. The theme of the Conference is *Re-interpreting Assessment: Society, Measurement and Meaning*. The event provides a forum for participants from around the world to share expertise, and strengthen mutual understanding and relationships.

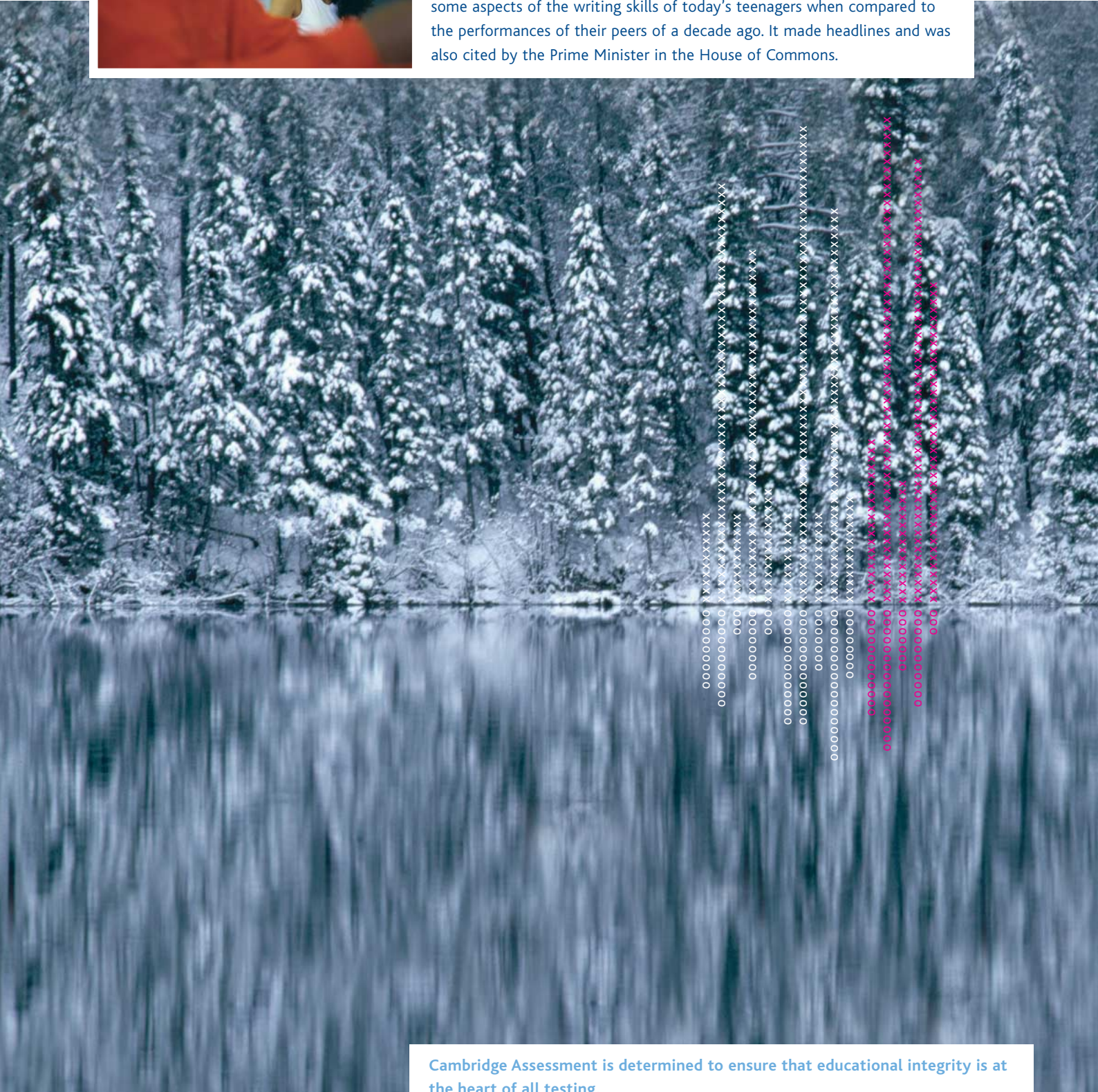
We will also showcase historic material from our archives. An exhibition will tour selected venues during the year including the Board of Graduate Studies (based in the original Syndicate building) on Mill Lane, Cambridge and our major reception areas in Cambridge and Coventry.

I hope you take advantage of this opportunity to visit our exhibition and we look forward to seeing many of you during our celebratory year. For information please visit our website during the forthcoming months www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk



Case Study – Aspects of Writing

Our research study, "Variations in Aspects of Writing in 16+ English Examinations between 1980 and 2004", was published in late 2005. The Aspects of Writing programme was established more than 20 years ago and studies the variations in the way students, originally at O Level and now at GCSE, write. The research revealed there was a definite return to form in some aspects of the writing skills of today's teenagers when compared to the performances of their peers of a decade ago. It made headlines and was also cited by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons.



Cambridge Assessment is determined to ensure that educational integrity is at the heart of all testing.

Influencing Thinking

Research

Our education research capability is the largest of its kind in Europe. By studying the outcomes of education and training throughout the world we drive improvements.

We have two research divisions – our English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tests are supported by the largest dedicated research team of any UK-based provider of English language assessment, and the Assessment Research and Development division influences thinking on assessment through published papers and seminars.

This year we established a Research Programmes Board to provide a strategic research programme across the Group.

A contract was won with England's Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to investigate the comparability between GCSEs and vocational GCSEs. Work was carried out with the Institute of Public Policy Research on its New Agenda for Schools Project – the focus of our involvement was on Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment. We also continued to work collaboratively with other organisations, including the British Dyslexia Association.

We received backing from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in the autumn of 2006, to continue our Aspects of Writing programme for a further two years. The new study will enable entire pieces of students' writing to be analysed.

On average about 70 validity studies are conducted annually on existing and proposed exams, as well as on assessment approaches and theories. Validity studies examine test items to ensure they are fit for purpose. Among other studies, we looked into Business Language Testing Systems (BULATS). We

researched marker reliability to determine whether there were any variances in interpretation of mark schemes by the markers of the exam papers. We also investigated grading methods for Business English Certificate (BEC), Young Learners English (YLE) and International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

In particular, through our Cambridge ESOL Research and Validation team, we have undertaken studies to analyse the language needs of particular occupational groups which led to the introduction of new qualifications for legal and financial English.

The team also carried out a major benchmarking study for the Colombian government to assess levels of English across school and university students. This research initiative will form the basis of further collaborative projects with the Colombian Ministry of Education.

A thorough review of First Certificate in English (FCE) and Certificate of Advance English (CAE), two of the world's best known and most widely recognised qualifications for learners of English, was carried out. The review led to a number of enhancements, including an overall reduction in exam time.

Influencing Thinking | **Sharing Knowledge**

We are committed to sharing knowledge to encourage and enhance the development of all those involved in assessment. Our communication network links assessment professionals across the globe, from teachers to researchers, ministries and regulators to government.

During 2005–2006 the Cambridge Assessment Network held more than 40 seminars and workshops which attracted high profile speakers. The Cambridge Assessment Network developed a Certificate in the Principles and Practice of Assessment in conjunction with the Institute of Continuing Education at the University of Cambridge which is open to our own staff, as well as teachers, trainers and the general public. It also ran a programme of courses designed to inspire professional development.

Our researchers delivered papers on a broad range of assessment subjects at more than 70 conferences around the world during the year. This included the delivery of a keynote address by the Director of the Research Division at the 10th Annual Round-table Assessment Conference in Melbourne. We had significant representation at the 2006 British Educational Research Association (BERA) Conference presenting ten papers. We also published a number of papers in refereed journals, and in two specialist encyclopaedias. Additionally, we produced two publications designed to share our knowledge with the assessment community – *Research Notes* which is quarterly and *Research Matters* which is published twice a year.

We took a leading role in the English Profile Project, which aims to assist learners and teachers to understand what real English language use actually looks like at each level of the influential Common European Framework of Reference. The English Profile project is a collaboration with the British Council, Cambridge University Press, English UK, the Research Centre for English and Applied Linguistics (University of Cambridge), Cambridge ESOL Examinations and the Centre for Research in English Language Learning and Assessment (University of Bedfordshire).

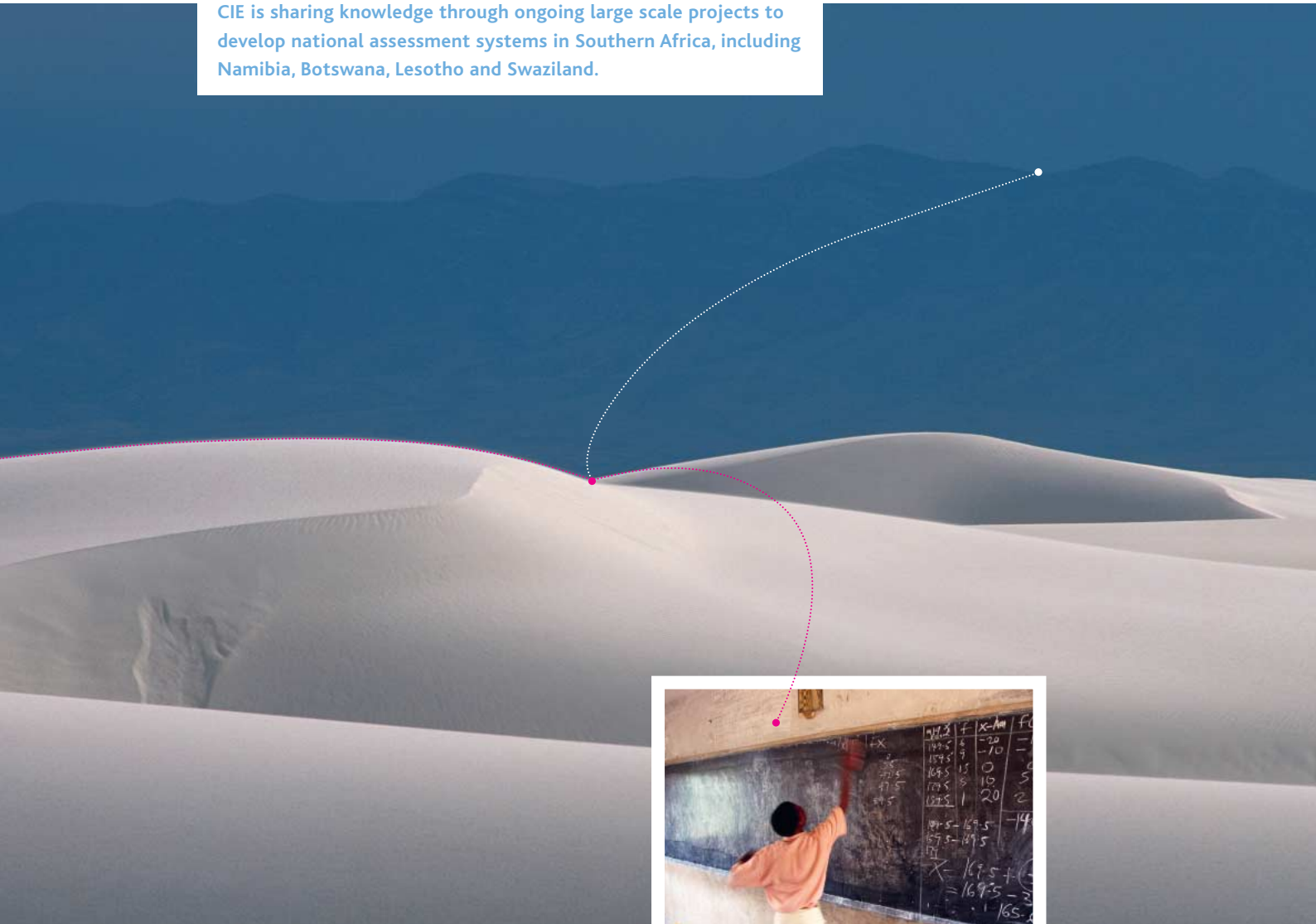
As part of our ongoing commitment to teachers, Cambridge ESOL organised around 600 seminars and attended more than 100 English Language Teaching conferences and exhibitions. Major events were held in Greece and Switzerland in collaboration with our Association of Languages Testers in Europe (ALTE) partners to mark the European Day of Languages in September 2005.

CIE continued collaboration with a number of ministries of education and shared global best practice in teaching through seminar programmes and offered formal professional development courses worldwide. In addition, CIE is providing advice and assistance in several national curriculum reform programmes and is moving towards broader access educational systems.

Internationally, Global Best Practice proved a popular theme. CIE staged more professional development courses, which cover both subject-specific training and wider pedagogical development, than ever before. CIE also provided thousands of skills transfer days and ran hundreds of sessions, both face to face and online for teachers.

Diploma Watch – designed by OCR to provide regular updates on the specialised Diplomas – was launched in 2006. We published five issues as part of our commitment to consult and keep schools and colleges informed during the development and introduction of the Government's proposed 14–19 Diplomas. OCR contributed through the year to a continuing debate between awarding bodies, regulators and Government about the national qualifications frameworks in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. OCR's analysis, drawing on the global experiences of the Group, helped to shape a two-year trial of a new

CIE is sharing knowledge through ongoing large scale projects to develop national assessment systems in Southern Africa, including Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.



approach in England which tries to embed employer input with greater choice for learners while ensuring qualifications are fit-for-purpose.

Over the year, OCR engaged extensively with the Government, regulators and teachers over the 14–19 White Paper reforms. We successfully argued for the retention of coursework where it is appropriate; shaped a programme of pilots for functional skills assessments; and helped the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to turn the work of

employer-led Diploma Development Partnerships into a workable framework for diploma development.

The Psychometrics Centre joined Cambridge Assessment in November 2005, under the direction of Professor John Rust, the UK's only Professor of Psychometrics. It provides a resource to be used by the Group to increase internal levels of psychometric expertise, as well as serving business and education communities externally, and will continue to explore external opportunities.

Influencing Thinking | New Developments

The Cambridge Assessment Group manages the development and delivery of innovative products and services to teachers and learners in 150 countries around the world. We understand that greater mobility through globalisation has created new demands for qualifications and have incorporated the latest technological and academic developments into our assessments.

New technology in assessment

Launched at BETT 2006, *achieve* is a new interactive 'assessment for learning' system to support teachers in the implementation of formative assessment in the classroom. We developed the flexible online assessments in conjunction with leading educational publisher, Harcourt Education. *achieve* is 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. It also provides diagnostic reporting, targeting and detailed teaching plans. Focusing on KS3 core subjects (English, Maths and Science) it covers all the National Curriculum attainment targets in each subject.

OCR launched the UK's first e-assessed GCSE. The Environmental and Land-Based Science specifications allow learners to complete the whole qualification through on-screen examinations and the use of a digital portfolio for coursework.

Cambridge ESOL introduced its online results service during the year. This innovative service allows candidates to access their results online as soon as they are issued. It has proved extremely popular and will be rolled out across the full range of exams during the coming year.

This year also saw a major milestone passed in CIE's Computer Based Testing strategy with the sitting of the first all-electronic component. Cambridge IGCSE Geography Alternative to Practical was taken in May by over 250 students in 20 centres. The computer-based examination requires students to carry out virtual fieldwork by using interactive software that incorporates video, images and sound.

During the examination, students are asked to carry out a variety of tasks including traffic surveys and interviews. We also piloted a computer-based version of our Checkpoint Mathematics diagnostic test involving five schools.

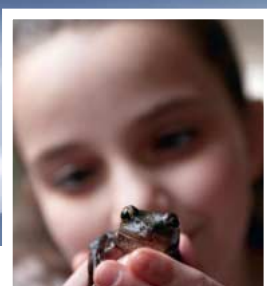
New qualifications and assessments

We worked with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to develop and pilot a generic university admissions test – uniTEST. We are also developing and trialling a new test for the English Faculty at Oxford University.

International Legal English Certificate (ILEC) was introduced in partnership with lawyer-linguists Translegal and interest is growing following examinations in May 2006. This is the first exam which Cambridge ESOL has provided for a specific profession and is complemented by the textbook *Legal English Course* published by Cambridge University Press. ILEC will be followed by the International Certificate in Financial English (ICFE) in 2007. ICFE has been developed in collaboration with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). Cambridge ESOL and ACCA are working with Cambridge University Press to pilot a blended learning course.

To help Italian universities meet government requirements to increase the number of students reaching level B1 in English, a unique partnership was formed. Cambridge ESOL, Cambridge University Press and the Association of Italian University Rectors (CRUI) developed an interactive blended learning course for Italian university students. A blended course combines several methods of tuition; in this case self-access study and online tuition.

OCR's ground-breaking new GCSE Science specifications have proven to be very popular with teachers. In particular, the Twenty First Century Science suite, with its emphasis on placing scientific understanding in real-world contexts.



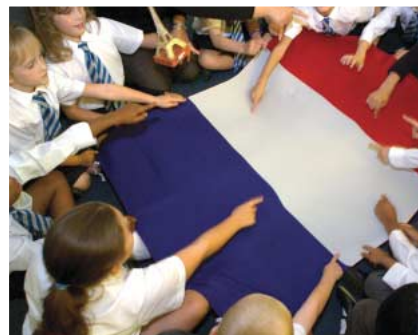
Development has begun on the Cambridge Pre-U, a major new initiative in post-16 education, which prepares students for university and is an alternative to AS/A Level. It seeks to develop a perspective which equips young people to understand a range of different cultures and ideas, and to respond successfully to the opportunity for international mobility. Over 1,000 educators from schools and universities have been taking part in our consultation on the overall qualification and its component parts – subject syllabuses, Independent Research Report and Global Perspectives course. Cambridge Pre-U will be available for first teaching from September 2008 and for first full examination in June 2010.

Our Asset Languages scheme attracted interest during its first full year. Asset Languages is the assessment scheme for the UK Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Languages Ladder and is being developed by Cambridge Assessment through OCR and Cambridge ESOL, as part of the National Languages

Strategy. The scheme is designed to reward language skills for learners of all ages and abilities, from primary to adult. We are developing qualifications, at six stages, in over 20 different languages in all four skill areas – listening, speaking, reading and writing. During the year, work included comparability across skills and languages, the relationship of Asset Languages assessments to existing UK qualifications, and the impact of Asset Languages assessments on teaching and the motivation of learners.

Through The Psychometrics Centre we offer a full range of British Psychological Society approved courses leading to relevant BPS Certificates of Competence in Occupational Testing. These are established qualifications for anyone seeking career development in HR management and meet the professional guidelines of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. The courses are also suitable for recruiters, occupational psychologists and management professionals.

Critical Thinking was OCR's fastest growing A Level. Critical Thinking is highly valued in higher education, and by a growing number of teachers who feel that, as well as offering a challenge to learners in its own right, it helps them develop generic skills which enhance their achievement in other subjects.



Case Study – Asset Languages

Schools have found that by adopting the Asset Languages scheme there is increased motivation for pupils who often experience a feeling of failure in many areas of the curriculum. Pupils, who normally do not have any formal qualification in modern foreign languages on leaving school, are now able to have a nationally recognised certificate of achievement. Since September 2005, in excess of 15,000 candidates have made entries across the range of languages offered and a further 50,000 are expected to make entries for summer 2007. Over 1,400 schools have already registered an interest in making entries in the future.

Delivering Assessment Services

The exam boards within the Cambridge Assessment Group all ensure learners receive a fair and accurate assessment of their achievements.

University of Cambridge International Examinations

In 2005–2006 over 400,000 candidates entered our University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) syllabuses in 150 countries through 6,000 schools, centres and distributors. The examinations taken included Cambridge IGCSE, O Level and International AS and A Levels.

In November CIE launched CIEDirect, a secure centre extranet designed to replace most traditional administrative transactions. Use of the site has been widespread, with more than 2,000 centres using it to receive their results in January and August. Development also started on a new version of CIE's public website, CIEOnline, which launched in March 2007. The new site is designed to make it easier for different types of users to find relevant content and to improve the recruitment of centres online.

University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations

Cambridge ESOL tests grew worldwide across the entire range of examinations and services. IELTS remains the test of choice for immigration to many English speaking countries and is now recognised by more than 4,000 universities and other educational institutions. Growing recognition in the USA – where nearly 900 institutions recognise the test, including seven of the eight Ivy League schools – has helped to fuel growth.

To support teachers with their own professional development the Cambridge ESOL Teacher Portfolio was launched. It is a secure, free, online portfolio that enables teachers anywhere in the world to store materials, lesson plans, teaching reflections and their career details. Computer-based Preliminary English Test (PET) was launched in some countries in Europe.

There is also considerable interest from Latin America and other parts of the world.

In the UK, the Cambridge ESOL's Skills for Life exams have been extremely successful and entries continue to grow rapidly, due to the exceptionally high level of support that Cambridge ESOL provides for teachers. The innovative Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) has also seen a sharp rise in candidates and has attracted recognition from ministries of education and other official bodies in several countries.

The worldwide network of Cambridge ESOL offices and staff continues to increase, with new offices in Mexico and Vietnam and expanded teams in China and Spain.

OCR

Anticipating the 14–19 reforms, and recognising that a growing number of schools and colleges are increasingly mixing general and vocational offerings, OCR brought together its two qualifications divisions to form a single new division. We believe this will enable schools and colleges to engage more effectively and flexibly with us as they tailor their choices to their particular learners.

In their second year, OCR Nationals were taken by a growing number of schools and colleges. For some, this offered a replacement for GNVQs, for many others OCR Nationals presented an opportunity to incorporate vocational programmes for the first time. Many more schools and colleges are preparing to adopt Nationals in 2006–2007.

OCR became the leading provider of adult Basic Skills tests, and was particularly active in supporting Basic Skills testing in prisons. By the end of the year, the majority of tests were being taken on-screen.

Summary

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)

We hope you enjoyed reading our Annual Review which reflects the activity undertaken across the Group. This continues to drive our ambition of raising educational standards around the world to ensure learners reap the benefit of education as established in 1858 by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (the original name of Cambridge Assessment).

All feedback and comments are welcome.

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To find out more about Cambridge Assessment please visit:

www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

For more information about our three exam boards please visit:

www.ocr.org.uk

www.cie.org.uk

www.cambridgeesol.org



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

INFLUENCE THINKING

Sharing Expertise

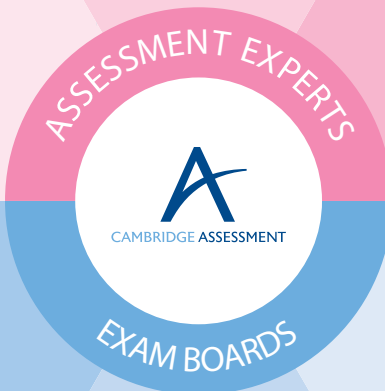
Professional network
Psychometrics
Centre

New Developments

Current examples:
Assessment for learning
HE entrance tests

Research

Largest assessment
research capability in
Europe



Qualifications for learners
and teachers of English:
leading provider



International 14–19
qualifications:
largest provider



Mainstream UK
qualifications:
major provider

DELIVER EXAMINATIONS



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