

# SYLLABUS

**Cambridge International Level 3  
Pre-U Certificate in  
Global Perspectives and Independent Research  
9777**

For examination in June 2021

This syllabus is regulated for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland as a Cambridge International Level 3 Pre-U Certificate. QN: 500/4010/8

## Changes to the syllabus for 2021

The latest syllabus is version 3, published May 2018.

This syllabus is now offered in the June series only. Please see page 9 for details.

### **Changes to previous version, published September 2016.**

We have added guidance on Total Qualification Time value (TQT). TQT includes both guided learning hours and independent learning activities. The number of hours required to gain the qualification may vary according to local curricular practice and the learners' prior experience of the subject.

|| Significant changes to the syllabus are indicated by double black vertical lines either side of ||  
the text.

**You are strongly advised to read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.**

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# Section 1: Pre-U Certificate in Global Perspectives and Independent Research

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## Introduction

### Why choose Cambridge Pre-U?

Cambridge Pre-U is designed to equip learners with the skills required to make a success of their studies at university. Schools can choose from a wide range of subjects.

Cambridge Pre-U is built on a core set of educational aims to prepare learners for university admission, and also for success in higher education and beyond:

- to support independent and self-directed learning
- to encourage learners to think laterally, critically and creatively, and to acquire good problem-solving skills
- to promote comprehensive understanding of the subject through depth and rigour.

Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects are linear. A candidate must take all the components together at the end of the course in one examination series. Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects are assessed at the end of a two-year programme of study.

The Cambridge Pre-U nine-point grade set recognises the full range of learner ability.

## Why choose Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Independent Research?

The Cambridge Pre-U curriculum is underpinned by a core set of educational principles:

- A programme of study which supports the development of well-informed, open and independent-minded individuals capable of applying their skills to meet the demands of the world as they will find it and over which they may have influence.
- A curriculum which retains the integrity of subject specialisms and which can be efficiently, effectively and reliably assessed, graded and reported to meet the needs of universities.
- A curriculum which is designed to recognise a wide range of individual talents, interests and abilities and which provides the depth and rigour required for a university degree course.
- A curriculum which encourages the acquisition of specific skills and abilities, in particular the skills of problem-solving, creativity, thinking critically, team working and effective communication.
- The encouragement of 'deep understanding' in learning – where that deep understanding is likely to involve higher-order cognitive activities.
- The development of 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.

In addition to the aims that run through and inform the Cambridge Pre-U subject syllabuses, Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Independent Research seeks to add value in terms of coherence, depth and breadth, through:

- Expanding creative, critical and responsible awareness through the tackling of global issues in Global Perspectives.
- Encouraging focused personal exploration and increased depth of study through the Independent Research Report.

**Global Perspectives** places academic specialisation in a practical, real-world context, being a seminar-based opportunity to research and explore a range of issues challenging people across the globe. Developing critical/analytical, research, and problem-solving skills essential to higher education, candidates will learn to place their personal perspectives in a global context, finding new inspiration and challenges for their studies. Candidates will submit a presentation and an essay from their portfolio and sit an examination.

The **Independent Research Report** gives candidates the chance to dig still deeper into a particular subject, or to cross boundaries by doing interdisciplinary work, or to make a new departure by investigating a subject not covered by traditional school syllabuses. Candidates submit a single piece of extended work on their chosen theme.

## Skills and perspectives

Global Perspectives seeks directly to assess generic skills relating to thinking critically and enquiry.

The Independent Research Report assesses some generic study skills at a high level, while also giving credit for advanced subject (and where appropriate interdisciplinary) knowledge and understanding.

|               | Detail              | Subject Syllabuses | Global Perspectives | Independent Research Report |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Knowledge     | Subject-specific    | *                  |                     | *                           |
|               | Cross-curricular    |                    |                     | *                           |
| Understanding | Subject-specific    | *                  |                     | *                           |
|               | Cross-curricular    |                    | *                   | *                           |
| Skills        | Subject-specific    | *                  |                     |                             |
|               | Cross-curricular    | *                  | *                   | *                           |
| Reflection    | Interdisciplinary   |                    | *                   | *                           |
|               | Self-reflective     |                    | *                   | *                           |
|               | Thinking critically |                    | *                   |                             |

Detailed assessment objectives for both Global Perspectives and the Independent Research Report are provided in the relevant sections in this syllabus.

## Assessment, grading and aggregation of Global Perspectives and Independent Research

A candidate taking Global Perspectives must take components 1, 2 and 3 in the same session. The Independent Research Report can be taken in a different session from Global Perspectives but should be taken within 13 months to claim the Global Perspectives and Independent Research certificate.

Candidates wishing to improve their performance in Global Perspectives must retake all three components 1, 2 and 3. They will **not** be allowed to resit individual components.

The Cambridge International Level 3 Pre-U Certificates are graded on a scale of nine grades: D1 (Distinction 1), D2, D3, M1 (Merit 1), M2, M3, P1 (Pass 1), P2, P3. Grades achieved for the four components will be aggregated to provide a single grade for the Cambridge Pre-U Certificate in Global Perspectives and Independent Research.

## Entry options for Global Perspectives and Independent Research

Candidates should be entered for Global Perspectives and Independent Research using the syllabus code **9777**.

## Options

Entry codes and instructions for making entries can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*. Other administrative documents, including timetables and administrative instructions, can be found at [www.cie.org.uk/examsOfficers](http://www.cie.org.uk/examsOfficers)

Candidates who wish to improve their performance on Global Perspectives may take all three components again in the same session as submitting the Independent Research Report. Candidates should be aware, however, that only the most recent result will count towards certification.

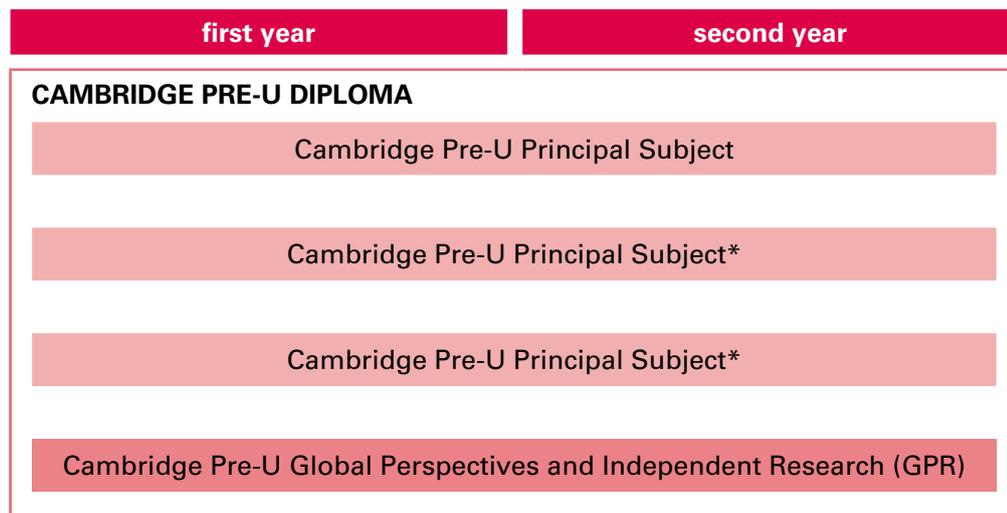
## Prior learning

Global Perspectives builds on the knowledge, understanding and skills gained by learners achieving a good pass in Level 1/Level 2 qualifications.

The course will equip candidates with a coherent theoretical and practical basis of transferable skills and key knowledge suitable for future lawyers, scientists, doctors and academic researchers, while providing thought-provoking material that may appeal to those intending to progress to study in higher education and ultimately into a wide range of careers.

## Cambridge Pre-U Diploma

If learners choose, they can combine Cambridge Pre-U qualifications to achieve the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma; this comprises three Cambridge Pre-U Principal Subjects\* together with Global Perspectives and Independent Research (GPR). The Cambridge Pre-U Diploma, therefore, provides the opportunity for interdisciplinary study informed by an international perspective and includes an independent research project.



\* Up to two A Levels, Scottish Advanced Highers or IB Diploma programme courses at higher level can be substituted for Principal Subjects.

Learn more about the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma at [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu)

## Support

Cambridge provides a wide range of support for Pre-U syllabuses, which includes recommended resource lists, Teacher Guides and Example Candidate Response booklets. Teachers can access these support materials at Teacher Support <https://teachers.cie.org.uk>

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## Section 2: Global Perspectives

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### Introduction

Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives aims to prepare young people for positive engagement with a rapidly changing world, broadening their outlook through the critical analysis of and reflection on, issues of global significance.

This syllabus is firmly based on skills rather than specific content. Through the study of global issues, learners will explore different and sometimes opposing perspectives and will acquire and develop thinking and reasoning skills as well as research and communication skills. These skills will enable learners to meet the demands of the twenty-first century and to make a successful transition to study in higher education.

Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives encourages transformative learning, where learners become critically aware of their own beliefs and assumptions and those of others, developing valid arguments by reflecting on and interpreting a range of evidence.

Advances in technology have changed our access to information and the way we communicate and work. Increasingly, young people are faced with a multiplicity of competing ideas, information and arguments and they need to be able to think critically to deconstruct arguments, to differentiate between the ways in which people express their perspectives, to assess and evaluate claims and to develop lines of reasoning.

Learners will develop research skills that will enable them to obtain information, evaluate the reliability and usefulness of this information and use the evidence gathered to construct their own arguments and support lines of reasoning.

Through well-defined stages, called the Critical Path, learners will apply a logical approach to decision-making. Learners will be able to analyse the structure and context of arguments, assess the impact and limitations of evidence and make well-reasoned judgements through informed research. Learners will learn to organise and communicate their findings in appropriate formats.

Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives prepares learners for further education and for life-long learning across a range of disciplines by helping them to be:

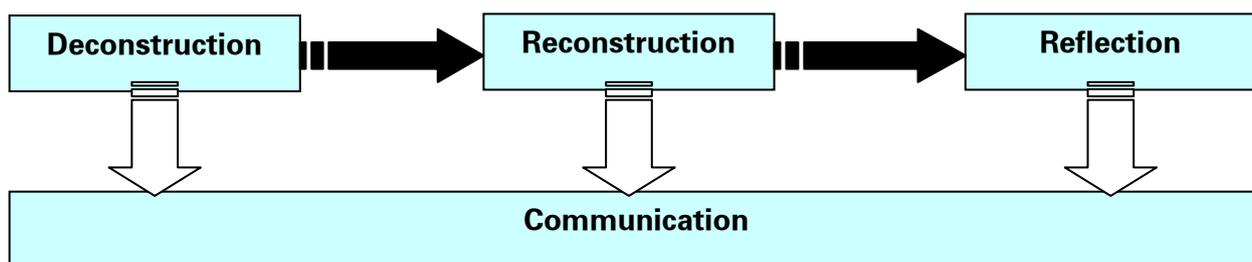
- **confident** in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others
- **responsible** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others
- **innovative** and equipped for new and future challenges
- **engaged** intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference

## Syllabus aims

The aims of the syllabus, listed below, are the same for all candidates.

- Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives will appeal to young people because it enables them to explore issues of global significance and offers them opportunities to acquire, develop and apply skills in critical thinking, research and communication.
- Not only does Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives equip learners with the skills they need in a rapidly changing intellectual and technical environment, it also prepares and encourages them to engage confidently with issues and ideas of global significance.
- To encourage learners to think critically, this syllabus presents an approach to analysing and evaluating arguments and perspectives called the Critical Path.
- Candidates will learn how to deconstruct and reconstruct arguments by researching global issues and interrogating evidence. They will reflect on the implications of their research and analysis from a personal perspective and communicate their findings and ideas as reasoned arguments.

### The Critical Path



Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives aims to develop learners by:

- providing opportunities to acquire disciplined and scholarly research skills
- promoting a critical, questioning approach to information that is often taken for granted
- encouraging self-reflection and independence of thought
- encouraging an understanding of and engagement with some of the key global issues that they will face wherever they live and work
- encouraging an awareness and understanding of and respect for the diversity of perspectives on global issues
- encouraging an interdisciplinary approach to global issues

## Progression

Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives serves as a basis from which a candidate may subsequently embark with confidence on the Independent Research Report, having developed the skills involved in identifying questions, locating and evaluating sources and perspectives, and in setting out a realistic and meaningful research agenda. The Global Perspectives assessment ends at the point where a candidate might be expected to be aware of the issues involved in setting up a research proposal, identifying an appropriate question, and undertaking a literature review or its equivalent. These latter skills are assessed generically in Global Perspectives, and are then assessed in relation to a particular piece of original research in the Independent Research Report.

The approach taken by Global Perspectives is very different from, but seeks to complement and carry forward, the subject-specific approaches elsewhere in the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma. The focus here is on candidates learning how to learn – on providing them with the tools for independent, pro-active, interdisciplinary study.

## Scheme of assessment

For Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Independent Research, candidates take all three components.

| Component   |                                    | Weighting |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Component 1 Written paper</b><br>Structured questions based on sources. 30 marks<br>Externally assessed.                                       | <b>1 hour 30 minutes</b>           | 25%       |
| <b>Component 2 Essay</b><br>Essay based on a global issue. 30 marks<br>Externally assessed.   |                                    | 30%       |
| <b>Component 3 Presentation</b><br>Presentation based on pre-released source materials provided by Cambridge.<br>40 marks<br>Externally assessed. | <b>max 15 minutes running time</b> | 45%       |

Components 2 and 3 are submitted in electronic form and marked by Cambridge. For submission dates, please see the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*.

Guidance on appropriate formats and procedures for the submitted work will be provided. Centres are strongly advised to retain securely either a hard copy or an electronic copy of the complete submission.

### Availability

This syllabus is examined in the June examination series.

This syllabus is not available to private candidates.

### Combining this with other syllabuses

Candidates can combine this syllabus in a series with any other Cambridge syllabus, except syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

## Assessment objectives

Throughout the course, candidates will gain knowledge and understanding of the background to a range of global issues and will appreciate the diversity of perspectives within them. This knowledge and understanding will underpin and inform the skills they will acquire, but will **not** be separately assessed.

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>A01</b> | <p><b>Deconstruction</b><br/>Analyse and evaluate conclusions, arguments, reasoning or claims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>critically compare <b>different perspectives</b></li> <li>analyse the <b>structure</b> of arguments, reasoning or claims and identify the <b>key components</b></li> <li>evaluate the <b>implications</b> of the conclusions, arguments, reasoning or claims.</li> <li>analyse and evaluate the <b>strengths</b> and <b>weaknesses</b> of arguments, reasoning or claims</li> <li>evaluate the <b>validity</b> of the conclusions, arguments, reasoning or claims</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>A02</b> | <p><b>Reconstruction</b><br/>Analyse the evidence for conclusions, arguments, reasoning or claims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>research and analyse <b>evidence</b> to support conclusions, arguments, reasoning or claims</li> <li>evaluate <b>sources</b> used to support conclusions, arguments, reasoning or claims</li> <li>research and analyse <b>alternative perspectives</b> and <b>conclusions</b> against the supporting evidence</li> <li>identify and analyse the <b>context</b> upon which arguments have been based</li> <li>evaluate the <b>reliability</b> and <b>credibility</b> of sources</li> </ul>                   |
| <b>A03</b> | <p><b>Reflection</b><br/>Assess the impact of research on personal perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>state <b>personal perspectives</b> before carrying out research</li> <li>research <b>alternative perspectives</b> objectively, with <b>sympathy</b> and <b>empathy</b></li> <li>evaluate the <b>impact</b> of alternative perspectives and conclusions on personal perspectives</li> <li>identify the <b>need</b> for further research and <b>suggest</b> its likely impact on personal perspectives</li> </ul>   |
| <b>A04</b> | <p><b>Communication</b><br/>Communicate views, information and research effectively and convincingly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>select</b> and <b>present</b> relevant information, in a <b>balanced, coherent</b> and <b>well-structured</b> way to a non-specialist audience</li> <li><b>present</b> complex, global concepts and perspectives effectively, using <b>appropriate</b> media</li> <li><b>develop</b> and <b>present</b> convincing and <b>well-supported</b> lines of reasoning <b>based on</b> supporting evidence</li> <li>use <b>appropriate technical terms</b> and <b>cite</b> references effectively</li> </ul> |

## Relationship between scheme of assessment and assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

| Assessment objective      | Weighting in Pre-U % |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>AO1 Deconstruction</b> | 27                   |
| <b>AO2 Reconstruction</b> | 30                   |
| <b>AO3 Reflection</b>     | 26                   |
| <b>AO4 Communication</b>  | 17                   |

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

| Assessment objective | Weighting in components % |             |             |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                      | Component 1               | Component 2 | Component 3 |
| <b>AO1</b>           | 60                        | 10          | 15          |
| <b>AO2</b>           | 40                        | 40          | 15          |
| <b>AO3</b>           | 0                         | 33          | 40          |
| <b>AO4</b>           | 0                         | 17          | 30          |

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## Grading and reporting

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Cambridge International Level 3 Pre-U Certificates (Principal Subjects and Global Perspectives Short Course) are qualifications in their own right. Cambridge Pre-U reports achievement on a scale of nine grades: Distinction 1, Distinction 2, Distinction 3, Merit 1, Merit 2, Merit 3, Pass 1, Pass 2 and Pass 3.

| Cambridge Pre-U band | Cambridge Pre-U grade |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Distinction</b>   | <b>1</b>              |
|                      | <b>2</b>              |
|                      | <b>3</b>              |
| <b>Merit</b>         | <b>1</b>              |
|                      | <b>2</b>              |
|                      | <b>3</b>              |
| <b>Pass</b>          | <b>1</b>              |
|                      | <b>2</b>              |
|                      | <b>3</b>              |

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## Grade descriptions

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Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

The following grade descriptions indicate the level of attainment characteristic of the middle of the given grade band.

### Distinction (D2)

Candidates characteristically:

- apply the language of reasoning in an appropriate, confident and precise way to the context
- demonstrate a secure understanding of the overall structure of subtle or complex argument, identifying key components accurately and, for example, distinguishing intermediate from main conclusion and recognising counter-argument where present
- demonstrate the ability to make perceptive critical evaluation of arguments in terms of their strengths, weaknesses, flaws, implicit assumptions, use of evidence, etc.
- where appropriate, interpret and clarify key expressions and ideas with precision
- critically assess the credibility of sources of evidence and the impact of those sources on the issue
- recognise contrasting points of view and identify the reasoning underpinning those points of view, recognising and evaluating clearly the arguments on each side
- construct and communicate their own cogent, complex arguments, synthesising concepts and ideas fluently and accurately in a logical manner
- provide persuasive reasoned responses to challenges, questioning and counter-argument
- show clear evidence of perceptive/original reflection and/or reasoned opinion
- respond with sensitivity and respect to counter-argument
- reflect on the development of their own viewpoint, showing balance and self-awareness.

### Merit (M2)

Candidates characteristically:

- apply the vocabulary of reasoning to the context with understanding of its correct usage
- demonstrate understanding of the overall structure of the argument, identifying most key components accurately
- demonstrate the ability to make some critical evaluation of the argument in terms of obvious strengths, weaknesses and flaws
- interpret and clarify expressions, generally with accuracy
- assess the credibility of sources of evidence and their impact with some relevance to the issue
- recognise at least one other contrasting point of view and the gist of the reasoning underpinning that point of view, but evaluation is incomplete or imprecise
- construct and communicate their own arguments, showing some ability to synthesise concepts and ideas mainly accurately and logically, but argument may lack balance
- provide sound information in response to challenges, questioning and counter-argument, but may lack perception
- show some evidence of reflection and/or their own reasoned opinion
- respond with respect to counter-argument
- show some capacity to reflect on their own viewpoint with self-awareness

**Pass (P2)**

Candidates characteristically:

- apply the vocabulary of reasoning with some instances of correct usage
- demonstrate understanding of the gist of the argument and/or some of the reasons, identifying one or more key components correctly
- demonstrate some evidence of critical evaluation of argument, for example identifying an obvious weakness or flaw
- make some comments about expressions and ideas, but these may be simplistic or superficial
- make superficial comments about the sources of evidence
- recognise the gist of contrasting points of view and/or some of the reasoning, but comments may be superficial
- make some attempt to construct an argument which may include relevant ideas and information, but lack depth or coherence, or include digression
- provide a response to challenges, questioning and counter-argument, but may lack relevance
- develop their own presentation using collaborative working methods which are effective at times
- show evidence of reflection and/or their own reasoned opinion, but this may be limited
- respond to counter-argument, but response may show lack of thought
- show some capacity to reflect on their own viewpoint, but conclusions may be superficial

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## Description of components

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### Component 1: Written paper

The written paper lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Candidates answer compulsory, structured questions based on two or more sources provided with the paper. Questions will require both short and longer responses.

The stimulus material provided with the written paper may express different perspectives on issues of global significance taken from the topics listed in the syllabus.

Candidates will **not** be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the specific issues represented in the stimulus material. Instead, candidates will be assessed on their thinking and reasoning skills focused mainly on analysing and evaluating arguments, evidence and contexts.

In carrying out a critical and comparative analysis of the stimulus material, candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- identify and analyse the structure and context of arguments, reasoning and claims
- evaluate the strength of the arguments
- identify the key components of arguments
- identify and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of arguments
- assess the validity of conclusions or claims
- assess the credibility of sources
- identify and evaluate different perspectives

This component is an externally set assessment, marked by Cambridge.

### Component 2: Essay

Candidates write an essay on a global issue of their choice from the topics studied during the course.

The essay must be framed as a single question which is clearly focused on a global issue that lends itself to global treatment in 1750 to 2000 words. Candidates should be supported in formulating an appropriate question. See pages 21–23 for the role of the teacher and the level of guidance permitted.

Candidates should focus their individual research on identifying and exploring the context and basis of the arguments from different global perspectives. They should identify different perspectives, understand the arguments, reasoning or claims, upon which these perspectives are based, offer a critical view of them and reach a personal, supported view.

In the essay, candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- identify and synthesise relevant sources
- assess the credibility of sources used
- analyse at least two conflicting perspectives
- identify and evaluate the evidence that supports the perspectives
- explain how the research has affected their personal perspectives
- show an awareness of the limitations of the arguments considered
- present convincing and well-supported conclusions that answer the question posed
- suggest further relevant research
- communicate effectively and concisely, using technical terms where appropriate

The essay must be written in continuous prose, include a list of sources used and be submitted in an electronic format. Quotations must be fully referenced. The essay must **not** exceed 2000 words and an accurate word-count must be clearly stated on each essay. The word-count excludes the title, references and footnotes. Work beyond the 2000-word maximum will **not** be included in the assessment.

Candidates decide on their own essay question for this component, which is externally marked by Cambridge. For submission dates, please see the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*.

### Component 3: Presentation

Candidates produce a presentation based on pre-released source materials provided by Cambridge. The stimulus material consists of a range of sources about at least one global issue seen through a variety of perspectives.

Candidates use the stimulus material to identify and research a topic for their presentation. Candidates must frame a single question that allows them to address contrasting perspectives on an issue derived from the stimulus material. They may research one or more perspectives for themselves. Candidates should be supported in formulating an appropriate question. See pages 21–23 for the role of the teacher and the level of guidance permitted.

Candidates should reflect on the alternative perspectives found in the source materials and from their own research and the focus of the presentation is mainly reflection and communication. In their presentation, candidates establish and present a coherent, personal perspective that shows an understanding of, and empathy with alternative perspectives.

In the presentation, candidates will be assessed on their ability to:

- communicate a coherent argument
- engage with different perspectives, showing any relationships between them
- develop a line of reasoning based on supporting evidence
- express a relevant personal perspective
- evaluate their own personal perspective
- justify their own personal perspective
- present convincing and well-supported conclusions that answer the question posed.

The presentation should:

- include relevant stimulus material
- communicate effectively to a non-specialist audience
- cite sources and references clearly and accurately.

Candidates are normally expected to deliver their presentation to a live audience and may choose any appropriate format to communicate their research (e.g. poster, PowerPoint, video, weblog, webpages or a mixture of different media). All materials must be submitted electronically. Teachers must ensure that the quality of any recording will permit accurate marking of the work.

Whether presented or not, the submission **must** include a verbatim transcript of the presentation. The running time for the presentation must not exceed 15 minutes. Work beyond the maximum 15 minutes running time will not be included in the assessment.

The pre-released source material will be available to Centres to allow candidates four weeks to complete their presentation. Each Centre may determine the precise timing of the four-week period to fit their own circumstances. Please see the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*, for more information.

Teachers must ensure that, for each candidate, sufficient and appropriate supporting evidence is submitted to permit accurate marking of the work. Any recorded dialogue or oral presentation must be accompanied by a written transcript and supporting visual materials.

Candidates decide on their own presentation question based on the stimulus material provided by Cambridge. The presentation is marked by Cambridge.

All materials for Component 3 must be submitted electronically. For submission dates, please see the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*.

## Syllabus content

### Skills in research, communication, thinking and reasoning

This syllabus uses global issues to develop the Critical Path approach to interrogating information, exploring different perspectives and communicating personal reflections. These practical skills are transferable across other subjects of study at the same level and provide candidates with valuable thinking and reasoning skills for use in higher education and for a wide range of careers.

The exemplar questions below are designed to support teachers and candidates in developing skills in research, communication, thinking and reasoning.

| Element   | Exemplar questions  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Deconstruction</b><br/>Analyse and evaluate conclusions, arguments, reasoning or claims</p>       | <p><b>What are the different perspectives represented?</b> Critically compare different perspectives.</p> <p><b>What are the key components of the argument or claim?</b> Differentiate between fact, argument, opinion, rant, speculation, prediction, explanation, hypothesis, account and belief. Identify the conclusions, reasons (premises), assumptions (stated and unstated), assertions (and counter-assertions), and supporting evidence.</p> <p><b>What are the implications of the conclusions, arguments, reasoning or claims?</b> Suggest the consequences of the conclusions, arguments, reasoning or claims, in a global context.</p> <p><b>What are the strengths and weaknesses of arguments, reasoning or claims?</b> Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the arguments, reasoning or claims. Assess the use of analogy and identify any flaws.</p> <p><b>Is there a valid conclusion or claim?</b> Identify whether any evidence gives strong or weak support to the conclusion or claim. Suggest other evidence required to substantiate or refute claims or counterclaims.</p> |
| <p><b>Reconstruction</b><br/>Critically analyse and interpret the context and evidence of arguments</p> | <p><b>What evidence is there to support different perspectives?</b> Analyse the evidence base and support for different perspectives.</p> <p><b>What are the sources used as supporting evidence and how credible are they?</b> Identify, synthesise and evaluate sources of research to support the evidence.</p> <p><b>Does the evidence lead to a single conclusion?</b> Research and evaluate alternative explanations and perspectives. Make a reasoned and balanced judgement based on evidence.</p> <p><b>What is the context of the arguments?</b> Explain the global context in which the arguments have been made.</p> <p><b>How reliable is the conclusion?</b> Evaluate the reliability and credibility of the sources, making it clear how reasoned judgements are made.</p>   |

| Element   | Exemplar questions   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Reflection</b></p> <p>Explore the impact of the research on personal perspectives</p> | <p><b>What were the personal viewpoints before carrying out the research?</b> Reflect on personal perspectives prior to undertaking the research.</p> <p><b>How do the personal viewpoints relate to the perspectives identified in the research?</b> Evaluate personal viewpoints against alternative perspectives on global issues.</p> <p><b>What impact has the research had on any prior viewpoints?</b> Evaluate the extent to which personal viewpoints have changed after carrying out the research.</p> <p><b>Why has the research had an effect on prior views?</b> Justify the reasons why personal perspectives have changed as a result of research.</p> <p><b>What additional research might be useful?</b> Identify and justify possible further research directions.</p> |
| <p><b>Communication</b></p> <p>Present research findings effectively</p>                    | <p><b>What is the most effective way to structure the presentation?</b> Select and organise relevant information in a logical and coherent way.</p> <p><b>How can research findings be presented to a non-specialist audience?</b> Explore appropriate media to present complex global perspectives.</p> <p><b>How can arguments be presented effectively and persuasively?</b> Use well-supported lines of reasoning based on supporting evidence.</p> <p><b>How can research findings be presented reliably?</b> Use appropriate technical terms and cite references accurately and clearly.</p>   |

## Global topics and perspectives

The global topics provide meaningful and stimulating contexts through which candidates can develop the skills necessary to participate as active, global citizens and to prepare them for independent research and further study. The topics are viewed through different perspectives that help candidates find pathways through the issues and the connections between them.

A suitable study programme can be devised by choosing a range of topics set within a global context and viewed through different perspectives. Candidates should select the topics that engage their interest and explore each chosen topic through the four elements:

- deconstruction
- reconstruction
- reflection
- communication

Candidates research global topics through different themes. Candidates should explore a range of topics from the list on the following page.

## Global topic

- Alternatives to oil
- Artificial Intelligence
- Biodiversity and threats to the world's natural heritage
- Endangered cultures
- Ethical foreign policies
- Genetic engineering
- Global climate change
- Globalisation of economic activity
- Globalisation versus new nationalisms
- Impact of the internet
- Incorporating technology into buildings
- Industrial pollution
- Integration and multiculturalism
- International law
- Medical ethics and priorities
- Migration and work
- Online and interactive communities
- Standard of living / quality of life
- Sustainable futures
- Technology and lifestyles
- The challenge of GM crops
- The economic role of women
- The emergence of a global superpower
- The ethics and economics of food
- The religious-secular divide
- The speed of change in technology and global trade
- Transnational organisations (UN, World Bank, EU, NATO)
- Urbanisation and the countryside

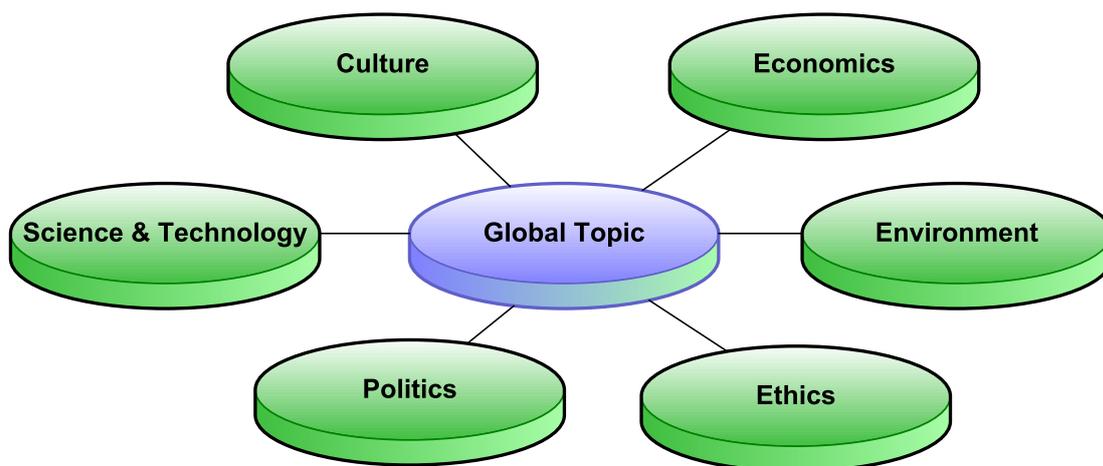
By studying at least **four** topics, candidates will develop the Critical Path to interrogating information and acquire and develop a range of skills, including thinking critically, reasoning and communication.

Candidates research global topics through as many different themes as are relevant.

## Theme

Culture  
Economics  
Environment

Ethics  
Politics  
Science and Technology



Global issues are complex, multi-faceted and multi-level challenges and, through the structured exploration of global topics, candidates research alternative perspectives from different themes. Candidates will be guided towards development of research, communication, thinking and reasoning.

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## The teacher's role and level of guidance permitted

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### Component 1: Written paper

#### 1 hour 30 minutes

The written paper consists of compulsory questions based on sources provided with the paper.

Candidates will be required to analyse and evaluate arguments, interrogate evidence and compare perspectives centred on global issues.

Although this is a skills-based paper that does not require candidates to have been taught any specific content, teachers should consider and explore the skills candidates need for this paper during class work. Teachers should prepare candidates for the types of questions they are likely to meet in the paper by using specimen and past papers and mark schemes which can be obtained from the website [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk)

### Component 2: Essay

Candidates write an essay on a global issue of their choice from the topics studied during the course.

A class may work together to carry out background research on a common theme, but each candidate must devise their own question. Each candidate must submit a different question.

Candidates should be given sufficient time to plan and prepare their research. During this preparation, teachers should support each candidate in:

- understanding the nature of the task
- identifying a suitable topic to research
- formulating an appropriate question
- developing a suitable approach to the research
- developing organisational skills
- citing and referencing their sources
- focusing on reconstruction and reflection
- writing effectively and concisely to stay between 1750 and 2000 words
- including an accurate word count

Proposals for areas of study are submitted to Cambridge for approval in advance using the Outline Proposal Form. Centres should submit an Outline Proposal Form for each candidate as this will assist each candidate with their direction of study. Proposals should be not more than 500 words, describing the proposed area of study, title and, where appropriate, list of source material to be consulted.

An Outline Proposal Form is submitted by the Centre to Cambridge after it has been completed by the candidate. Further details can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*.

**The essay must be the candidate's own work.** Once candidates embark on researching and writing the essay, they must only seek assistance from their teacher, **but** there must be minimum intervention by the teacher. Candidates must **not** cut and paste large amounts of text from sources without showing evidence of reworking.

Teachers must **not**:

- offer or provide detailed subject guidance to candidates
- undertake any research on behalf of candidates
- prepare or write any subject-specific notes or drafts for candidates
- correct any part of a candidate's essay or notes used for the essay
- suggest amendments to, or comment on, any part of the essay

**Candidates must be taught the meaning and significance of plagiarism.**

At the time of submission, the candidate is required to sign a declaration that the Coursework is their own work and the teacher countersigns to confirm they believe the work is that of the candidate. Centres should use the Pre-U Cover Sheet for this purpose. Further details can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*.

### Component 3: Presentation

Candidates produce a presentation based on pre-released stimulus materials provided by Cambridge. The stimulus material consists of a range of sources about a global issue seen through a variety of perspectives.

A class may work together to carry out background research on a common theme, but each candidate must devise their own question which has its own focus.

Candidates should be given sufficient time to interrogate and discuss the pre-released material, and to plan and prepare their research. During this preparation, teachers should support each candidate in:

- understanding the nature of the task
- discussing the issues, problems and research opportunities based on the pre-released material
- formulating an appropriate question
- developing a suitable approach to the research
- developing organisational skills
- citing and referencing their sources
- focusing on reflection and communication
- developing an empathetic approach to alternative perspectives

**The presentation and associated materials must be the candidate's own work.** Once candidates embark on researching and producing the presentation, they must only seek assistance from their teacher, **but** there must be minimum intervention by the teacher. Candidates must **not** cut and paste large amounts of text from sources without showing evidence of reworking.

Teachers must **not**:

- offer or provide detailed subject guidance to candidates
- undertake any research on behalf of candidates
- prepare or write any subject-specific notes or drafts for candidates
- correct any part of a candidate's notes used for the presentation
- prepare any part of the presentation
- produce any part of the transcript to accompany the oral commentary
- suggest amendments to, or comment on, any part of the presentation

**Candidates must be taught the meaning and significance of plagiarism.**

At the time of submission, the candidate is required to sign a declaration that the Coursework is their own work and the teacher countersigns to confirm they believe the work is that of the candidate. Centres should use the Pre-U Cover Sheet for this purpose. Further details can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*.

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## Key terms

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A **global issue** is one that goes beyond the local or national context and would be experienced by people wherever in the world they live or work. For example, migration is an issue of importance around the world, and to examine it in its global context from different perspectives would require a question such as 'Is immigration control ever justified?' rather than 'Should immigration policy in Germany be changed?' The latter is based on one country whereas the former has the potential to be global.

A **perspective** is a viewpoint or standpoint, sometimes embedded in or strongly informed by a world view. Underlying any perspective are concepts, principles, uses of language and attitudes which are often implicit and may be emotional and subconscious as well as rational and conscious. Perspectives tend to be coloured by the circumstances in which people live, the language they use and the ideas that surround them.

Different perspectives should be genuinely **contrasting** (i.e. they should come from a different world view rather than represent subtly different takes on an issue). Although there is no absolute requirement that alternative perspectives be rooted in different geographical areas, genuinely different **global perspectives** are likely to be informed by different cultural, geographical and political environments. Looking at materials from different countries and/or cultures would therefore be a good way of accessing different global perspectives.

It is also possible for two contrasting perspectives (rooted in different world views) to be exemplified by particular 'local' contexts (for example the views of a local Muslim community versus those of a secular background). Teachers should note however that while local contexts can be used as exemplification, this exemplification should be used to consider implications more globally. Candidates need to **empathise** with viewpoints that differ from their own while not necessarily accepting the viewpoints of others.

Arguments and evidence often express a perspective and can be used to support a perspective. There needs to be some form of **evidence base** underlying and/or supporting all perspectives. This evidence base is likely to consist of a variety of arguments, sources and evidence which may or may not be of good quality. Candidates need to sift and select evidence. **Evidence** is likely to come in two forms: primary evidence such as historical texts or results of scientific evidence, and secondary evidence such as the arguments and opinions of historians or scientists. The assessment objectives put weight on the second of these. Candidates should be aware of the strengths and potential weaknesses of all types of evidence. Primary is not necessarily better than secondary. When assessing the credibility of particular sources candidates should bear in mind that this is a way of assessing the evidence presented for a perspective and is not an end in itself.

Candidates research and **analyse** different perspectives based on issues of global significance. They examine the structure of arguments, considering the strengths and weaknesses. They will use research skills to search, collect and **synthesise** their findings into well-supported lines of reasoning, drawing together evidence from a variety of sources into a balanced argument or conclusion. Candidates **evaluate** evidence, arguments, reasoning, conclusions or claims in the context of different perspectives, including their own. They make reasoned value judgements based on evidence and personal viewpoints prior to and after carrying out their research. Candidates consider the validity of evidence, reasoning, conclusions or claims.

The **Critical Path** is an approach to thinking critically. It consists of **deconstruction**, **reconstruction** and **personal reflection**. **Deconstruction** is the analysis of an argument or reasoning, **reconstruction** is the analysis of the context and evidence of an argument, and **personal reflection** is the exploration of the impact of research on personal viewpoints.

## Section 3: Independent Research Report

### Introduction

For the Independent Research Report candidates submit a report based on work done beyond individual subject syllabuses, on a topic chosen by the candidate. It gives the candidate the opportunity to:

- 1 dig deeper in a chosen specialism, or
- 2 cross boundaries with an inter-disciplinary enquiry, or
- 3 make a new departure with a study in a non-school subject, perhaps one that the candidate plans to read at university.

The Independent Research Report:

- is submitted in the form of an extended essay or report
- builds on other components of the Pre-U Diploma – Principal subjects and the Global Perspectives components
- adds breadth and depth to the candidate’s programme of study
- articulates with and provides progression from studies in the Global Perspectives components
- provides the opportunity to explore a specialist area of study, an unrelated topic or an interdisciplinary theme
- enables candidates to develop practical skills in research methodology, thinking skills and the skills to manage a sustained piece of academic work
- deepens the academic experience.

Candidates submit a single report which should not exceed 5000 words. It is recommended that candidates submit a report of between 4500 and 5000 words. The report itself is a single piece of extended writing in the form of a dissertation or a report based on an investigation or field study. The precise nature and format of the report, and the research and reporting convention adopted, will be those most appropriate to the subject of the enquiry. Equally, whether the work is based in primary or secondary material or both will depend on the subject matter and the approach.

### Progression

The approach taken by the Independent Research Report is very different from, but seeks to complement and carry forward, the subject-specific approaches elsewhere in the Cambridge Pre-U Diploma. The focus here is on candidates **applying** the tools for independent, pro-active, interdisciplinary study.

The Independent Research Report builds on and reinforces the learning outcomes of the Global Perspectives component, taking forward the emphasis on an interdisciplinary, independent and reflective approach, and focusing on the need for rigour in the analysis and construction of arguments.

Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives provides a basis from which a candidate can embark with confidence on the Independent Research Report, having developed the skills involved in identifying questions, locating and evaluating sources and perspectives, and in setting out a realistic and meaningful research agenda. Candidates who have completed the Global Perspectives components can be expected to be aware of the issues involved in setting up a research proposal, identifying an appropriate question, and undertaking a literature review or its equivalent. These skills are assessed in the Independent Research Report in relation to the candidate’s piece of own original research.

Candidates can produce the Independent Research Report at any time during the academic year, but it is essential that they are appropriately prepared beforehand by undertaking the Global Perspectives course.

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## Aims

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The Independent Research Report aims to:

- **Prepare candidates for a way of working in Higher Education:**  
Promoting familiarity with the research conventions current in higher education; understanding of the different modes of research enquiry; readiness to reflect critically and respond to review; a capacity for autonomous study and self-management.
- **Develop generic and higher-order skills of research and analysis:**  
Including the ability to design research proposals; understanding and planning data collection methods; ability to interpret, analyse and base conclusions on results; ability to communicate complex findings.
- **Encourage intellectual curiosity:**  
Providing the means of acquiring a deeper knowledge and understanding of the subject matter of the research.

Thus the candidate will carry on to Higher Education not just high-order study skills, but enhanced knowledge of the subject, and a more widely applicable self-discipline in independent study.

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## Scheme of assessment

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The Independent Research Report submission must comprise:

- A single piece of extended writing in the form of a dissertation or a report based on an investigation or field study normally comprising no more than 5000 words. Where a project has involved extensive field study, manipulation of data, or laboratory experiment, the resulting report length may fall below these guidelines (further guidance will be provided). Alternative forms of submission will not be accepted.
- Independent Research Report Monitoring Form completed by the tutor. This form provides a means for tutors to track the candidate's progress in developing and producing the Independent Research Report and will assist in the process of authenticating that the Report is the candidate's own original work.
- Outline Proposal Form (if one was submitted) with the moderator's comments.

## Centre assessment and Quality Assurance

The Independent Research Report should be marked by teachers according to the criteria given on pages 36–39.

Proposals for areas of study are submitted to Cambridge for approval in advance using the Outline Proposal Form. Centres should submit an Outline Proposal Form for each candidate as this will assist each candidate with their direction of study. Proposals should be not more than 500 words, describing the proposed area of study, title and, where appropriate, list of source material to be consulted.

An Outline Proposal Form is submitted by the Centre to Cambridge after it has been completed by the candidate. Further details can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*.

Notwithstanding the tutorial/supervision arrangements that the Centre puts in place, it is recommended that initial assessment of Reports will be undertaken by a subject specialist, with procedures for internal standardisation being put in place before marks are submitted to Cambridge for quality assurance.

## Internal standardisation

Where more than one teacher in a Centre has marked Independent Research Reports, arrangements must be made within the Centre to ensure that all teachers interpret the marking criteria in the same way. The arrangements for internal standardisation should normally include:

- a standardisation meeting at the start of the marking period, at which the application of the marking criteria is discussed in detail, using examples
- the mutual monitoring of marking during the marking period by all of the teachers involved to ensure consistency of marking.

It is essential that all candidates in the Centre are assessed to a common standard so one teacher in each Centre will need to act as lead assessor whose professional judgement on the application of the marking criteria must guide his/her colleagues

## Authentication

The Independent Research Report must be entirely the candidate's own work. Candidates will need to sign the declaration statement on the Independent Research Report Monitoring Form indicating that the report is their own work. The teacher responsible will be required to countersign this declaration, verifying that these regulations have been observed. For guidance on the role of the teacher and level of support permitted see pages 34–35.

## External moderation

Please check the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*, available from the 'Exams Officer' section of the Cambridge website, for details on the submission of coursework samples.

The number of candidates in the sample is set according to the criteria shown in the table below:

| number of candidates entered | number of candidates whose work is required |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1–10                         | all candidates                              |
| 11–50                        | 10  |
| 51–100                       | 15  |
| 101–200                      | 20  |
| More than 200                | 10% of the candidates                       |

An additional sample of candidates' work may subsequently be requested by Cambridge if necessary.

For each candidate in the sample, reports and Independent Research Report Monitoring Forms should be sent to Cambridge. In addition, the completed Coursework Assessment Summary Form and a copy of mark sheet MS1 (a computer-printed mark sheet sent from Cambridge) should be enclosed with the sample of work.

## Assessment objectives

The assessment of the Independent Research Report will focus on the ability to design, plan and manage a research project; to collect and analyse information; to evaluate and make reasoned judgements; and to communicate findings and conclusions.

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| <b>A01</b> | <p><b>Knowledge and understanding of the research process</b></p> <p>Design, plan, manage and conduct own research project using techniques and methods appropriate to the subject discipline.</p>                   |
| <b>A02</b> | <p><b>Analysis</b></p> <p>Select, assess and synthesise information, concepts, arguments and evidence from a range of source material.</p>   |
| <b>A03</b> | <p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <p>Evaluate alternative perspectives and interpretations and make independent reasoned judgements, demonstrating the capacity to reflect on own learning and achievement.</p>               |
| <b>A04</b> | <p><b>Communication</b></p> <p>Communicate clearly in negotiating and conducting the research project, and in presenting own research, interpretations and judgements, using appropriate format and conventions.</p> |
| <b>A05</b> | <p><b>Intellectual challenge</b></p> <p>Demonstrating additional skills, knowledge or understanding that shows particular intellectual engagement with the subject of the report.</p>                                |

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## Relationship between scheme of assessment and assessment objectives

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The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

| Assessment objective                   | Weighting in Independent Research Report % |
|--|--|
| <b>AO1 Knowledge and understanding</b> | 15   |
| <b>AO2 Analysis</b>                    | 30   |
| <b>AO3 Evaluation</b>                  | 30   |
| <b>AO4 Communication</b>               | 15   |
| <b>AO5 Intellectual challenge</b>      | 10   |

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## Grade descriptions

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Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

The following grade descriptions indicate the level of attainment characteristic of the middle of the given grade band.

### Distinction (D2)

Candidates characteristically:

- demonstrate breadth and depth of subject knowledge applied relevantly to the chosen issue
- draw selectively on knowledge of research techniques
- collect evidence using a variety of appropriate techniques
- manage the research process effectively
- interpret and synthesise relevant information, concepts and evidence from a range of sources
- use a variety of appropriate techniques to analyse arguments and evidence
- show insight and intellectual rigour in engagement with concepts and arguments in source material
- evaluate the validity of outcomes and interpretations recognising any limitations
- produce cogently argued reasoned judgements
- show clear evidence of perceptive/original reflection on own learning and achievement demonstrating self-awareness
- communicate clearly, fluently and accurately in a concise and logical way, selecting and using appropriate media effectively
- use format and conventions appropriate to the subject with precision

### Merit (M2)

Candidates characteristically:

- demonstrate some breadth of subject knowledge which is generally applied relevantly to the chosen issue
- draw on knowledge of research techniques, showing some selectivity
- collect evidence using appropriate techniques
- manage the research process adequately
- interpret and synthesise information, concepts and evidence from sources
- use some appropriate techniques to analyse arguments and evidence
- show some evidence of engagement with concepts and arguments in source material
- provide some evaluation of the validity of outcomes and interpretations
- produce reasoned judgements
- show capacity to reflect on their own learning and achievement with some self-awareness
- communicate effectively; generally selecting and using media effectively, but communication may lack accuracy, although errors do not intrude or impede understanding
- use format and conventions appropriate to the subject correctly, in general

**Pass (P2)**

Candidates characteristically:

- demonstrate subject knowledge, but this may be of limited relevance or not always applied appropriately
- draw on knowledge of research techniques
- collect evidence
- manage the research process, but with limited effectiveness
- interpret and synthesise information, concepts and evidence from sources, but this may be restricted in scope
- use a limited range of techniques to analyse arguments and evidence
- show limited evidence of engagement with concepts and arguments in source material
- provide some comment on the validity of outcomes and interpretations
- produce judgements, but these may lack balance or be superficial
- show limited capacity to reflect on their learning or reflection may be superficial
- communicate mainly adequately, but understanding may be impeded by errors or use of media may be inappropriate on occasion
- show some evidence of use of format and conventions appropriate to the subject

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## Description of Report

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Candidates will complete an Independent Research Report in the form of an essay or report of between 4500 and 5000 words in length. Work beyond the 5000-word maximum will **not** be included in the assessment.

While it is not a requirement that a full research log be submitted, teachers will be asked to verify that the work is the candidate's own, and that the candidate did undertake the necessary preparation in advance. Teachers should encourage their candidates to cover the following elements of research design and execution:

### 1 Planning and preparation

- identification of the area of study
- initial literature search
- methods and techniques of literature review
- development of a research idea
- research methods through a consideration of definitions and purposes of research, approaches to framing the enquiry, and designing the research project on a topic of the candidate's own choice
- consideration of research approaches and conventions and alternative approaches to research
- research ethics and ethical constraints
- research planning including timescales, activities
- focusing ideas
- understanding key issues which are common to all scholarly research projects; identifying and assessing further planning issues
- questionnaire design and data collection
- survey analysis
- personal research management

### 2 Production of the Report

- methods, analysis and writing up the research project
- critical assessment of a range of research methods
- presenting research results and evaluating research
- presentation skills (writing for various audiences)
- referencing conventions appropriate to the subject discipline
- summarising and presenting results in a variety of formats
- demonstrating awareness of good practice in conducting research, including research ethics and, where appropriate, 'good science'
- making informed judgements about research methods and evidence

Candidates are expected to apply research methods appropriate to their chosen subject discipline. Equally, whether the work is based on primary or secondary material will depend on the subject matter and the approach. The report itself will be a single piece of extended writing based on an investigation or field study. The precise format and referencing conventions used should be appropriate to the subject discipline and production of a bibliography is a requirement.

## Research methods

Successful research projects generally focus on a specific question. For example 'Is nuclear power the best option to solve our energy supply problems?' is more likely to generate focused analysis than 'Whose problem is poverty?'

Candidates should select and apply research methods appropriate to the discipline they are working within and the nature of the selected topic. It is expected that some, but not all, of the research methods listed below will be used in their Report.

- literature searches
- internet searches
- interviews, e.g. with subject specialists, witnesses
- collection of primary data – quantitative and qualitative – through surveys, questionnaires, etc.
- laboratory experiment
- computer modelling
- case study
- fieldwork

Either primary or secondary research may be appropriate depending upon the nature of the enquiry.

Research should normally be the individual candidate's own unaided work: the requirements of the Research Report mean that group work is unlikely to be appropriate or acceptable.

It is, however, anticipated that candidates will draw on their strengths in other areas of study.

## Health and safety issues

Field study and laboratory experiments undertaken while doing the Independent Research Report will require risk assessments to be carried out. Responsibility for safety matters rests with Centres.

## The teacher's role and the level of guidance permitted

The Report involves a single piece of extended writing resulting from independent thinking and learning within a supported environment. Each candidate's question must be different.

Each Report must include a bibliography and full bibliographical references must be given for any quotations. Each Report must not exceed 5000 words, excluding only the bibliography and the citations for any quotations. A word count must be declared. Any work beyond 5000 words will not be included in the assessment.

The teacher will need to assist with determining the subject and scale of the Report so that the topic selected provides sufficient opportunities to meet the Assessment Criteria while being neither too large nor too complex. In the initial stage when topics are being selected, teachers might conduct seminar-style workshops for candidates to discuss subject-specific issues and approaches. As topics are refined and questions developed, seminars might be used to share ideas. Once questions have been defined, teachers may submit an Outline Proposal Form. Forms are submitted to Cambridge for approval and advice.

The teacher will need to assist candidates in:

- understanding the nature of the task [e.g. the need for formal reflection [AO3]
- finding a suitable subject and then refining it into a formal question
- identifying the main issues and possible research strands in their topic
- identifying and locating appropriate sources of information/evidence
- understanding and developing appropriate research methodologies
- understanding and developing the necessary organisational skills.

Teachers should also encourage candidates to show originality in their choice of investigation, approach and conclusion(s) [AO5].

Candidates should certainly be taught together:

- the necessary research and organisational skills for this task
- the appropriate academic conventions for presentation of the Report
- the meaning and significance of plagiarism.

Significant time should be allocated to this important preparatory stage.

While candidates will be expected to carry out their research on their own, their work should be supported by ongoing opportunities in group or individual tutorials to discuss progress and ask questions. Teachers may monitor progress to check that the candidate remains on schedule, and will need to take the supervisory steps necessary to be able to authenticate with confidence that each Report is the unaided work of the individual candidate. The Independent Research Report Monitoring Form should be used to record any assistance given to the candidate. It may be helpful to see the teacher's role as analogous to that of a tutor in HE who is supervising undergraduate dissertations. Centres are thus advised to consider whether a team of tutors across different subject specialisms should be identified.

Once the candidate embarks on researching and writing the Report there must be minimum intervention by the teacher. The Report must be the candidate's own unaided work. Candidates will be expected to carry out their research on their own and, once drafting has begun, the candidate must complete the process and prepare their Report without further subject-specific assistance. The teacher may not:

- offer or provide detailed subject guidance for a candidate
- undertake any research for a candidate
- prepare or write any subject-specific notes or drafts for a candidate
- correct any part of a candidate's subject-specific notes or drafts
- prepare any part of a candidate's Report.

At the time of submission, the candidate is required to sign a declaration that the Personal Investigation/ Coursework is their own work and the teacher countersigns to confirm they believe the work is that of the candidate. Centres should use the Pre-U Cover Sheet for this purpose. Further details can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*.

It is recommended that teachers hold a brief (five to ten minute) informal interview (viva) with each candidate when completed Reports are submitted for marking within their Centre. This will assist tutors to be confident about authenticating (or not) each Report as the candidate's own unaided work.

## Marking criteria

Independent Research Reports should be marked using the criteria on the following pages.

### Applying the level descriptors

In general terms, progression through level descriptions is underpinned by:

- increasing breadth and depth of understanding
- increasing coherence of argument and synthesis
- increasing independence and originality.

Candidates can perform at different levels across the assessment criteria. Within each assessment criterion, shortcomings in some aspects of the assessment requirements may be balanced by better performance in others. Teachers should select appropriate levels not on the basis of a 'tick list' but on the overall response as it relates to the requirements stated within each performance description level. Teachers should adopt a holistic, best-fit approach and apply their professional judgement.

Marking must be positive. Marks are not to be deducted for inaccuracies. Part marks are not to be used. Marking must be done in red. **Teachers must annotate the work** to show that every page has been read. They must also show clearly in the margin where each level per assessment objective has been met (e.g. AO1 L2). If a piece of work reaches a level then the candidate must be rewarded with a mark in that level. It is not necessary to work up through the levels.

Only where the candidate's work does not meet any of the required criteria should no marks be awarded.

Initial guidance and tutorial support should be available to all candidates when they are planning and producing their Independent Research Report. In this context, the following guidelines should be applied when the Report is marked:

- **'Some support and guidance'**: the candidate has to be guided and advised throughout to ensure that progress is made. The candidate relies heavily on the support of the teacher, who has to assist in many aspects of the work. This degree of support restricts the candidate's work to Level 1, irrespective of the quality of the outcomes.
- **'Limited assistance'**: the teacher supports the candidate initially in the choice of topic for investigation. The candidate frequently checks matters of detail or may need significant prompting to make progress. The teacher needs to assist in some aspects of the work. This degree of support restricts the candidate's work to Level 1 or 2, irrespective of the quality of the outcomes.
- **'Independently'**: the teacher supports the candidate initially in defining and refining the scope and title of the Independent Research Project. Thereafter the teacher reacts to questions from the candidate and suggests a range of ideas that the candidate acts upon. The teacher monitors progress throughout. This degree of support gives access to all three levels.

## Marking criteria: Independent Research Report

| Assessment objective                                       | Task   | Clarification   | Level 1  | Level 2   | Level 3   |
|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| AO1<br>Knowledge and understanding of the research process | Design, plan, manage and conduct own research project using techniques and methods appropriate to the subject discipline | Knowledge of research methods and conventions.<br>Applies subject-specific knowledge to refine issue for investigation, identify question and conduct research.<br>Own independent research using techniques and methods appropriate to the subject discipline i.e. literature search, relevant statistical/ data handling and modelling techniques | The research question is identified with significant support from tutor.<br>Some application of basic research techniques which are appropriate to the subject.<br><br>Some research as planned is carried out with significant support from tutor.  | The research question is identified and developed with some support from the tutor.<br><br>Planned research is carried out with some support.<br>Research techniques applied are appropriate to the subject and the question.   | The research question is identified, developed and refined in a constructive dialogue with the tutor.<br><br>Detailed research is carried out, with creative use of appropriate techniques and methods which are relevant to the subject discipline and serve to illuminate the question.                                       |
| AO2<br>Analysis  | Select, assess and synthesise information, concepts, arguments and evidence from a range of source material              | Clarification of expressions and ideas e.g. defining key terms.<br>Analysis of structure of argument in source material e.g. identifying reasons, conclusions, assumptions, evidence and examples.<br><br>Analysis of arguments and evidence to draw reasoned conclusions   | 1–3 marks<br><br>Source materials selected may be narrow in scope and of limited relevance to the question.<br>Some evidence of application of critical thinking techniques to analyse source material.<br>Limited reference to theories and concepts.<br>Data analysis is superficial and may contain inaccuracies. | 4–6 marks<br><br>Source materials are generally relevant.<br>Source materials are analysed using critical thinking techniques, but with some omissions, irrelevancies or inaccuracies.<br>Some reference is made to theories and concepts, but these are not necessarily relevant or analysis is sketchy.<br>Data analysis is generally accurate and fit for purpose. | 7–9 marks<br><br>Materials selected are wide ranging and relevant to the question.<br>Analysis of source materials uses robust critical thinking techniques, and is thorough and coherent with links to appropriate theories and concepts.<br>Data analysis is technically accurate and uses well-chosen techniques with flair. |
|  |  |   | 1–6 marks  | 7–12 marks  | 13–18 marks   |

| Assessment objective | Task   | Clarification  | Level 1   | Level 2   | Level 3   |
|----------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| AO3<br>Evaluation    | Evaluate alternative perspectives and interpretations and make independent reasoned judgements, demonstrating the capacity to reflect on own learning and achievement            | <p>Evaluation of different types of claims e.g. whether a source is reliable, whether the claim is credible and is supported by the evidence.</p> <p>Evaluation of arguments and evidence to draw valid conclusions.</p> <p>Evaluation of alternative perspectives and interpretations and making own valid, reasoned judgements.</p> <p>Reflection on own research techniques and project management.</p> | <p>Limited use of critical thinking techniques to assess claims in source material.</p> <p>Conclusions are drawn, but may be superficial or not supported by arguments or evidence.</p> <p>Limited discussion of alternative interpretations</p> <p>Judgements may be superficial and not supported by evidence.</p> <p>Reflection on own research and conclusions is limited or superficial.</p> | <p>Some relevant use of critical thinking techniques to assess strength of claims in source material, credibility of sources and strength/weakness of evidence.</p> <p>Conclusions relate to arguments and evidence.</p> <p>Some relevant alternative perspectives and interpretations are considered.</p> <p>Judgements relate to sources and evidence but may overlook key aspects.</p> <p>Reasoned reflection on own research and conclusions.</p> | <p>Accurate and comprehensive use of critical thinking techniques to assess strength of claims in source material, credibility of sources and strength/weakness of evidence.</p> <p>Conclusions are incisive, and supported by reasons and evidence in a structured argument.</p> <p>Synthesises arguments, evidence and alternative interpretations to construct own cogent, coherent argument.</p> <p>Reflection on own research is rational and supported by the content of the essay.</p> |
| AO4<br>Communication | Communicate clearly in negotiating and conducting the research project, and in presenting own research, interpretations and judgements, using appropriate format and conventions | <p>Negotiation with tutor: proposing and refining topic/issue, finalising research proposal, determining research methods.</p> <p>Explanation and presentation of research methods, findings and conclusions.</p> <p>Academic report/essay conventions; quality of written communication; use of appropriate method (e.g. graphs, charts, photographs) to present findings clearly.</p>                    | <p>1–6 marks</p> <p>Clarification needed when negotiating with tutor.</p> <p>Communication of own argument is impeded by errors and inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p> <p>Subject terminology and conventions used, but not always accurately.</p>  | <p>7–12 marks</p> <p>Communicates effectively when negotiating with tutor.</p> <p>Communicates own argument with some errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, but these do not impede understanding or are not intrusive.</p> <p>Subject terminology and conventions mainly used accurately.</p>   | <p>13–18 marks</p> <p>Communicates in a highly effective manner when negotiating with tutor.</p> <p>Communicates own cogent, coherent argument, with a high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p> <p>Subject terminology and conventions used accurately and appropriately.</p>   |

| Assessment objective          | Task  | Clarification | Level 1  | Level 2  | Level 3   |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------|--|--|---|
| AO5<br>Intellectual Challenge | Demonstrates additional skills, knowledge or understanding that shows particular intellectual engagement with the subject of the report.<br><br>Evidence of one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New ways of synthesising information – creating new links</li> <li>• Subject matter which is non-standard for level 3 qualifications</li> <li>• Looking at epistemological debates and the wider implications of the chosen methodology</li> <li>• Innovative use of research techniques.</li> </ul> |               | Report shows evidence of one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• limited synthesis, or synthesis is predictable and lacks real insight.</li> <li>• Deals with subject matter that extends slightly beyond standard Level 3 qualifications in the subject area.</li> <li>• Shows a limited consideration of epistemological and methodological issues.</li> <li>• Research techniques are applied to new examples but in a predictable way.</li> </ul> | Report shows evidence of one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some synthesis of information showing some insight.</li> <li>• Deals with subject matter that extends beyond standard Level 3 qualifications in the subject area.</li> <li>• Shows some consideration of epistemological and methodological issues.</li> <li>• Research techniques are applied showing some innovative ideas.</li> </ul> | Report shows evidence of one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative and insightful synthesis of information.</li> <li>• Deals with subject matter that extends significantly beyond standard Level 3 qualifications in the subject area.</li> <li>• Detailed consideration of epistemological and methodological issues.</li> <li>• Research techniques are applied in an innovative way.</li> </ul> |
|                               |   |               | 1–2 marks  | 3–4 marks  | 5–6 marks   |
|                               |   |               |  |  | Maximum [60] marks  |

## Sample guidance for candidates

The Independent Research Report is a compulsory component of the Cambridge Pre-U Certificate in Global Perspectives and Independent Research, and is designed to be stimulating and enjoyable. It is also intended to enable you to use and to develop skills which universities and employers are looking for – not least the ability to learn critically and independently. The assessment of your Report or essay will reflect how clearly you have demonstrated these skills.

### Initial preparation

- 1 Choose a topic that interests you. It does not necessarily have to be linked to your other Cambridge Pre-U or A Level courses.
- 2 Your title should take the form of a question: questions require answers. Give particular thought to this; why, for example, is this a problem worth solving?
- 3 Your essay or report must be word-processed, and no longer than 5000 words.
- 4 Ideal presentation is 11 point, 1.5 or double spaced and with default margins. Avoid unusual or fancy fonts – use a standard font such as Arial or Times New Roman.

### Writing the essay or report

- 5 You must include an Introduction in which you identify and explore the terms, issues and scope of the enquiry. Suggest why it is an enquiry worth undertaking.
- 6 You also need a Conclusion. This need not be extensive, if the Report itself is answering the question posed. You may need only to extract and link strands of argument already presented. You could also suggest routes for further research and consider how your ideas and opinions may have changed during the course of your research.
- 7 Essays consist of paragraphs. When you are planning, and even more importantly when you have completed a draft and are seeking to highlight the argument, ensure that each successive paragraph is playing its part in answering your question. Better 4500 words, sharply focused, than 5000 words where many are off the point and surplus to requirements.

The essay should be able to be read by one of your peers. You must be able to explain it to someone who is not a specialist in the subject area.

### Sources and references

- 8 You are not expected to produce anything wholly original; but what you produce must be independent. That is, you must initially seek (in books, articles, the internet etc.) information on which you can work, that you then have to process, digest, and interpret. In other words, finding what someone else has discovered, said, written or broadcast about something is only a start: you have to engage intellectually with those sources to come up with an answer to your particular question. Be critical of your sources: be aware of limitations, and especially bias.

### Plagiarism

- 9 Merely assembling other people's material, extracted from books or downloaded from websites, would miss the point and could constitute plagiarism. You must therefore **acknowledge** where specific ideas and information come from. Copied chunks from any source will not be marked.

- 10 At the end you must add a Bibliography (which is not included in the word limit). It should list all the sources that have guided you in your enquiry – and it must, especially, list every source from which you have taken a particular fact, idea, quotation or interpretation.
- 11 You should give references to your sources throughout. Conventions vary: whatever style you choose to adopt, be consistent.
- For a book, you must give author, title and date of publication.
  - For the internet, you must give title, URL (the exact website identifier, so that anyone can find the source), and the date of your consultation.
  - Every quotation has to be referenced/footnoted, preferably with page number.

### Three key steps

- 12 Determine your title – in consultation with your Independent Research Report tutor and your subject teachers. Your current thoughts on a university course will be a factor here, and you should not hesitate to ask the advice of the relevant Head of Subject.
- 13 On the basis of your title, identify and consult a member of staff who will read and mark your Report.
- 14 **By [date to be inserted by centre] you must hand in to your IRR tutor a completed IRR Proposal Form.**

### What happens next?

- 15 Ensure you arrange regular tutorials with your IRR Tutor to discuss your ideas and progress, and get advice. It is important that you use initiative and are pro-active here.
- 16 You must hand in the Report to your IRR Tutor on **[date to be inserted by Centre]**. Reports will not be accepted after that date.
- 17 Your IRR tutor will mark your Report.
- 18 Your IRR tutor will discuss your Report with you in a brief interview (viva) by **[date to be inserted by Centre]**.
- 19 The mark for your Report will be submitted to CIE (the examination board). At this stage marks are not final and may be adjusted by CIE.
- 20 You may also wish to make reference to your Report and research in your UCAS personal statement.

### Advice for candidates planning science-based reports

- 21 Reports about the history of science are acceptable.
- 22 Reports might cover a topic which you have been taught but you should go into much more detail about the subject (its origins, its practical uses and how it has developed) or you might ideally look at an area/topic which you have not previously studied. Alternatively you could consider a different application of something you have studied.
- 23 When considering the area of your Report you could visit a library and look at the non-school textbooks and magazines on science or mathematics (e.g. New Scientist, Scientific American, Mathematical Spectrum, Mathematical Gazette). In these there are interesting articles (with references) which you could research further. You could also look at undergraduate prospectuses and see what topics are covered in the first year and then research these.
- 24 It is important that you adopt a critical and evaluative approach to evidence.

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## Additional information

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### Equality and inclusion

This syllabus complies with our *Code of Practice* and *Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition*.

Cambridge has taken great care in the preparation of this syllabus and related assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind. To comply with the UK Equality Act (2010), Cambridge has designed this qualification with the aim of avoiding direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present unnecessary barriers for candidates with disabilities or learning difficulties. Arrangements can be put in place for these candidates to enable them to access the assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. Access arrangements will not be agreed if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed. Candidates who are unable to access the assessment of any component may be eligible to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken. Information on access arrangements is found in the *Cambridge Handbook (UK)*, for the relevant year, which can be downloaded from the website [www.cie.org.uk/examsOfficers](http://www.cie.org.uk/examsOfficers)

### Guided learning hours

Cambridge Pre-U syllabuses are designed on the assumption that learners have around 380 guided learning hours per Principal Subject over the duration of the course, but this is for guidance only. The number of hours may vary according to curricular practice and the learners' prior experience of the subject.

### Total qualification time

This syllabus has been designed assuming that the total qualification time per subject will include both guided learning and independent learning activities. The estimated number of guided learning hours for this syllabus is 380 hours over the duration of the course. The total qualification time for this syllabus has been estimated to be approximately 500 hours per subject over the duration of the course. These values are guidance only. The number of hours required to gain the qualification may vary according to local curricular practice and the learners' prior experience of the subject.

### If you are not yet a Cambridge school

Learn about the benefits of becoming a Cambridge school at [www.cie.org.uk/startcambridge](http://www.cie.org.uk/startcambridge). Email us at [info@cie.org.uk](mailto:info@cie.org.uk) to find out how your organisation can register to become a Cambridge school.

### Language

This syllabus and the associated assessment materials are available in English only.

Cambridge International Examinations  
1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU, United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)1223 553554 Fax: +44 (0)1223 553558  
Email: [info@cie.org.uk](mailto:info@cie.org.uk) [www.cie.org.uk](http://www.cie.org.uk)

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