

# University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)

## An Information Sheet for Employers

published January 2007

### IGCSE

IGCSE is designed for 14-16 year old students:

- mostly sat in Year 11
- usually 5-7 subjects sat
- grades from A\* to G
- prepares students for further academic study
- equips students with the skills needed for future employment.

### AS Level

AS is a 1 year course:

- usually sat in Year 12/13
- grades from A to E

### A Level

A Level is a 2 year course:

- usually sat in Year 13
- grades from A to E
- AS is the year 1 course
- A2 is the year 2 course

AS & A Level have wide-spread recognition as educational qualifications. They are rigorous programmes that encourage high academic standards and are recognized by universities worldwide.

### What is CIE?

CIE stands for 'University of Cambridge International Examinations'. The University of Cambridge is respected as one of the world's top universities. A non-profit division (Cambridge Assessment) oversees three examination boards – OCR tests UK students, another tests ESOL students worldwide, while CIE tests students in about 180 countries across the world.

### What CIE qualifications exist?

There are three levels:

- IGCSE
- AS Level
- A Level

**IGCSE** is sat mostly in Year 11.

Students will normally sit 5-8 subjects. Grades that can be achieved are from A\* to G.

Students who do not achieve a grade are Ungraded (U).

**AS Level** is usually sat in Years 12 & 13. The course consists of 180 hours (which is significantly more than for NZ courses). Grades range from A to E.

**A Level** is a two- year course of which the first half is AS.

### Are CIE and UK qualifications the same?

CIE uses a similar structure to that used in the UK. However, while similar in name, they are very different in course content and examination structure.

The UK uses a modular system that is generally felt to result in much lower standards. As a result, over 100 top UK independent schools have preferred to offer IGCSE as this is considered 'more demanding' and of better value to students.

### University Entrance

CIE students must meet three standards to achieve UE:

**General Standard** – requires 3 subjects at D grade or better & a total of 120 UCAS points (table below). Subjects must be from approved subjects.

**Literary Standard** – grade E in AS English (Language or Literature).

**Numeracy Standard** – grade D in IGCSE Mathematics or E in AS Mathematics.

### UCAS Points

Grade	AS	A Level
A	60	120
B	50	100
C	40	80
D	30	60
E	20	40

### Are CIE courses suitable for NZ students?

CIE courses are not the same as UK courses although, in many subjects, course content is similar worldwide. In other subjects, NZ examples can be incorporated. In addition, a small number of courses have been developed specially for NZ schools. CIE courses are **not** the same as UK courses.

### Are CIE qualifications accepted worldwide?

Yes - they are recognized at universities throughout the world. The Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) has ruled that they should be accepted on an equivalent basis as UK qualifications. This means they are 'portable' and will be recognized, not only in NZ, but in all other countries.

### What countries offer CIE?

CIE exams are sat in more than 150 countries. CIE is part of Cambridge Assessment, a non-profit arm of the University of Cambridge. In some cases they are additional to any national qualifications. In other countries (such as Singapore) the national system has been developed in conjunction with CIE.

Statements that 'CIE is offered only in third world countries' are untrue and misleading!

### How many NZ schools offer CIE qualifications?

Currently 44 NZ secondary schools (about 12%) are registered to offer CIE. Some offer a full range of subjects while others may offer only 1-2 subjects.

### Is CIE 'standards-based' or 'norm-referenced'?

*Standards-based* means the result a student gains is related to a pre-determined standard. *Norm-referenced* means that marks are scaled so that a pre-determined percentage of students gain specified grades/marks.

CIE is a standards-based examination – standards are maintained by an experienced group of examiners while results are checked statistically.

### Do students get marks as well as grades?

NZ students get percentages as well as grades.

*For more information refer the following websites:*

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

[www.acsnz.org.nz](http://www.acsnz.org.nz)

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Association of Cambridge Schools in New Zealand (Inc)  
P O Box 7247, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1141, NZ  
Tel 64+9+638-0550 Fax 64+9+638-0552  
Email [acsnz@ags.school.nz](mailto:acsnz@ags.school.nz) [www.acsnz.org.nz](http://www.acsnz.org.nz)