

Achieve

Autumn 2012



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



Welcome to *Achieve*

The latest news from Cambridge Assessment, the University's international exams group.

Cambridge Pre-U students are university ready

Feedback from schools shows that the qualification helps students to develop the skills needed for university. see page 7

Risk in the exam system

Experts gathered in Cambridge to discuss pressures on assessment in England. see page 3

Learning not assessment is the key to good education

"It's not just the assessed items that matter but the wider curriculum," said head of UK exam board OCR.

Speaking to politicians, policy makers and educational experts at the Labour and Conservative Party autumn conferences, Mark Dawe, OCR Chief Executive, asked those gathered to consider "what type of people do we want our education system to turn out?" Stressing that an academic core of English, maths and science were crucial for progression into further study and employment, he said that parents and employers also needed, and wanted, well rounded socially aware citizens.

Taking the form of roundtable discussions, the two events entitled 'How do we get value for money out of a world class education system?' and 'The future of GCSEs: another day, another solution' were jointly hosted by OCR's parent Cambridge Assessment, the think tank Reform and the Association of School and College Leaders. Also speaking at the events were Shadow Secretary of State for Education Stephen Twigg MP, Conservative Former Schools Minister Nick Gibb MP, and Conservative Member of the Education Select Committee Charlotte Leslie.

Stephen Twigg MP argued that future reform of the education and exams system needed to start from the premise of "what does our country and our economy need in the coming years?" He also said he wanted a "serious



Mark Dawe, OCR Chief Executive and Nick Gibb MP.

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By Dr Ron McLone, former OCR Chief Executive (in post 1985 to 2004).

New Cambridge IGCSE qualification for Indonesian schools

A new qualification focusing on certifying students' language skills in the official language of Indonesia is being developed. The new Cambridge IGCSE Bahasa Indonesia, from Cambridge International Examinations, is a result

of a commitment the exam board made with the Indonesian Ministry of Education earlier this year. The qualification will also prepare students for the next stage of their education, both in Indonesia and overseas.

First bursary awarded for new Master's degree

A teacher in Spain has taken up a place at the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, thanks to funding from Cambridge International Examinations. The exam board launched the bursaries last year for English and History teachers wanting to study a new Master's

degree in Advanced Subject Teaching. Kerry Louise Wood, a teacher at King's College, The British School in Alicante, is the first successful applicant and begins the part-time course in September 2012. Teachers at Cambridge-registered schools outside the UK are eligible for the scheme.

New Cambridge initiative in China to benefit English language learners

A new partnership arrangement between Cambridge ESOL and a leading provider of computer-based testing and testing-related services in China will increase access to internationally recognised Cambridge English exams throughout China and the rest of Asia. The agreement will see

Cambridge ESOL and Beijing headquartered ATA Online Education Technology Ltd working closely together to deliver high-quality Academic English language assessment solutions.

Under the arrangement, students throughout Asia will get greater access to a range of Cambridge English exams at different ability levels – including English language exams designed for young learners and school-age students.

"We're delighted to be working closely with ATA in China and across the rest of Asia," commented Dr Mike Milanovic from Cambridge ESOL. "The key to raising English standards is to increase access to high-quality language exams and this has been the driving force behind this important project."

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Whither the GCSE?

For 24 years out of the last 25 the percentage of candidates achieving grade C or better at GCSE has increased. All that ended in August, with an inevitable furore.

So, have 'standards' suddenly risen? Is the 2012 cohort of students less able, less motivated, not as well taught?

The Secretary of State says the GCSE 'must be reformed'. You could argue that, starting even before the first examinations were taken in 1988, the GCSE has been subject to perpetual reform, in content, assessment or structure.

The fact is the numerous changes introduced over those 25 years have left an examination which has become divorced from its original purpose and without any obvious sense of identity in its present form. Making more changes within the present structure misses the point.

Education systems around the world almost all follow a pattern which acknowledges two phases of educational development. The first is the 'general education' society expects for each child and the second is preparation for life beyond compulsory education.

We should reform the GCSE by adopting a two-phase education system which re-focuses on these fundamental goals. Phase 1 would deliver for each student a good general education showing competence in essential key subjects; a range of skills on which future progress can be based; general knowledge of the development of their country and effective participation in society. Phase 2 could then build on this with individual study programmes that start with an emphasis on breadth, followed by an intermediate assessment and more focussed study, leading to nationally accredited and regulated assessments and qualifications.

By focusing on an end-point to compulsory education at 16 the current system places unnecessary constraints on the nature and extent of the preparation for either HE or employment at 18. A better balance could be achieved by recognising achievement of the first phase at, say, 14, with four years available for the second phase.

There would be no requirement for a national examination at 16. Completion of a 'general education' is represented by Phase 1 and 'preparation for further study' is covered by the intermediate assessment during Phase 2. The GCSE is thus replaced by a system which more specifically and transparently targets the fundamental goals.

Dr Ron McLone's proposal 'Whither the GCSE? An alternative approach' is available to read in full at www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

New quality standard for language tests



A new prestigious quality indicator will help to encourage high standards in language testing across Europe.

The ALTE Q-mark, awarded to examinations produced by members of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), shows that an exam is backed by appropriate processes, criteria and standards. Martin Nuttall from the ALTE Secretariat, says that the new quality indicator comes at a time when language tests are increasingly being used for high-stakes purposes.

"ALTE members develop language tests that are used for high-stakes purposes and the ALTE Q-mark shows that an examination has met strict quality standards. This gives individual test users and organisations that rely on exam results extra confidence in the quality of tests that have been awarded this status."

Two ALTE members whose examinations have recently been awarded the ALTE Q-mark are the Department for Language Teaching and International Students at the St Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia for their Standardised Test in Bulgarian as a Foreign Language (at B2 level), and German language test developers telc GmbH, who received the Q-mark for their test Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer. Both examinations successfully passed a rigorous audit to show that they meet the 17 minimum standards set out in ALTE's Quality Management System.

Cambridge ESOL is a founding member of ALTE – a leading group of language testing experts from around Europe who work to promote fairness and multilingualism across Europe.

Correction: The figures in the story on page 2 of the Summer 2012 issue were incorrect. Home Office statistics for 2002 for those at or below Entry level are that 46% of prisoners have less than functional reading, 31% less than functional spelling, and 43% less than functional numeracy. Our thanks to Greg Brooks, Emeritus Professor of Education, University of Sheffield.

Small talk means big business

Students need to focus on small talk and real-life communications skills when developing their language skills, according to Cambridge ESOL.

Speaking at the Australian Education Fair in India, Sujata Stead, Assistant Director Cambridge ESOL, said that choosing English language qualifications that actually help students improve their language skills can give them a real advantage in the long run.

"Having the right level of communication skills will not only help students make the most of their opportunity of studying abroad, but recent research has shown that a high level of communication skills also enhances employment opportunities", explained Sujata Stead. "Too many students around the world find that they can follow lectures and write essays but may not have the social skills to thrive in an English speaking environment, or the interpersonal skills for professional success."

Sujata – originally from India – also reflected on some of her experiences: "When I carried out my studies in the UK, I found that small talk in real-life situations was just as important as academic and technical skills. The importance of being able to use real-life



Sujata Stead, Assistant Director Cambridge ESOL.

communication skills has been highlighted in recent research in a wide range of professions and can make the difference of success or failure in higher education and professional life."

Cambridge IGCSE gets schools' seal of approval



Uptake of Cambridge IGCSE has continued to rise significantly in UK schools – with a marked uplift in English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects in particular, including English, history and biology.

This increase follows the Government's decision in June 2010 to fund Cambridge IGCSE subjects in state schools and for Cambridge IGCSE to count towards the EBacc, as well as the popularity of Cambridge IGCSE among independent schools.

Schools in the UK made over 50,000 entries for Cambridge IGCSE this year, seeing a rise of 100 per cent since 2011. Entries for Cambridge IGCSE subjects that count towards the EBacc tripled over the same period. In state schools, which now make up nearly half of the UK schools offering Cambridge IGCSE, the biggest increase was in English Language and English Literature. State

schools made over 10,000 entries for these subjects this year.

Peter Monteath, UK Schools Manager for Cambridge International Examinations, said: "The feedback we are getting from schools is that they like the flexibility of these syllabuses, which gives teachers more scope to explore different topics with students. Their linear structure also gives students space and time to study topics in depth. The unseen paper, which forms part of our English Literature course, is particularly popular because it gives students the opportunity to respond creatively and critically to a work they haven't seen before."

Teacher training is key to success of bilingual schools

Teachers need the right skills to deliver successful bilingual schooling programmes across Europe – agreed experts who met in Cambridge this summer.

The latest thinking in this area was discussed at The Cambridge English European Forum: effective language learning, teaching and assessment in schools – which brought together representatives from Ministries of Education and schools across Europe.

"Teachers play a huge role in raising language learning standards in schools but it's essential they have the skills they need to deliver language programmes with the desired impact," said Angela Wright, Cambridge ESOL's Global Manager Schools. "Across Europe we're seeing some excellent examples of how policy-makers and governing bodies are taking responsibility for ensuring that teachers are supported, developed and assessed."

Delegates included Gisella Langé from the Italian Ministry of Education, Oksana Kovalenko from the Ministry of Education and Science in the Ukraine and Henny Rönneper from the Ministry of Education and Further Education of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany.

Projects showcased included a look at how German Federal States have established new common standards for foreign language learning – and a look at bilingual projects in Spanish schools which were designed to improve efficiency in language education for both teachers and students.

There were also contributions from policy-makers and leaders in education from across Europe, from France to Russia.



Learning not assessment is the key to good education

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debate on standards, a curriculum that helped address skill shortages and evidence based policy making”.

Discussing the Government’s recent announcements on reform of GCSE, Nick Gibb MP insisted: “Exams should not be made more accessible to lower ability students, instead the system should enable and challenge students and schools to raise their standards to those required by the exam”. He balanced this by saying: “It was right to let some people take exams one or two years later so they can get better grades”.



Stephen Twigg MP.

Charlotte Leslie argued grade inflation was a key issue. She also believed that the new English Baccalaureate Certificate should focus on core skills including literacy and numeracy, that practical and technical skills should not be left behind and softer skills should be taught around the curriculum not as part of it.

Discussions were frank and also covered topics such as the need for exams at 16, the effects of early intervention, reducing the amount of high stakes testing, the negative effects of using the wrong kind of accountability measures and the potential benefits of training teachers to create their own rigorous assessments. All agreed that teaching beyond the test leads to better grades.



Mark Dawe,
OCR Chief Executive.



Nick Gibb MP, Charlotte Leslie, Conservative Member of the Education Select Committee and Brian Lightman, ASCL.

Validating exams

Look out for the Special Issue of Research Matters ‘An approach to validation – Developing and applying an approach for the validation of general qualifications’. Available from October 2012, this issue will describe a programme of research in which a framework for validation studies of general assessments was developed and applied to two International A Level qualifications.

Research Matters is a free biannual publication from Cambridge Assessment. The aim of the publication is to share assessment research in a range of fields with the wider assessment community and to comment on prominent research articles.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Exploring new ways of looking at leadership in schools

The idea that the school principal is the sole agent of change and leadership within a school was challenged at the Cambridge Teachers Conference in September 2012, hosted by Cambridge International Examinations.

178 teachers from 40 countries gathered at Robinson College, Cambridge, to explore new ways of looking at leadership in schools. One of the fundamental ideas of the conference was that school leadership should be distributed, and that schools that strive for excellence are constantly striving for school improvement based on collective responsibility.

Dr David Frost, Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, delivered one of the keynote addresses. A founder member of ‘Leadership for Learning: the Cambridge Network’, he spoke about the role of the teacher in educational reform. He said: “Part of ‘Leadership for Learning’ is a focus on teacher leadership. My work is dedicated to trying to find ways to enable teachers to lead development projects in their schools. I believe that teachers need a very tight framework of support within which they can set their own priorities and plan strategically to make a difference in their school.”

The annual Cambridge Teachers Conference provides a forum where teachers from around the world can engage in high-quality discussion and compare experiences. Workshops took place throughout the two-day event so teachers could develop their skills



Dr David Frost, Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

and practice. As well as exploring the teacher’s role as a leader, participants also considered how best to develop leadership skills in students and how schools can take a lead in their communities.

A delegate from Rotterdam International Secondary School, Les Palmer, said the theme of the conference was fundamentally important for teachers. He commented: “[Leadership] is challenging to get right. It’s therefore been great to share ideas and learn from colleagues from around the world.”

He added: “I think it is vital that teachers continue with their own professional development, because unless teachers learn themselves, how can they teach others to learn?”

Podcasts of the keynote speeches are available at www.cie.org.uk/news/features/detail?feature_id=48188

OCR supports computing in schools

A joint initiative between OCR and the team behind Raspberry Pi – the new credit-card sized computer for schools – aims to drive forward computer science in schools with the development of new resources to support teaching. The organisations, both not-for-profit and part of the University of Cambridge, share a mission to reinvigorate the computing curriculum.



Raspberry Pi gives young people invaluable hands-on experience of how computers work and has already sold over 400,000 units. It was launched in Spring 2012, just weeks after Education Secretary Michael Gove called for computer science to play a larger part in young people's learning and for the existing ICT curriculum to be abandoned.

OCR launched its own GCSE in Computing – the first exam board to do so – just over a year ago. Since the highly successful pilot of the Computing GCSE, the number of candidates taking OCR's qualification has risen by 3,000%.

The suite of teaching and learning resources which OCR is currently developing 'maps' Raspberry Pi to the curriculum, helping teachers to get the best use out of the computer in the classroom. The new resources will be on display for the first time at BETT, the major IT education exhibition, in January 2013.

Computing at Schools (CAS) is another key player in the teaching of computer science in England and Wales with whom OCR is working. CAS backed the development of OCR's GCSE qualification. This academic year, OCR has sponsored ICT and computer teacher Mark Dorling, CAS' CPD coordinator for the network of teaching excellence in computer science, in his valuable work across all education sectors supporting the growing numbers of enthusiastic computer science teachers.

Bursting with Talent

A group of talented students who have won an OCR Bursary towards the costs of their studies at Cambridge University were congratulated by OCR Chief Executive, Mark Dawe, during a presentation at OCR's offices in Coventry in September.

The OCR Bursary Scheme supports pupils from the West Midlands for the lifetime of their undergraduate degrees at Cambridge University. The fund arises from OCR's historical association with the West Midlands Examinations Board. The financial support – now £3,000 per year – can be used either towards tuition or maintenance costs and helps students to make the most of their time at university.

Of the ten awards made this year, one went to Paige Phelps who is the first female student from Stoke Park School in Coventry to have achieved a place at the University of Cambridge since 1975. Another went to

Abdalla Abdalla from Cadbury Sixth Form College in Birmingham, who moved to the UK from war-torn Somalia just over ten years ago with no formal education.

A previous recipient of a bursary, mathematician Aled Walker, reported back on his second year at Cambridge where he balances his love of music with his studies, thanks to OCR's support. Alongside being placed in the top 5 per cent of his year for maths, he sang in choirs and operas and orchestrated for Footlights. He also contributed to the Vorderman report on Maths and volunteered for the UK Maths Trust. "Compiling this



OCR's Mark Dawe congratulates Paige Phelps from Stoke Park School in Coventry.

account," he said, "has made me realise how much I've still been able to enjoy through the year. OCR's support in the form of the OCR bursary has ensured that the pressure remains temporal rather than financial."

Education for the Commonwealth

Bilingual education and helping students develop 21st century skills are two of the education practices needed to shape future leaders, said Cambridge International Examinations Chief Executive, Ann Puntis, speaking at the 18th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers (CCEM) Stakeholders Forum in Mauritius in August 2012. She also identified the need for schools to share professional practice and focus on leadership in the classroom.

Cambridge International Examinations joined education ministers and representatives of 54 countries from across the Commonwealth to discuss the most important education issues and opportunities facing the Commonwealth today. The exam board works with more than 30 ministries of education around the world, and delivers examinations in many Commonwealth countries – including Mauritius where the conference took place.

Ann Puntis said: "It is a real honour to be a part of this event, sharing our expertise and leading discussions on practical measures needed to transform education

delivery across the Commonwealth. Our long standing history with the host country, Mauritius, makes 18CCEM particularly special for us.

"Mauritius has achieved the millennium development goal of universal primary education and high participation in secondary education with a significant percentage of young people not only bilingual but trilingual, moving with ease between English, French and their third language, Arabic, Chinese or one of the Indian languages. I'm proud that Cambridge has worked with Mauritius through such positive educational developments."

'Is English enough?' ask experts at the European Parliament

Experts from Cambridge ESOL and the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) addressed the theme 'Is English enough?' during a week of events in the European Parliament (EP) celebrating Europe's commitment to multilingualism. MEP Miguel Angel Martínez, Vice-President of the European Parliament responsible for Multilingualism and MEP Hannu Takkula, Committee on Culture and Education hosted this annual event.

As Martin Nuttall from the ALTE explains: "Of course, when we asked this question we already knew that the answer would be 'No, of course not'. What we're trying to do is encourage discussion of the importance of teaching languages and using a wide range of languages at a time when English is becoming more and more widely used."

Cambridge ESOL's Neil Jones, Director of the European Commissions' first European Survey on Language Competences, presented the findings of this major

study on language learning in schools. The seminar included an opening address from MEP Miguel Angel Martínez as well as contributions from experts from around Europe including Pierre Mairesse, Director, 'Lifelong learning: horizontal policy issues and 2020 strategy', Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission.

The events second seminar 'Putting language skills of healthcare professionals under the spotlight' included contributions from MEP Bernadette Vergnaud, the



Dr Neil Jones, Pierre Mairesse, MEP Miguel Angel Martínez and Martin Nuttall.

European Parliament's rapporteur on Professional Qualifications Directive. The event also included an exhibition on multilingualism where hundreds of delegates took part in a survey to help to identify some of the hardest words in English and tell researchers what is special about their language.

Cambridge Pre-U students 'ready for university study'

Take-up of Cambridge Pre-U continues to rise among UK schools looking for an alternative to A Level. Twenty-six per cent more schools entered candidates for the Cambridge Pre-U exam series in June 2012 compared with June 2011, and UK entries increased by 28 per cent.

Cambridge Pre-U is designed to prepare students for university. It offers a linear structure, with all exams at the end of two years.

Feedback from schools shows that the qualification is delivering on its promise to develop the skills needed for university, such as the ability to carry out research and study independently. A history teacher at Walthamstow Hall, Kent, Anne Murphy, said former students have told her they are much better prepared for university-level history than their non-Cambridge Pre-U contemporaries. She said: "Having linear exams means we get to teach much more history. Pupils learn transferable historical skills, are not restricted to any style of essay-writing and can think much more flexibly as a result."

Feedback from university admissions staff also backs this view. "We have some students on our campus who have taken Cambridge Pre-U classes and they're doing great," said Stuart Schmill, Dean of Admissions, MIT, Massachusetts, United States. "Cambridge Pre-U students appreciate the fact that they have challenged themselves and it gives them a lot more confidence. When they go to university they feel like they're really ready to take on the challenges that we're going to offer them."

Take-up of Cambridge Pre-U is also rising in schools outside the UK, including the US where it is being piloted in an education programme designed to better prepare students for college.



Speaking English with confidence

A talented university student from India won first prize in the 2012 Cambridge English speaking competition at Cambridge University this summer.



Sruthi Vijayachandran – who holds a Master's Degree in Public Relations – was one of nine young English language students from across Asia who was flown to the UK to take part in the final of Cambridge ESOL's Best Young Speaker from Asia competition.

The final was held at Robinson College, Cambridge in July and Sruthi, and the other contestants, had to give two presentations with a business theme in English and answer a series of questions put to them by an expert panel.

Simon Wright, from competition organisers Cambridge ESOL, said: "Sruthi has a real flair for communications and this really showed on the day."

Sruthi secured a place in the final by impressing judges with her English speaking ability at the regional rounds held earlier this year. She also recently passed Cambridge English: Business Vantage – a high level business English qualification developed by Cambridge ESOL. She was awarded the first prize of an MBA scholarship at the London School of Business Finance – one of the event's sponsors.

Watch a video of the event at www.youtube.com/watch?v=XC8V4tzSHGQ&feature=plcp

An even BETTer 2013 show

Cambridge Assessment will be exhibiting at the BETT 2013 show. Dedicated to showcasing the best in UK and international educational technology products, resources and best practice, the BETT show is relocating to ExCeL London for 2013 – to grow and accommodate the fringe events that take place around the show – after more than a decade at Olympia.

Why not come and see us on stand B240 to find out more about the qualifications and services we offer through our three exam boards, OCR, Cambridge International Examinations and Cambridge ESOL.

BETT 2013 will run over four days from Wednesday 30 January to Saturday 02 February at ExCeL, London. For more information on BETT 2013, please visit www.bettshow.com

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CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

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Cambridge Assessment strengthens role in Asia

To reflect Cambridge Assessment's commitment to education in Asia Pacific, it has established Cambridge Assessment Singapore to provide a platform for development of education services and for debate on the key educational issues facing policy makers and educators in the region.

Cambridge Assessment Singapore was launched officially by Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, on Friday 9 November 2012.

Cambridge and its exam boards have a long record of involvement in Asia Pacific countries, in curriculum development and in the development, design and operation of examinations. Students in almost 2,000

schools in Asia Pacific take Cambridge qualifications and the exams Group works in partnership with ministries of education in several Asian countries, including Singapore.

A programme of events in Asia Pacific will mark the launch of Cambridge Assessment Singapore, bringing together Cambridge representatives in Asia Pacific and leading school principals from around the world.

Australian universities adopt Cambridge English

Recognition of the Cambridge English: Advanced exam by Australian education institutions is growing, with two more leading universities recently announcing they would recognise the exam.

The University of Sydney and The University of Adelaide have joined a growing number of top universities, including four others from the Group of Eight (Go8) coalition, in embracing Cambridge English: Advanced (CAE). This now means almost all Australian universities, TAFE institutions and colleges recognise the test as proof of language ability. In November 2011, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship announced it would recognise CAE for Australian student visas.

Dr Mike Milanovic, the CEO of Cambridge ESOL, said Australian education providers had recognised

that Cambridge English: Advanced was a high quality, secure qualification that ensures students have the language skills to operate effectively in an academic and professional environment.

"We are delighted these leading institutions have embraced CAE as an alternative language test," Dr Milanovic said. "They realise that CAE provides a rigorous, in-depth assessment of a student's communication skills, equipping them to study in an English-speaking institution and get the most from the course they are undertaking."

OCR reaches new audiences with Apprenticeships

Over 90 representatives from businesses across the West Midlands came along to find out more about the benefits of Apprenticeships this summer at an event organised by OCR, in conjunction with the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and Birmingham Chamber of Commerce.

It was the first in series of regional events led by OCR and targeted at employers to de-bunk some of the myths surrounding Apprenticeships. One of the most common is that Apprenticeships only exist in manual trades yet OCR provides Apprenticeship programmes in areas such as Business Administration, Customer Service, Health and Social Care, IT, Management and Retail. OCR also helps companies such as IBM, the BBC, and Channel 4 to create bespoke Apprenticeship schemes.

OCR is also reaching new audiences for Apprenticeships as the first awarding body to develop key components for the new Higher Apprenticeship in Professional Services.

Funding for Apprenticeships in Professional Services, a sector seen as critical for UK economic success, was announced in December 2011. Mark Dawe, OCR CEO, said: "We place a great importance on our portfolio of high quality Apprenticeships. We've seized the initiative by developing the new Level 4 Apprenticeship in Professional Services which we



Representatives from OCR, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, NAS, local employers and colleges share the benefits of Apprenticeships.

hope will help to open up a new generation of career routes."

The new Level 4 Apprenticeship, which offers a choice of three pathways in audit, tax or consulting, allows people to follow a vocational route and still come out with a qualification equivalent to a Foundation degree. It was developed with the input of more than 40 employers to ensure content is relevant to industry needs.