



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT
NETWORK

CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT NETWORK

Developing and sharing expertise in assessment

2011 Programme

courses | seminars | conferences | training events



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT NETWORK

Cambridge Assessment Network activities provide a forum for professionals involved in assessment to develop and share their knowledge and expertise.

Network activities are coordinated by the Network Division, which is part of Cambridge Assessment, Europe's largest assessment agency, a department of the University of Cambridge and a not-for-profit organisation. We were established in 2005 to help assessment professionals keep up to date with the latest thinking in assessment, allowing them to share ideas with like-minded people as part of an international community of practice.

We divide our activities into two main categories: Continuing Professional Development and Dialogue. **Development** activities – where participants attend seminars and courses to learn about assessment – are run by leading figures at Cambridge Assessment, or by consultants to the Cambridge Assessment Network Division, drawing upon a huge range and depth of experience. **Dialogue** activities – where participants meet to discuss current issues and developments in assessment – are led by distinguished thinkers from Cambridge, the UK and beyond.

www.canetwork.org.uk



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT
NETWORK

Welcome



Welcome to the Cambridge Assessment Network programme for 2011.

Last year was an excellent year for the Network, with a great programme of activities and very positive feedback indeed. This year we have another fine line-up of conferences, seminars, courses and workshops, which I'm sure you'll want to be part of at some point.

There are a number of developments for 2011 which I'd like to draw your attention to. You might notice that some of our 'Current Issues in Assessment' seminars take place at Downing College at a slightly later time, and have a little longer allowed for discussion. This is because we are not holding a separate 'Forum' series of seminars in 2011, and instead are incorporating these into the 'Current Issues in Assessment' series.

You might also notice that there is no Cambridge Assessment Conference this year. It's not gone forever, it's just moved to a biennial cycle, every two years. Our plans for the 2012 conference are developing in the light of the changing context for assessment in England, the implications of recent White Paper proposals, and international standards of best practice for curriculum and assessment. We will keep you posted through Network News and announcements on the website.

Our programme for 2011 continues to divide our offering into two main strands: Dialogue and Continuing Professional Development.

The Dialogue section provides opportunities for you to become part of a broader conversation on assessment issues and developments. In this section you'll find two seminar series, *Current Issues in Assessment* and *Perspectives from Cambridge Assessment*, each providing opportunities for discussion and debate on topics such as *Resits in high-stakes examinations: the unusual case of A levels*, *What can we learn from the British Birth Cohort Studies?* and *The effects of modular GCSE examinations on students' outcomes, motivation and workload*.

In the Continuing Professional Development section you'll find opportunities to learn more about assessment. Our CPD offering ranges from focused training events, like *Assessment Principles* and *Assessment Practice*, to extended certificated

courses, notably the *Certificate of Continuing Education in the Principles and Practice of Assessment*, offered by the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education with Cambridge Assessment. For those of you working in assessment outside the UK, our two-week residential course, the *International Study Programme*, provides a comprehensive overview of the development and administration of assessments, as well as an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise with assessment professionals from around the world.

If you'd like to book a place or would like any further information, please contact the team at:

thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk

I hope to see you at a Network event soon!

Dr Paul Newton

Director, Cambridge Assessment Network Division

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All events are held in Cambridge unless otherwise stated.

S This stimulating series of seminars provides a platform for debating current issues in assessment.

Resits in high-stakes examinations: the unusual case of A levels

Speaker: Eva Poon Scott (University of Sussex)
Date: 12 January
Time: 15.30–17.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

In contrast to many other high-stakes examinations which test students only at the end of a course, A levels use a modular format where students are allowed to resit past units within the two-year sixth-form course with no limit or penalty. Since resits were introduced ten years ago, A level performance has been improving steadily. Based on the results of a research study which used a student questionnaire and individual interviews of students, teachers and university admissions tutors, this presentation examines how students make resit decisions, how they improve in resits, how resits affect their learning and how the resit policy affects the effectiveness of A levels in certifying and selecting students at the end of sixth-form education. The research findings suggest that, due to a lack of appreciation for the rationale behind the modular system, no control of resits and the highly competitive nature of selection by universities, the resit policy has produced some undesirable effects when it comes to actual practice in sixth-form education.

How can we improve the quality of marking in our examinations and what does this mean for validity?

Speaker: Dr Ayesha Ahmed (CamExam)
Date: 15 February
Time: 15.30–17.00
Venue: Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road

Exam question writers must achieve two things. Not only must they ensure that each question elicits the kind of performance that shows how 'good' pupils are at the subject, but they must also ensure that each mark scheme gives more marks to those who are 'better' at it.

'As a priority, training in how to write mark schemes will probably lead to more immediate improvement in exam validity than will any other measure.' (Pollitt, Ahmed, Baird, Tognolini & Davidson, 2008 Report for QCA, p4)

How can we improve the quality of mark schemes and their use? Ayesha will outline a taxonomy of the kinds of mark schemes that are currently used in examining in the UK and discuss what makes a good mark scheme, based on the best practice observed in the study quoted above. The taxonomy shows us how to evaluate the evidence of the trait that exists in the student's performance. Ayesha will discuss what this means for the role of the question writer in ensuring the validity of an assessment.

Assessing assessment – progress or politics?

Speaker: Dr Tony Ashmore (National Education Trust)
Date: 2 March
Time: 15.30–17.00
Venue: Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road

This is the title of a pamphlet in NET's Counterblast series aimed at stimulating debate. It is based on the thesis that high stakes external assessment has come to dominate the educational experience of students in our schools and colleges. Assessment is an everyday tool used by teachers to determine what students know and can do, and to plan their teaching. Students need evidence of their attainments for entry to higher education and employment. Schools and colleges are rightly held accountable for the service they provide and government needs evidence to develop policy.

However, the amount of assessment has increased and its purposes have become confused. Too much time and money that could otherwise be used for productive learning is wasted on external assessments. Prime responsibility for assessment should be restored to schools and colleges.

The assessment industry (awarding bodies) should refocus its activities on applied research and development in assessment methodology. The industry should produce assessment tools and professional development for teachers and a much slimmed down external verification service.

The speaker will develop the arguments presented above leaving the majority of time for discussion.

Inter-subject comparability, forced policy-making and the social responsibility of awarding bodies

Speaker: Dr Iasonas Lamprianou (European University-Cyprus)
Date: 15 March
Time: 16.30–18.30
Venue: Downing College, Regent Street

A frequent claim of awarding bodies is that standards are comparable across assessments in different subject areas, and if they are not, the awarding bodies can make them comparable through appropriate statistical techniques. It is not surprising that in many countries such brave statements are received with suspicion and mistrust by the stakeholders.

This seminar will look at the attempts of the Cyprus Testing Service to aggregate candidates' scores from various subjects, with the aim of producing a single index of 'academic performance' for each candidate. We will discuss how using different comparability methods can affect the outcomes, and will show that, depending on the method used, different groups of candidates may be 'penalised'.

We will ask questions regarding the ethical as well as the legal dimension of 'tampering' with the scores of candidates. Dr Lamprianou will explain how external political and legal issues forced the policy-makers at the Ministry of Education in Cyprus to adapt the current comparability method, and we will brainstorm on the possibility of something similar happening in the context of the English education system.

'A really interesting presentation – engaging, stimulating and entertaining.'

What can we learn from the British Birth Cohort Studies?

Speaker: Professor Jane Elliott (Institute of Education)
Date: 19 April
Time: 15.30–17.00
Venue: Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road

The British Birth Cohort studies are among the most powerful tools for social science researchers. By tracking the same individuals over decades, we can get much stronger evidence about the real causes of social problems than by other methods. We can develop an understanding of how circumstances in early life impact on later life chances. For example, we can look at the factors that influence the qualifications that individuals obtain, and the returns that they get from those qualifications.

In this presentation, Professor Jane Elliott will introduce some of the landmark research carried out using longitudinal evidence from the cohort studies, and examine some of the opportunities for future research as the studies develop.

Ensuring comparability in a diverse and unregulated qualifications market

Speaker: Professor Robert Coe (Durham University)
Date: 28 April
Time: 15.30–17.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

The aim of reducing central regulation of qualifications and allowing a range of different providers to offer the qualifications they judge to be appropriate may have educational benefits, as well as fitting with current political directions. Against this, the pressure for regulation comes partly from the need to ensure comparability of standards across different specifications, subjects and qualification types. How can we reconcile these conflicting demands? Can we reduce regulation and allow a diverse range of qualifications, but still maintain comparability?

In this talk Professor Coe will propose a structure for doing this. Examples will be given, together with a discussion of pros and cons of different approaches.

Assessment for Higher Education entry: admissions testing

Speakers: Tim Oates (Cambridge Assessment) and Professor John Laycock (Imperial College London)
Date: 12 May
Time: 16.00–17.30
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

This seminar will consider the place of admissions testing, in the overall range of assessment options for Higher Education entry. It will show how admissions testing is able to round out the holistic assessment of applicants to HE, in addition to, for example, the data on prior or predicted academic achievement provided by examination grades and the narrative provided by the UCAS personal statement. It will also look at how assessment of candidates through admissions testing is clearly distinguishable from other forms of academic assessment, such as A levels.

The seminar includes a case study presented by Professor Laycock on how admissions testing is used in the context of competitive entry to Medicine.

Measuring 'quality' in early education – determining whether pre-schools can support children to become better learners

Speaker: Professor Kathy Sylva (University of Oxford)
Date: 15 June
Time: 16.30–18.30
Venue: Downing College, Regent Street

This session will examine the methodological challenges associated with the largest study of pre-school education in Europe. The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) research programme is the largest in Europe on the effects of pre-school and primary school on children's development. EPPE has followed 3000 children from 3–14 years of age in England and studied the effects of pre-school on development. The study employs a mixed methods design. Quantitative (multi-level value-added) analyses are applied to longitudinal child assessments and background factors over time; qualitative analyses are applied to case studies of educational

settings and also of children and their families. This presentation will explore the role of pre-school quality in relation to children's developmental profiles when they entered school. It will also present new data on the effect of pre-school quality not only on children's profiles at school entry, but also on their capacity to make accelerated progress in Key Stage 2. The talk will close by considering what large-scale 'outcome' studies can and cannot tell us about pre-school education.

Plagiarism in Higher Education: is there a postcode lottery?

Speaker: Vera Bermingham (Kingston University)
Date: 6 July
Time: 15.30–17.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

Although there is a generalised notion of academic misconduct and an assumption that there is a common understanding of the offences across universities, a variation in attitudes to plagiarism is shown to exist. Even within institutions there is anecdotal evidence that certain types of activity are considered by some staff as poor academic practice rather than actual misconduct, which others see as misconduct. External examiner experience shows inconsistency in the approach to dealing with the issue across institutions. This ranges from universities which adopt rigorous detection procedures and follow institutional processes for hearings and application of penalties, to those where less emphasis is placed on formal procedures. There is also a lack of information on whether findings of academic misconduct are routinely recorded in student files and the extent to which universities take positive steps to inform the professional bodies of students who are found to cheat. In the context of highly regulated career destinations such as the legal or medical professions, a finding of academic dishonesty can have serious consequences for a student. The focus of this session will be to illustrate the need to raise student awareness of the importance of developing appropriate skills for research and referencing before embarking on a university degree.

'Most useful presentation – very well summarised and thought-provoking!'

Digging for validity: developing new ways of assessing extra-curricular achievement

Speaker: Dr Carena Lewis (University of Cambridge)
Date: 7 September
Time: 15.30–17.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

In 2008 a collaboration began between ACA (Access Cambridge Archaeology) and Cambridge Assessment, with an initial aim to see whether it would be possible to gain formal recognition from OCR of ACA's 'HEFA' extended learning programme involving archaeological excavation. It rapidly became clear that the way to achieve this was through refining the assessment of school pupils' performance on the HEFA courses in order to give the full range of assessments more validity. Two particular challenges were inherent in this: Firstly, how to develop a valid assessment model for an extra-curricular activity whose greatest asset was the opportunity it provided for pupils to rise to the challenge of doing something difficult, new and different for its own sake and as a release from the grind of constant assessment within the curriculum. Secondly, how to assess 'soft' transferable skills such as team-working and creative thinking in ways that would be valid, and could be scaled up, in an activity that required high staff-pupil ratios. This seminar will present the progress that has been made on this, review the development of ideas about the type of recognition that could be achieved and plans for the future. It will also consider the wider implications of the work that has been done.

Epistemic ascent and curriculum design

Speaker: Professor Christopher Winch (King's College London)
Date: 15 September
Time: 16.30–18.30
Venue: Downing College, Regent Street

Academic subjects are generally assumed to be composed of propositional rather than practical knowledge. One of the insights of Paul Hirst was, however, that they are also practices with procedures for validating and establishing truths. They are also constituted by a closely connected conceptual structure. Mastering this structure involves inferential ability, just as the ability to validate and establish truths demands a variety of forms of practical ability. This talk looks at the relationship between subject knowledge, inferential ability and ability to validate and establish truths in the perspective of an ascent from novice to expert within a subject area. It is argued that a key feature of good

curriculum design is the ability to manage the different types of knowledge in a sequence that matches, not just the needs of the subject, but also that of the student in such a way that the different kinds of subject knowledge are introduced in a way such that the development of expertise is not compromised. Examples of problems with curriculum design are discussed.

The effective monitoring of marking quality through on-screen marking

Speakers: Graham Hudson (DRS Data Services Limited), Beth Black (Cambridge Assessment), and Tom Benton (NFER)
Date: 26 October
Time: 15.30–17.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

Electronic marking provides a wealth of data on marker and examination performance, offering new opportunities for detecting poor marking that were not practical in paper-based marking. Given that reliability (and specifically, marking accuracy) is a prime goal of assessment agencies, the quality assurance of markers during a live session (identifying and remedying lenient, severe or inconsistent marking) is a key endeavour.

This session will look at what we can learn from previous examination data and presents possible models for detecting aberrant marking. We will discuss the uses of 'seeding' item data, the possible place of double marking in electronic marking, issues of practical implementation and the role of the regulator in promoting marking reliability.

Metaphors, markets and marks: the general qualifications market and its deregulation

Speaker: Ben Jones (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance)
Date: 2 November
Time: 15.30–17.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

This presentation will explore the metaphors used to describe general qualifications: their basis, meaning and the effect they might have in 'the real world'. In particular, the notion of a 'market place' for qualifications will be analysed, including the supply and demand side factors, the impact and desirability of its deregulation, the risks and benefits inherent in such an approach, and how, and by how much, such a market should be regulated.

S These seminars provide an opportunity to hear the latest thinking from Cambridge Assessment on topical assessment issues.

The effects of modular GCSE examinations on students' outcomes, motivation and workload

Speakers: Dr Carmen Vidal Rodeiro, Sylvia Green and Tim Oates (Cambridge Assessment)

Date: 2 February

Time: 15.30–17.00

Venue: Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road

Date: 23 March

Time: 14.00–15.30

Venue: OCR, Progress House, Coventry

As part of a recent reform in education, GCSEs are now organised into modules which can either be taken at the end of the course in a linear fashion or at different points throughout the course in a modular approach to teaching and learning.

The proponents of modular schemes have long argued for their advantages in terms of curriculum flexibility, short-term assessment goals, regular feedback, resit opportunities and increasing motivation for students. On the other hand, critics of the modular assessment claim that it leads to fragmentation of learning, students entering examinations when not ready, more teaching to the test and over-assessment. Furthermore, it is also being claimed that GCSEs are becoming less and less demanding, which might lead to a diminution of trust in the qualification.

This seminar will present the findings from a research project set out to investigate the above claims analysing students' performances and attitudes towards modularisation in two GCSE subjects.

Bespoke provision

If you have a particular training requirement that isn't already covered by our programme, we would be happy to discuss potential bespoke solutions for you. Please contact us at thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk

Comparability of examination standards

Speakers: Tom Bramley, Gill Elliott, Dr Paul Newton, Sylvia Green and Dr Jackie Greatorex (Cambridge Assessment)

Date: 6 April

Time: 15.30–17.00

Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

Cambridge Assessment has been involved in research into the comparability of examination standards for many years and, since 2009, has had a dedicated programme of research in this field. Comparability of examination standards is a multifaceted and contentious area of research, involving practical dilemmas and complex theoretical modelling of the issues, which have been complicated by a lack of clarity in the terminology being used. Finding effective methodological solutions to inform practice is a challenge which has been exercising researchers in the field for many years.

In this seminar a panel of Cambridge Assessment staff will discuss the issues surrounding comparability and will engage in debate with the audience about methods for establishing comparability, public understanding of the issues and directions for the future.

Developing a new linear qualification: how difficult can it be? Cambridge Pre-U, a case study

Speakers: Mark Dowling, Di Palmer and Val Sismey (University of Cambridge International Examinations)

Date: 16 May

Time: 15.30–17.00

Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

The presentation will provide an account of the background, development and implementation of the Cambridge Pre-U. During this process a number of educational and assessment issues have been widely discussed among those involved with the development, including the different characteristics of modular and linear syllabuses and assessments, the relationships between the assessments and teaching and learning experiences in the classroom and accessibility for students across the ability range.

Educational changes under the coalition

Speaker: Clara Kenyon (OCR)

Date: 29 June

Time: 14.00–15.30

Venue: OCR, Progress House, Coventry

Date: 11 August

Time: 15.30–17.00

Venue: Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road

A new coalition government, a new set of educational policies! Gone are the 14–19 strategy, the four pathways, QCDA and the Diplomas. In come academies, free schools, the English Baccalaureate and the freedom for parents and teachers to choose qualifications. Or so it appears.... This seminar looks at the educational changes that have emerged since the coalition government came to power and assesses their impact on the educational system and the design and delivery of qualifications.

Challenges to admissions testing; how arguments for validity, reliability, impact and practicality are relevant to the development, delivery and use of admissions tests scores

Speakers: Simon Beeston (Cambridge Assessment) and Dr Lynda Taylor (University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations consultant)

Date: 5 October

Time: 15.30–17.00

Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

This presentation will review the research, development and validation of an academic writing task to be used as part of an HE admissions test. The presentation will describe the basis for the test mandate in terms of academic literacy issues in HE and how the test development plan has attempted to build a strong and defensible argument not just for the validity and reliability of the assessment but also for its beneficial impact with regard to the usefulness of the test score information for receiving institutions when making recommendations on follow-up action needed post admission.

Developing a model for investigating the impact of assessment within educational contexts by a public examination provider

Speaker: Dr Nick Saville (University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations)

Date: 24 November

Time: 14.30–16.00

Venue: OCR, Progress House, Coventry

Date: 14 December

Time: 15.30–17.00

Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road







Impact is relatively new in the field of assessment and has only fairly recently appeared in the literature as an extension of washback. Broadly speaking, impact is the superordinate concept covering the effects and consequences of tests and examinations throughout society, whereas washback is more limited and refers to the influence of tests and examinations in teaching and learning contexts.








Based on the premise that there is no comprehensive model of test or examination impact and how it might be investigated, this presentation considers the question 'What are the essential components of an action-oriented model of impact that would enable the providers of high-stakes examinations to investigate the impact of their examinations within the educational contexts in which they are used?'

A starting point for the discussion will be the role that examinations boards, such as those in Cambridge Assessment, play within educational systems. The speaker will also draw on research conducted by Cambridge ESOL to provide some possible answers, and will illustrate his talk with examples of projects which have been carried out since the mid-1990s. A possible model of test impact will be presented with suggestions as to how it can help examination providers find out and understand the impact their examinations have on education and on society more broadly.

'Very interesting topic that deserves more time'

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Introduction to Assessment | online course

C Introduction to Assessment

- Date:** 3 June to 14 July
- Standard fee:** £350
- Early bird fee:** £315 (for registrations received on or before 3 March)
- Other discounts available, visit www.canetwork.org.uk for full details

What is it about?

This six-week online course provides an introduction to the key principles of effective assessment and how these may be put into practice.

Who is it for?

This course is ideal for trainee teachers and any teachers interested in developing a basic grounding in assessment. It would be useful to anyone who assesses or teaches others in the course of their work. No prior knowledge of the principles of assessment or of studying online are required.

What will I get out of it?

- ❖ A basic understanding of the key principles of assessment
- ❖ Experience of the use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) for study purposes
- ❖ Skills and practical knowledge to be able to plan an assessment based on key principles

Course overview

- Week 1** Contexts for assessment
- Week 2** Purposes and methods of assessment
- Week 3** Selecting the best assessment tool
- Week 4** Principles of assessment 1: obtaining valid results
- Week 5** Principles of assessment 2: interpreting results
- Week 6** Putting the principles into practice: review and assignments

Issues in Question Writing | non-residential course

C Issues in Question Writing

- Date:** 18 October
- Time:** 9.30–16.00
- Venue:** Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road
- Standard fee:** £120
- Early bird fee:** £108 (for registrations received on or before 18 July)
- Other discounts available, visit www.canetwork.org.uk for full details

What is it about?

This one-day course provides insights and guidance on issues in question writing. It has been devised by expert practitioners based on their research and experience. It is led by Dr Victoria Crisp and Nicky Rushton, members of the Cambridge Assessment Research Division.

Who is it for?

The course is recommended for people currently or potentially involved in the setting and editing of question papers and assessment tasks.

What will I get out of it?

- ❖ An introduction to the principles of question writing
- ❖ Consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of different types of questions
- ❖ An understanding of different types of mark schemes
- ❖ An opportunity to reflect on your question writing/editing practice
- ❖ An introduction to the psychology of question answering
- ❖ Insight into how features of exam questions affect their difficulty and fairness
- ❖ An opportunity to discuss and edit example questions

'Content is useful and directed to assessment as the main goal, but participants can adapt it to their teaching situations.'

Certificate of Continuing Education in the Principles and Practice of Assessment | non-residential course

C Certificate of Continuing Education in the Principles and Practice of Assessment

Date: A modular programme with start dates in January and September

Fee: To be confirmed

What is it about?

This programme, offered by the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education with Cambridge Assessment provides an introduction to educational assessment, using topical and relevant examples.

Who is it for?

The programme is for anyone with an interest in assessment and its role in society today; in particular examiners, test writers, teachers with special responsibility for assessment and awarding body staff working day to day in assessment.

What will I get out of it?

- ❖ A firm grounding in the principles and practice of assessment
- ❖ A basis for analysing assessment processes
- ❖ An opportunity to interact with fellow assessment professionals
- ❖ An understanding of the consequences of one's work in assessment
- ❖ An appreciation of the wider context of assessment
- ❖ An accredited qualification from the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education (60 credits at undergraduate HE level one (FHEQ 4))

Course overview

Course A 'Principles of Assessment'

- ❖ Types and purposes of assessment
- ❖ Qualities of good assessment including validity and reliability
- ❖ Standard setting and consistency
- ❖ Criterion and norm referencing

Course B 'Practice of Assessment'

- ❖ Specification development
- ❖ Designing assessment tools
- ❖ Standardisation
- ❖ E-assessment

Course C 'Evidence in Assessment'

- ❖ The candidate and the context
- ❖ Ensuring reliable and valid assessment
- ❖ Maintaining standards
- ❖ The impact of assessment – where is it taking us?

Certificate of Continuing Education in the Principles and Practice of Assessment | *continued*

Find out more

If you are interested in attending the programme and would like to learn more about it, then come along to an introductory session. Held over lunch, the session will give an overview of what you can expect from the course, and will be an opportunity to ask questions of the Course Director, as well as current course participants.

Date: 5 May

Time: 12.30–13.30

Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

Date: 26 May

Time: 12.30–13.30

Venue: OCR, Progress House, Coventry

For more information please visit the Institute of Continuing Education's website: www.ice.cam.ac.uk

'The discussion forums gave me an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas and gain an understanding of how the principles and practices of assessment are applied by other colleagues across a range of roles and sectors.'

AEA-Europe accreditation

The Association for Educational Assessment (Europe) has set up a professional accreditation scheme for assessment professionals, and it is now possible to apply for accreditation as either a Practitioner or Fellow of AEA-Europe. If you want to consider applying, the Cambridge Assessment Network Division is able to offer advice on completing your application. Find out more about the scheme at www.aea-europe.net, or contact us at thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk for advice on applying.

C International Study Programme**Date:** 9–20 May**Fee:** £3,200 (including accommodation)**What is it about?**

This two-week course provides an overview of best practice in the design and delivery of public examinations.

Who is it for?

Typical participants are working for a public examinations provider at management level, in professional and/or operational areas. However, the course is also open to those who don't work directly in assessment provision, but would like to learn more about it. They may have an understanding of the administrative aspects of examination provision, but are looking to develop their knowledge and skills, and to explore new approaches. They may have already been involved in designing new assessment tools or revising existing ones.

What will I get out of it?

- ❖ A comprehensive overview of each stage in the development and delivery of public examinations
- ❖ The opportunity to discuss issues from your context with experts
- ❖ A chance to share experiences with participants from around the world
- ❖ A full social programme including:
 - a walking tour of Cambridge, taking in some of the famous University Colleges
 - a punting trip on the river Cam
 - a visit to a local school
 - a trip to Cambridge Assessment's purpose-built warehouse, despatch and printing facility
 - a course dinner to celebrate completion of the course at one of the picturesque Colleges

Course overview

Topics covered on the course will include:

Developing examinations

- ❖ The purposes of assessment
- ❖ Test development principles and procedures: the context and the test-taker
- ❖ Item writing, mark scheme development and test construction
- ❖ Pre-testing and item level data collection: uses of IRT and Rasch
- ❖ Standard setting and maintaining

Managing examinations

- ❖ Objective marking and professional judgement: the practical implications
- ❖ Managing the delivery of examinations: virtual and physical modes
- ❖ E-assessment: the implications of delivery and assessment mode
- ❖ Making assessment accessible to all
- ❖ Appeals and dealing with malpractice

Context of examinations

- ❖ Current developments in examining and assessment: UK and worldwide
- ❖ Assessment for Learning
- ❖ Developing public policy and planning
- ❖ Capacity building and monitoring
- ❖ Public examinations: the role and responsibilities of the awarding body
- ❖ Stakeholder relations: feedback and support

'An excellently designed course: it helps the participant to get involved in the topic and to develop their skills.'

Embedding formative assessment with teacher learning communities

Keynote speaker: Professor Dylan Wiliam (Institute of Education)
Date: 28 September
Time: 9.30–16.00
Standard fee: £250
Early bird fee: £225 (for registrations on or before 1 June)
 Other discounts available, visit www.canetwork.org.uk for full details
Venue: Hallam Conference Centre, London

Implemented properly, formative assessment can have an extraordinary impact on student achievement, but too often, the implementation is patchy, or focused on the use of assessment to track students’ progress rather than improve learning. In this workshop, participants will learn:

- ❖ What kinds of formative assessment have the biggest impact on student achievement
- ❖ Practical techniques for establishing effective formative assessment in every classroom
- ❖ How formative assessment can be sustained and developed through the use of teacher learning communities

‘It was great to meet people from a diverse selection of schools; talk about different experiences, ideas and issues/success.’

Network News

Our bi-monthly newsletter is now in its sixth year. Previous issues have looked at Assessment for Learning, e-assessment, and a focus on assessment overseas. Articles and other contributions to Network News are always welcome. If you would like to contribute, or to receive copies of Network News, please contact the Network team at thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk

This series enables delegates to think about the basic principles of assessment and their role in today’s education system. It is designed and presented by Andrew Watts, Cambridge Assessment consultant.

Fee: Free to University of Cambridge staff and students, including the Cambridge Assessment Group.
 £30 per session for all other participants

Purposes: What is the point of public assessments?

Date: 20 January
Time: 10.30–12.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

What can be done to address the issue of the purposes of public exams better? Why, for example, do students have to take GCSEs, English language exams, A levels, Diplomas, and vocational assessments? Can we balance the differing needs of those who are stakeholders in these assessment systems? This seminar, and the following four seminars, will address such questions in the light of currently live issues in the world of examining and educational assessment. Participants will be asked to share their own experiences and perceptions, and to reflect on those of others.

Learning: How can assessment support learning?

Date: 10 March
Time: 10.30–12.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

Date: 5 April
Time: 14.00–15.30
Venue: OCR, Progress House, Coventry

What do people mean when they claim that summative assessment ‘damages learning’? And what are the arguments of groups which champion greater reliance on ‘Assessment for Learning’? Is it possible to say that some assessment regimes support learning better than others? And if that is so, is it mainly a matter of getting summative assessment over and done with as quickly and painlessly as possible? Or is there more to say about the positive effect of examinations and external assessments on learning?

Development: Is assessing an art or a science?

Date: 4 May
Time: 10.30–12.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

What are the differences between a psychometric approach to assessment, found more commonly in the US, and one that is embedded in a broader view of curriculum aims and linked to teaching, as in the UK? Could UK awarding bodies learn from a more 'scientific' approach in the development of our examinations? Or could an over-reliance on standardised testing principles lead to a reductive style of assessment which is in conflict with the UK's tradition?

Validity: How can we ensure the value of certificates and qualifications?

Date: 14 July
Time: 10.30–12.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road

Date: 20 September
Time: 14.00–15.30
Venue: OCR, Progress House, Coventry

Our understanding of the concept of validity has been developing over the past century. It is confirmed as the most fundamental aspect of any assessment and the challenge to assessment developers is to show that what is measured in a test or exam bears a valid relation to the desired knowledge and skills in the real world. But it is claimed that present explanations of the concept are now of less help than they used to be because they emphasise the interpretation of assessment results, a matter over which exam and test developers have limited control. Traditionally, examinations in the UK have relied on a close link with teaching and learning communities (of vocational or subject specialists) to underpin the validity of their assessments. Can we ensure the value of assessment results by reaffirming this traditional system? Or is the gathering of 'validity evidence' and validation by assessment experts the way to do this?

Trust: Can the public have confidence in national assessments?

Date: 14 September
Time: 10.30–12.00
Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

Each year examination boards and awarding bodies have to cope with negative perceptions of the working of the examinations process in the press and among their stakeholders. Is this a situation which people can accept? Or is a general questioning of the professionalism of the boards undermining the national exam system? Have the awarding bodies made any impact on public perceptions by their greater transparency and by aligning their practices and procedures to public regulation? Perhaps this agenda should include more discussion of the meaning of the term 'measurement error', but will that term be unhelpfully misunderstood? Could there be more ways in which awarding bodies could work with their stakeholders to increase public trust in the judgements made by examiners and assessors?

'A thought-provoking and very interesting seminar with opportunities for audience participation.'

t This series focuses on different technical aspects of assessment.

Fee: Free to University of Cambridge staff and students, including the Cambridge Assessment Group.
£30 per session for all other participants

Test and item evaluation

Speakers: Nat Johnson (OCR) and Sara Scorey (Cambridge Assessment)

Date: 25 January

Time: 14.00–16.00

Venue: OCR, Progress House, Coventry

Date: 13 October

Time: 10.30–12.30

Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

An introduction to test and item evaluation covering the item level statistics used across a range of Cambridge Assessment’s qualifications. The session will introduce the concepts of omit rates, facility values, discrimination indices, bias or Differential Item Functioning, and analysis of multiple choice items. Parts of the session will have a workshop style to build confidence in interpreting statistical analysis of assessments. This session assumes a basic knowledge of statistics, including the concepts of mean and standard deviation.

Weekly News Round-Up

The Network team issues weekly emails, rounding up the week’s UK educational and assessment news, and presenting it in an accessible format for all who want to keep up to date with the latest developments. To subscribe please contact us at thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk

Basic statistics

Speaker: Jo Emery (Cambridge Assessment)

Date: 10 February

Time: 10.30–12.30

Venue: Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road

This introductory seminar (with examples in the context of scores on a test) is aimed at people with little or no knowledge of statistics. It looks at basic summary statistics, such as the mean, mode, median, range and standard deviation, and graphical ways of displaying data, such as frequency distributions, cumulative frequency curves, histograms and boxplots. It also looks at the properties of the normal distribution curve.

Question writing

Speakers: Dr Victoria Crisp and Nicky Rushton (Cambridge Assessment)

Date: 21 April

Time: 10.00–12.30

Venue: Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

Getting the exam questions right is important in order to ensure that a test measures the intended knowledge, understanding and skills and is of appropriate difficulty for the candidates to be measured. This session will provide an introduction to some of the principles of item writing. Topics covered will include ensuring content and skill coverage, features affecting question difficulty and fairness, and the process involved when a student answers a question.

‘Very clear, excellent use of analogy that was understandable to a novice.’

Grading**Speaker:** Mark Shannon (Cambridge Assessment)**Date:** 26 May**Time:** 14.00–16.00**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry**Date:** 3 August**Time:** 10.30–12.30**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

This session will provide an overview of the processes of grading and awarding, which are central to the establishment and maintenance of examination standards. The main focus will be on current practices for the grading and awarding of general qualifications, including the consideration of evidence from various sources, and the application of the uniform mark scale (UMS). There will also be a discussion of historical grading practices and alternative approaches to the reporting of results.

Reliability and validity**Speaker:** Mark Shannon (Cambridge Assessment)**Date:** 9 June**Time:** 10.30–12.30**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

This session will provide plenty of opportunity for group discussion of the philosophical issues which arise from the notions of reliability and validity. During the session we will look at different concepts and definitions of reliability, types of validity, the concepts of reliability, estimating reliability (methods based on Classical Test Theory) and the factors affecting reliability.

Our website

On our website you can find the latest news of forthcoming events and download presentations from previous ones. We run some of our courses via a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as well as providing resources such as a glossary of assessment terms and useful references to articles and academic papers. Visit our website at www.canetwork.org.uk

Standard setting and maintaining using expert judgement**Speaker:** Beth Black (Cambridge Assessment)**Date:** 20 October**Time:** 10.30–12.30**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry**Date:** 10 November**Time:** 10.30–12.30**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

A look at a fundamental issue in assessment. This session will look at the role of expert judgement in standard setting and maintaining, the methods used for capturing expert judgements (e.g. Angoff, Bookmark, Awarding, rank-ordering) and an evaluation of these methods.

Introduction to Rasch**Speaker:** Tom Bramley (Cambridge Assessment)**Date:** 1 December**Time:** 10.30–12.30**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

A brief review of the mathematical concepts needed to understand Rasch models, plus an introduction to the latent trait theory and the Rasch model for dichotomous items. Main topics include: the link between measurement theory and the Rasch model, Item Characteristic Curves (ICCs), and analysing the fit of the data to the model.

Equating and item banking with the Rasch model**Speaker:** Tom Bramley (Cambridge Assessment)**Date:** 8 December**Time:** 10.30–12.30**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road

An explanation of what is meant by a bank of calibrated items with a discussion on different data collection designs and techniques for adding items to a bank, plus detailed worked examples and practice exercises.

Cambridge Assessment Network Division

There are four full-time permanent members of staff in the Cambridge Assessment Network Division.

Paul Newton, Director



Paul joined Cambridge Assessment during the summer of 2009 as the Director of the Network Division. Although he originally trained as a developmental psychologist, he has spent most of his career researching educational

assessment, within a range of assessment agencies in England, where his research has focused on issues related to the design and evaluation of large-scale assessment systems.

Paul was a member of the Assessment Reform Group (which 'retired' during 2010) and serves on the Editorial Board of *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice*. He has published papers on a range of assessment topics, including: comparability theory; the defensibility of England's national curriculum assessment systems; systems for appealing against results; assessment purposes; and the public understanding of measurement inaccuracy. Paul is a Fellow of the Association for Educational Assessment – Europe.

Jill Grimshaw, Senior Manager



Jill joined Cambridge ESOL in 1989 after teaching in the UK, Italy and the Middle East. Since 2005 she has been the Senior Manager in the Cambridge Assessment Network Division, where her current responsibilities include the CPD

stream of the programme. She manages the consultants who work with the Network Division and is Director of the Certificate of Continuing Education in the Principles and Practice of Assessment, which is run jointly with the University of Cambridge. Jill is a Practitioner of the Association for Educational Assessment – Europe and a member of their Marketing Committee.

Sarah Dodd, Events and Communications Manager



Sarah has been at Cambridge Assessment since October 2004, working both for CIE and Cambridge ESOL, before joining the Cambridge Assessment Network Division in July 2007. She is responsible for the marketing

and organisation of Network events and courses, and she also manages Network communications such as Network News and the Weekly News Round-Up.

Liz Ford, Divisional Support Officer



Liz joined Cambridge Assessment in November 2009 after working as a Workshop and Conference Organiser for the European Bioinformatics Institute. Her role within the Network team is to organise the seminar programme,

and assist Sarah with the organisation of larger events. Liz also acts as a PA to Paul and deals with the day to day administration of the team.

The Cambridge Assessment Network Division is supported by a team of consultants who work with us on our projects.

Challenges of assessment reform



1 October 2010

5th Cambridge Assessment Conference



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT
NETWORK

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