



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT  
NETWORK

CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT NETWORK

*Developing and sharing expertise in assessment*

# 2010 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.cambridgeassessment.org.uk](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk)



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT  
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# Welcome



Welcome to the Cambridge Assessment Network's 2010 programme. I am very pleased to be able to write this introduction as the new Director of the Network Division, having joined Cambridge Assessment during the summer of 2009. As I have spent most of my professional life within assessment

agencies – including the Associated Examining Board, the National Foundation for Educational Research, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) – I hope that there is much that I will be able to offer the Network.

You may notice that we have structured our programme slightly differently this year. We have divided 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. The highlight of this part of the programme is the 5th Cambridge Assessment Conference, which takes the theme *Challenges of assessment reform* and is scheduled for 21 October at Robinson College, Cambridge. In this section you will also find three seminar series, each providing opportunities for discussion and debate on topics such as *Assessing Citizenship in schools*,

*Competitive admissions to Higher Education*, and *Managing and implementing effective internal assessment*.

In the Continuing Professional Development section you will find opportunities to learn more about assessment. These range from our series of focused training events, *Assessment Principles* and *Assessment Practice*, to 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, *International Study Programme: the development and administration of examinations*, 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.

We hope that our new structure will make it easier for you to find the activities that are right for you. Don't forget that if you need any further information or advice about what to attend you can contact us at [thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk](mailto:thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk).

I look forward to seeing you this year!

**Paul Newton**  
Director, Cambridge Assessment Network Division

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## Challenges of assessment reform

**Keynote speaker:** Professor Paul Black (King's College London)  
**Date:** 21 October  
**Venue:** Robinson College, Grange Road, Cambridge  
**Fee:** £180 per delegate, or £150 if booked on or before 30 July

Assessment is under reform all over the world. Some countries are embracing national testing, while others are abandoning it. Many countries are struggling to understand how best to integrate Assessment for Learning within everyday classroom practice.

The potential gains from reform may be high but the processes of change are complex and the consequences of getting it wrong can be severe. In the past decade alone, England has witnessed numerous crises of assessment reform; from the introduction of Curriculum 2000 A levels and the grading furore of 2002, to the appointment of a new contractor for marking national curriculum tests and the marking furore of 2008. Current reforms include the introduction of stretch and challenge at A level, diploma qualifications, revised arrangements for national testing, functional skills testing, controlled assessments, project qualifications, and more.

The 2010 conference, the highlight of our annual programme, will address the challenges of assessment reform. What ensures its success? What undermines it? What lessons can we learn from reforms past and present?

The Cambridge Assessment Conference involves exceptional thinkers provoking cutting-edge debate. This year, our speakers include Professor Jo-Anne Baird from the University of Bristol, Professor Frank Ventura from the University of Malta, as well as others yet to be confirmed. Professor Paul Black, from King's College London, will open the conference with a keynote presentation on the effective integration of pedagogy, learning and assessment, as the foundation for successful assessment reform.

*'Fascinating and very inspiring'*

*'Focused on the real issues'*

The Forum is a quarterly series of prestigious seminars, providing an opportunity for discussion of innovative thinking in assessment. The seminars are presented by eminent figures in the world of education, and their participative format encourages lively debate on key issues.

## When is an exam not really an exam?

**Speaker:** Dr Sue Horner  
**Date:** 17 March  
**Time:** 16.30–18.30  
**Venue:** Downing College, Regent Street, Cambridge

The effectiveness of techniques to assess learner progress and performance is related to the purposes for which assessment is undertaken. The roles of different techniques in formal and informal assessment need further exploration. When roles and purposes have high stakes associated with them this impacts the selection of techniques. Public confidence is often cited as a reason for resisting a range of styles of assessment. Are there ways forward for teacher assessment, tests and qualifications?

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

### 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.assessnet.org.uk](http://www.assessnet.org.uk).

### S Revisioning assessment through a children's rights approach: implications for policy and practice

**Speakers:** Professor Jannette Elwood and Dr Laura Lundy (School of Education, Queen's University Belfast)

**Date:** 9 June

**Time:** 16.30–18.30

**Venue:** Downing College, Regent Street, Cambridge

A focus of debate in assessment has been whether we are assessing our children too much. In the UK children from a very early age are exposed to formal, high-stakes testing situations which continue across all their years of schooling. The debate has culminated more recently with political, academic and policy level concern that children are suffering unduly through the amount of testing that they have to go through and that too much testing has adverse consequences for their overall experience of schooling. The linkage between the impact of assessment and compliance with children's rights is a connection, which although seemingly obvious, is nonetheless rarely made, particularly by governments, which, as signatories to the relevant International Treaties, have the primary responsibility for ensuring that educational practice is compatible with international children's rights standards. While some jurisdictions are explicit about an adherence to children's rights frameworks in general policy documentation, such a commitment rarely features when the focus is on assessment and testing. Thus, in spite of significant public and academic attention given to the consequences of assessment of children and governments committed to working within children's rights standards, the two are rarely considered together. This seminar will examine the implications of international human rights standards for assessment practice. Key children's rights principles and standards will be used as a critical lens to examine assessment policy and practice. The overall aim is to seek new insights into the complexities of assessment practice from the critical but neglected perspective of children's rights.

*'A lively session with good questions and discussion to follow.'*

### S Summative assessment by teachers: designing a system that is fit for purpose

**Speaker:** Professor Richard Daugherty (School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University)

**Date:** 29 September

**Time:** 16.30–18.30

**Venue:** Downing College, Regent Street, Cambridge

Teachers summarise attainment in a multiplicity of ways in response to diverse demands for information about the performance of their students. Amongst those demands are the requirements of large-scale systems of assessment. In spite of the chequered recent history of large-scale teacher assessment in England – National Curriculum, GCSE coursework, vocational qualifications – there have been growing calls in recent years for the role of teachers in such systems to be enhanced. This presentation will review the design features to be taken into account if systems of assessment in which teacher judgement has a role are to be robust enough to meet the expectations of students, teachers, policy-makers and the wider public.

### S Degrees of success: progressing to Higher Education through vocational pathways

**Speaker:** Dr Geoff Hayward (Department of Education, University of Oxford)

**Date:** 15 December

**Time:** 16.30–18.30

**Venue:** Downing College, Regent Street, Cambridge

Widening participation in Higher Education crucially depends upon recruiting more young people from vocational pathways. But what sorts of opportunities do such learners access in Higher Education? Do these offer real opportunities for increasing social mobility and raising earnings? Is there any parity of esteem between academic and vocational progression routes? What are the challenges that students from more vocational programmes face when they enter Higher Education? How can we better support their learning and so improve success rates?

These questions are answered drawing upon the results from a two year ESRC funded research programme employing the analysis of both large scale administrative data sets and more focussed qualitative research.

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

### S Formative assessment: a critical review

**Speaker:** Dr Randy Bennett (Research and Development, Educational Testing Service)  
**Date:** 18 February  
**Time:** 15.30–17.00  
**Venue:** Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road, Cambridge

This presentation covers six inter-related issues in formative assessment (aka, 'Assessment for Learning'). The issues concern the definition of formative assessment, the claims commonly made for its effectiveness, the limited attention given to domain considerations in its conceptualisation, the underrepresentation of measurement principles in that conceptualisation, the teacher-support demands formative assessment entails, and its place in the larger educational system. The thesis of the presentation is that, to realise maximum benefit from formative assessment, substantial progress must be made toward acknowledging and resolving these concerns.

### S Assessing Citizenship in schools. Are we measuring the unmeasurable?

**Speaker:** Dr Mary Richardson (Centre for Beliefs, Rights and Values in Education, Roehampton University)  
**Date:** 11 March  
**Time:** 15.30–17.00  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

This paper discusses the problems of assessing Citizenship, a subject which is perceived by many teachers as unconventional, and by some, as unassessable. The value of assessing Citizenship will be considered in the context of the findings from an empirical study conducted in secondary schools across England. The challenge for Citizenship educators is the need for meaningful assessments that relate to the beliefs and values under discussion in lessons.

### S Competitive admissions to Higher Education – how do institutions differentiate between applicants?

**Speakers:** Tim Oates (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment), Janet Graham (Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Programme) and Dr Robert Wilkins (Dept. of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics, University of Oxford)  
**Date:** 13 May  
**Time:** 15.30–17.00  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

UCAS applications to UK Higher Education institutions, the number of A levels awarded an A grade and high achieving students exceeding the minimum entry requirements are all on the increase. In this context, the increasing numbers of well-qualified applicants presents institutions with a real challenge: how can they choose between applicants in a way that is consistent, fair, transparent and predictive of their future academic success? This session will look beneath the surface of the reported statistics. It will consider the wider context of admissions to competitive Higher Education entry, including the impact of the Schwartz Report's recommendations on admissions processes. We will also look at how one institution uses various forms of assessment to help with differentiating between applicants.

*'A very informative and succinct overview of a very complex subject, delivered in plain English. The speaker was extremely knowledgeable.'*

### S Managing and implementing effective internal assessments

**Speaker:** Graham Herbert (Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors)  
**Date:** 8 July  
**Time:** 15.30–17.00  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge

Education reform is changing teaching and learning practice, bringing a greater focus on the need for valid and reliable assessment carried out to a common and high standard within the learning environment.

The increasing unitisation and modularisation of public examinations, allied to the increasing emphasis on Assessment for Learning (AfL) in the classroom, has put assessment at the heart of the reform agenda. The introduction of the diploma in 14–19 education has placed a reliance on more localised and personal assessment for the benefit of the learner

In recognition of this the Expert Group on Assessment was tasked with reporting to the Secretary of State on strengthening the quality of assessment. In May 2009 they recommended:

- ❖ The assessment capacity of the teaching profession should be increased further
- ❖ All schools should have a lead assessor with an aspiration that all schools should have access to a Chartered Educational Assessor (CEA)
- ❖ DCSF should work with assessment organisations to develop a national accreditation of schools with an institution-level mark of excellence

What are the implications of this move towards increasing levels of demand on teachers' assessment skills? What support is available and how can teachers access it? This seminar raises the issues and implications of these trends and the ways teachers can access support to fulfil these requirements.

*'An excellent speaker who gave a very clear and interesting presentation.'*

### S Today's assessment jungle: a view from the regulator

**Speaker:** Dennis Opposs (Ofqual)  
**Date:** 14 October  
**Time:** 15.30–17.00  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

Ofqual's regulation stretches from the early years through the key stages, GCSEs, A levels and diplomas to vocational and occupational qualifications. Ofqual monitors assessments, reviews standards and has a major programme focused on reliability. What has the regulator found in its regulatory work on the significant developments that 2010 has brought? How do the outcomes help Ofqual fulfil its mission to ensure that these assessments are valued and trusted by learners, users and the wider public?

### S To err is human... What can psychological theories of human error add to our understanding of examiner error?

**Speaker:** Dr Michelle Meadows (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance)  
**Date:** 8 December  
**Time:** 15.30–17.00  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

Research in a wide range of fields of human activity, from industrial accidents to medical misdiagnoses, has revealed that errors are far from heterogeneous. Different types of error have different cognitive and attitudinal underpinnings, and understanding these has led to successful targeted error reduction approaches. Yet research and practice in examiner error often makes no such distinction. This, Dr Meadows will demonstrate, is to err.

#### 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](mailto:thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk).

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

**S** **Footprints in the secret garden – awarding bodies’ engagement with the curriculum**

**Speaker:** Tim Oates (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment)

**Date:** 3 February

**Time:** 15.30–17.00

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

**Date:** 16 March

**Time:** 15.00–16.30

**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry

To what extent should awarding bodies be concerned about curriculum matters? If qualifications increasingly are seen as a means of controlling and influencing the quality of education and training, it is timely to ask what kind of engagement awarding bodies should have with programme content, learning processes and other curriculum issues. Is maintaining a distance between assessment and learning healthy and appropriate or should there be greater articulation between the two? Should awarding bodies limit themselves to understanding the impact of assessment and moderating negative ‘washback effects’ or actively manage a tighter relationship between qualifications and curriculum matters? Should the relationship be determined solely by a technical concern to ensure coherence between assessment and learning or is there a moral component associated with educational attainment and progression? The presentation will argue that awarding bodies stand in a complex relation with curriculum matters and occupy a crucial position in the system – one which is capable of mediating strongly competing interests and pressures.

*‘The seminar raised some challenging but important issues about the role of educational reform and the place of research within that’*

**S** **Reviewing the impact of changes in the assessment of GCSEs**

**Speakers:** Clara Kenyon (Qualifications Division, OCR) and Merrick Smith (14–19 Division, OCR)

**Date:** 22 April

**Time:** 15.30–17.00

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

**Date:** 6 July

**Time:** 14.00–15.30

**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry

New GCSE qualifications were introduced for first teaching in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in September 2009. These new GCSEs included changes such as controlled assessment, unitisation and entry, aggregation and terminal rules. This seminar will discuss the implications of these changes, both for schools and for awarding bodies such as OCR.

**S** **No Irish potatoes? Try yams – looking at alternative approaches for assessing science practical skills**

**Speakers:** Liz Burns (Assessment Services Division, University of Cambridge International Examinations) and the CIE Science team

**Date:** 25 May

**Time:** 15.30–17.00

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

Good science courses provide plenty of opportunities for students to explore and develop their understanding of scientific ideas through practical work. It is often argued that, to encourage school practical work, the students’ practical skills need to be formally assessed by examination or coursework but is this really necessary and if so, what is the best way to do this? CIE is reviewing the assessment of practical skills and this presentation will aim to highlight the key issues and suggest possibilities for the future. There will of course be some hands-on whizz bang experiments to set the scene.

**S** The validation of general qualifications

**Speakers:** Victoria Crisp (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment) and Stuart Shaw (Assessment Services Division, University of Cambridge International Examinations)

**Date:** 14 July

**Time:** 15.30–17.00

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

A number of frameworks for validation have previously been proposed but a coherent model with an accompanying set of methods that can be applied to general qualifications such as GCSEs and A levels has previously been absent. This seminar will report on recent work at Cambridge Assessment to develop and pilot a validation framework and methodology for general qualifications.

Whilst this work moves us towards a refined approach to validation for general assessments, various challenges remain, for example, in relation to the practicalities of gathering such evidence operationally on a routine basis, and with regard to the amount of evidence required to argue that an assessment is sufficiently valid.

**S** **Incomprehensible? Inexpressible? Inconceivable?**  
The very idea of inter-subject comparability

**Speaker:** Dr Paul Newton (Cambridge Assessment Network Division, Cambridge Assessment)

**Date:** 28 October

**Time:** 15.30–17.00

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

**Date:** 23 November

**Time:** 14.00–15.30

**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry

If awarding bodies are to claim that standards are comparable, across examinations in different subject areas, then it seems reasonable to ask the sense in which this is supposed to be true. However, since the introduction of techniques for monitoring inter-subject comparability, during the early 1970s, their underlying principles have failed to be articulated clearly, consistently and coherently. Indeed, some researchers have claimed that the very idea of inter-subject comparability is inconceivable. This seminar will trace the history of investigations into inter-subject comparability in England, aiming to shed light on implicit and, occasionally, explicit statements of principle. It will analyse the emergence of early implicit conceptions and will illustrate how potential alternative conceptions have largely remained unrecognised, despite their potential utility.

**S** Linking assessments to international frameworks of language proficiency

**Speakers:** Dr Hanan Khalifa and Dr Neil Jones (Research and Validation, University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations)

**Date:** 10 November

**Time:** 15.30–17.00

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is having a special impact on assessment, as test users increasingly insist on evidence of alignment to it. But what kind of evidence is needed? Interpreting test performance (against the CEFR in this case) is at the heart of test validity. Thus if CEFR alignment is important for an exam, it should impact every relevant stage of design and administration. It cannot be a one-off exercise. Cambridge ESOL's approach will be presented as an illustration of this. We will also present the SurveyLang project coordinated by Cambridge ESOL, due to deliver the European Survey on Language Competences in 2011, using the CEFR to benchmark the language competences of secondary-school pupils across Europe.

*'A really worthwhile chance to reflect on the ways of our industry and consider how such learning should be applied in today's context'*

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## Introduction to Assessment | online course

### **C** Introduction to Assessment

**Date:** 4 June –15 July  
**Fee:** £200 or £150 if registered by 21 May  
Student fee £100

#### 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. 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

##### Getting to know...each other and the VLE

- ❖ Contexts for assessment
- ❖ Purposes of assessment
- ❖ The role of the assessor

##### Assessment styles

- ❖ Assessment objectives
- ❖ What it means to be 'fit for purpose'

##### Types of assessment

- ❖ Appropriate tools
- ❖ Marking styles

##### Principles of assessment

- ❖ Validity and bias
- ❖ Reliability and standards

##### Putting the principles into practice

*'It was an opportunity to think about assessment in different fields'*

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

### **C** Certificate 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

#### Programme 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 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:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry

**Date:** 7 May

**Time:** 12.30–13.30

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road,  
Cambridge

For more information please visit the Institute of Continuing Education's website: [www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk)

*'Very interesting and informative and relevant to my work. The tutors are very helpful and friendly and the VLE is easy to use.'*

### 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 is able to offer advice on completing your application. Find out more about the scheme at [www.aea-europe.net](http://www.aea-europe.net), or contact us at [thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk](mailto:thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk) for advice on applying.

## International Study Programme | residential course

### International Study Programme

**Date:** 10–21 May

**Fee:** £3,200 (including accommodation)

#### What is it about?

This two-week residential 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 examinations 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:**

- ❖ 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
- ❖ E-assessment: the implications of delivery and assessment mode
- ❖ Making assessment accessible to all
- ❖ Assessment for Learning
- ❖ Current developments in examining and assessment: UK and worldwide
- ❖ Developing public policy and planning
- ❖ Capacity building and monitoring
- ❖ Standard setting and maintaining
- ❖ Managing the delivery of examinations: virtual and physical modes
- ❖ Objective marking and professional judgement: the practical implications
- ❖ Stakeholder relations: feedback and support
- ❖ Appeals and dealing with malpractice
- ❖ Public examinations: the role and responsibilities of the awarding body

*'The course was very good. Socially we were able to mingle and make new friends; professionally we shared knowledge and experiences and we were able to develop a new understanding of the processes of developing and administering exams'*

 **Assessment for Learning: making it work**

**Keynote speaker:** Professor Gordon Stobart (University of London Institute of Education)

**Time:** 9.30–16.00

**Fee:** £150

**Date and Venue:** This conference will run twice during 2010:  
Friday 19 March, University of Cambridge  
Friday 26 November, University of London

This conference is designed for teachers with practical experience of Assessment for Learning (AfL) who want to deepen their understanding of the principles on which it is based and to develop their own classroom and school practices. A unique feature of this event will be the opportunity to take part in post-conference online discussions, led by Professor Stobart, which will enable participants to learn from each other as they put insights from the conference into practice within their own classrooms.

Professor Stobart – an internationally recognised expert on AfL – will discuss recent findings about what makes AfL work well and what obstructs it. These raise questions about, for example, learning objectives and feedback. He will review recent policy developments in England – including *Assessing Pupils' Progress* – comparing them with research and policy from other countries.

The day will include a variety of formats, from a keynote presentation on current thinking about the principles of Assessment for Learning, to very practical workshops on how to embed AfL in schools. Following the conference, using an online resource hosted by Cambridge Assessment, Professor Stobart will lead participants in discussion of their experiences and reflections, transforming the traditional conference talking shop into a genuinely collaborative learning enterprise.

Professor Stobart is a former teacher and educational psychologist. As a founder member of the Assessment Reform Group, he is an internationally recognised expert on AfL. He has worked around the world on developing classroom and school practice. He has a particular interest in how AfL is expressed as official policy. His latest book is *Testing times: The uses and abuses of assessment*.

This series helps delegates to think about the basic principles of assessment and their role in today's education system.

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

**t Purposes: what is the point of public systems of assessment?**

**Speaker:** Andrew Watts (Cambridge Assessment consultant)

**Date:** 21 January

**Time:** 10.30–12.00

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

**Date:** 29 April

**Time:** 14.00–15.30

**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry

The first question to ask about any assessment is, what is its purpose? We have seen in recent years public systems of assessment run into difficulties when they are asked to do too many jobs. So this seminar will consider 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? And in this debate, can we balance the differing needs of those who are stakeholders in these assessment systems?

*'These sessions are great – really interesting, challenging and thought provoking.'*

**t Learning: does assessment damage learning?**

**Speaker:** Andrew Watts (Cambridge Assessment consultant)

**Date:** 3 March

**Time:** 10.30–12.00

**Venue:** Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road, Cambridge

There has been a tendency in some circles to suggest that summative assessment actually damages learning. What is meant by this? 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?

**t Development: is assessing an art or a science?**

**Speaker:** Andrew Watts (Cambridge Assessment consultant)

**Date:** 6 May

**Time:** 10.30–12.00

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

**Date:** 21 September

**Time:** 14.00–15.30

**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry

Much writing on the theory and practice of assessment is to be found in the United States. There, a model of standardised, external tests is more the norm than in the UK, and indeed than in Europe. What are the differences between their psychometric approach to assessment and one that is more embedded in the school curriculum and linked to teaching? Can we in the UK learn more from psychometrics in the development of our examinations? Or does over-reliance on standardised testing fail to reward the full breadth of student learning?

**t** **Validity: how can we ensure the value of certificates and qualifications?**

**Speaker:** Andrew Watts (Cambridge Assessment consultant)  
**Date:** 1 July  
**Time:** 10.30–12.00  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 1 Hills Road, Cambridge

It seems that the concept of validity has become more complicated over the past 30 years. Possibly, it is now of less help than it used to be to examination writers and test developers, because its emphasis on the interpretation of assessment results is a matter over which they have limited control. Yet, the challenge to assessment developers is still 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. 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?

### Network News

Our bi-monthly newsletter is now in its fifth 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](mailto:thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk).

**t** **Trust: can the public have confidence in national assessments?**

**Speaker:** Andrew Watts (Cambridge Assessment consultant)  
**Date:** 2 September  
**Time:** 10.30–12.00  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

Decisions about students' success or failure in their courses inevitably rely on the judgements of examiners and assessors. Is this a situation which people accept, or is a general questioning of professional judgement beginning to undermine the 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? Should this agenda include more discussion of the meaning of the term 'measurement error' or will that term be unhelpfully misunderstood? And are there more ways in which awarding bodies could work with their stakeholders to increase public trust in the judgements made by examiners and assessors?

*'This seminar has given me a lot to take away and think about – thank you! It was a lively, enjoyable session with great content.'*

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

### t Basic statistics

**Speaker:** Jo Emery (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment)

**Date:** 29 January

**Time:** 14.00–16.00

**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry

**Date:** 10 February

**Time:** 10.30–12.30

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

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.

### t Test and item evaluation

**Speakers:** Nat Johnson (Standards Division, OCR) and Sara Scorey (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment)

**Date:** 1 April

**Time:** 10.30–12.30

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

An introduction to test and item evaluation covering the principles behind statistics used across Cambridge Assessment's qualifications. The session aims to build confidence in interpreting statistical analysis of assessments. Concepts introduced will include omit rates, facility values, discrimination indices, bias or Differential Item Functioning, and analysis of multiple choice items.

### t Reliability and validity

**Speaker:** Mark Shannon (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment)

**Date:** 5 May

**Time:** 14.00–16.00

**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry

**Date:** 3 June

**Time:** 10.30–12.30

**Venue:** Hughes Hall, Mortimer Road, Cambridge

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 validity, types of validity, the concepts of reliability, estimating reliability (methods based on Classical Test Theory) and the factors affecting reliability.

### t Item writing

**Speakers:** Victoria Crisp and Nicky Rushton (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment)

**Date:** 5 August

**Time:** 10.30–12.30

**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

**Date:** 26 October

**Time:** 14.00–16.00

**Venue:** OCR, Progress House, Coventry

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.

**t** Grading

**Speaker:** Mark Shannon (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment)  
**Date:** 7 October  
**Time:** 10.30–12.30  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

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.

**t** Standard setting and maintaining using expert judgement

**Speaker:** Beth Black (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment)  
**Date:** 4 November  
**Time:** 10.30–12.30  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

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.

## 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](mailto:thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk).

**t** Introduction to Rasch

**Speaker:** Tom Bramley (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment)  
**Date:** 2 December  
**Time:** 10.30–12.30  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

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.

**t** Equating and item banking with the Rasch model

**Speaker:** Tom Bramley (Assessment Research & Development Division, Cambridge Assessment)  
**Date:** 9 December  
**Time:** 10.30–12.30  
**Venue:** Cambridge Assessment, 9 Hills Road, Cambridge

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.

*'Very good balance of 'hard' and 'soft' material, especially for a non-assessment person like me!'*

## 5th Cambridge Assessment Conference

### *Challenges of assessment reform*

Thursday 21 October 2010 | Robinson College, Cambridge

The 5th Cambridge Assessment conference, the highlight of our annual programme, will address the challenges of assessment reform. What ensures its success? What undermines it? What lessons can we learn from reforms past and present?

Assessment is under reform all over the world. Some countries are embracing national testing, while others are abandoning it. Many countries are struggling to understand how best to integrate Assessment for Learning within everyday classroom practice.

The Cambridge Assessment Conference involves exceptional thinkers provoking cutting-edge debate. This year, our speakers include Professor Jo-Anne Baird from the University of Bristol, Professor Frank Ventura from the University of Malta, as well as others yet to be confirmed. Professor Paul Black, from King's College London, will open the conference with a keynote presentation on the effective integration of pedagogy, learning and assessment, as the foundation for successful assessment reform.

For more information, contact us at  
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