

Becoming a Cambridge International School

A guide to the registration process

We are delighted you are interested in becoming a Cambridge International School. When you join us you will be part of a global community of schools working to equip learners for success in our changing world.

Why do we ask schools to register with Cambridge?

All schools offering Cambridge qualifications must demonstrate their eligibility to do so by successfully registering with Cambridge Assessment International Education. Registration is a process for us to learn more about your values and approach to education and to establish which of our registration quality standards you meet and where we can support you to meet those you do not.

Registered schools gain access to a unique range of teaching and learning resources, professional development opportunities – and a world-class curriculum and wide range of qualifications for 5 to 19 year olds.

Building strong relationships

Each stage of the registration process contributes to developing our relationship with you. We want to understand and support the educational goals of your school, building a picture of the curriculum you make available to learners.

In return, we want you to understand our policies and procedures and to share our view of their importance. Registration also establishes a legal relationship between your school and Cambridge, and makes clear the roles and responsibilities of both parties.





What is in this guide?

This guide:

- explains the registration stages and describes how you should prepare for each stage of the process
- describes our registration quality standards – and the support we provide to help you reach these standards
- provides answers to frequently asked questions about the process.

For an overview of the registration process, with a focus on the approval visit, view our short online guide at www.cambridgeinternational.org/startcambridge

There are four steps to becoming a Cambridge International School:

1. Express your interest	We aim to contact you within two working days of submitting your expression of interest.	
2. Complete our Application Form	We aim to contact you within five working days of submitting your <i>Application Form</i> .	
3. We carry out an approval visit	We will arrange a time that is convenient to you.	
4. You become a Cambridge International School	If you are approved to become a Cambridge International School we will send your contract letter within 30 working days of the approval visit.	



Step one: Express your interest

If you are interested in becoming a Cambridge International School go to www.cambridgeinternational.org/startcambridge and complete our online form.

At this stage we ask:

- for your key contact details
- which Cambridge programmes and qualifications you are interested in
- whether you are ready to offer our programmes or qualifications.

What should I do before completing the *Expression of Interest Form*?

Before expressing interest in becoming a Cambridge International School it is a good idea to have a number of internal policy discussions to:

- consider your goals in implementing a Cambridge curriculum
- assess your resources and facilities against our requirements
- identify the impact on your teachers of moving to our programmes and qualifications.

What information is available to support these early discussions?

We provide a range of documents (see overleaf) that will help you get a better understanding of the:

- products and services we offer
- issues to consider to successfully implement a school curriculum using our programmes and qualifications
- standards you must meet to become a Cambridge International School.

If you would like to talk to us before you submit your expression of interest you can contact your local Cambridge representative or contact our Customer Services team.

What happens next?

At the end of the form you will be asked the following question: 'Do you have the necessary government permissions to offer an international education?'

If you answer 'No' to this question you will be given advice on what to do next. If you answer 'Yes' you can submit the form.

When you submit your *Expression of Interest Form* it will be assigned to your local Cambridge representative who will get in touch within five working days to advise on next steps. We will provide support and guidance throughout the process.

“ The reports that I complete following the approval visit ask me for evidence of the way in which the school is managed, of its educational values, and of the quality of its teaching and learning. The discussions during the approval visit are very much about learning more about the school and seeking to identify how we can support schools further to build our relationship for the future. ”

Local Cambridge representative



Step one: Express your interest continued

Useful documents	How it helps	Where to find it
<i>Cambridge Prospectus</i>	Provides an overview of the products and services we offer and the benefits of working with Cambridge. Helps you to consider the programmes and qualifications you want to offer. Start with the prospectus and then look at the syllabuses for a more detailed understanding of individual qualifications.	www.cambridgeinternational.org/prospectus
Cambridge syllabuses or curriculum frameworks, past papers and examiner reports	Gives you a more detailed understanding of the knowledge and skills learners will develop and how these will be assessed for each of the qualifications you want to offer. Looking at these documents in detail will help you identify the resources, teaching expertise and facilities needed to deliver the qualification.	Cambridge Primary Cambridge Lower Secondary Cambridge Upper Secondary Cambridge Advanced
<i>Implementing the Curriculum with Cambridge</i>	Provides guidance to school leaders responsible for the educational programme in a school on designing, developing, implementing and evaluating the curriculum where Cambridge programmes and qualifications are followed. Reading this guide will help you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider your goals in implementing a Cambridge curriculum • identify the impact on your school and teachers of moving to Cambridge programmes and qualifications. 	www.cambridgeinternational.org/curriculumguide
<i>Guide to Planning Practical Science</i>	This guide sets out the resources and facilities that you must have in place to offer any of our science qualifications.	www.cambridgeinternational.org/startcambridge
<i>Getting Started Guide for exams officers</i>	To join Cambridge you need a member of staff with dedicated time to administer our exams. We call this person the exams officer. This guide gives you an overview of the role and responsibilities of a Cambridge exams officer.	www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers
<i>Cambridge Handbook</i>	This document sets out the regulations for running Cambridge exams. It will help you understand the legal requirements and responsibilities of a Cambridge school. The document is quite detailed, so at this stage we suggest you focus on the following sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre responsibilities • Sections 4 and 5 (not applicable to online schools). 	www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers
Events and training calendar	Gives details of our training and events programme. Searching the calendar will give you an idea of the range of training and events we offer our schools.	www.cambridgeinternational.org/events

You may prefer to go straight to www.cambridgeinternational.org and have a look round to learn more about who we are and the programmes, qualifications and support we offer.



Step two: Complete our *Application Form*

If you are ready to move to the application stage your local Cambridge representative will send you the *Application Form*. The form is designed for you to tell us more about your school and learners. It also helps us get an understanding of the way in which your school meets our registration quality standards. We have registration quality standards (detailed on pages 5 and 7) for the following five key areas:

- mission and educational values
- educational management and leadership
- approach to teaching and learning
- the way in which the physical environment supports teaching and learning and meets our requirements for the secure administration of examinations (physical schools only)
- the online provision of the school (online schools only)
- legal requirements.

We're concerned we might not meet all your registration quality standards

We recognise that at the time you apply your school might not fully meet all our registration quality standards. Talking with your local Cambridge representative at this stage will help you identify the standards that must be achieved on or before the approval visit, and those that you can work towards once you join Cambridge. They will also be able to tell you about the support we can provide to help you move towards full achievement.

What should I do before completing the *Application Form*?

Before you complete the form we recommend you:

- read our guide *Implementing the Curriculum with Cambridge* to develop an understanding of our approach to education, including the way in which our programmes and qualifications help to develop learners and teachers who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged
- review and understand our registration quality standards (detailed on pages 5 and 7)
- meet your senior management team to work out which of the quality registration standards the school meets and how to demonstrate this when completing the *Application Form*

- identify the roles and responsibilities for all staff who will be involved in managing and delivering Cambridge programmes and qualifications
- review your school's and teachers' readiness to make the transition to Cambridge, identifying any support you may need.

Please identify those teachers who will be involved in teaching courses that require the internal assessment of coursework. It is important that we know they are experienced in assessment and that they are able to meet our standards for doing so. For more information on the requirements for internally assessing Cambridge coursework see section 3 of the *Cambridge Handbook* at www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficers

You may also consider:

- consulting parents and your governing body
- speaking to other Cambridge International Schools in your area to discuss first hand the benefits of joining Cambridge.

What support do we offer at this stage?

If you have any questions about the *Application Form* your local Cambridge representative will be happy to help. They will also be able to provide guidance on each of our registration quality standards. If you think you do not fully meet any of our registration quality standards please discuss this with your local Cambridge representative. They will work with you to develop an action plan that sets out what you need to do to meet the standard(s) and when.

What happens next?

When you have completed the *Application Form* send it to your local Cambridge representative. They will review the form and may come back to you for more information. When we have all the information we need we will make arrangements with you for the approval visit. If for any reason you are not ready to move to the approval visit stage we will advise you on the most appropriate steps to take.



Step three: We carry out an approval visit (physical schools)

Physical schools

The approval visit is the opportunity to look at the evidence that supports the information you submitted on your *Application Form*. It will be carried out by your local Cambridge representative – or by a specialist, briefed about your school and what you hope to achieve in joining Cambridge.

The approval visit is not about looking to identify 'one right answer'. We know that Cambridge schools come in many forms. Our network of schools includes some of the largest, most well-established and best-resourced names in education today, but also the smallest, and the newest which deliver effective education with few resources.

What they share is a commitment to delivering the best possible education for their learners. During the approval visit we want to build a picture of your school, including your goals, educational ethos and curriculum, and to ensure that you understand our policies and procedures.

Meeting our registration quality standards

We will be looking to see if you meet our quality standards in five key areas.

The school's mission and educational values	School management and leadership	Quality of teaching and learning	The physical environment of the school	Legal requirements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a clear mission statement that makes reference to its educational values. The culture of the school is learner-centred and supports students and teachers to become confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged. International awareness and global perspectives are promoted through the curriculum and other activities. Relationships between staff and students are positive, demonstrate mutual respect, and the school has established and consistent expectations of behaviour. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The school principal is suitably qualified and experienced in educational leadership. The senior management team and the governing body demonstrate clear goals for the successful introduction of Cambridge qualifications and can evidence planning to support effective implementation. Senior staff are committed to setting targets for school improvement and staff development, supported by well-designed performance review and self-evaluation. There is effective and transparent management of school budgets. A complaints procedure is in place that effectively manages complaints for parents and other stakeholders. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The school is appropriately resourced with sufficient staff employed in management, teaching and support roles. The school curriculum is clearly expressed and accessible to teachers, students and their parents. Assessment outcomes are monitored and evaluated with clear feedback into teaching and learning strategies. Teachers have appropriate qualifications to deliver Cambridge programmes and qualifications successfully. Teaching takes account of students' diverse learning styles and individual needs. The school has a well-designed approach to the professional development of teachers and other staff. The school has a clear policy to address the language needs of learners. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The school premises create a positive learning environment for students. Library or learning resources adequately support delivery of the curriculum. Specialist facilities are provided (e.g. for Cambridge syllabuses in art and design, music, languages, ICT, physical education and the sciences). Secure storage arrangements for question papers and other examination materials comply with our regulations. Appropriate facilities that comply with our regulations for accommodating examinations have been identified. A good understanding of the Centre responsibilities set out in the first section of the <i>Cambridge Handbook</i>. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fire certificate. Government approval to operate, including any approvals needed to provide the Cambridge curricula you wish to offer. Health and safety policies in line with government requirements. First aid provision in line with government requirements. Child protection policies in line with government requirements.



Step three: We carry out an approval visit (physical schools) continued

Physical schools

Checklist of documents for the approval of physical schools

Please have these documents available at the approval visit.

- Organogram for senior management team
- Job descriptions for senior management team
- Roles and responsibilities with respect to Cambridge programmes and qualifications for senior management team
- Key staff CVs (principal and teachers involved in teaching Cambridge syllabuses)
- Code of conduct for students and teachers
- Mission statement and educational values
- School development plan showing goals for the introduction of the Cambridge curriculum
- Performance management plan
- School curriculum policy
- School language policy
- Complaints policy
- Health and safety policy
- First aid certificates
- Fire certificates as required by local legislation
- School professional development policy
- Evidence (in English) of government approval to offer an international curriculum
- Documents to evidence other necessary government permissions.

Please save a copy of these documents onto a USB stick for the Cambridge representative to take away at the end of the visit.

The duration of the visit depends on the number of qualifications or programmes you are interested in offering. Your approval visit will typically last half a day and sometimes longer, depending on the school.

You and your local Cambridge representative will agree the visit agenda beforehand, and it will typically involve a mix of document review and classroom and facilities observation to give them the most appropriate evidence for each standard. The box on the left details the documents you are likely to need to share with us during the approval visit.

Special attention to examination administration and security

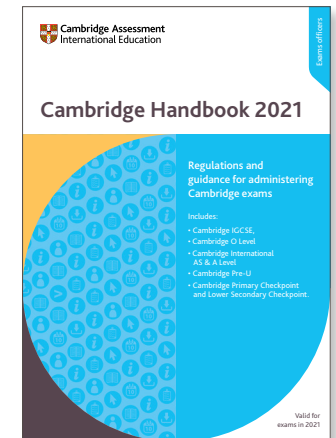
During the approval visit we will review your security arrangements for safe question paper and script storage, evaluate the school's processes for managing our exams and inspect the space you intend to use for storing confidential exam materials. It is vital that you read and understand the *Cambridge Handbook*, which sets out the regulations for running Cambridge exams. It will help you understand the legal requirements and responsibilities of Cambridge International Schools.

We suggest you focus on the following sections:

- Centre responsibilities
- Section 4: Before the exams
- Section 5: Exam day.

We must make sure you comply with the requirements set out in the *Cambridge Handbook* in time for the approval visit. Again, you can talk to your local Cambridge representative about any concerns you have connected with our regulations.

Once registered, you have a contractual responsibility to meet the regulations set out in the *Cambridge Handbook*. You may find it helpful to view our videos on storing question papers and running exams at www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficers





Step three: We carry out an approval visit (online schools)

Online schools

The virtual approval visit for online schools is the opportunity to look at the evidence that supports the information you submitted on your *Application Form*. It will be carried out by your local Cambridge representative – or by a specialist, briefed about your school and what you hope to achieve in joining Cambridge.

The approval visit is not about looking to identify 'one right answer'. We know that Cambridge schools come in many forms. Our network of schools includes some of the largest, most well-established and best-resourced names in education today, but also the smallest, and the newest which deliver effective education with few resources.

What they share is a commitment to delivering the best possible education for their learners. During the approval visit we want to build a picture of your school, including your goals, educational ethos and curriculum, and to ensure that you understand our policies and procedures.

Meeting our registration quality standards

We will be looking to see if you meet our quality standards in five key areas.

The school's mission and educational values	School management and leadership	Quality of teaching and learning	The online provision of the school	Legal requirements
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a clear mission statement that makes reference to its educational values. The culture of the school is learner-centred and supports students and teachers to become confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged. International awareness and global perspectives are promoted through the curriculum and other activities. Relationships between staff and students are positive, demonstrate mutual respect, and the school has established and consistent expectations of behaviour. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The school principal is suitably qualified and experienced in educational leadership. The senior management team and the governing body demonstrate clear goals for the successful introduction of Cambridge qualifications and can evidence planning to support effective implementation. Senior staff are committed to setting targets for school improvement and staff development, supported by well-designed performance review and self-evaluation. There is effective and transparent management of school budgets. A complaints procedure is in place that effectively manages complaints for parents and other stakeholders. The academic leadership and education technology teams clearly articulate how the school's approach to teaching and learning is developed and supported in an online environment. The school has a good understanding of its responsibilities as set out in the Cambridge Handbook. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The school is appropriately resourced with sufficient staff employed in management, teaching and support roles. The school curriculum is clearly expressed and accessible to teachers, students and their parents. Assessment outcomes are monitored and evaluated with clear feedback into teaching and learning strategies. Teachers have appropriate qualifications or experience to deliver Cambridge programmes successfully in an online environment. Teaching takes account of students' diverse learning styles and individual needs. The school has a well-designed approach to the professional development of teachers and other staff, with particular regard to best practices in online teaching and learning. The school has a clear policy to address the language needs of learners. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The use of technology provides safe and secure conditions for learning. The online provision encourages active learning and collaborative learning, which fulfils the school's mission and educational values. Approaches to technology ensure full access for all – adaptable for all user requirements, on any device – meeting best practice accessibility and usability standards. The school provides access to, and guides students in their use of, suitable online resources and tools. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Government approval to operate. Policies on digital privacy and eSafety. Criminal and child protection checks. Awareness of and compliance with copyright and content licensing regulations.



Step three: We carry out an approval visit (online schools) continued

Online schools

Checklist of documents for the approval of online schools

Please have these documents available at the approval visit.

- Organogram for senior management team
- Job descriptions for senior management team
- Roles and responsibilities with respect to Cambridge programmes and qualifications for senior management team
- Key staff CVs (principal and teachers involved in teaching Cambridge syllabuses)
- Code of conduct for students and teachers
- Mission statement and educational values
- School development plan showing goals for the introduction of the Cambridge curriculum
- Performance management plan
- School curriculum policy
- School language policy
- Complaints policy
- Digital privacy policy
- eSafety policy
- School professional development policy
- Evidence (in English) of government approval to offer an international curriculum
- Documents to evidence other necessary government permissions.

Please be ready to share these documents by email when requested by your Cambridge representative.

The duration of the virtual visit depends on the number of Cambridge programmes you are interested in offering and how much evidence is required.

You and your local Cambridge representative will agree the visit agenda beforehand, and it will typically involve a mix of discussion, document review and lesson observation in your online environment(s) to give them the most appropriate evidence for each standard. The box on the left details the documents you are likely to need to share with us during the approval visit.

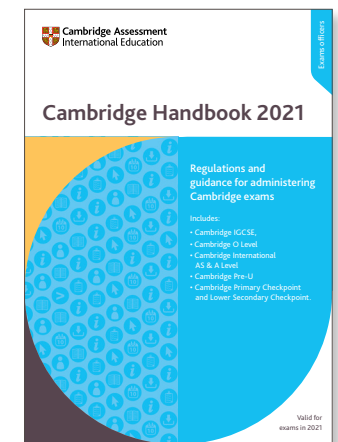
Special attention to quality of teaching and learning online

During the virtual visit we will ask you about your approach to teaching and learning in an online context. We believe that, with effective use of technology, the quality of a Cambridge education online is as high as in a physical school, and that different approaches to online education are equally valid. We will ask you about how you plan lessons and structure the learning online to meet the needs of all students, as well as how you make use of varied digital tools and resources to engage learners.

Cambridge Handbook

Once registered, you have a contractual responsibility to meet all the regulations set out in the *Cambridge Handbook*. For online schools, please make sure you are familiar with the sections on Centre responsibilities as well as section 2.1.2 about ensuring your students can enter at a registered Cambridge centre as a private candidate.

During the virtual visit, your Cambridge representative will make sure you understand your responsibilities as set out in the *Cambridge Handbook*.





Step three: We carry out an approval visit continued

What happens after the visit?

After the visit your local Cambridge representative completes an *Approval Visit Form* detailing the evidence they have seen in relation to the quality registration standards. At the end of the form your local Cambridge representative will make a recommendation.

There are three categories:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions
- Not ready to join Cambridge.

Very few schools fall into the final category as the dialogue between Cambridge and the school will, in most cases, have indicated that the school is not yet ready to complete the process before getting to this point.

If the Cambridge representative recommends your school is approved with conditions they will make clear what you need to do for full approval, and will continue to work with you to ensure that this is put in place as effectively and quickly as possible.

Your Cambridge representative will send the completed *Approval Visit Form* along with the recommendation back to Cambridge. We will email to confirm the final recommendation within 30 days of the approval visit.

“ I want a school to tell me their concerns – for example, what professional development is available to support my teachers? How will my examination officer learn about their new role? How can we improve our science lab? At Cambridge, we are here to help – the more schools discuss any issues they have during the visit, the more I can support them. We might record 'Approved with conditions' but then we will work with the school to ensure that the conditions are met. ”

Local Cambridge representative





Step four: You become a Cambridge International School

If you are approved to join Cambridge we will send you a contract letter to sign and return. Signing the contract letter and paying any relevant fees completes the registration process. At this stage we hope you will be able to reflect on a professionally rewarding, supportive and educationally valuable experience.

You will receive a *Cambridge Welcome Pack* which contains a range of information about the many ways in which your school can engage with the Cambridge learning community. The *Welcome Pack* includes:

- information on resources available for parents and learners about the Cambridge curriculum
- details on our well-established professional development programme and qualifications
- our Code of Practice
- a certificate and wall plaque confirming your status as a Cambridge International School
- login information for our administrative and Teacher Support websites
- marketing and promotional resources to support your communications
- *Getting Started Guides* for your exams officer and teachers.





Frequently asked questions

How long will the registration process take?

We measure our performance on the basis of a target of three months from receipt of your *Expression of Interest Form* to confirming the outcome of your approval visit. If, however, there are delays in sending through the *Application Form* or there is a period of school closure that prevents an approval visit taking place, then it is inevitable that the process will take longer.

How much does registration cost?

You will be required to pay an Application fee, as well as the fees for the programmes you are approved to offer. Because we are transparent about our costs we will send you our fees list, which details the costs associated with being a Cambridge International School, including training and exam entry fees. In addition, your own consideration of the implications of a move to a Cambridge curriculum will have identified the cost of new resources or equipment to be funded by the school.

What happens if my school does not fully meet the registration quality standards?

One of the outcomes from an approval visit is 'Approved with conditions'. This means registration is approved but with certain restrictions until the conditions are met. This might be because further work needs to be done on the school's curriculum planning or its professional development for teachers, or because safety or examination security issues need to be tightened.

In such cases a school can be confident that when the conditions are met, full registration will be achieved. Your Cambridge representative will detail the conditions that you need to meet to achieve full registration on the *Approval Visit Form* and share this action plan with you.

If I am not approved can I apply again?

Yes. The most frequent cause for an application being rejected is that the application has been made too early – that is, before school buildings have been completed or teacher recruitment has taken place. In such circumstances we welcome a subsequent application when the timing is more appropriate.

Can you put me in touch with other schools that use Cambridge qualifications?

Yes. One of the strengths of our global community is that we can encourage links and professional exchanges between schools. The open discussion of curriculum implementation frequently occurs at principal forums, at conferences and through our discussion forums. Your local Cambridge representative can also arrange for you to observe the implementation of Cambridge programmes in other schools.

Can teachers from my school take part in Cambridge professional development activities before we are formally registered?

Yes. We encourage the early involvement of your teachers in moving to a Cambridge curriculum. Online courses for teachers new to a syllabus and workshops in key subjects available throughout the year will be particularly valuable as you prepare for registration. Teachers can access courses that focus on more general aspects of teaching and learning, such as language awareness and using technology in the classroom. They can also choose to work towards our professional development qualifications. In addition, your teachers can access webinars, video conferences and 'Ask the Expert' sessions. You can find further information at www.cambridgeinternational.org/events

Why do schools in the UK go through a different registration process?

Inspection reports are published for all UK schools, whether state maintained or independent. In addition, all UK schools offering the examinations of any of the UK Awarding Bodies will previously have been approved to do so. Our registration process for UK schools is designed to take account of these sources of information.