

**STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES  
Cambridge Course Weighting Request**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools request that Cambridge courses be considered for GPA weighting similar to AP (Advanced Placement) and IB (International Baccalaureate) courses. Cambridge courses are offered to high school students throughout the United States and abroad and are accepted at universities across the world including many UNC institutions. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is the first district in North Carolina to offer the courses and consequently need approval to weight the courses on the same scale as AP and IB.

**Background:** G.S. 116-11(10a) provides that “grade point average and class rank shall be calculated by a standard method to be devised by institutions of higher education.” “Institutions of higher education” includes the State Board of Community Colleges and The University of North Carolina. The current weighting for courses is as follows:

- AP, IB, and other college courses, including dual enrollment and North Carolina community college transfer courses from the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement – 5.0 points
- Honors course – 4.5 points
- Standard course – 4.0 points

**Rationale:** In order to achieve equal weighting for all college-level courses, it is proposed that Cambridge courses receive the same weight as AP, IB, and North Carolina community college transfer courses from the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement which is 5.0 points.

The Cambridge courses were presented to the University of North Carolina (UNC) Board of Governors committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs during the October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 meeting. The UNC Board of Governors approved the proposed weighting for the Cambridge courses.

**Contact:**

Dr. Lisa Eads  
Program Coordinator



North Learning Community

4339 Stuart Andrew Blvd.  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28217

Dr. Eads,

I am the Superintendent of the North Learning Community, part of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. I am writing to you in regards of the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) program that we would like for the North Carolina Community College Systems Office to review in order to receive equity in quality points with other Advanced Studies programs in North Carolina.

Our interest in CIE centered on the fact that our students could increase their readiness for college and career, while earning college credits. Many universities and colleges in North Carolina recognize the fact that this program prepares our students for the college setting. In addition to this, CIE provides our students with the opportunity to earn an International Diploma that is recognized around the world.

We believe that this program has much to offer the students of North Carolina, and because of this we started the implementation of the program in the Hopewell Feeder Pattern in the 2015-2016 school year. This program offers our students the rigor, problem solving skills, and international perspective that is vital to success in both academia and life.

Interest in the program has increased. The number of students who are taking these courses almost tripled this year from 230 to close to 600. Students start the journey in elementary school, and continue through to high school, helping to develop a strong foundation in our students. Teachers are trained by Cambridge Trainers to help ensure that the program fulfills its purpose with fidelity.

The Cambridge Curriculum fulfills a very important need in CMS, by helping us add rigor, critical thinking and problem solving with a global perspective. Providing our families with educational choices is very important to us at CMS, and CIE is helping us give these choices to the families we serve.

Sincerely,  
Matthew G. Hayes, Ed.D.  
Community Superintendent - North Learning Community  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools

## Cambridge International Examinations Overview

Cambridge International Examinations is part of Cambridge Assessment Inc., a non-profit department of the University of Cambridge.

Cambridge International Examinations provides an academically rigorous curriculum emphasizing critical thinking and inquiry based learning that helps students develop the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in college and beyond.

Cambridge International Examinations:

- Is part of the University of Cambridge, renowned worldwide for excellence in education
- Is the world's largest provider of international education programs and qualifications for students ages 5 – 19
- Develops successful learners in over 160 countries
- Is used in over 10,000 schools worldwide
- Is in partnership with educators worldwide, including 40 national governments and education reform projects

### Emphasis on a Learner Centered Approach

- Our programs provide learners with the foundation to achieve high levels of academic and personal learning in an engaging way. Together with schools, we aim to develop learners who are:
  - **Confident** in working with information and ideas – their own and of others
  - **Responsible** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others
  - **Reflective** as learners, developing their ability to learn
  - **Innovative** and equipped for new and future challenges
  - **Engaged** intellectually and socially, and ready to make a difference

### What does Cambridge Offer? Cambridge Pathway

**The Cambridge Pathway offers programs and qualifications from primary through secondary and pre-university years:**

- Coherent and aligned instructional system for students ages 5-19
- Progressive curriculum with one stage building on the next
- Internationally recognized courses backed by leading research and assessment practice
- Supports for educators and classrooms, such as publications, online resources, training, and professional development

### The Cambridge Pathway for Ages 14-19

**International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE®) for ages 14 to 16.**

- Features internationally based standards and end of course assessments for over 70 subjects, including 30 languages
- Is the world's most popular international qualification for 14 to 16 year olds
- Develops learner knowledge, understanding and skills
- Includes written, oral, coursework and practical assessment
- Approved as Honors Level Courses by the Charlotte Mecklenburg School district per the North Carolina Honors Level Course Rubric Framework
- IGCSE end of course exams have rigorous questions requiring more than rote-memory. They require the application of knowledge in unfamiliar contexts and require development of thought and argumentation
- Accepted for admission in many four year and 2 year junior and community colleges

- In many subjects there is a choice between core and extended curricula, making Cambridge IGCSE suitable for a wide range of abilities
- Excellent college prep curricula

**Cambridge International Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and Advanced (A) levels for ages 16-19,** designed for those ready for college level courses while in high school.

- Established and well known rigorous curriculum
- Requires deep understanding, independent learning, analysis and critical thinking skills
- Features internationally based standards and end of one year (AS level) or two year (A level) course assessments for over 55 subjects
  - Students can specialize or retain breadth, providing flexibility
- Teachers are provided with sample unit lesson plans and professional development
- Over 500 colleges and universities in the US, such as MIT, Duke, and all Florida colleges and universities, have credit and placement policies for A and AS level course examinations.
- Tens of thousands of students use it every year to gain entrance at leading universities worldwide
- Students can earn the prestigious **Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) diploma** by earning 7 credits while passing at least one exam at the AS or A level from each subject group: Math & Science, Languages, Arts & Humanities plus AS level Global Perspectives & Research. AS level exams passed equal 1 credit and A level exams passed equal 2 credits.
- AICE diploma recipients may be eligible for university scholarships e.g.
  - Florida students who earn the AICE diploma are eligible for the 4 year FL Bright Futures Academic Scholar Award scholarship which can be used at all state universities, state colleges, and private colleges in Florida. AICE Diploma recipients are exempt from the scholarship's minimum SAT/ ACT score requirement.
- Research (Shaw, S. & Bailey, C, 2011) with Florida State University shows Cambridge AICE students and AP students earning higher first year GPA compared to IB.

### What are people saying about Cambridge?

"The AS/A Level Physics courses were the first time I was able to apply theory to practical matters. The laboratory and theoretical components were integrated very seamlessly. I am confident that this approach is what allowed me to successfully apply my AS/A level knowledge in physics courses at MIT.

I felt prepared to tackle new concepts at the college level and further build upon areas I had already been introduced to, because the Cambridge curricula required me to draw inferences, rather than simply state a particular law."

– Isabel Plana, Former student of Cambridge Physics (and who took 10 Cambridge courses), Ronald W. Reagan Doral Senior High School in Miami, FL, who attended MIT

"Cambridge courses demand that students own the lessons, rather than just experience them. Grappling with the integration of concepts, applying lessons to real and hypothetical situations, and communicating original insights are part of the learning process for Cambridge courses. Students who engage in such rigorous learning activities experience impressive gains in standardized test performance. But, they also thrive beyond the classroom as a result of the analytical, research, communication, and problem solving skills they develop through engaging in the Cambridge curriculum."

- Geoff McKee, School District of Palm Beach County, Florida Instructional Superintendent.

"Students who have taken Cambridge International A Levels do very well at our campus. They are well prepared for our curriculum and we find that they have a lot of confidence, but also that they have a good, deep subject knowledge, [and] the ability to think critically and well."

– Stuart Schmill, Dean of Admissions, MIT

"We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university."

- Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University

