



Progressive education for tomorrow's challenges

Cambridge Assessment  
International Education  
Cambridge International School

We are proud to be part of  
the world's largest international  
community of schools.

## Choosing the Cambridge Path

As one of its options of education, Curro offers the Cambridge curriculum at two of its Curro Select schools, one of which is **Cooper College in Johannesburg North**.

### What is the Cambridge curriculum?

This is an international curriculum offered by more than 10 000 schools in over 160 countries. It offers learners a clear educational path from age five to 19. Cambridge is a well-established international curriculum and was developed by the University of Cambridge in the UK about 150 years ago.

### Why should I consider a Cambridge education for my child?

- The overarching focus is on developing learners to be ready for education, university and the adult world.
- Offering a wide array of subjects, the emphasis is on in-depth subject knowledge combined with developing skills that make study and work easier in future.
- Learners develop advanced writing skills and have a high reading load.
- Learners are challenged to think for themselves, using their curiosity, creativity and collaboration skills.
- Cambridge encourages learners to develop higher order thinking and comprehension skills that will last a lifetime:
  - Problem-solving and critical thinking
  - Independent research
  - Innovation
  - Collaboration
  - Engaging socially and intellectually
- Because of this, self-discipline, responsibility and time-management skills are second nature.

### What is the approach of the Cambridge pathway?

Cambridge helps students discover their individual abilities, broaden their horizons, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can excel at school, university and work.

### How does it work?

The Cambridge pathway has four stages that lead seamlessly from primary to secondary and pre-university years. Each stage builds on the learners' development from the previous one and offers a wide range of subjects with an emphasis on English, Mathematics and Science:

1. Cambridge Primary (5 to 11 years old)
2. Cambridge Lower Secondary (11 to 14 years old)
3. Cambridge Upper Secondary or the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) – IGCSE Core or IGCSE Extended (14 to 16 years old)

#### 4. Cambridge Advanced AS and A levels (16 to 19 years old)

'A level' and 'AS level' are completed in Stage 4. AS level is completed at the end of year 12, and A level is completed a year after the 'matric' year, being equivalent to a first-year Cambridge University course. (Some schools do this differently.)

#### **What is the difference between a Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) qualification and our National Senior Certificate (NSC) or IEB (Independent Examinations Board) matric qualification?**

- IEB and NSC are monitored by Umalusi, the quality assurance authority for education in South Africa and are similar in content, grading, subject choice and pass requirements. The CIE is not conducted or assessed by a South African academic body, but by the CIE council, and is vastly different.
- The Cambridge Assessment International Education assessments and exams are generally recognised as being more in-depth and advanced.

#### **Does a Cambridge matric give my child a better chance to be accepted at universities, both local and abroad?**

- Cambridge qualifications lay the foundation for international studies and are recognised as a premier university entrance qualification worldwide. Over 1 500 universities recognise Cambridge qualifications, including more than 600 universities in the US (also all the Ivy League) and all UK universities.
- A Cambridge 'matric' does not necessarily mean learners will get into international or local universities easier, but the demands of the Cambridge curricula and the rigorous assessments prepare learners to flourish in higher education.
- A Cambridge education helps in bridging the gap between school and university, promoting a greater degree of individual learning.
- Research indicates that Cambridge qualifications improve the chances of a student staying on at university and graduate on time.
- Universities and employers generally see Cambridge qualifications as evidence of academic achievement.

#### **If we emigrate to another country, will my child be able to go to another Cambridge school?**

Learners in a Cambridge school has the flexibility to move between Cambridge schools globally, without compromising their curriculum.

#### **If my child has been in a government school or other private school, will it be difficult for them to adapt?**

Cambridge schools are used to learners enrolling from other schools, backgrounds and abilities and are equipped to help them adapt and progress with continued guidance and support.

#### **How flexible is the curriculum in terms of subject choices?**

- Cambridge offers an unrivalled choice of subjects – over 70 at IGCSE, AS and A level. Learners can choose subjects in any combination.
- Cooper College offers subjects based on learner numbers and interest shown in specific offerings.

- Cambridge also offers opportunities for “greening” the curriculum via subjects such as Global Perspectives, preparing learners to manage 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges such as climate change, global warming, renewable energy sources, social inequalities, and different lifestyles.

### **Do learners write quarterly tests and exams?**

- Cambridge believes education is most effective when curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment are closely aligned. It has a unique way of tracking learners’ progress so teachers can understand the strengths and weaknesses of learners and adapt teaching and learning accordingly.
- Learners results can be compared against their class, school or other schools around the world, and on a year-by-year basis.
- Cambridge offers both internal and external assessments:
  1. Cambridge progression tests (from Grade 3), assessed by the school and usually taking place in term three/four:
    - Teachers use progression tests to assess the performance and progress of learners in their classes.
    - The tests are designed to be used with the Cambridge Lower Secondary Curriculum in English, Mathematics and Science.
  2. Cambridge Secondary Checkpoint (Grade 9), assessed by Cambridge and usually taking place at the beginning of October
    - This is an invaluable tool for schools, as these standardised tests give feedback on a learner’s strengths and areas for development in key curriculum areas.
    - As the Cambridge Secondary Checkpoint curriculum covers core content necessary for study towards Cambridge IGCSE programmes, these scores are useful predictors of future IGCSE grades in the same subject.
  3. IGCSE (Grade 10 and 11) – either IGCE Core or IGCE Extended – AS (Grade 12) and A (Grade 13) level exams, assessed by Cambridge, and usually taking place in October of their Grade 11 year at Cooper College:
    - Learners are required to take a minimum of five IGCSE subjects. The Core curriculum in each subject is within the ability range of the majority of learners (Grade 10). The Extended curriculum, which comprises the Core curriculum and the Supplement, provides extra topics or depth added to the Core (Grade 11).
    - Learners can enter different levels for different subjects.

### **Do teachers get specific training for the Cambridge programme?**

Cambridge develops teachers to be confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – as well as powerful, aspirational and inspiring. It provides first-class support for teachers through publications, online resources, training and professional development. This include:

- Online training
- A school support hub, where teachers have access to a wealth of resources including schemes of work, past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports

### **Where can I find out more?**

- Hesna Müller, Executive Head: Cooper College (all schools): 011 014 1975 or hesna.m@curro.co.za

- Mariska van Reenen, Operational Head: Cooper College: 011 014 1975 or mariska.v3@curro.co.za
- [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org)
- [www.curro.co.za](http://www.curro.co.za)

Side notes:

Checkpoint exams can also be written during the Cambridge Primary course – Grade 6

Checkpoint exams can be written in May or October – at Cooper College, we write them in October. From experience it works better.

Checkpoint exams are written in English, Mathematics and Science.