



# ACS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

*Cobham Egham Hillingdon*

London, England

## Thriving at university and beyond

The changing exam landscape and the value of the International Baccalaureate

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## Foreword

In November 2006, the government announced that it would provide funding to support the introduction of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma in at least one school in every local authority in England.

Meanwhile, vocationally based diplomas, initiated in response to the Tomlinson Report have been developed and will be on offer in schools and colleges from September 2008. At the same time, exam boards currently providing the A level curriculum and exam materials are now actively considering the development of their own exam systems as an alternative to A levels.

Not surprisingly this leaves many educationalists, parents and pupils wondering what the best choice is for them and their future.

This survey has been designed to throw some light on the views and values associated with the exam choices now available, particularly the IB Diploma.

ACS International School has been offering the IB education programme for 27 years, and last year, conducted a survey among university admissions officers to gather their views on the qualification and its relevance to university and working life.

University admissions officers, reviewing thousands of differently qualified young adults every year, are uniquely placed to consider and assess the merits of different education qualifications and the personal qualities they nurture in their candidates.

Since conducting the survey of university admissions last year, the high school exam scene has developed quite dramatically, fuelled in part by the government's announcement to support the IB.

What is it about the IB which the Government has recognised and chosen to support? Where does this leave the A level exam system? Can the two operate together, and if faced with a choice, what are the merits of each programme for today's youth?

The IB programme is presented as a model system for the 21st century, incorporating as it does a belief in global citizenship with local community action, and the development of a breadth and depth of academic study combined with independent learning. We recognise that many schools, parents and students will be assessing if the IB is right for them. A greater understanding of the IB, compared to other qualifications, will be of benefit to anyone considering high school education issues.

To help further understanding, and to foster informed debate about how best to educate our young for the challenges they will face at university and beyond, we have commissioned this survey of university admissions officers for a second year. The results are presented in the following report.

*Fergus Rose, ACS International Schools*

## Summary of findings

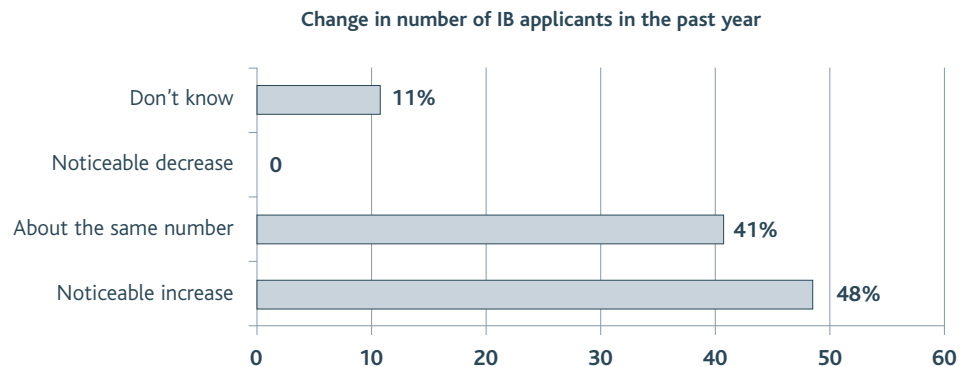
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- The 56 admissions officers who took part in this survey handle on average 12,779 university applications every year. All of them have some experience of assessing candidates with the IB qualification, seeing on average 1,220 IB candidates every year.
- University admissions officers rate the IB very highly, and feel it is a better preparation for university life and working life than A levels.
- Respondents believe that the Government has supported the introduction of the IB in local state schools because it has recognised the value of its broad based education and academic rigour, rather than as a knee-jerk reaction to media pressure.
- University admissions officers feel that the key qualities needed to thrive at university are independent inquiry, in-depth subject expertise and self-management skills. This fits well with employer requirements which they believe to be self management skills, encouraging independent inquiry plus nurturing communication skills.
- The core education values of the IB are the closest match to university and employer requirements according to respondents to this survey; these values are believed to be encouraging independent inquiry, developing self management skills and developing in depth subject expertise.
- Although admissions officers believe the IB is a better preparation for university life than A levels, and as an education system develops personal qualities most in line with employer requirements, they continue to support the A level exam system.
- Just over half, 52 per cent, of admissions officers feel that A levels should be developed and supported, and the same proportion feel that A levels suffer from unfair media reporting, noting that the modular approach of A levels gives them good information against which to assess the applications they receive for university places. Some respondents observed that the media does not understand the A level scoring system well enough to report it fairly.
- Respondents are concerned that media coverage of A levels is a disservice to both teachers and students, but particularly to students for whom disparaging comments about high A levels results can be unfair to those who have worked extremely hard to achieve them.
- Admissions officers recognise that applicants are under intense pressure to achieve top exam scores, but also look for a raft of other qualities or experiences in addition to exam results to help them choose between the applications they receive.
- So called "soft" skills such as good communication or presentation skills remain the main quality which university admissions officers look for over and above exam qualifications, followed by work experience.
- A surprisingly high proportion of university admissions officers look for signs of active participation in charitable or citizenship work, which is more widely used to review university applicants than participation in sporting activities. Completing community work is a requirement of the IB Diploma.
- University admissions officers feel that students can help themselves to benefit more from their university experience by paying greater care and attention to their choice of course, and choice of university.
- Choosing a course for the love of a subject, rather than the job it might lead to, is considered an important factor for students to benefit most from university life.
- Seven in ten admissions officers agree that it is a good thing that there will be a wider range of exam systems on offer and, of the choices being considered, give the IB by far the greatest degree of support as an alternative to A levels.
- Admissions officers give cautious support to the new vocational qualifications, although a majority, 54 per cent, express a concern that the range of exams on offer will lead to a two tier system.
- Further investigation into the concerns over a two tier system would be beneficial. The signs from this survey are that these concerns do not relate to the IB, which is extremely strongly supported, but to the combination of new diplomas and other new alternatives to the A levels such as the Cambridge Pre U.
- The most negative effect on the quality of education which university admissions officers fear is the decline in students applying for STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) and the decline in applications from male students. These subjects are of intense concern to university admission officers.
- Other radical changes which have been discussed in education, such as extending the school leaving age to 18, receive modest support with around a third of university admission officers believing that this would be a good thing for the quality of university education in the long-run.
- The most positive effect on the quality of education from which universities could benefit, from a choice of six different factors suggested to university admissions officers, would be more students taking the IB Diploma. It is considered significantly more important than the introduction of other exam systems, or a continued improvement of the A level exam system by university admissions officers.

- Admissions officers show strong support and understanding of the government's decision to introduce the IB.
- A levels are still supported by a slim majority but there are some signs that this support may be waning.
- Admissions officers don't however, like to see student's hard work devalued by negative media coverage of A levels particularly grade inflation; it still requires hard work all round to get top grades. Many believe the media unfairly presents, or misunderstands the A level system.
- The wider range of exam choices being developed is cautiously welcomed, but there is a significant proportion who fear the creation of a two tier system. This seems to be based on new diplomas and the Pre U rather than the IB.
- The IB is considered the best fit in terms of delivering core values required by both universities and employers through an education programme, and is highly thought of by university admissions officers.
- The UCAS tariff as it applies to the IB will only be applied rigorously in a minority of universities; many intend to follow their own guidelines or are still considering their approach.
- One in five admissions officers say that their university sets its own exams for some courses; this figure is likely to rise slightly in the coming years.
- In addition to exam results, admissions officers assess a wide range of other qualities to choose between applicants. The top three other qualities in priority order are: "soft" skills such as presentation or communication skills, work experience, and participation in charitable or community activities.
- Charitable work, a core aspect of the IB, is a more widely used assessment criteria than active participation in sports. Work experience is likely to become an even more important criterion in coming years to win a place at university.
- Love your subject! Admissions officers think this is the best way to benefit and thrive at university, and that by taking greater care and attention over their course and university choices, students would gain more from their experience of higher education.
- Admissions officers voice grave concerns over the reduction in STEM subjects and male applicants, which is seen as the biggest threat facing university education in the future.
- The introduction of the IB is seen as the best possible way to improve university education quality, from all the new and existing exam systems on offer.
- Other ideas tested in this survey, including extending the school leaving age to 18, receive a modestly positive reception.

## 1. IB and university entry

### 1.1 WHAT CHANGE, IF ANY, HAVE YOU SEEN JUST IN THE PAST YEAR IN THE NUMBER OF UK STUDENTS OFFERING THE IB DIPLOMA? HAVE YOU SEEN A....

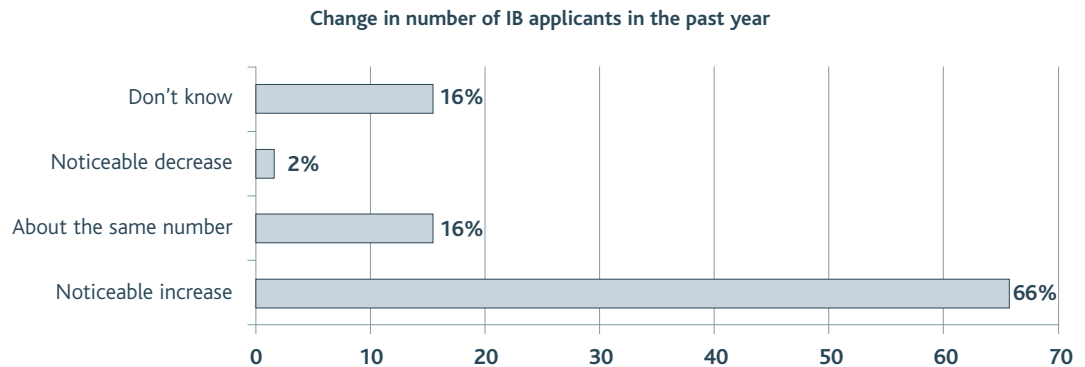


On balance, an increase in applicants offering the IB Diploma is reported by respondents, with 48 per cent of admissions officers reporting a noticeable increase in the number of UK applicants offering the IB diploma, and 41 per cent saying they have seen about the same number of IB applicants this year compared to last year.

The overall affect is an increase in the number of UK students offering the IB Diploma, which corresponds to the increase in the number of schools and colleges which are now offering the IB in addition to, or instead of A levels. This year saw the 100th school offer the IB Diploma in the UK, an increase from 84 schools offering the education programme last year. (Source: International Baccalaureate Organisation IBO).

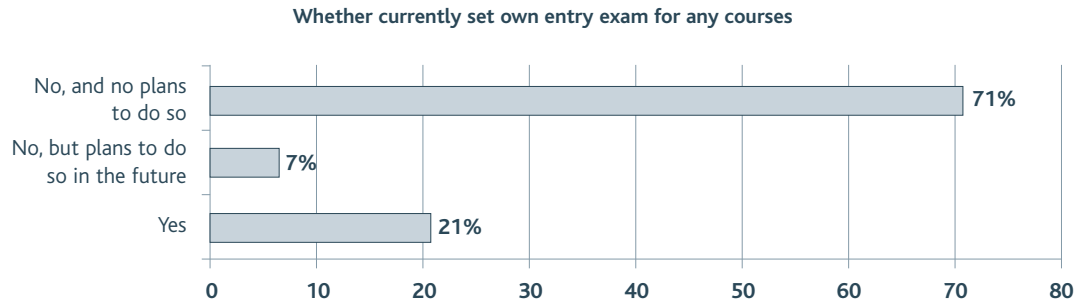
There has been a steady increase in the number of educational organisations, both from the state and private sector offering the IB to pupils. ACS International Schools which was one of the first to offer the IB in the UK in 1980, now offers training to IB teachers from other schools and guidance to a number of schools and colleges considering or introducing the IB. The government's announcement in November 2006 of £2.5 million of funding to ensure that at least one institution in every local authority offers the IB will mean that this pattern of steady increase will probably continue into the future, as explored in the following question.

### 1.2 WHAT CHANGE, IF ANY, DO YOU EXPECT TO SEE IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS IN THE NUMBER OF UK STUDENTS OFFERING THE IB DIPLOMA?



The majority of respondents, two out of three, are expecting to see a noticeable increase in the number of UK applicants offering the IB diploma. This may well be in response to the government initiative described above. While 102 schools and colleges currently offer the IB education programme, if at least one academic institution from all 388 local authorities in England offer the IB Diploma this will create a very dramatic increase in student numbers with this qualification.

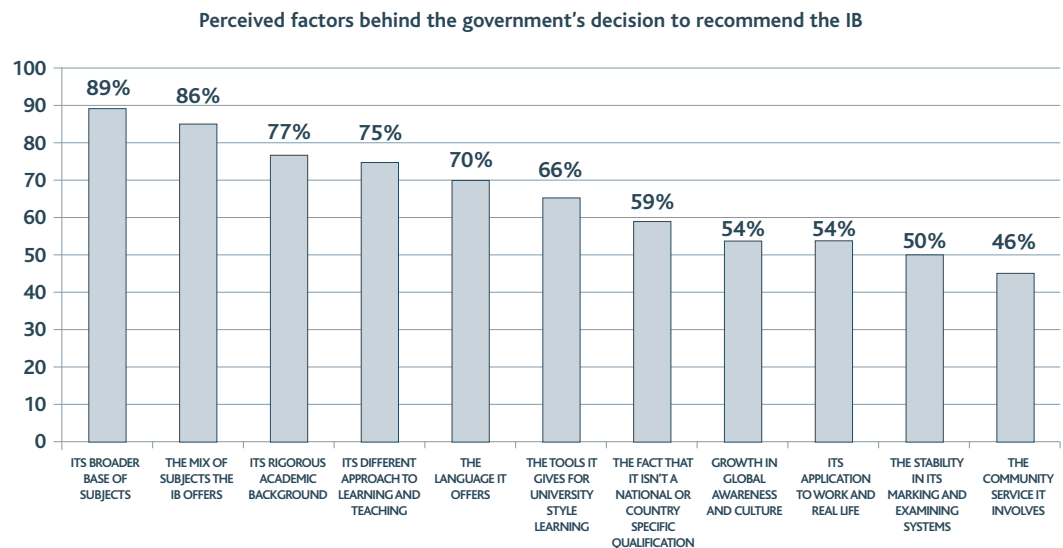
### 1.3 DOES YOUR UNIVERSITY SET ITS OWN ENTRY EXAM FOR ANY SUBJECTS AT ALL?



One in five universities sampled in this survey currently set their own entry exam. This could cover any university course from the thousands on offer, but still seems quite a high figure. A further seven per cent of admissions officers say that their university has plans to introduce its own entry exam in the future.

## 2. Perceived values of the IB

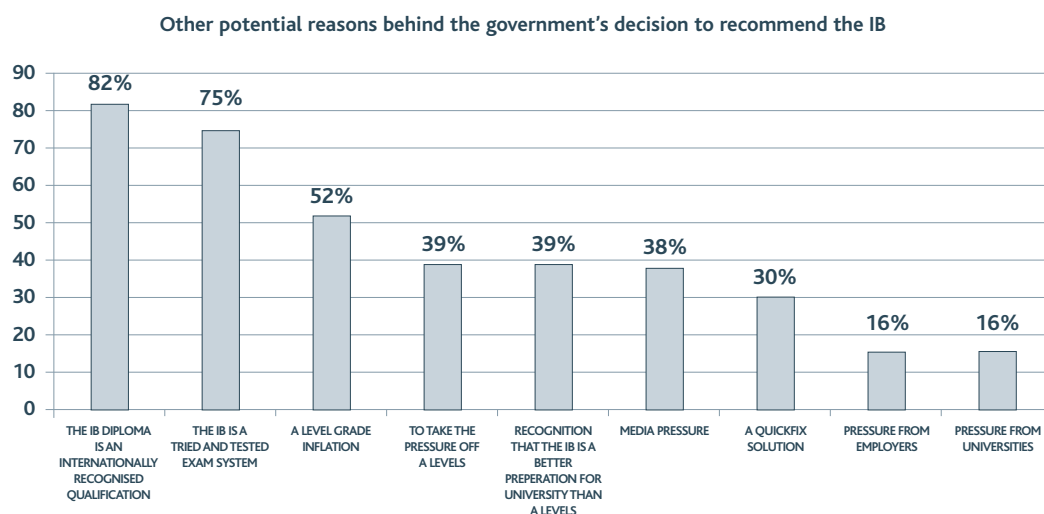
### 2.1 THE GOVERNMENT RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD LIKE TO SEE A SCHOOL IN EVERY LOCAL AUTHORITY OFFER THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE TO ITS STUDENTS. WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE IB DIPLOMA QUALIFICATION DO YOU PERSONALLY THINK WERE BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO MAKE THIS SUGGESTION?



Respondents were asked in two different ways what they thought had motivated the government to suggest the IB as an alternative to A levels, focussing first on the academic qualities of the exam system as described above and secondly, on a wider range of reasons as outlined in 2.2.

On the first basis, exploring the educational qualities of the IB, admissions officers agree almost unanimously, 89 per cent, that the IB has been put forward because of the broader base of subject study that it involves, and its rigorous academic background.

**2.2 WHICH, IF ANY, OF THESE OTHER POTENTIAL REASONS DO YOU THINK MIGHT HAVE BEEN BEHIND WHY THE GOVERNMENT MADE THE RECOMMENDATION FOR SOME SCHOOLS TO SWITCH TO THE IB?**



Asking about the other potential reasons behind the government endorsing the IB as an alternative to IB levels, encouragingly, the majority of respondents chose positive qualities of the IB rather than potentially negative factors about the political situation or expediency.

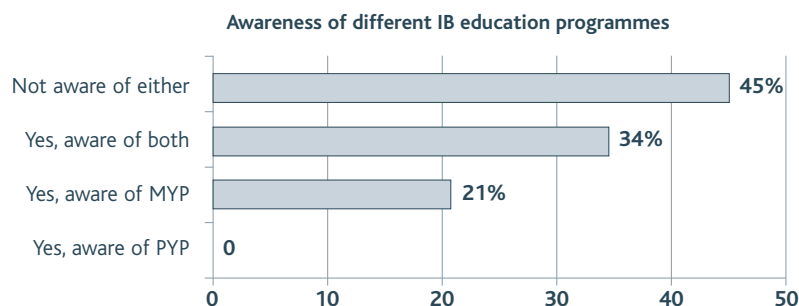
Over three quarters of respondents said they felt the IB being internationally recognised was a factor as well as it being a tried and tested exam system. 'A level grade inflation', as a causative factor, was chosen by just over half, 52 per cent of the sample as one of the reasons why the government may have suggested the IB in addition or instead of A levels for sixth form study.

The third and fourth most often cited motivation was specifically related to the A levels – in response to A level grade inflation and to take the pressure off A levels. A further positive 'draw' of the IB: 'recognition that the IB is a better preparation for university than A levels', was also cited by over a third of respondents.

A third of respondents also agreed that they felt there was some bowing to media pressure, with 38 per cent feeling this factor may have played a part in the Government's decision making. It must be noted, however, that more respondents did not feel the Government was responding to media pressure.

**2.3 IN ADDITION TO THE IB DIPLOMA ARE YOU AWARE THAT THERE IS AN IB PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (PYP) FOR TEACHING CHILDREN FROM THE AGES 3 – 11 AND AN IB MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME (MYP) FOR TEACHING 11 – 16 YEAR OLDS?**

We have seen that every respondent to this survey is familiar with the IB Diploma, and all have views about its best qualities. Over a half, 54 per cent, of the respondents to this survey also knew about either the primary years programme or the middle years programme of the International Baccalaureate.



This represents fairly high levels of awareness, given that at present the Primary Years Programme (PYP) is currently taught in just four centres the UK in addition to ACS International School, and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) is taught at six.

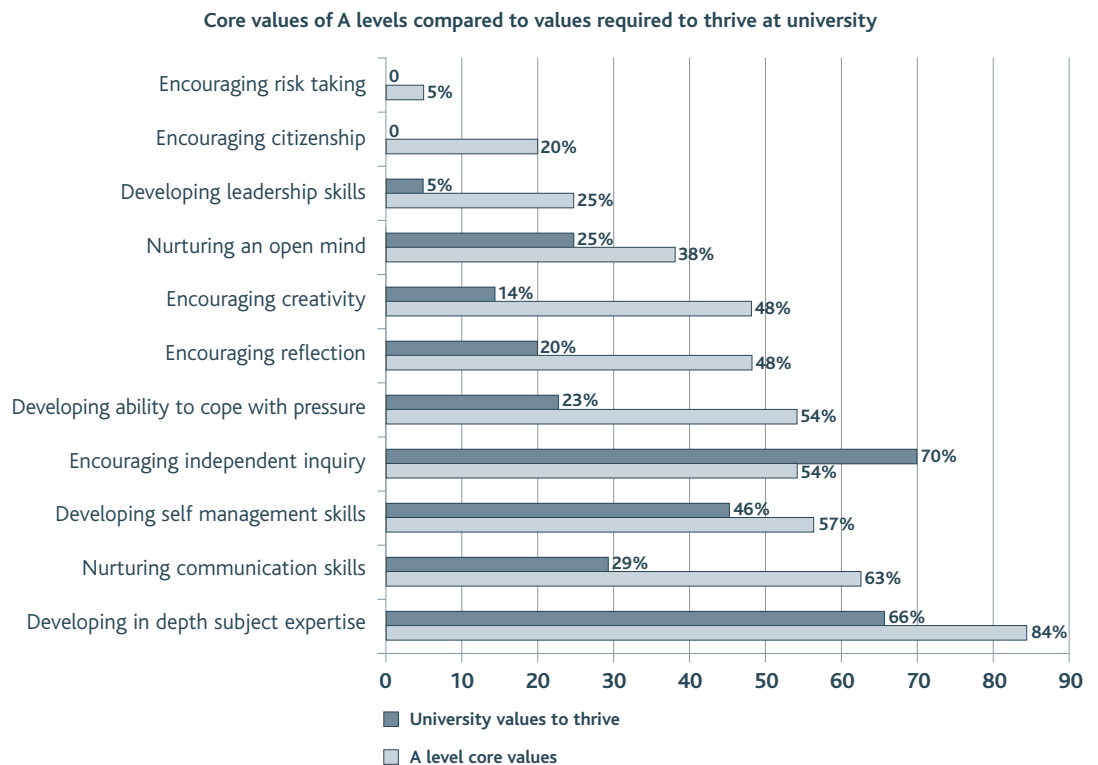
### 3. Education values of different systems

The top three qualities which admissions officers believe most help student thrive at university are independent enquiry, in-depth subject expertise and self management skills.

The majority of university admission officers believe that the core values of the A level system are developing in-depth subject expertise, nurturing communication skills and developing self management skills. These would also seem to be essential building blocks for success at work and in life.

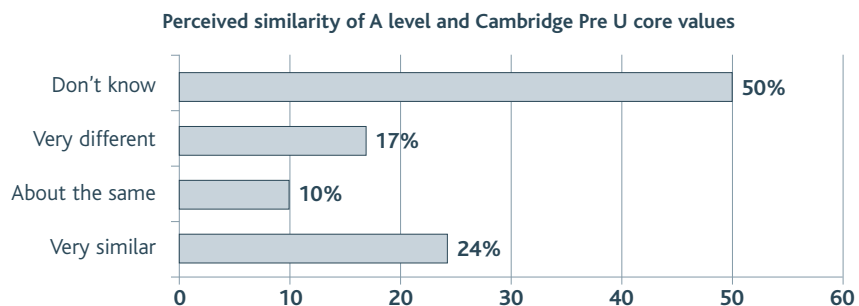
There is however a weaker match between the perceived qualities of A levels compared to the qualities most valuable in helping students thrive at university, as outlined below.

#### 3.1 WHICH IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL FORM A CORE PART OF THE VALUES OF THE A LEVEL SYSTEM AND HOW DO THEY COMPARE TO VALUES NEEDED TO THRIVE AT UNIVERSITY?



It is interesting that independent enquiry is rated the most important quality required to thrive at university. This is not considered to be a main value of the A level system.

#### 3.2 HOW SIMILAR WOULD YOU SAY THE CORE EDUCATION VALUES ARE OF THE A LEVEL SYSTEM AND THE PRE U EXAM?



A majority of respondents were aware of the Pre U. These respondents were asked how similar they felt the core education values are of this system compared to A levels. While the majority of admission officers felt they could not comment as they did not know enough about this system, of those who did know the Cambridge Pre U well enough to comment, just over a third, 34 per cent said they felt it had similar or very similar values to the A level system.

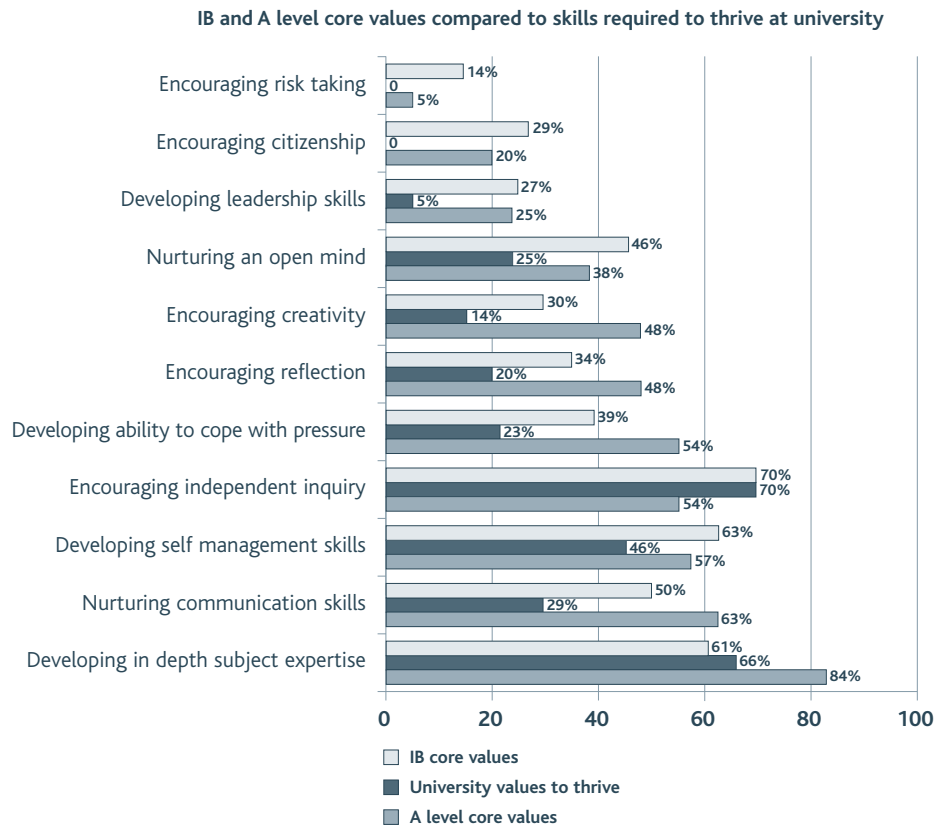
In total 17 per cent, or seven per cent of all those who commented on the question, felt that the Cambridge Pre U has very different values to A levels. Further investigation would be required to identify what those values might be, and their value to students, universities or employers.

### 3.3 WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE CORE VALUES OF THE IB SYSTEM, USING THE LIST WE WENT THROUGH EARLIER?

Respondents were asked to describe the education values of the IB against the same list of qualities used to describe the A level system. Admissions officers rated the IB's top three qualities as encouraging independent inquiry, developing self management skills and thirdly developing in-depth subject expertise.

In the view of admissions officers, these qualities represent a closer match against the skills required to thrive at university. This corresponds with views expressed earlier in the survey where 39 per cent of admissions officers said they felt one of the best qualities of the IB was that it provided a better preparation for university life.

The graph below presents the key skills or values required to thrive at university against the core education values of both A levels and the IB, as rated by respondents to this survey.



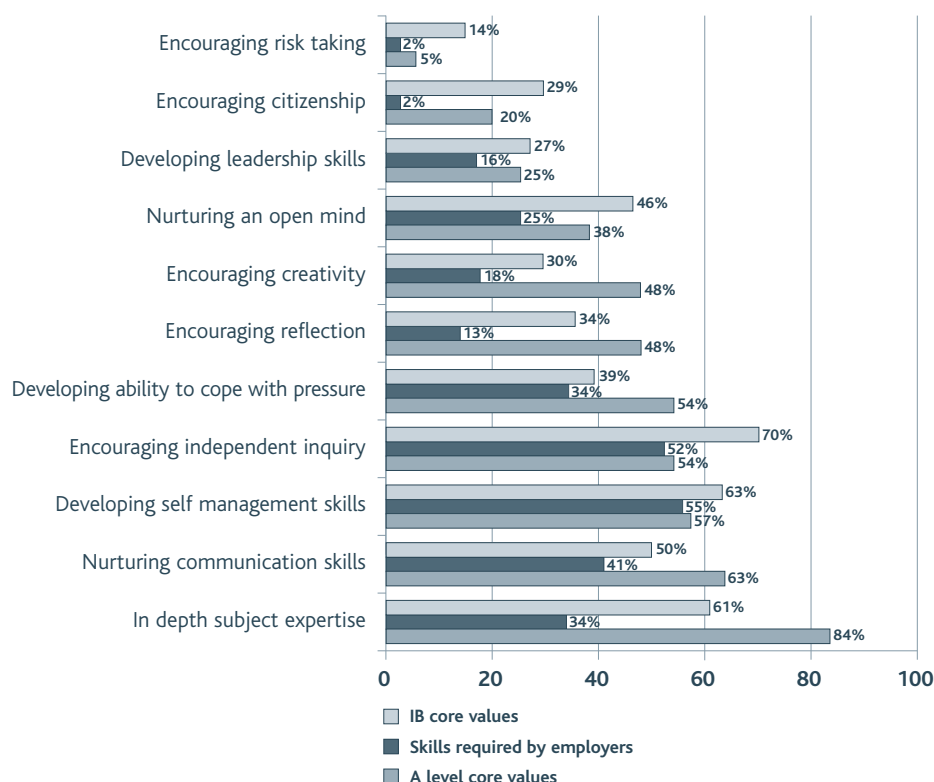
## 4. Employer education requirements

### 4.1 WHICH THREE QUALITIES DO YOU THINK EMPLOYERS MOST VALUE NOWADAYS?

University admissions officers believe that the world of work values slightly different skills to universities. At university the most important skill required to thrive is, not surprisingly, an ability to conduct independent inquiry, whereas at work the most highly valued skill is self management, according to the university admissions officers who took part in this survey.

The next key skills at work are believed to be encouraging independent inquiry, nurturing communication skills and an ability to cope with pressure. Interestingly university admission officers have rated having an open mind above creativity and leadership which 16 per cent of respondents believe are valued by employers nowadays. These are shown on the chart below.

IB and A level core values compared to skills required by employers



Additionally the above chart illustrates how the core values of the two exam systems, A levels and the IB prepare their candidates for the world of work, according to survey respondents. Overall it can be seen that the core values of both A levels and the IB score well against skills required by employers, however there is a closer match between the skills required by employers and the core values of the IB, especially the most important values, when compared to A levels.

## 5. Impact of changes

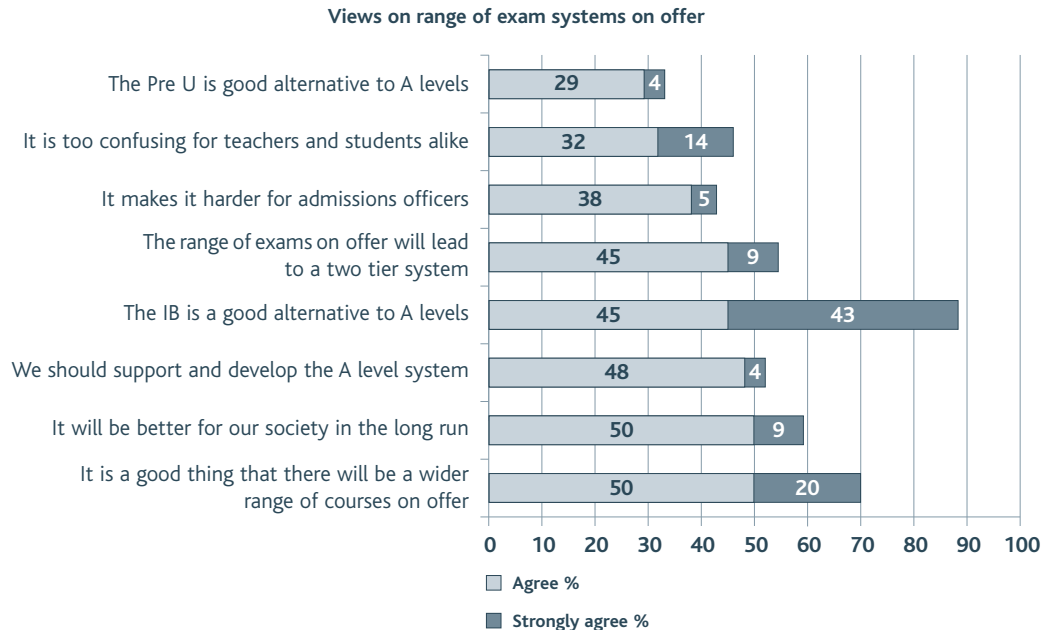
### 5.1 FIVE NEW DIPLOMAS INCLUDING ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT ARE BEING INTRODUCED IN 2008 AS PART OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM. DO YOU THINK THESE MARK A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD IN TEACHING AND EXAM STYLE?



A third of university admissions officers didn't answer this question because they felt they didn't know enough about the new diplomas. Since the diplomas have yet to be completed and are not set up to be a replacement for A levels and university entry, they need not be particularly 'on radar' for admissions officers.

Among respondents who felt they could comment on the new diplomas, the majority feel positively towards them with 41 per cent saying they feel they mark a positive step forward in teaching and exam style. Just under a third, 29 per cent disagree, and do not think they mark a positive step forward. As is shown later, the overall body of opinion is positive towards the new exam diplomas.

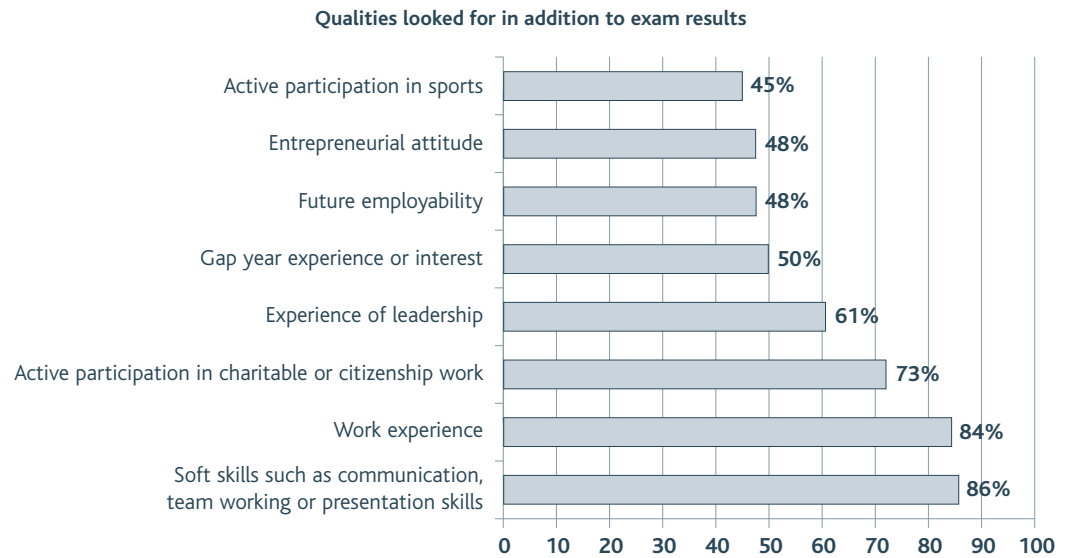
### 5.2 HOW STRONGLY DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE RANGE OF DIFFERENT EXAMS NOW ON OFFER IN ENGLAND AND WALES?



While just over half, 52 per cent, believe that the A level system should be supported and developed a much greater proportion, 88 per cent, agree that the IB is a good alternative to A levels. Within this group, 43 per cent strongly believe that the IB is a good alternative to A levels.

## 6. Applying to university

### 6.1 DO YOU LOOK OUT FOR SIGNS OF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING IN STUDENT APPLICATIONS TO YOUR UNIVERSITY, IN ADDITION TO EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS?



Of course, the main guide to admissions officers concerning which students to accept to a university course is the academic qualification which the candidate offers.

With a higher proportion of students offering the highest grades, we know that admissions officers have to use other criteria to choose between similarly well qualified candidates. The top three qualities which admissions officers are looking for are "soft" skills; work experience and active participation in charitable or citizenship work.

These are tough expectations: 84 per cent of admissions officers are looking for work experience for example; almost three quarters, 73 per cent look for participation in charitable or citizenship work, and well over a half, 61 per cent, look for experience of leadership.

We have already seen that admissions officers rate A levels highly in developing the "soft" skills required, including team working, communication or presentation skills. These qualities were considered to be the second set of core education values, after in-depth subject knowledge which the A level system delivers.

The IB would seem to be slightly more aligned to university requirements than A levels though, since in addition to developing the key communication skills it also involves an essential element of charitable and citizenship activity. Creativity, action and service is the third core quality which is compulsory and central to the philosophy of the IB. The other two core subjects are the extended essay, which requires an individual, in depth study of a topic of personal interest to the student, and the Theory of Knowledge element which is an interdisciplinary course looking at how knowledge is acquired across different subjects and cultures.

## 7. Admissions expectations

### 7.1 WHICH SINGLE ONE, IF ANY, OF THESE DO YOU EXPECT TO BECOME A MORE IMPORTANT SELECTION CRITERION IN THE COMING YEARS, IN ADDITION TO EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS?

The skills which admissions officers think will become more important in the coming years are "soft" skills, followed by work experience. Future employability, however that is judged, also appears as a quality which is expected to be more important in the coming years.

**Most important selection criteria in future years, in addition to exam results**



**8. The UCAS tariff**

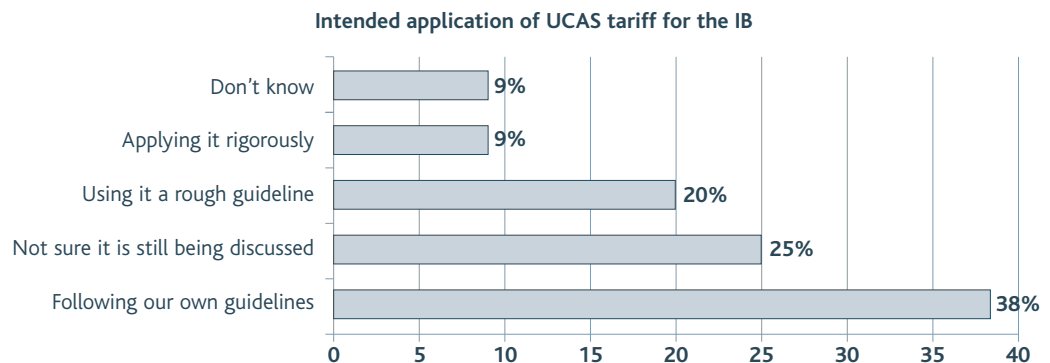
There has already been some lively discussion in the media about the UCAS tariff score for the IB Diploma.

An IB Diploma is awarded after six out of a choice of seven courses have been followed. In addition an extended essay has to be written. A total score of 45 points is the maximum possible score for all these elements.

Last year five per cent of IB Diploma candidates worldwide achieved a score of 40 or over (source: The International Baccalaureate Organisation) and 24.1 per cent of all A level candidates achieved an A grade result (source: Joint Council for General Qualifications.)

We asked university admissions officers for their views on the UCAS tariff as it relates to the IB and the results show that at present most intend to use it as a guideline only.

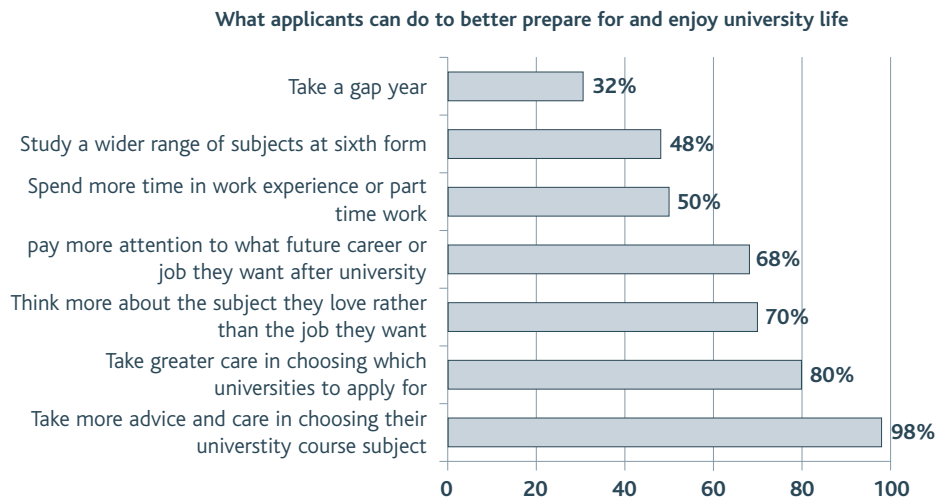
**8.1 WHEN THE UCAS IB TARIFF BECOMES EFFECTIVE FOR 2008 ENTRY IN WHICH IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS WILL YOUR UNIVERSITY BE APPLYING IT?**



Around one in ten university admissions officers know at this stage that they intend to apply the UCAS tariff rigorously. The majority, 38 per cent plan to follow their own guidelines, while a quarter are discussing the matter internally.

## 9. Making the most of university life

### 9.1 IN WHICH, IF ANY, OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS DO YOU THINK UNIVERSITY APPLICANTS CAN MOST HELP THEMSELVES TO PREPARE FOR AND BENEFIT FROM UNIVERSITY LIFE?



This question is interesting because it explores how admission officers think candidates can help themselves more; not how they can make a stronger application and win a place, but how they can make the most of their time at university. The overwhelming response is that students should take more advice and care in choosing their course subject.

Statistics from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) suggest that on average 7.7 per cent of students drop out of university in their first year of study (HESA 2006 for entrants in 2004/2004) which represents a huge amount of soul searching, confusion and, not least, an administrative burden and expense which could be reduced by more thorough planning and preparation from the student.

Admission officers are almost unanimous, at 98 per cent in saying that applicants could help themselves most by taking more advice and greater care over choosing which subject they study at university.

Choosing the right university is considered slightly less important than choosing the right course, although still 80 per cent of admission officers say that applicants can help themselves by focussing more on which university they wish to apply to.

Surprisingly perhaps, given the widely acknowledged importance of career success and good post graduation employment rates, admissions officers are also saying very strongly that students would be well advised to consider a course because it is a subject they really love, rather than a route to a particular job at the end.

### 9.2 AND FINALLY, WHAT AFFECT IF ANY, FROM POSITIVE TO NEGATIVE, DO YOU THINK THE FOLLOWING FACTORS MIGHT HAVE ON UNIVERSITIES IN THE FUTURE, AND THE QUALITY OF THE EDUCATION THEY CAN OFFER?

	POSITIVE AFFECT (%)	NO AFFECT (%)	NEGATIVE AFFECT (%)	DON'T KNOW (%)
More students taking the IB Diploma	75	21	2	2
Wider choice of exam systems for 16 – 18 year olds available in the UK	54	16	16	14
More students achieving top grades in their A levels	48	30	14	7
More students taking gap years	41	48	4	7
Increasing school leaving age to 18	38	25	21	16
The introduction of variable student fees	11	32	50	7
Fewer applicants to STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, maths)	5	9	82	4
Fewer males applying to higher education	4	16	71	9

The above table is ranked in order of the most positive factors which might affect university education and, based on the choices offered, the top three positive factors are more students taking the IB, a wider choice of exam systems available in the UK, and more students achieving top grades in their A levels.

Having more students offering the IB Diploma in future is considered by university admissions officers to be the most important factor which could positively affect the quality of education which universities can offer. It is considered significantly more important than the introduction of other exam systems, or a continued improvement in A level exam results.

As the IB is a tried and tested education system, and the Government has given clear support for the wider introduction of the IB in the UK, it is a very real possibility that universities could benefit from more applicants offering the IB Diploma.

Again, it is worth reiterating that the A level system is still supported by admissions officers, with almost half, 48 per cent, saying that more students achieving top grades in their A levels will help the quality of education which universities can deliver.

Other positive factors include raising the school leaving age to 18, which just over a third of admissions officers believe could have a positive affect on university education in the future.

Examining the most negative potential affect on university education shows a very different picture. The most significant concerns are over the declining number of applicants to STEM subjects, and fewer males applying to higher education. The decline in applicants to science, technology, engineering and maths provokes the strongest response of any of subject, positive or negative.

University admissions officers are also concerned about the potential impact of variable tuition fees with exactly half agreeing that this could have a negative affect on the quality of education the university can offer.

## Research Details

This research project was devised and delivered by the Twelve Consultancy (MMRS, PRCA) on behalf of ACS International Schools. The survey is based on telephone interviews with 56 university admissions officers working in a range of different university types across the UK. The telephone interviews were conducted by Stormark Ltd (DMA, TPS) between 12th March 2007 and 10th April 2007. All research was conducted according to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

There are currently 114 university institutions in the UK, counting separately the colleges of Wales and London (source: Universities UK 2006) There are also 54 Colleges of Higher Education which can award degrees giving a total of 168 degree awarding institutions.

The 56 admissions personnel who took part in this survey were drawn from all different HEI types across the UK as described below.

Survey respondents, regional distribution

	NUMBER	%
England	32	57
Scotland	6	11
Wales	5	9
Northern Ireland	1	2
London	12	21
Total	56	100

Survey respondents, university institution type

	NUMBER	%
Old university	30	54
New university	18	32
Other HEI including veterinary or agricultural colleges	8	14
Total	56	100

The average number of applications processed by respondents' offices each year is 12,779.



# ACS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

*Cobham Egham Hillingdon*

ACS International Schools enrolls a total of 2,500 students aged between 2½ and 18, from over 70 nationalities, at three London area campuses in England. The schools are non-sectarian and co-educational, with both day and boarding available. Based on international and American research, principles, and educational practices, ACS is committed to maintaining the highest standards of scholarship and citizenship.

## **Our academic programme**

All ACS campuses are International Baccalaureate (IB) World Schools, offering the IB Diploma Programme (IBDP). In addition, ACS Egham is one of only three schools in the UK to also offer the IB Middle Years Programme (IBMYP), and the IB Primary Years Programme (IBPYP).

All ACS campuses offer an American High School Diploma, with ACS Cobham and ACS Hillingdon also teaching prestigious Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

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