



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT

Centres' Survey Summary

February 2011



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Cambridge Assessment's Admissions Tests team surveyed both candidates and centres in November – December 2009, via an online questionnaire. 330 centres responded out of 2,016 total, giving a response rate of 16.4%.

Selected findings and actions taken from the survey are summarised below:

- Over two-thirds of centres (67.5%) had five candidates or fewer for university admissions tests.

Action taken: The Admissions Tests team is being more proactive in communicating important information to centres (e.g. upcoming candidate entry deadline dates) so that centre staff do not need to seek out this information.

- Over 83% of centres use the admissions tests website as their primary port-of-call for information about the admissions tests. Printed materials (e.g. leaflets / posters) are ranked a much lower 2nd in terms of importance, whilst 'UCAS publications / website' were also a relatively important source of information. A reasonable proportion of centres recalled receiving printed materials about the tests, with BMAT materials having the highest recall, as the greatest percentage of centres had candidates for this test. Results Online information was recalled by nearly 80% of respondents, possibly because this information had been sent to centres the most recently prior to the survey being carried out.

Action taken: Websites – above all Cambridge Assessment's admissions tests website, as well as UCAS' and the universities', are primary sources of information about the tests. Therefore it is vital that information on these websites is up-to-date, correct and easy to locate, as they are the initial place that centres seek information from. For example, forthcoming test dates are available on Cambridge Assessment's admissions tests website up to nine months in advance of the test taking place.

- The overwhelming majority of centres wanted test entry deadline reminders, with email being by far the preferred means of receiving reminders. Some centres also asked for a calendar of key deadline dates to be sent to them.

Action taken: The Admissions Tests team now supplements its hard copy materials, such as informational leaflets and posters, with emailed deadline reminders to centres and a calendar of key dates for the forthcoming academic year.

- Nearly a third of those who took the survey added a comment in the final 'other comments' section. The majority of comments concerned practicalities: the date when the test papers arrived at centres; the labelling and packaging of test papers, and providing the test invigilation instructions in electronic format in advance of the test date. There were a number of positive comments about the "fantastic support" given to centres by the Admissions Tests team via phone and email.

Action taken: There is much that Cambridge Assessment's Admissions Tests team already does which clearly works: above all the practical customer support offered and the clear website information, both of which are highly praised. Test papers are posted to arrive at centres prior to UK schools' October half term holidays (i.e. before the final week of October) and are despatched by trackable courier in secure envelopes. From summer 2011, the test invigilation instructions will be uploaded in advance of the test date to the 'Help' section of the secure Entries Extranet.

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