

## Mauritius: Expanding the curriculum to prepare students for the world of work

A new pathway for post-16 students, from Cambridge International Examinations, bridges the gap between school and work.

### Over a century in Mauritius

We have provided qualifications to Mauritian state and independent schools for over 100 years, which have been managed by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES) for over 30 years. Students take Cambridge O Levels at the end of Grade 11 to obtain the School Certificate, and Cambridge International AS & A Levels in Grade 13 to achieve the Higher School Certificate.

### The challenge

The Mauritius government wanted to address the dual challenge of an economic skills gap, particularly acute in the IT sector, and youth unemployment and high drop-out rates among 16 year olds finishing compulsory education.

A new professional pathway within the upper secondary education system, designed to prepare learners for sector-specific work without compromising their opportunity to progress to university, was considered a strategy to address both challenges simultaneously.

“For the MES, a good professional relationship has been developed with Cambridge International Examinations over the years, which has contributed in the effective organisation and conduct of examinations at national level and in ensuring public confidence. The greatest event in the world of education in Mauritius will surely be the introduction of the HSC-Pro, a new and groundbreaking certificate.”

Professor Lucien Finette, former Director,  
Mauritius Examinations Syndicate

### Our response

Together with the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, and the Mauritius Ministry of Education and Human Resources, we developed an alternative (optional) curriculum for 16–19 year olds, the Higher School Certificate Professional (HSC Pro). Initially piloted from January 2015, this ambitious new curriculum aimed to:

- provide an alternative, professionally focused study pathway
- close the gap between school-leavers' skills and employers' needs
- reduce the number of students leaving education at 16
- meet the country's economic needs, particularly in ICT
- challenge rates of youth unemployment
- prepare students for lifelong learning.

Drawing on the expertise in vocational education and assessment of our sister organisation OCR, together with the Mauritius Ministry of Education, we developed a curriculum and assessment approach which combined technical and transferable skills with academic subjects, thereby preparing students either for employment or for university.

The resulting HSC-Pro curriculum comprises three Cambridge International AS & A Level qualifications in academic subjects, the skills-based Cambridge International AS Level in Global Perspectives, the Cambridge Technical in IT qualification (from OCR) and compulsory work experience. This combination makes sure that the reputation of HSC-Pro remains equal to its academic alternative (the Higher School Certificate), and that students taking HSC-Pro develop the knowledge and technical understanding sought by employers in the IT sector, together with transferable higher order thinking skills, such as critical thinking or problem solving, which prepare students for both work or university.



Training was a vital part of the process – to enable teachers to deliver the new qualifications, employers to provide work placements, and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate to administer a new type of assessment. During a year-long programme of training events, held in Mauritius, teachers were introduced to new approaches of teaching, based on active learning, and employers learnt more about their role as providers of workplace opportunities and assessors of student performance.

### Key outcomes

Feedback from the first cohort has been very positive. Teachers have embraced the new teaching styles, resulting in greater student participation, while students have become more independent learners, and more critical in their research and analysis.

Parents have noted students' increased maturity, making them better prepared for work or higher education. As a result, the Ministry, together with Cambridge, is now considering a similar student pathway for a different economic sector.



*Representatives from the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate came to the UK to observe teaching of Cambridge IT qualifications*

### Why Cambridge?

We have earned a global reputation for curriculum development and transformation through the introduction of bespoke curricula and qualifications, supported by extensive teacher training, classroom support, assessment services and quality assurance. We work with ministries of education around the world, both long term and at project level, and know that delivery of change at this scale demands a unique skill set. We offer:

- proven expertise in curriculum and qualification development and delivery
- the expertise of our sister organisations OCR and Cambridge English Language Assessment
- a partnership approach to ensure solutions meet local needs
- a global reputation for sustained quality, ensuring national and international credibility for our qualifications
- as part of the University of Cambridge, unrivalled access to expertise in disciplines ranging from educational research to academic publishing
- a commitment to improved education standards for the benefit of the individual and for the nation.

Learn more at [www.cie.org.uk/educationsservices](http://www.cie.org.uk/educationsservices) or email [educationsservices@cie.org.uk](mailto:educationsservices@cie.org.uk)

