



Guidance Notes

**Cambridge International
AS & A Level
Digital Media & Design 9481**

Use these guidance notes for exams in 2026, 2027 and 2028.
Exams are available in the June and November series.



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This syllabus is not available to private candidates.

These instructions are for exams officers or supervisors responsible for the administration of Cambridge Digital Media & Design Externally Set Assignment (component 2).

They also provide information relating to examined coursework, including dates for submission for Cambridge Digital Media & Design (component 1 and component 3).

This document should be read in conjunction with the syllabus and information published on the samples database www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples

When do we submit the work to Cambridge?

Paper	June submission deadline	November submission deadline
9481/1	30 April	31 October
9481/2	Test to be taken between 1 January–30 April. Work should be submitted as soon as possible after the test and no later than 5 May.	Test to be taken between 1 July–31 October. Work should be submitted as soon as possible after the test and no later than 5 November.
9481/3	30 April	31 October

What are the submission requirements for the supporting studies and final outcomes?

All work must be submitted to Cambridge digitally via Submit for Assessment. You must ensure that you are submitting work for the correct component and for the correct candidate. Errors with submissions can mean that we are not able to mark the work until it has been re-submitted. Check the Administrative guide: Using Submit for Assessment

www.cambridgeinternational.org/exam-administration/cambridge-exams-officers-guide/

Moving image work should be no more than 5 minutes' duration and can be shorter.

Component 1: Portfolio

- Supporting studies: up to **ten** screens/slides
- A proposal (e.g. pitch, proposal, presentation).

Component 2: Externally set assignment

- Supporting studies: up to **ten** screens/slides
- Final outcome: produced during a supervised test of 10 hours' total duration.

The work produced for this component must relate to **one** assignment from the question paper.

Component 3: Personal Investigation

- Final practical outcome and
- Supporting studies including a written commentary of 1000–1500 words.

Component 2: Externally Set Assignment

Important

It is your responsibility to download the early question paper. You can do this in one of two ways:

- School Support Hub (SSH) www.schoolsupporthub.cambridgeinternational.org/
You can access the early question paper from the relevant syllabus page. You must ensure that you download the correct question paper for the series you have entered.
- Digital File Despatch (DFD) *Cambridge Handbook*
To access early question papers, you must first submit final entries.

Hard copy question papers will not be sent to you. Please refer to the table below which shows when your school will be able to access the early question paper.

	June series	November series
9481/2	1 January	1 July

Question paper

It is your responsibility to ensure that the correct question paper is distributed (printed by the centre or soft copy transmission) to the candidates. The date on the front of the question paper refers to the series entered not the calendar month when they take the examination.

You must distribute the papers as soon as they are available to enable candidates to prepare for the test.

Scheduling of the Externally Set Assignment

You should schedule the Externally Set Assignment within the following range of dates.

Paper	June Test dates	November Test dates
9481/2	1 January–30 April	1 July–31 October

Candidates must complete the test in

- 10 hours maximum over no more than three weeks.

You should aim to schedule the test as early as possible in the period. If any candidates are ill, you can re-schedule the test at a later date, but still within the window. You do not need permission in order to re-schedule the test within the window. Rescheduling within the test date window should not be used to accommodate candidates who fail to attend a session without good reason.

What do I need to do to prepare for Cambridge Digital Media & Design Externally Set Assignment?

The following materials are required to prepare candidates for the test date:

Material	Method of delivery
Question Paper	Available for centres to download from School Support Hub or Digital File Despatch

If you cannot access the School Support Hub, on the date specified, or the Digital File Despatch, please contact our Customer Services team at info@cambridgeinternational.org

The Externally Set Assignment has a preparatory period in which candidates produce their supporting studies. The preparatory period begins once you have distributed the question paper to the candidates and ends with the start of the test. All tests must be scheduled to end by the date indicated on the question paper.

Candidates must have their supporting studies with them at the start of the 10-hour test as they will need them to complete the test. The supporting studies will be submitted to Cambridge along with the final outcome that is produced during the 10-hour test.

The supporting studies and the final outcome must remain secure and must not be removed from the test room. Candidates must be advised not to edit or amend the supporting studies after the test has started.

Frequently asked questions

This list is not exhaustive and centres should contact the Customer Services team at info@cambridgeinternational.org for advice.

Are candidates allowed access to any other equipment during the test?

No, candidates are not permitted access to any equipment other than what they need to complete the test. They are not permitted any mobile devices and they are not permitted to listen to music during the test.

Can candidates use their own laptops?

Yes, candidates can use their own laptops or digital devices in the timed test. Their devices must be checked before the exam to ensure they don't have a final copy already stored there. The devices should also be stored between exam sessions so that the candidates do not work on their supporting studies. If this is not possible we recommend storing candidate work on a server or hard drive that students cannot access, between exam sessions.

Are candidates allowed access to the internet during the test?

Yes, candidates can have access to the internet during the timed test where they are using software that requires internet access.

My student is making a website for their final piece, can we just send you the URL?

No, we cannot access external URLs from the marking interface. For websites and apps, we recommend that the candidate takes a screen recording of their design in use and submits this as a moving image file. It can be embedded into a powerpoint or sent as a separate moving image file. Do not include links to Google drives and school servers, we cannot access them and will not be able to mark the work.

How many invigilators should there be for each Digital Media & Design Externally Set Assignment test?

One invigilator must be present for every 30 candidates. There must always be at least one invigilator who has not been involved in the preparation of any of the candidates for the test.

In addition, a suitably experienced supervisor must be present in each test room to deal with any technical difficulties. The supervisor is allowed to have been involved in the preparation of candidates for the test. The supervisor must not be counted as an invigilator.

It is up to the centre to appoint suitable personnel, but the availability of an extra technician in addition to the invigilators and supervisor is encouraged.

Invigilation regulations are detailed in the *Cambridge Handbook*, available to download from www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficersguide

Can supervisors or invigilators give candidates any help during the test?

Apart from assisting with a technical/equipment failure, the invigilators, supervisors or technicians must not give any help to the candidates during the test.

What is not included in the time allowed for the test?

The following are not included in the time allowance for the test:

- rendering large files
- animation or filming where the timed test will be used for editing
- off site location photography.

Can candidates communicate with each other during the test?

No, candidates must not communicate with each other during the test.

What should happen at the end of the test?

Candidates are allowed to keep copies of the question paper.

The work is submitted to Cambridge as soon as possible after completing the text.

Safeguarding and inappropriate content

You are responsible for ensuring the suitability of topics and themes that candidates study and you should consider your national and local cultural and social policies. Please note that the Cambridge International safeguarding team will contact your centre for reassurance of the candidate's safety and well-being, if there is a concern.

Safeguarding and duty of care extends to our staff and assessors and any work that they consider offensive will be referred as malpractice. Please refer to the *Cambridge Handbook*.

If you are in any doubt regarding the suitability of a topic or theme then you should contact Customer Services team at info@cambridgeinternational.org for advice prior to the commencement of the work.

School feedback: ‘While studying Cambridge International AS & A Level and Cambridge International A Levels, students broaden their horizons through a global perspective and develop a lasting passion for learning.’

Feedback from: Zhai Xiaoning, Deputy Principal, The High School Affiliated to Renmin University of China

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