Cambridge Assessment International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge IGCSE™ (9–1)

Music 0978

Use this syllabus for exams in 2026, 2027 and 2028.
Exams are available in the June series.
This syllabus is **not** available in all administrative zones.
Please check the syllabus page at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/0978** to see if this syllabus is available in your administrative zone.

Version 4

For the purposes of screen readers, any mention in this document of Cambridge IGCSE refers to Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education.

Cambridge Pathway

Why choose Cambridge International?

Cambridge International prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Our Cambridge Pathway gives students a clear path for educational success from age 5 to 19. Schools can shape the curriculum around how they want students to learn – with a wide range of subjects and flexible ways to offer them. It helps students discover new abilities and a wider world, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can achieve at school, university and work.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, are rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for learners to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources. Learn more about our research at **www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/**

We believe education works best when curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment are closely aligned. Our programmes develop deep knowledge, conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking skills, to prepare students for their future. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge students from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with the Cambridge Pathway.

School feedback: 'We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.'

Feedback from: Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA

Quality management

Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international education programmes and qualifications for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/about-us/our-standards/**

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Important: Changes to this syllabus

For information about changes to this syllabus for 2026, 2027 and 2028, go to page 40.

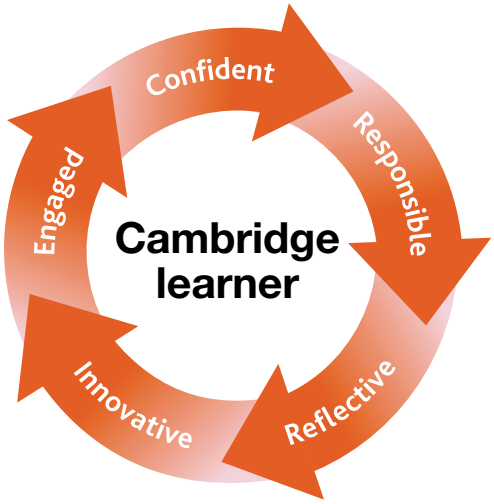
1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

Cambridge IGCSE is the world's most popular international qualification for 14 to 16 year olds, although it can be taken by students of other ages. It is tried, tested and trusted.

Students can choose from 70 subjects in any combination – it is taught by over 5000 schools in 150 countries.

Our programmes promote a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.



Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) Music is accepted by universities and employers worldwide as providing proof of musical skills, knowledge and understanding. This syllabus offers students the opportunity to develop their practical musical skills through performing and composing. They further develop their listening skills by studying music from a diverse range of world cultures and from historical periods to the present day. The emphasis of the syllabus is on enabling students to take part in an active musical life, whether as a performer, composer or listener.

Our approach in Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) Music encourages learners to be:

confident, in performing music, both individually and with other musicians

responsible, in developing effective time management skills through coursework, and a sense of shared responsibility when working collaboratively with others

reflective, in evaluating their own compositions and performances and in understanding music from diverse traditions, time and places

innovative, in creating original music in a style of their own choice

engaged, by participating in a variety of musical activities.

School feedback: 'The strength of Cambridge IGCSE qualifications is internationally recognised and has provided an international pathway for our students to continue their studies around the world.'

Feedback from: Gary Tan, Head of Schools and CEO, Raffles Group of Schools, Indonesia

International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) Music gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades 9 to 4 are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level Music.

Cambridge IGCSEs are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Cambridge students can be confident that their qualifications will be understood and valued throughout their education and career, in their home country and internationally. Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge IGCSEs or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

UK ENIC, the national agency in the UK for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills, has carried out an independent benchmarking study of Cambridge IGCSE and found it to be comparable to the standard of the GCSE in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge IGCSE qualifications are accepted as equivalent to UK GCSEs by leading universities worldwide.

Learn more at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition**

School feedback: ‘Cambridge IGCSE is one of the most sought-after and recognised qualifications in the world. It is very popular in Egypt because it provides the perfect preparation for success at advanced level programmes.’

Feedback from: Managing Director of British School of Egypt BSE

Supporting teachers

We believe education is most effective when curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment are closely aligned. We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance, innovative training and targeted professional development so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge IGCSE. To find out which resources are available for each syllabus go to our School Support Hub.

The School Support Hub is our secure online site for Cambridge teachers where you can find the resources you need to deliver our programmes. You can also keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community through our online discussion forums.

Find out more at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/support**

Support for Cambridge IGCSE			
Planning and preparation • Syllabuses • Schemes of work • Specimen Question Papers and Mark Schemes • Teacher guides	**Teaching and assessment** • Online forums • Support for coursework and speaking components	**Learning and revision** • Example candidate responses • Past papers and mark schemes • Specimen paper answers	**Results** • Candidate Results Service • Principal examiner reports for teachers • Results Analysis

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Syllabuses and specimen materials represent the final authority on the content and structure of all of our assessments.

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- Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications (PDQs) – Practice-based programmes that transform professional learning for practising teachers. Available at Certificate and Diploma level.

Find out more at:
www.cambridgeinternational.org/support-and-training-for-schools/professional-development/

Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers.
Find out more at: **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to enable students to:

- acquire and consolidate a range of musical skills, knowledge and understanding, through the activities of listening, performing and composing
- develop an understanding of a variety of musical traditions
- develop a perceptive and critical response to music
- develop creative and interpretative skills through composing and performing
- develop an enthusiasm for exploring diverse musical styles and genres through listening, performing and composing
- develop a secure basis for further study in music.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.

Content overview

Candidates develop an understanding of music through the three skills of listening, performing and composing, and seven areas of study:

1 Baroque music
2 Classical music
3 Romantic music
4 Music and words
5 Music for dance
6 Music for small ensemble
7 Music for stage and screen

Assessment overview

All candidates take three components. Candidates will be eligible for grades 9 to 1.

All candidates take:

Paper 1 c.1 hour 15 minutes
Listening 40%

70 marks

Written examination based on listening tracks supplied by Cambridge International

Externally assessed

and:

Component 2 Coursework
Performing 30%

50 marks

Performance in two parts: solo performing and performing with others

Internally assessed and externally moderated

and:

Component 3 Coursework
Composing 30%

50 marks

Two contrasting compositions

Internally assessed and externally moderated

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

Check the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** for submission information, forms and deadlines for Components 2 and 3.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Listening

- Listen attentively and responsively, demonstrating aural awareness and perception.
- Communicate knowledge and understanding using appropriate musical terminology.
- Comment perceptively on a range of music from different traditions, times and places.

AO2 Performing

- Demonstrate technical competence and control on one or more instruments.
- Perform with accuracy, fluency and expression.
- Demonstrate coordination and awareness when performing with others.

AO3 Composing

- Demonstrate musical inventiveness and imagination.
- Demonstrate appropriate use of structure and medium and effective use of compositional techniques.
- Communicate compositional intent with clarity.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in IGCSE %
AO1 Listening	40
AO2 Performing	30
AO3 Composing	30
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %		
	Paper 1	Component 2	Component 3
AO1 Listening	100	0	0
AO2 Performing	0	100	0
AO3 Composing	0	0	100
Total	100	100	100

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

Listening

The content of Paper 1 Listening is organised into seven areas of study through which candidates experience a rich mixture of music from different traditions, times and places. They should be taught to listen to the music with careful attention to detail, developing their recognition and understanding of musical features and concepts using appropriate musical terminology, supported by an understanding of staff notation when appropriate to the style.

Areas of study 1–3 cover repertoire of the western classical tradition and include 'focus works', enabling candidates to learn the skills of score reading and simple analysis. They will apply their knowledge and understanding to extracts in the examination which will be related to the focus works in structure, genre or style.

Areas of study 4–7 include a wide variety of music from different cultures and extend the range of repertoire from the early twentieth century to the present day. Candidates will learn how musical features are combined and used to create music for distinct purposes and in different contexts. Centres are encouraged to tailor their choice of listening to the school's context and candidates' interests.

The content of the listening paper is shown in the table below. In response to recorded extracts played in the examination, candidates may be asked to:

- identify, describe or comment on any feature of the music or its performance
- compare passages within the extract
- follow a printed score
- identify the key of a printed passage of music
- identify missing sections of melody or rhythm from multiple choice options
- identify chords and cadences
- name printed intervals
- transpose short passages of music written for transposing instruments to concert pitch
- identify the composer from multiple choice options
- comment on the context or the style
- write a short description of the features of the music
- identify the structure of the music using appropriate terminology or letters e.g. AABA.

Melody	melodic movement (ascending, descending, by step, in leaps), scalic, broken chord, arpeggio, countermelody, phrases, improvisation, leitmotif, range, fanfare, hook, riff, rāga, quarter-tone
Scales and modes	major, minor, chromatic, modal, pentatonic, rāga, maqām
Rhythm and metre	duple, triple, quadruple and irregular metre simple and compound time syncopation, hemiola, anacrusis, cross-rhythm, polyrhythm habanera, marcado forward clave, reverse clave tāla īqā'āt (singular īqā')
Tempo	common Italian tempo markings (e.g. allegro, andante, adagio) changes in tempo (e.g. accelerando, rallentando, rubato) BPM (beats per minute)
Tonality	major and minor modulation to related keys (dominant, subdominant, relative major and relative minor) tonic major and minor
Harmony	primary and secondary chords dominant seventh and diminished seventh cadences (perfect, imperfect and interrupted) consonant, dissonant, diatonic and chromatic harmony suspensions tonic pedal, dominant pedal
Texture	monophonic, unison, doubled in octaves, homophonic / melody and accompaniment, polyphonic, heterophonic, imitative, parallel motion, solo, tutti, antiphonal, cluster chords, drone
Musical devices	repetition, ascending sequence, descending sequence, imitation, ostinato, riff, Alberti bass
Dynamics	pp (pianissimo), p (piano), mp (mezzo piano) mf (mezzo forte), f (forte), ff (fortissimo) crescendo, diminuendo terraced dynamics
Articulation and ornaments	legato, staccato, accent, sforzando, slur trill, mordent, turn, appoggiatura, acciaccatura

Instruments, ensembles and voices	ripieno, concertino, basso continuo chamber music ensembles (e.g. string quartet, piano trio) common orchestral instruments piano, harpsichord, organ soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices pop and rock instruments instruments of the orquesta tipica salsa instruments Hindustani instruments instruments of silk and bamboo ensembles instruments of takht ensembles
Instrumental and vocal techniques, and word-setting	pizzicato, arco, glissando, portamento, pitch-bending, tremolo, double stopping, roll, melisma, syllabic, rap, word-painting
Structure	binary, ternary, rondo ritornello, episode sonata form (including exposition, development, recapitulation, first subject, second subject, transition, codetta, coda) introduction cadenza minuet and trio theme and variations strophic, through-composed intro, verse, chorus, bridge / middle eight, outro breakdown, build up, drop call and response ālāp, jōr, gat, jhālā
Music technology and production	sample, loop, chorus, reverb, delay, overdubbing, double-tracking, multi-tracking, drum machine
Notation	staff notation treble, bass and alto clefs key signatures of up to four sharps or flats all rhythmic note values including triplets, dotted rhythms and rests simple and compound time signatures common signs and symbols (e.g. articulation, ornamentation, pause) major, minor and perfect intervals transposing (trumpets in B flat, clarinets in B flat and A, horns in F and E flat)

Candidates are expected to study each focus work listed for areas of study 1–3. These works have been selected to exemplify the features found in music of the focus area. Study of these works will enable candidates to answer questions on related works in the exam. The focus works will **not** be used in the exam.

Wider listening examples for areas of study 1–3 are intended to broaden candidates' listening experience within each area of study. Starting points in areas of study 4–7 are chosen to exemplify many of the main features of each style. Any listed examples are not prescribed or exhaustive and centres are encouraged to engage with each area of study in a way which appeals to the candidates, including through use of local and popular musical styles and examples.

Area of study 1: Baroque music

Focus works:

Vivaldi: *Spring* from *The Four Seasons*, movement 1 (Allegro)
Handel: *Concerto Grosso in D major* Op. 6, No. 5 (HWV 323), movements 1 (Larghetto e staccato), 2 (Allegro), 4 (Largo) and 6 (Menuet)

Candidates should listen to a range of Baroque instrumental music, with a focus on the solo concerto and the concerto grosso. The focus works should be used to exemplify the specific features found in Baroque concertos, and the style of Baroque music in general. Candidates should understand some of the typical aspects of performance practice found in this repertoire.

Wider listening:

Corelli: *Concerto Grosso in G minor*, Op. 6 No. 8 'Christmas Concerto'
JS Bach: *Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D*, BWV 1068
Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre: *Suite in A minor*, No. 4 from *Pieces de Clavecin*
Telemann: *Trio Sonata in F*, TWV 42:F1

Area of study 2: Classical music

Focus work:

Mozart: *Quintet for piano and winds in E flat major*, K. 452, movement 1 (Largo – Allegro moderato)

Candidates should listen to a range of Classical instrumental music, with a focus on chamber music for three to six players. During the Classical period, sonata form became the most important way for composers to structure their music, and the focus work should be used to teach candidates about the main features of sonata form and the style of Classical music in general

Wider listening:

Haydn: *Piano Trio No. 39 in G*, Hob. XV:25 'Gypsy'
Mozart: *String Quartet No. 17 in B flat*, K. 458 'The Hunt'
Mozart: *9 Variations on a Minuet by Duport*, K.573
Haydn: *Symphony No. 95 in C minor*, Hob. I:95
Beethoven: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in C*, Op. 15

Area of study 3: Romantic music

Focus work:

Smetana: *Vltava* from *Ma Vlast*

Candidates should listen to a range of Romantic instrumental music with a focus on single movement works for orchestra. The focus work should be used to exemplify a number of the common trends in this era: the expansion of the orchestra, the increasing importance of programme music, and the desire of some composers to express their national identity through music.

Wider listening:

Mendelssohn: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* overture, Op. 21
Emilie Mayer: *Faust* overture, Op. 46
Borodin: *String Quartet No. 2 in D*
Clara Schumann: *Piano Concerto in A minor*, Op. 7
Chopin: *Étude in E*, Op 10. No 3

Area of study 4: Music and words

Focus areas:

Art song for solo voice; music for choirs; popular song and songs from musicals

The repertoire for this topic can be taken from the early twentieth century to the present day. Candidates should explore the ways in which composers set words to music. This includes focusing on musical features which enhance the meaning of the text and on the common structures and techniques found in modern song writing.

Starting points:

Libby Larsen: *Chanting to Paradise*

Jonathan Dove: *The Passing of the Year*

Benj Pasek and Justin Paul: *A Million Dreams* from *The Greatest Showman*

Teachers are free to choose any popular songs and songs from musicals which will appeal to their students, reflect the local context and exemplify the features found in the syllabus and in the notes for guidance on the School Support Hub.

Area of study 5: Music for dance

Focus areas:

Tango; Salsa; EDM (Electronic Dance Music)

The influence of African and western music in creating a distinctive Latin American sound can be heard clearly in the dance styles of Tango and Salsa. Candidates should listen to a selection of this music to recognise the instruments and understand the main musical features of the styles. They should be aware of the context in which the music is created. Through listening to a representative range of music (including from their local context whenever possible), they should focus on the ways in which music technology is used to create EDM and the particular techniques that are commonly found in the music.

Starting points:

Piazzolla: *Libertango*
Hector Lavoe: *El Cantante*
F-777: *Viking Arena*

A wide range of recordings is available in digital, streaming and physical formats. Teachers should choose a representative sample of music which exemplifies the instruments and features found in the syllabus and in the notes for guidance on the School Support Hub.

Area of study 6: Music for small ensemble

Focus areas:

Silk and bamboo ensembles; Hindustani classical music; Arab takht ensembles

Music performed by small ensembles can be found in many cultures across the world. In this area of study candidates should listen to a range of music from the specified traditions, learning to identify the main instruments in each ensemble, describe the features which are specific to the style, and comment on the social and performance contexts of the music.

Starting points:

San Liu, as performed by the Chinese National Orchestra

Rāga khamāj, as performed by Ravi Shankar

Wasla en sabâ, as performed by Al-Kindî Ensemble

A wide range of recordings is available in digital, streaming and physical formats. Teachers should choose a representative sample of music which exemplifies the instruments and features found in the syllabus and in the notes for guidance on the School Support Hub.

Area of study 7: Music for stage and screen

Focus areas:

Ballet music; film music; video game music

The repertoire for this topic can be taken from the early twentieth century to the present day. Through listening to a representative range of repertoire (including from their local context whenever possible), candidates should gain an understanding of how orchestral music to accompany visual action is used as a vital element of ballet, film and video games. They should understand some of the main ways in which musical features can be chosen and combined to create atmosphere, increase tension and excitement, and enhance specific moments of action.

Starting points:

Stravinsky: *The Rite of Spring*
John Williams: *Star Wars*
Yoko Shimomura: *Gran Saga* soundtrack

4 Details of the assessment

All candidates take three compulsory components.

Paper 1 – Listening

Written paper, c.1 hour 15 minutes, 70 marks

The paper is an externally set assessment, marked by Cambridge.

Candidates answer all questions.

Questions will be set on eight short recorded extracts of music, which will include at least one extract from each area of study. The question paper will state which area of study the extract is taken from and, where appropriate, the tradition or genre from which it is drawn.

For seven of the extracts there will be a variety of multiple choice and short answer questions; for the other extract, a short descriptive question will be set. The total number of marks for the paper is 70 and the number of marks for each extract will vary between 6 and 16.

Each extract will be played between three and five times according to the demand of the questions. For some extracts there will be printed music to follow in the question paper (which may be in treble, alto and/or bass clef); music for longer passages will be printed in a separate insert. For vocal extracts, the words may be printed in the question paper; a translation or summary will be provided where the language is not English.

All questions test assessment objective AO1.

Component 2 – Performing

Internally marked/externally moderated coursework, 50 marks

Component 2 consists of performances (either singing or performing on any instrument) of the candidate's own choice of music (which may be from any style or tradition). There are two parts to the component – solo performing, and performing with others. Each part should last at least 2 minutes, and the performances together should last no longer than 10 minutes. The performances must be recorded. Each piece may be recorded more than once and the best version submitted, but the final recording of each piece must be a single take and must not be edited in any way.

Part 1 – solo performing

Candidates must sing or play a solo. If the piece is very short, they may perform a second solo on the same instrument or voice.

The solo may be accompanied or unaccompanied, but if the piece is intended to be accompanied, this is how it should be performed. Candidates may offer self-accompanied singing; they can choose to be assessed for their singing alone, or for the singing and accompanying together.

Pieces may be accompanied in any of the following ways:

- by any instrument played live (e.g. a piano)
- by any small group of instruments played live (e.g. a rhythm section)
- by a backing track
- by the candidate themselves (e.g. by playing a guitar whilst singing).

Part 2 – performing with others

Candidates must sing or play with other live performers, in a duet or small group. If the piece is very short, they may perform a second piece on the same instrument or voice. They do not need to perform on the same instrument as that offered for solo performing.

The piece chosen should allow the candidate to demonstrate rhythmic coordination with the other musicians, and ensemble awareness. Backing tracks may be used, provided there is at least one live performer in addition to the candidate. The candidate's part must not be extensively doubled by any of the other performers.

The other musicians do not have to be candidates for the examination. It is not necessary for all candidates in a class to perform in the same ensemble. Teachers may perform as part of a group.

Examples of the types of performing which would be suitable are:

- playing a duet for any two instruments where both parts are equally important, with or without accompaniment
- playing either part in a piano duet
- performing a part in a small instrumental ensemble
- singing a duet or in a small vocal ensemble with one voice per part, with or without accompaniment
- singing or playing in a band
- accompanying on any appropriate instrument
- singing or playing with a backing track **and** at least one other live performer.

The following types of performing are not acceptable for Part 2:

- An accompanied solo performance in which the candidate plays the solo part. For example, a flute solo with piano accompaniment would not be acceptable if the candidate plays the flute part
- Solo repertoire to which extra parts have been added. For example, a piano solo in a jazz style to which drums and/or bass have been added would not be acceptable if the candidate plays the piano part
- Vocal duets where the vocal parts consist of solo passages alternating between two solo singers – if the candidate hardly ever sings at the same time as the other singer, they cannot demonstrate ensemble skills. Pieces like this are often found in musical theatre repertoire. An appropriate vocal duet would allow the candidate to demonstrate the ability to maintain an independent part singing in harmony with one or more other singers.

Choice of music

Candidates should be guided in selecting repertoire which is appropriate to their technical and musical development at the time of recording. In all areas, assessment is of the demonstration of skills, rather than of the difficulty of the music itself. Although pieces which are very simple will naturally limit access to the highest marks, there is no benefit in performing repertoire which is too difficult, as this is also likely to restrict the marks gained.

Credit is given for the following:

(a) Confidence, fluency and accuracy
(b) Choice and control of tempo, coordination with the backing track (if applicable) and rhythmic coordination (when performing with others)
(c) Character, style and ensemble awareness
(d) Technical control of the instrument
(e) The performance as a whole.

A copy of the sheet music must be submitted for all pieces where this is how the candidate has learned the music. If the candidate has intentionally altered their performance from the sheet music, this must be clearly indicated. Where there is no sheet music, the teacher must compare the performance against the original and support their mark in the comments box on the working mark sheet. Do **not** submit a copy of the original recording. Where an improvised performance is based on a lead sheet or other stimulus this should be submitted.

If centres are in any doubt about the suitability of the proposed repertoire, contact Cambridge International through either **info@cambridgeinternational.org** or the discussion forum on the School Support Hub.

Marking criteria

(a) Confidence, fluency and accuracy

This criterion is concerned with how well the candidates know the music. Aspects to be considered include:

- Is the performance accurate?
- Does the candidate perform confidently and fluently?
- In styles where strict adherence to every detail of the printed music is not the usual way of performing, is the candidate's performance stylistically appropriate?
- If any aspect of the performance is improvised (including the instrumental part in self-accompanied singing), is the candidate able to improvise fluently on the basis of any given materials? Is there a sense of direction and purpose in the improvisation, or does it repeat itself too much, resulting in aimless meandering?

(b) Choice and control of tempo, coordination with the backing track or accompaniment (if applicable) and rhythmic coordination (when performing with others)

This criterion is concerned with tempo and rhythmic co-ordination. Aspects to be considered include:

- Does the candidate set a suitable tempo for the music and maintain it throughout the performance, allowing for any rubato that may be essential to the style of the music?
- If performing to a backing track or with live accompaniment, is the performance well coordinated?
- When performing with others, is there a secure sense of rhythmic ensemble?
- If the performance is self-accompanied, does the instrumental part provide a secure rhythmic foundation for the singing?

(c) Character, style and ensemble awareness

This criterion is concerned with the extent to which candidates are able to bring the music to life in their performances, and an awareness of balance and matching of phrasing and articulation when performing with others. Aspects to be considered include:

- How well does the candidate perform any markings written into the score by the composer (e.g. dynamics, articulation, ornaments)?
- In music which is not notated, has the candidate given due consideration to issues such as the need for dynamic variety?
- How sensitive is their phrasing?
- Are stylistic conventions followed?
- Is the candidate's part well balanced when performing with others?
- If the style of the music requires it, is articulation and phrasing well matched to the other performers?

(d) Technical control of the instrument

This criterion is concerned with matters of technical control as appropriate to the instrument or voice. If the performance is self-accompanied, teachers should consider the instrumental part as well as the singing. Aspects to be considered include:

- Does the candidate perform with suitable quality, variety and evenness of tone?
- How well do they handle the specific factors which apply to their instrument (e.g. coordination of right hand/left hand, bow/fingers, tongue/fingers; intonation; breath control; diction; pedalling; vibrato)?

(e) The performance as a whole

This summative criterion is concerned with the range of skills the candidate has demonstrated. Aspects to be considered include:

- Has the candidate chosen music which allows them to demonstrate a range of interpretative and technical skills?
- How successful is the performance overall?

A mark out of 5 must be awarded for each of the criteria.

When awarding marks, teachers should consider each aspect of the performance and then make a judgement about which level statement is the 'best fit'. In practice, performances do not always match one level statement precisely so a judgement may need to be made between two or more level statements. Any such decision should be explained in the comments section on the working mark sheet.

(a) Confidence, fluency and accuracy

Level	Description	Marks
5	The performance is confident and fluent and the level of accuracy is high. Any improvisation has a clear sense of direction and purpose as appropriate to the style and/or stimulus.	**5**
4	The performance is mainly confident and fluent, but with some errors. Any improvisation is strong overall but is not of consistently high quality throughout.	**4**
3	The performance is moderately accurate and fluent overall, but a few passages are hesitant and/or less precise. Any improvisation is mostly fluent, but more limited in its range or sense of direction and/or a few passages are hesitant.	**3**
2	The general level of accuracy is low and/or the performance is hesitant. Any improvisation is hesitant and limited in its range and sense of direction.	**2**
1	The performance is very inaccurate and hesitant throughout. Any improvisation is of low quality and lacking direction.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

(b) Choice and control of tempo, coordination with the backing track (if applicable) and rhythmic coordination (when performing with others)

Level	Description	Marks
5	The music is performed at an appropriate tempo throughout, with effective control of any tempo changes which are notated or appropriate to the style. The candidate's part is very well coordinated with any backing track or accompaniment. When performing with others, rhythmic coordination with the other musicians is excellent.	**5**
4	The tempo is appropriate but there are some small fluctuations which are not appropriate to the style, or the tempo is not entirely appropriate but is maintained consistently. The candidate's part is mostly well coordinated with any backing track or accompaniment. When performing with others, rhythmic coordination with the other musicians is good overall, but with some small fluctuations.	**4**
3	The choice of tempo is not entirely appropriate and there are some fluctuations which are not appropriate to the style. The candidate's part is moderately well coordinated with any backing track or accompaniment. When performing with others, rhythmic coordination with the other musicians is moderate.	**3**
2	The choice of tempo is inappropriate and/or there are frequent fluctuations. The candidate's part is not securely coordinated with any backing track or accompaniment. When performing with others, rhythmic coordination with the other musicians is not secure.	**2**
1	The performance has no consistent sense of pulse. There is little coordination with any backing track or accompaniment. When performing with others, there is little rhythmic coordination with the other musicians.	**1**
0	No creditable response	**0**

(c) Character, style and ensemble awareness

Level	Description	Marks
5	A characterful performance with excellent attention to dynamics, phrasing and articulation (whether or not these are notated) and/or to observing appropriate performing conventions. In addition, when performing with others, dynamic balance is excellent and phrasing and articulation are well matched where applicable.	**5**
4	The performance has character, with good attention to dynamics, phrasing and articulation and/or to appropriate performing conventions. In addition, when performing with others, dynamic balance is good and phrasing and articulation are mostly well matched.	**4**
3	The performance has some character, but there is inconsistent attention to dynamics, phrasing and articulation and/or to appropriate performing conventions. In addition, when performing with others, there is some awareness of dynamic balance, and articulation and phrasing are moderately well matched.	**3**
2	There is limited attention to dynamics and/or phrasing and articulation. In addition, when performing with others, there is limited awareness of dynamic balance, or of matching articulation and phrasing.	**2**
1	There is little attention to dynamics, phrasing and articulation. In addition, when performing with others, there is little awareness of dynamic balance, or of matching articulation and phrasing.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

(d) Technical control of the instrument

Level	Description	Marks
5	The candidate demonstrates excellent control in all areas of technique appropriate to the instrument.	**5**
4	The candidate demonstrates good technical control but with an area of minor concern.	**4**
3	The candidate demonstrates sufficient technique to perform the piece adequately, but weakness in some areas of technique reduces the quality of the performance.	**3**
2	The performance is affected by significant issues in some areas of technique.	**2**
1	The performance is affected by weak control in all areas of technique.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

(e) The performance as a whole

Level	Description	Marks
5	The performance is fully engaging. The candidate demonstrates well-developed skills, performing music which makes substantial interpretative and technical demands.	**5**
4	The performance is convincing. The candidate demonstrates a range of secure skills, performing music with a variety of interpretative and technical demands.	**4**
3	The performance is reasonably successful. The candidate demonstrates a range of skills, performing music which makes moderate interpretative and technical demands.	**3**
2	A performance of music which makes few demands, and the range of skills demonstrated is limited.	**2**
1	A performance of music which makes very simple demands, through which the candidate demonstrates a narrow range of skills.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

In assessing the demand of the music played, the following advice should be used in conjunction with exemplar materials.

Music making very simple demands might typically:

- use an easy range of notes
- have simple rhythms
- offer minimal scope for interpretation.

Music making moderate demands might typically:

- use an extended range of notes
- have more complex rhythms
- require a variety of articulation and sensitivity to dynamics and phrasing.

Music making substantial demands might typically:

- have a range of technical challenges
- require interpretative insight.

Component 3 – Composing

Candidates are required to submit **two** original compositions for assessment. There must be some difference between the two compositions in the selection of instrument(s), voice(s) or electronic sounds. If both compositions use an identical combination of instrument(s)/voice(s)/electronic sounds, a mark of 0 must be awarded under Use of Medium for Composition 2. The following types of composition are not acceptable:

- theme and variations where the candidate has not written the theme
- arrangements of pre-existing pieces.

There are no recommended minimum or maximum timings as this is dependent on the tempo and complexity of the music. To access the highest marks each composition should be long enough to demonstrate the skills being assessed in each criterion. The examples of compositions on the School Support Hub will give an indication of the typical scope of student compositions at IGCSE level.

Composition 1 must be notated using staff notation, in the form of a complete score. A recording (which may be live or made using music technology) must be submitted with the score.

Composition 2 must be written to a candidate-defined brief which relates to one of the following areas of study:

- Music and words
- Music for dance
- Music for small ensemble
- Music for stage and screen

Please note, however, that the Composition does not have to be limited to the specific examples used in the areas of study for the Listening paper.

Example briefs:

'My composition is a piece of music with words, in a gospel style, with call-and-response influences.'
'My composition is a piece of film music based on a story board which I have included in my written commentary.'

This Composition must be submitted as a recording together with:

- **either** a detailed written commentary with timings, which must follow the template provided
- **or** a statement of how the composition relates to the brief together with a score written in a notation system that is appropriate to the style/tradition of the music, e.g.
  - a composition for guzheng could be notated using cipher notation
  - a composition for jazz ensemble could be notated using a lead sheet showing the melody and chord symbols
  - a composition for clarinet could be notated using staff notation.

Any texts which are not in English must be accompanied by a translation (to be used only for the information of teachers and moderators: the translation will not be assessed and can come from any convenient source).

Any notation other than staff notation must be accompanied by a translation of any terms or instructions that are in the language of the chosen tradition (again, the translation is only for the information of teachers and moderators).

Template for Written Commentaries

Candidates should use or replicate the template shown below which is provided as a Word document on the Samples Database. The completed template can be submitted as a Word file or as a PDF.

The box in **1 Statement of brief** can be expanded. Any material relating to the brief (picture, poem, play text, story board etc.) must be included in this box. It can be added as an image if appropriate.

The table in **2 Commentary on the composition** can be extended with as many rows as needed.

TEMPLATE

Your commentary should include details about your composition, which should be as informative as possible. You should include:

- information about the structure and content of the piece
- how your effects were achieved (e.g. through the use of instruments, musical devices, keys, modulations, technology)
- any other information which allows the recording to be understood in the absence of a written score.

1 Statement of brief

Tick **one** box to indicate which area of study your composition relates to:

Music and words		Music for dance		Music for small ensemble		Music for stage and screen	

What brief did you give yourself? Include any picture, poem, play text, story board, etc. that you have used:

2 Commentary on the composition

Timing	Details of the music

Marking criteria

In assessing compositions, teachers should assess candidates' responses to specific key areas of the composing process, summarised below. Each composition is assessed out of a maximum of 25 marks, a maximum of 5 marks being awarded for each criterion.

(a) Ideas

This concerns the basic elements of composing: the quality of melodic writing, the effectiveness of rhythm, and (when appropriate) the nature of accompanying chords/harmony. This area deals with the 'raw materials' of a composition rather than the use made of them by the candidate.

Candidates must not be credited for the use of any ideas that are not their own, e.g. pre-existing loops.

(b) Structure

This concerns candidates' abilities to use the ideas they have produced to create a coherent and organised composition. Credit should be given for clear evidence that important features of structure have been understood in terms of sectional contrasts, links between sections and the conception of a broad overview of each composition. In this area, all aspects of structure should be considered: the small-scale aspects (e.g. relationships between phrase lengths) and the broader view (the overall structures and coherence of the composition).

(c) Use of medium

This criterion concerns the ways in which candidates make use of instrumental or electronic resources – their selection of sounds and handling of different textures within the composition. Aspects to be assessed include candidates' choice of resources; idiomatic writing for specific instruments/combinations; selection of electronic sounds and evidence of aural awareness revealed in the composition.

Candidates are expected to have some sense of the appropriateness of what they write for the resources they have chosen to use. Care should be taken to ensure that the range of instrumental/vocal parts does not exceed the normal range of the acoustic instrument/voice concerned.

Compositions that maintain a single musical texture without variety will often display a lack of compositional understanding, and it is expected that most candidates should be able to appreciate the need to vary the texture within the pieces of music that they compose.

It is a requirement of the syllabus that there must be some difference between the two compositions in the selection of instrument(s), voice(s) or electronic sounds. If both pieces use an identical combination of instrument(s), voice(s) or electronic sounds, a mark of 0 in this category must be awarded for Composition 2.

(d) Compositional technique

This criterion assesses the ways candidates make use of the basic 'raw material' of music in their compositions. Aspects to be assessed include candidates' understanding of the ways basic ideas can be extended, developed and combined; the exploration and utilisation of standard composing devices such as sequence, inversion, and the manipulation of techniques on a broader scale to produce a successful composition.

Where appropriate within the style or tradition of the music, teachers must also consider the harmony, whether explicit (as in the piano accompaniment to an instrumental melody) or implicit (as in the case of an unaccompanied song or solo instrumental line). Aspects of harmonic appropriateness in relation to the melodic line and the progression of chords can provide evidence of candidates' aural awareness of the relationship between linear (melodic) and vertical (harmonic) aspects of their compositions.

Where the music is based on a non-European style or tradition, techniques appropriate to that style/tradition must be assessed.

(e) Either

(i) Score presentation / notation

Candidates are required to submit Composition 1 in the form of an audio recording and a notated score or lead sheet. In all scores, performance indications should be clear and precise. Teachers should credit work that displays evidence of a careful and intelligent attempt to notate musical ideas and which pays close attention to performing details.

The same criteria must be used to assess any examples of Composition 2 that are presented using a form of notation appropriate to that style or tradition.

Or

(ii) Written commentary based on the given template

The written commentary should state how the composition fulfils the chosen brief and a description of the music which should be as informative as possible, to allow the recording to be understood in the absence of a score. Teachers should credit work that displays evidence of a careful consideration of the structure and content of the piece; the assessment should take into account the relevance and detail with which the candidate has completed the commentary.

When awarding marks, teachers should consider each aspect of the composition and then make a judgement about which level statement is the 'best fit'. In practice, compositions do not always match one level statement precisely so a judgement may need to be made between two or more level statements. Any such decision should be explained in the comments section on the working mark sheet.

(a) Ideas

Level	Description	Marks
5	Strong and inventive ideas that suggest a keen sense of aural awareness and (in Composition 2) a convincing response to the candidate's stated intentions in relation to the chosen area of study.	**5**
4	Good musical ideas, showing a secure sense of musical inventiveness, but lacking imagination or range and (in Composition 2) a mostly convincing response to the candidate's stated intentions in relation to the chosen area of study.	**4**
3	Reasonable musical ideas displaying some aspects of inventiveness, but not always secure or consistent and (in Composition 2) a partly convincing response to the candidate's stated intentions in relation to the chosen area of study.	**3**
2	Only a small range of simple and/or awkward ideas and (in Composition 2) a limited response to the candidate's stated intentions in relation to the chosen area of study.	**2**
1	Very weak ideas with little or no contrast and (in Composition 2) no evidence of a link to the candidate's stated intentions in relation to the chosen area of study.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

(b) Structure

Level	Description	Marks
5	Clear and appropriate structure, with inventive use of elements creating contrast and continuity in the composition as a whole.	**5**
4	Effective in overall structure, with good attention to aspects of contrast and continuity, although showing some imbalance between sections.	**4**
3	Reasonable attention to structure, although perhaps over-reliant on repetition and limited in its sense of the overall concept.	**3**
2	Structure evident in some clear sections, but with obvious imbalances, and a limited use of contrast and continuity.	**2**
1	Weak structure, with little sense of contrast and continuity.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

(c) Use of medium

If both pieces are written for an identical combination of instrument(s), voice(s) or electronic sounds, a mark of 0 in this category must be awarded for Composition 2.

Level	Description	Marks
5	Imaginative use of resources throughout, displaying strong aural awareness and revealing a broad range of inventive and varied textures.	**5**
4	Effective use of resources overall, and displaying a good range of textures, although lacking elements of imagination and/or invention in places.	**4**
3	Reasonable use of resources; a fair range of workable textures, with some consideration of detail, but with notable impracticalities in balance or occasional passages of awkward writing.	**3**
2	Limited use of resources, and keeping to simple textures and narrow registers, with restricted use of textural variety.	**2**
1	Basic use of resources, with little evidence that musical texture has been understood.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

(d) Compositional technique

Level	Description	Marks
5	Inventive and confident use of techniques to extend, develop and connect ideas, with convincing use of harmony in styles where this is appropriate, and demonstrating consistent aural familiarity across a wide range of techniques.	**5**
4	Effective use of techniques to extend, develop and connect ideas, with effective use of harmony in styles where this is appropriate, and demonstrating good aural familiarity across a range of relevant techniques.	**4**
3	Reasonable and generally secure use of techniques to extend and/or develop ideas, with partly effective use of harmony in styles where this is appropriate, but perhaps using stock devices across a limited range.	**3**
2	Some attempt to use techniques to develop or extend ideas but revealing only a limited aural imagination; any use of harmony is limited in effectiveness.	**2**
1	Little use of techniques; any use of harmony is ineffective.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

(e) (i) Score presentation / notation (to be used for Composition 1 and for any Composition 2 submissions where notation is used)

Level	Description	Marks
5	Clear and well-presented notation showing consistent attention to musical and performing detail.	**5**
4	Coherent and clear notation, but with some ambiguities, inaccuracies or omissions.	**4**
3	Mostly accurate notation, but lacking attention to detail (e.g. omitted dynamics) and/or with unclear layout.	**3**
2	Partly accurate notation, but with frequent problems with rhythm, pitch and/or layout. Limited performance instructions given.	**2**
1	Poor presentation and/or incomplete notation.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

(e) (ii) Written commentary based on the given template (to be used for all submissions for Composition 2 except those where notation is used)

Level	Description	Marks
5	A detailed commentary, providing a consistently informative and accurate description of the structure and content of the composition.	**5**
4	A fairly detailed commentary, providing an informative and mostly accurate description of the structure and content of the composition.	**4**
3	A somewhat generalised commentary, providing a partly informative and accurate description of the structure and content of the composition.	**3**
2	A brief and general commentary, providing evidence that some aspects of the structure and content of the composition have been understood.	**2**
1	A weak commentary, suggesting that the structure and content of the composition have been only superficially or incompletely understood.	**1**
0	No creditable response.	**0**

Guidance for centres on coursework

Supervising coursework

Coursework must be a candidate's own, unaided work. The teacher must be able to authenticate the work is the candidate's own.

A general discussion on the progress of coursework is a natural part of the teacher–candidate relationship, as it is for other parts of the course. Candidates can revise their work following feedback, but you should only give brief summative comments on progress.

Teachers can support candidates by reviewing their work before it is handed in for final assessment. Teachers can do this orally or through written feedback. Teachers should not correct or edit draft coursework. Advice should be kept at a general level so that the candidate leads the discussion and makes the suggestions for any amendments. Teachers must not give detailed advice to individual candidates or groups of candidates on how their work can be improved to meet the assessment criteria.

For further information about supervising coursework, see the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Authenticity and academic honesty/avoidance of plagiarism

It is the centre's responsibility to make sure all assessed work is the candidate's original work. Candidates must **not** submit someone else's work as their own.

A candidate taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as their own is an example of plagiarism. It is your responsibility as a teacher to prevent plagiarism from happening and to detect it if it does happen. For more information, search for 'Preventing plagiarism – guidance for teachers' on our website at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/teachingandassessment**

You will be required to declare the authenticity of the work at the point of submitting the work.

Making recordings

For components 2 and 3 recordings must be saved as MPEG Audio Layer 3 files (.mp3).

Internal moderation

If only one teacher is marking internal assessment, no internal moderation is necessary. If more than one teacher in your centre is marking internal assessments, you must make arrangements to moderate or standardise your teachers' marking so that all candidates are assessed to a common standard. You can find further information on the process of internal moderation in the *Cambridge Handbook* and on the samples database for the relevant year of assessment.

You should record the internally moderated marks for all candidates on the required form(s) and submit these marks to Cambridge International according to the instructions on the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples**

External moderation

Cambridge International will externally moderate all internally assessed components.

- You must submit the marks of all candidates to Cambridge International.
- You must also submit the marked work of a sample of candidates to Cambridge International.

The sample you submit to Cambridge International should include examples of the marking of each teacher. The samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** explains how the sample will be selected.

The samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** also provides details of how to submit the marks and work.

External moderators will produce a short report for each centre with feedback on your marking and administration of the assessment.

Using the samples database

The samples database refers you to key information about administering coursework, speaking tests and examined coursework for each syllabus.

Use the database to find out:

- when and how to submit your marks for moderated coursework
- when and how to submit your candidates' work
- which forms to complete and return with your candidates' work.

The samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** will ask you for:

- your country/territory
- the syllabus code (i.e. 0978 for this syllabus).

The database will then take you to the information you need, including dates and methods of submission of candidates' marks and work, as well as any forms you may need to complete.

Submitting candidates' marks and work

Please refer to the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** for information, dates and methods of submission of candidates' marks and work. You should follow the instructions for coursework components 2 Performing and 3 Composing on the samples database.

You should submit a working mark sheet for each candidate and a Coursework Assessment Summary Form listing all candidates. Download the forms from the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples**. Follow the instructions on each form itself to complete it. Include these forms with the sample materials you send to Cambridge International.

Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exams. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
Comment	give an informed opinion
Compare	identify/comment on similarities and/or differences
Describe	state the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things clear / say why and/or how and support with relevant evidence
Give	produce an answer from a given source or recall/memory
Identify	name/select/recognise
Suggest	apply knowledge and understanding to situations where there are a range of valid responses in order to make proposals / put forward considerations

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have studied a broad curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework. We expect learners to have as a minimum some background in practical music-making.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge IGCSE syllabuses to require about 130 guided learning hours for each subject. This is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to each school and the learners' previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable. Find your administrative zone at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/adminzone**. This syllabus is **not** available in all administrative zones. To find out about availability check the syllabus page at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/0978**

You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables**

You can enter candidates in the June exam series.

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates cannot enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge IGCSE Music (0410)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) and Cambridge O Level syllabuses are at the same level.

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has access to this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to an administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable.

Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Retakes and carrying forward marks

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes**

Marks achieved in Components 2 Performing and 3 Composing can be carried forward to future series, subject to the requirements set out in the *Cambridge Handbook* at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**. Candidates must carry forward marks achieved in both components.

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

At Cambridge International, we work to avoid direct or indirect discrimination in our syllabuses and assessment materials. We aim to maximise inclusivity for candidates of all national, cultural or social backgrounds and candidates with protected characteristics, which include special educational needs and disability, religion and belief, and characteristics related to gender and identity. We also aim to make our materials as accessible as possible by using accessible language and applying accessible design principles. This gives all candidates the fairest possible opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding and helps to minimise the requirement to make reasonable adjustments during the assessment process.

Access arrangements

Access arrangements (including modified papers) are the principal way in which Cambridge International complies with our duty, as guided by the UK Equality Act (2010), to make 'reasonable adjustments' for candidates with special educational needs (SEN), disability, illness or injury. Where a candidate would otherwise

be at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a candidate with no SEN, disability, illness or injury, we may be able to agree pre-examination access arrangements. These arrangements help a candidate by minimising accessibility barriers and maximising their opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding in an assessment.

Important:

Requested access arrangements should be based on evidence of the candidate's barrier to assessment and should also reflect their normal way of working at school. This is explained in the *Cambridge Handbook* **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

- For Cambridge International to approve an access arrangement, we will need to agree that it constitutes a reasonable adjustment, involves reasonable cost and timeframe and does not affect the security and integrity of the assessment.
- Availability of access arrangements should be checked by centres at the start of the course. Details of our standard access arrangements and modified question papers are available in the *Cambridge Handbook* **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**
- Please contact us at the start of the course to find out if we are able to approve an arrangement that is not included in the list of standard access arrangements.
- Candidates who cannot access parts of the assessment may be able to receive an award based on the parts they have completed.

For Component 1 Listening, music notation can be provided in braille form if this is the candidate's normal way of working.

For Component 2 Performing, candidates are permitted to use adaptive instruments. For any candidate wishing to use assistive technology, please contact us before starting the course.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2 or 1 indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge IGCSE (9–1).

9 is the highest and 1 is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade 1. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge IGCSE is shown as INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (IGCSE).

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge IGCSE has two purposes:

1 to measure learning and achievement

The assessment confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.

2 to show likely future success

The outcomes help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful.

The outcomes help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Changes to this syllabus for 2026, 2027 and 2028

This syllabus has been updated. This is version 4, published March 2026.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Changes to version 4 of the syllabus, published March 2026

Other changes	• The section on Authenticity and academic honesty/avoidance of plagiarism on page 32 has been updated.

Changes to version 3 of the syllabus, published December 2025

Other changes	• The weblink on page 36 has been updated.

Changes to version 2 of the syllabus, published April 2025.

Changes to syllabus content	• Computer games on page 16 have been updated to video games.

Changes to version 1 of the syllabus, published September 2023.

Changes to syllabus content	• Subject content has been refreshed and is arranged in areas of study. • Candidates are no longer required to study set works. • Areas of study 1–3 include Focus works. • Listening suggestions are provided for each area of study. • A glossary of command words has been added.

Changes to assessment (including changes to specimen papers)	• Paper 1 Listening has been restructured and includes a descriptive question. • Component 2 Performing requirements have been adjusted. • Component 2 Performing marking criteria have been updated: – Instrument-specific guidance has been replaced by guidance that can be applied to any instrument. – The criteria have been reordered and criterion (a) The range of technical and musical skills demonstrated has been replaced by criterion (e) The performance as a whole. – The level descriptions have been updated, with full descriptions added for levels 4 and 2. – The overall descriptors have been removed. • Component 3 Composing is now marked out of 50 marks (25 for each composition). • Component 3 Composing requirements have been amended: – The requirement for western tonal style has been removed from Composition 1. – Composition 2 must be written to a candidate-defined brief and related to one of four areas of study. – A commentary may be submitted for Composition 2 as an alternative to notation. • Component 3 Composing marking criteria have been updated: – The wording of the descriptions has been refreshed. – Descriptions have been added for the marking of commentaries. – The overall descriptors have been removed.
Other changes	• Teachers' Guides will not be supplied for each syllabus version. Notes for guidance will be made available in the Teaching and Learning section of the School Support Hub. • The working mark sheets will be updated for first assessment in 2026.

In addition to reading the syllabus, you should refer to the updated specimen assessment materials. The specimen papers will help your students become familiar with exam requirements and command words in questions. The specimen mark schemes show how students should answer questions to meet the assessment objectives.

School feedback: ‘While studying Cambridge IGCSE 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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