Cambridge Assessment International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge International AS & A Level
Digital Media & Design 9481

Use this syllabus for exams in 2026, 2027 and 2028.
Exams are available in the June and November series.

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 students 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 review all our syllabuses regularly, so they reflect the latest research evidence and professional teaching practice – and take account of the different national contexts in which they are taught.

We consult with teachers to help us design each syllabus around the needs of their learners. Consulting with leading universities has helped us make sure our syllabuses encourage students to master the key concepts in the subject and develop the skills necessary for success in higher education.

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 programmes 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/**

Contents

**Important: Changes to this syllabus**

1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

The best motivation for a student is a real passion for the subject they are learning. By offering students a variety of Cambridge International AS & A Levels, you can give them the greatest chance of finding the path of education they most want to follow. With over 50 subjects to choose from, students can select the ones they love and that they are best at, which helps motivate them throughout their studies.

Following a Cambridge International AS & A Level programme helps students develop abilities which universities value highly, including:

- a deep understanding of their subjects
- higher order thinking skills – analysis, critical thinking, problem solving
- presenting ordered and coherent arguments
- independent learning and research.
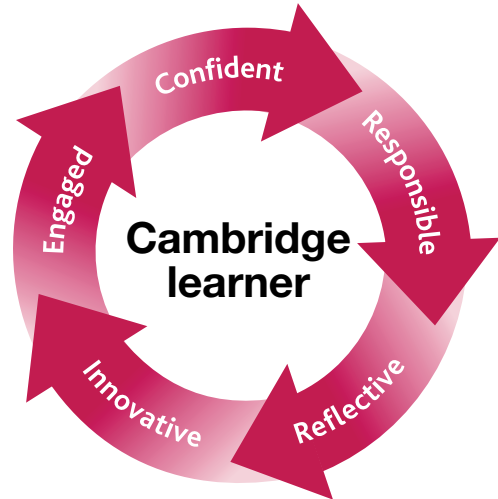
Cambridge International AS & A Level Digital Media & Design encourages independent creative expression and the development of a critical, reflective practice, and visual language skills as a tool for communication. The syllabus provides opportunities for learners to enrich their understanding of creative uses of technology and to improve their skills in a wide range of contemporary techniques. The syllabus is designed to accommodate a range of interests, materials and resources, and the skills and interests of the teaching staff.

Our approach in Cambridge International AS & A Level Digital Media & Design encourages learners to be:

confident, identifying, researching and evaluating problems in a systematic way and improving technical skills to support development of learners' personal design style

responsible, taking charge of their own development as designers, with an independent approach to creative and technical practice

reflective, recording ideas and critically evaluating their work to help learners to continually review, refine and adapt

innovative, combining approaches and techniques and developing the skills to solve problems creatively

engaged, enriching their work by exploring different designers, processes and concepts.

School feedback: 'Cambridge students develop a deep understanding of subjects and independent thinking skills.'

Feedback from: Principal, Rockledge High School, USA

Key concepts

Key concepts are essential ideas that help students develop a deep understanding of their subject and make links between different aspects. Key concepts may open up new ways of thinking about, understanding or interpreting the important things to be learned.

Good teaching and learning will incorporate and reinforce a subject's key concepts to help students gain:

- a greater depth as well as breadth of subject knowledge
- confidence, especially in applying knowledge and skills in new situations
- the vocabulary to discuss their subject conceptually and show how different aspects link together
- a level of mastery of their subject to help them enter higher education.

The key concepts identified below, carefully introduced and developed, will help to underpin the course you will teach. You may identify additional key concepts which will also enrich teaching and learning.

The key concepts for Cambridge International AS & A Level Digital Media & Design are:

- **communication**
  The essential purpose of any piece of digital design is to communicate. Designers need to understand that the relationship their work builds with the audience is influenced by many things, including their chosen media and methods. Effective communication is also essential for operating in today's design world, which demands collaboration and engagement with wider cultures and emerging technologies.

- **creativity**
  Creativity is at the heart of a designer's processes. It pushes designers to question, investigate, experiment and take risks to create solutions that are original and effective. Creative practitioners use curiosity, imagination and innovation to solve design problems in new ways.

- **innovation**
  Innovation means experimenting with processes, approaches and technologies. A willingness to innovate builds confidence and helps develop awareness of new ways of looking at things, which is fundamental to digital media and design. A skilled designer selects the techniques and processes that communicate their message in the most effective way.

- **intention**
  An intention is the starting point of any project, from which a designer starts to develop ideas. An intention or purpose can come from a brief, proposal or research, while at other times it might begin as an idea or feeling. Though an intention is the reason to start a project, it is important to understand that the intention can evolve as work develops.

- **critical reflection**
  Critical reflection and user feedback are the ongoing processes that help designers to learn what works and what does not. Designers need to evaluate how the media, techniques and processes they choose affect how their work communicates meaning. This process can help work become more relevant and coherent.

- **research and context**
  First-hand research helps designers to develop their ideas and refine their practice. Actively researching and responding to other practitioners, cultures and creative movements gives the designer a broader view. A designer can use this to improve their practice and understand how their work connects with its intended audience.

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. Every year thousands of students with Cambridge International AS & A Levels gain places at leading universities worldwide. Our programmes and qualifications are valued by top universities around the world including those in the UK, US (including Ivy League universities), Europe, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

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 International AS & A Level and found it to be comparable to the standard of AS & A Level in the UK. This means students can be confident that their Cambridge International AS & A Level qualifications are accepted as equivalent, grade for grade, to UK AS & A Levels by leading universities worldwide.

Cambridge International AS Level Digital Media & Design makes up the first half of the Cambridge International A Level course in Digital Media & Design and provides a foundation for the study of Digital Media & Design at Cambridge International A Level. The AS Level can also be delivered as a standalone qualification. Depending on local university entrance requirements, students may be able to use it to progress directly to university courses in digital media and design or some other subjects. It is also suitable as part of a course of general education.

Cambridge International A Level Digital Media & Design provides a foundation for the study of digital media and design or related courses in higher education. Equally it is suitable as part of a course of general education.

For more information about the relationship between the Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level see the 'Assessment overview' section of the Syllabus overview.

We recommend learners check the Cambridge recognition database and university websites to find the most up-to-date entry requirements for courses they wish to study.

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

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 International AS & A Level. To find out which resources are available for each syllabus go to www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

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 International AS & A Level			
Planning and preparation	**Teaching and assessment**	**Learning and revision**	**Results**
• Syllabuses • Schemes of work • Specimen Question Papers and Mark Schemes • Course Handbook	• Endorsed resources • Online forums • Support for coursework	• Example candidate responses • Past papers and mark schemes • Specimen paper answers	• Candidate Results Service • Principal examiner reports for teachers

Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates

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

Professional development

Find the next step on your professional development journey.

• Introductory Professional Development – An introduction to Cambridge programmes and qualifications.
• Extension Professional Development – Develop your understanding of Cambridge programmes and qualifications to build confidence in your delivery.
• Enrichment Professional Development – Transform your approach to teaching with our Enrichment workshops.
• 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:

- develop awareness of the world of digital media and design and understand influencing factors and contexts
- develop creative processes and understand that design is an iterative process
- research and evaluate information relevant to their studies
- reflect on requirements and feedback from specific audiences and clients in developing their work
- use digital media creatively as a way of expressing meaning
- use knowledge, understanding and creativity to innovate using appropriate software, equipment, technology and practices
- develop personal ideas in the context of contemporary practice
- develop the skills needed for the study of digital media and design in higher education
- prepare for working in a collaborative industry.

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

Cambridge International AS & A Level Digital Media & Design is for candidates who want to explore a range of processes and techniques in digital media. This qualification is also for candidates who want to develop their creative work in the context of contemporary practice.

The subject content allows space for teaching and learning to be creative. It is grouped into three broad areas of study:

• Digital photography

• Moving image

• Games design and mobile and multimedia applications.

You do not have to cover all three areas of study to deliver this qualification. You can structure a course around a single area of study, or you can create a course which includes a combination of two or three areas of study. The choice of content will depend on the interests of teachers and candidates, and on the resources and expertise available at the school.

Candidates can complete the assessment components in any of the areas of study.

The subject content includes a list of skills, techniques, knowledge and understanding common to all areas of study. It also provides details on individual areas of study.

Across the syllabus, the emphasis is on a personal response and the creative journey the candidate takes to fulfil a design brief, whether the brief is generated by the candidate or set by Cambridge International.

Candidates wishing to study Cambridge International AS & A Level Digital Media & Design with another Cambridge International AS & A Level might wish to combine this syllabus with AS & A Level Art & Design, or to combine this syllabus with Computer Science, Information Technology or Design & Technology, to develop their creative skills alongside more technical study.

School feedback: 'Cambridge International AS & A Levels prepare students well for university because they've learnt to go into a subject in considerable depth. There's that ability to really understand the depth and richness and the detail of a subject. It's a wonderful preparation for what they are going to face at university.'

Feedback from: US Higher Education Advisory Council

Assessment overview

Component 1

Portfolio

100 marks

Candidates choose a theme from the list in the syllabus.

There are **two** elements to the portfolio:

- supporting studies **and**
- a final proposal

Externally assessed

50% of the AS Level

25% of the A Level

Component 3

Personal Investigation

100 marks

This is a practical component supported by written work. Candidates research a topic or theme of their choice.

There are **two** elements to the investigation:

- a final practical outcome **and**
- supporting studies including a written commentary of 1000–1500 words

Externally assessed

50% of the A Level

Component 2

Externally Set Assignment   10 hours

100 marks

Candidates choose **one** assignment from the question paper.

There are **two** elements to the assignment:

- supporting studies **and**
- a final outcome, produced during a supervised test of 10 hours' total duration

Externally assessed

50% of the AS Level

25% of the A Level

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

Check the timetable at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables** for the test date window for Component 2.

Check the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** for submission information, forms and deadlines for Components 1 and 3.

The early question paper is made available to centres before the exam.

Teachers should check the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment for information on when and where the early question paper will be available.

There are three routes for Cambridge International AS & A Level Digital Media & Design:

	Route	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
1	**AS Level only** (Candidates take all AS components in the same exam series)	yes	yes	no
2	**A Level** (staged over two years) Year 1 AS Level*	yes	yes	no
	Year 2 Complete the A Level			yes
3	**A Level** (Candidates take all components in the same exam series)	yes	yes	yes

* Candidates carry forward their AS Level result subject to the rules and time limits described in the *Cambridge Handbook*. See **Making entries** for more information on carry forward of results and marks.

Candidates following an AS Level route are eligible for grades a–e. Candidates following an A Level route are eligible for grades A*–E.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Research and record

Research and record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress

- generate and research ideas from a variety of appropriate sources
- record and analyse information relevant to ideas

AO2 Explore and select

Explore and select appropriate media, materials and technology, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops

- explore a range of media, materials or technology appropriate to ideas
- review and refine digital solutions to the brief

AO3 Develop ideas

Develop ideas or concepts through investigations informed by feedback and constraints, demonstrating critical understanding

- make informed judgements through development and understanding relevant constraints
- use visual and other forms to express ideas or concepts relevant to the brief

AO4 Produce

Produce a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes connections between ideas and digital media and design

- show personal vision and commitment through a creative digital media response
- present an informed response through personal evaluation, reflection and critical thinking.

Weighting for assessment objectives

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

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in AS Level %	Weighting in A Level %
AO1 Research and record	25	25
AO2 Explore and select	25	25
AO3 Develop ideas	25	25
AO4 Produce	25	25
Total	100	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %		
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
AO1 Research and record	25	25	25
AO2 Explore and select	25	25	25
AO3 Develop ideas	25	25	25
AO4 Produce	25	25	25
Total	100	100	100

3 Subject content

Cambridge International AS & A Level Digital Media & Design is for candidates who want to explore a range of processes and techniques in digital media. The syllabus encourages learners to adopt an experimental approach as they develop visual language to communicate ideas. Learners have an opportunity to develop their work in the context of contemporary practice.

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 topics, subject contexts, 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.

The subject content is grouped into three broad areas of study:

- Digital photography
- Moving image
- Games design and mobile and multimedia applications.

You do **not** have to cover all three areas of study to deliver this qualification. You can structure a course around a single area of study, or you can create a course which includes a combination of two or three areas of study. The choice of content will depend on the interests of teachers and candidates as well as the resources and expertise available at the school.

Candidates can complete the assessment components in any of the areas of study.

In some schools it might be appropriate to take a single area of study. Other schools may wish to offer candidates the opportunity to learn new skills in a range of areas before they choose an area of study in which to specialise. At this level, candidates are **not** expected to cover every element within the chosen area(s) of study.

Candidates can complete the components in any of the areas of study, but they should select the most appropriate media, techniques and processes relevant to their chosen idea, the concept, and their level of skill.

The qualification encourages a personal response that is based on knowledge, understanding and skills in digital media and design.

Candidates:

- are **not** expected to demonstrate complex technological skills, for example be able to build and code websites
- are **not** expected to be expert in a range of software
- should understand the relationship between skills, creative activity and visual language
- should be able to document their progress
- should show the critical and analytical processes they have used to review and refine their work as they develop their ideas.

You are expected to spend some time during the first year of study introducing the principles of design and allowing candidates to become familiar with different media, to build up skills and to experiment with smaller projects.

Skills and understanding common to all areas of study

Some skills apply to all three areas of study. These should be embedded in the course for all candidates:

- researching and exploring techniques and processes
- selecting and organising information
- generating ideas and starting to develop technical skills to present ideas
- reflecting and refining ideas and designs as work develops.

Candidates should be encouraged to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

Working to a brief

- planning for a specific digital outcome
- constraints (e.g. budget, location or resources, customer requirements, software and technology restrictions, accessibility)
- working to a deadline
- working with others

Ethical considerations of digital media and design

It is important that candidates are aware of any ethical considerations relevant to their designs. This should include the physical properties of their work, for example:

- the impact materials and production methods used have on the environment
- the use of renewable and recycled materials
- the design's life span – the length of time it is safe and relevant to use
- copyright and intellectual property integrity; not using other people's ideas or creations without acknowledgement.

Candidates should also ensure that their designs are culturally sensitive and not offensive on the grounds of race, gender or religious belief.

Critical and contextual understanding

Candidate work should demonstrate an understanding of the context in which their ideas and designs have been created. Candidates should research artists, designers, genres and contemporary digital media practices that are relevant to their own work and ideas. They should critically analyse the work they have researched and demonstrate they understand how that work is relevant to their own and how the artist or designer achieved their desired outcomes.

Contextual work should also explore any relevant social and political issues (e.g. environment, gender, economics, geography etc.) and its impact on other people's and their own design work.

Visual Language

Communication of ideas through the use of:

- line
- tone
- form
- shape
- pictorial space
- composition
- colour theory
- semantics and semiotics
- harmony and balance.

Evaluation and testing of design

Candidates should continually evaluate and test their work to ensure it is meeting the requirements of the brief. Feedback and evaluation should be used to develop and improve their designs.

Evaluation – how successful has the candidates design been in:

- meeting the brief
- use of visual language
- interpretation and realisation of ideas
- acknowledging and incorporating influences – e.g. contextual and sociological factors
- acknowledging and incorporating ethical considerations.

Design testing – how has the candidate tested their ideas against the below:

- Responsive design – dynamic changes to an online design so that it can be used successfully on different devices.
- User experience (UX) – how easy the design is to use and how it meets the needs of the user.
- User interface (UI) – how the user interacts with the design and how effective the visual layout is.
- Use of technology – the design uses the most appropriate form of technology and advances in technology have been explored.
- Design for accessibility – designs should be inclusive for the widest range of people possible including users with disabilities and those from different countries and cultures.
- Impact on the environment – designs don't use harmful materials and use manufacturing processes that are green and energy efficient and not damaging to the environment at any stage.
- Digital footprint – the trail of data that a user leaves when using the internet.
- Online ethics, data protection and safeguarding – users are protected and they are not exposed to any sensitive, harmful or offensive content.

Digital photography

Digital photography is an established and an evolving area of contemporary practice and it is also complementary to other areas of creative activity. Digital photography can include a number of aspects. You are advised to select a few aspects to study in depth rather than try to cover all aspects.

Completed work should have an intended application such as portraiture, landscape, documentary, still-life or editorial. Candidates can experiment with image manipulation skills to develop ideas. Candidates can also combine photography skills, software skills and visual language skills to produce a visual outcome. Digital photography as a means of recording and image making can also be used for gathering and researching ideas that may be developed in another area of study.

Skills and techniques

Candidates should be able to select the most appropriate skills, techniques and processes to develop their chosen idea:

- planning, preparing equipment and resources for digital photography
- using digital photographic skills to capture and record images
- using scale, composition and formal elements to construct images
- using technical ability including depth of field, shutter speed, exposure, angle and viewpoint
- using lighting, shadow, balance, contrast, texture, tension
- selecting, editing and manipulating digital images
- using relevant specialist technical language for record keeping
- using a range of appropriate equipment, for example cameras, lenses, filters, formats, projectors, lighting, props
- depending on the task, selecting the correct file size, naming conventions, resolution and aspect ratio
- using software for editing and post-production of own images
- communicating ideas and meaning visually.

Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be able to use feedback to critically reflect on their own progress as their work develops and communicate meaning through their images. They should also be able to select the appropriate style or genre for different types of photography, depending on the theme or brief, and demonstrate understanding of how their images will be viewed, depending on the brief.

Moving image

Moving image practice has origins in fine art, experimental and independent cinema. This area of study explores the relationships between video, digital technologies and creative expression in physical and online environments. Moving image work combines elements of visual language to communicate to an audience.

It can include animation – either hand-drawn, stop frame or digital. It could also cover moving elements in web-based products and digital film-making. You can structure a course that focuses on any of these forms of expression depending on the technology and resources available. Candidates are encouraged to experiment with resources and the expression of ideas.

Candidates are encouraged to think of moving image as a dynamic and thriving area of art practice, which can be located in a host of venues from galleries to public digital advertising and web content.

Completed work could have a commercial application, such as advertising, standalone video short, film or animation.

Skills and techniques

Candidates should be able to select the most appropriate skills, techniques and processes to develop their chosen idea:

- storyboarding and image-making through photography, modelling, drawing and/or illustration
- planning and preparing equipment and resources
- using scale, composition and formal elements to construct images
- if appropriate, researching locations for filming or for site-specific works
- briefing participants/actors, casting
- producing scripts and shot lists
- character development or modelling for animation
- using appropriate software
- selecting, editing and manipulating video sequences
- record keeping, using relevant specialist technical language
- using a range of appropriate equipment, for example cameras, lenses, filters, formats, projectors, lighting, props
- communicating ideas and meaning visually.

Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be able to use feedback to critically reflect on their own progress as their work develops and communicate meaning through their images. They should also be able to select the appropriate style or genre for different types of moving image, depending on the theme or brief, and demonstrate an understanding of their audience and how the finished outcome will be viewed.

Games design and mobile and multimedia applications

Candidates may choose to explore different areas of games design and mobile and multimedia applications, but they should be advised to focus on one or two areas of specialism in such a broad area of study. This is an evolving and innovative area of contemporary practice. Games design and mobile and multimedia applications include web and mobile applications, games, interactive media and digital installation. Candidates should understand that this area of study is applied and creative in its practice.

When deciding on the concept to be developed, candidates should consider technological, resource and time constraints. If a prototype is all that is required to fulfil the brief for the assessment, the quality of ideas should not be limited or restricted. The quality of the visual outcome will be dependent on how visual language is used to communicate ideas.

Candidates might choose to develop ideas which include a combination of photography and moving image within a digital context. Ideas generation could be combined with drawing and software skills to create concept artwork, environments, gameplay, storyboards or character development related to a theme or brief. Candidates are encouraged to experiment with these elements as they develop ideas. Supporting work for digitally produced work should include evidence of the development of ideas and of understanding techniques and processes.

Skills and techniques

Candidates should be able to select the most appropriate skills, techniques and processes to develop their chosen idea:

- using drawing, concept art and/or narrative image-making to generate ideas
- storyboarding and pitching ideas and concepts
- understanding and using a workflow strategy
- planning and preparing equipment and resources
- using scale, composition and formal elements to construct images
- games design: role-play games, online games, mobile games
- app design including user journeys and page layouts
- character developing and scripting
- using viewpoints, timing and pace
- directing, producing, editing, post-production
- using relevant specialist technical language in record keeping
- choosing appropriate formats and resolutions depending on how the outcome will be viewed
- using web-based hosting or storage services for online media
- communicating ideas and meaning visually.

Candidates will be expected to work with appropriate software as available. Coding is not a requirement unless it is an integral part of the outcome. Prototype platform games, massive multiplayer online games (MMO) and role player games (RPG) concepts should have age-appropriate content and themes.

Knowledge and understanding

Candidates should be able to use feedback to critically reflect on their own progress as their work develops and communicate meaning through their work. They should also be able to select the appropriate style or genre for different types of games design and platforms for mobile and multimedia applications, depending on the theme or brief. They should be able to show appropriate choices based on their intended audience in relation to concepts such as bandwidth limitations, responsive sites, processing power and screen size to increase accessibility, enjoyment and ease of use.

Often, digital content is used more than once across different platforms. Candidates should show understanding of how important it is that content creators consider how the media is accessed. Candidates are also expected to show an understanding of how their end product will be shown or how the user will interact and engage with the digital outcome.

4 Details of the assessment

For each component, candidates work towards a client brief or a scenario. Candidates should reflect the constraints of audience or client requirements as they develop their ideas in their chosen area or areas of study. They should carefully manage elements of visual language to communicate ideas, meaning or a message. Candidates may approach any component in any of the areas of study. It is expected that there will be some crossover between areas depending on the resources available and the outcomes for each component.

Component 1 – Portfolio

Component 1 is an AS Level component.

There are two elements to the portfolio:

- supporting studies **and**
- a final proposal (e.g. pitch, presentation, final ideas).

Cambridge International will assess the two elements together and award a **single mark** out of 100.

There is **no** question paper for this component.

Candidates should choose one theme from the themes listed in the syllabus. The themes have been structured to guide candidates through the stages required to meet the assessment objectives and to give flexibility to schools over the content and chosen area of study. The themes provide a brief, a choice of proposals to answer the brief, some suggested areas to start research and exploration and guidance on the type of expected outcome. For this component, candidates are expected to research and develop ideas and to present their proposal as a pitch or presentation.

Supporting studies

The supporting studies should show generation and exploration of ideas, based on one of the Component 1 themes.

Candidates may use a range of stimuli to start their research. This does not have to be limited to digital design and artwork but could include references such as theatre, literature or film. Candidates could focus on design, technological, socio-cultural or other contexts. The most successful work will demonstrate thorough and detailed recording from first-hand sources. All sources **must** be credited and candidates should make it clear where imagery is their own. Candidates are expected to use note-taking, photography and drawing to gather research and to communicate ideas. Ideas can be developed through exploration of media materials and technology, informed by feedback and using visual language to communicate meaning.

Proposal

Based on their supporting studies, candidates produce a proposal for their final idea. The proposal should be a presentation of ideas, concepts or prototypes. The focus of the proposal is on the ideas, rather than a fully resolved outcome.

Candidates should carefully select work for the supporting studies to show:

- research and recording of ideas, observations and insights
- critical reflection on work and progress
- exploration and selection of appropriate media, materials and technology
- review and refinement of ideas as work develops
- development of ideas and concepts through investigations
- that investigations are informed by feedback and understanding of constraints
- a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes appropriate connections between ideas and digital media and design.

The supporting studies will be marked against the same criteria as the proposal. Candidates should select and present work for assessment that meets the assessment criteria for Component 1.

Candidates submit the Portfolio to Cambridge International digitally. Candidates are required to submit a Portfolio showing 10 pages/screens of supporting studies or the equivalent and a final presentation of their proposal. Moving image work should not exceed 5 minute's duration and can be shorter.

Refer to the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** for submission dates for this component.

Component 1 Portfolio themes

Candidates must choose one of the following themes:

Theme 1: Maps

Maps are used as a way of describing, measuring and depicting areas and regions. A map is often made from signs, symbols, images, visual codes, numerals and text.

Using maps or mapping as a theme, develop your own idea or concept for a digital element to be included in an exhibition called 'From here to there'.

Focus on one or more of the following aspects of maps:

- maps of the unseen or underground, such as geology, railways or sea beds
- visual symbols or codes used to describe the physical world
- different forms of maps e.g. books, folded, three-dimensional, digital
- plans of interior spaces
- routes, pathways, boundaries; real or imagined
- maps as unreliable or biased documents.

Suggestions for initial research could include mapping organisations e.g. Ordnance Survey, Michelin, National Geographic Society; researching artists, photographers, or designers who use maps in their work; innovative cartographers who work with maps or data mapping; maps as inspiration in storytelling or legends and maps in advertising.

Develop a proposal for:

- a short film or animation from an element of your research into maps
- a series of photographs based on the theme
- an app to support the exhibition 'From here to there'
- a map of a game environment
- a visual display or projection
- your own idea.

Theme 2: Cycles and repetition

The natural environment is in a constant state of flux, cycles and repetition. From the ebb and flow of the tides to the routines of daily life.

Choose one element from the list below to explore your ideas for a digital element to be included in an exhibition on the theme of cycles and repetition.

Focus on one or more of the following aspects of cycles and repetition:

- oscillation, rhythm, repetition
- sequence, tempo, pace
- tidal patterns of seas and oceans
- circadian rhythms of day and night
- the cycle of the seasons; growth, renewal and decay
- urban and natural environments that change over times of day.

Suggestions for initial research could include artists, designers, and photographers who depict motion in their works; devices which measure and describe movement; film makers, artists and photographers inspired by cycles in nature; CCTV, satellite images, speed cameras and advertisers who use repeated sequences, chains of events or strings of ideas.

Develop a proposal for:

- a short film or animation about cycles and repetition
- a series of digitally manipulated images based on the theme
- an online game based on the theme
- advertising materials that use the theme of cycles and repetition
- a photo essay for an exhibition
- your own idea.

Theme 3: Narrative stories

Narrative stories are accounts of events or experiences and can be real or imagined, presented through a sequence of visual images, written or spoken words.

Develop ideas for a narrative story to be included in a digital storytelling festival, this can be displayed in a venue or for an online festival.

Focus on one or more of the following aspects of narrative stories:

- biographies, hidden narrators, e.g. voiceovers in films, point of view
- broadcast news and current affairs
- community entertainment, dance, circus, puppets, poets
- personal narratives in journals or diaries
- graphic novels, comics, illustrated books
- legends, stories, myths, oral histories, cave paintings.

Suggestions for initial research could include artists who tell stories through their work; illustrated diaries, journals, children's books; news broadcasts, social media narratives and traditional storytellers, myths and legends.

Develop a proposal for:

- a visual display or projection
- a photo essay narrating a visual story
- a film, documentary, or animation
- an information app for the festival
- advertising for the festival
- your own idea.

Theme 4: The built environment

The built environment can be interpreted as architecture, buildings, cities; living, working or recreational spaces inhabited by people. The theme could also be explored with an abstract approach by investigating structures, shadows, reflections, pattern and textures.

Explore the theme creatively in one of the areas listed below.

Focus on one or more of the following aspects of the built environment:

- people in the built environment; where they gather, how they use public buildings and spaces
- town planning; how transport and people move around towns and cities
- the juxtaposition of wealth and poverty in the built environment
- the built environment and architecture in games.

Suggestions for initial research could include places of worship, study, homes, offices, hospitals, warehouses, museums, zoos, shops, marketplaces; traffic, street furniture, signage, symbols, advertising, graffiti, ghettos, windows, bridges, points of transportation and architecture and architectural features.

Develop a proposal for:

- an interactive display for a new building development
- a design for a built environment in a game
- a film or documentary about living in the built environment
- an online guide or app to local architecture
- photographs of the patterns and textures of the built environment
- your own idea.

Theme 5: Museums

Museums house collections of objects that have historical, cultural, artistic or scientific significance. They exhibit their artefacts in displays and exhibitions that inform, educate, entertain and preserve. Museums are often themed, from niche objects and local interests to objects of global importance.

Focus on one or more of the following aspects of museums:

- artefacts and what they can tell us about history and culture
- curation and context of pieces on display
- narratives and archives, both what's included and what is missing
- information and engagement with audiences
- an object from a collection that has meaning.

Suggestions for initial research could include a local museum; online and digital collections; assemblage artists; museum buildings and architecture and the current collection or specialist exhibition of a museum.

Develop a proposal for:

- an online exhibition
- a documentary or film about a museum or a specific exhibition
- an interactive educational display
- an online museum guide
- an app or game to be used in a museum
- your own idea.

Theme 6: Water

Water is a theme that has inspired many artists, designers and craftspeople. From its changing physical appearance, to the symbolism of water in artworks e.g. creative energy, change, purity and cleansing.

Explore the theme of water creatively in one of the areas listed below.

Focus on one or more of the following aspects of water:

- bodies of water, rivers, seas, streams, lakes, estuaries, reservoirs, canals, ponds, swimming pools, puddles
- changing states of water and weather
- absence of water, drought, dryness
- rain, hail, waterfalls, waves, tides, dripping taps
- underwater, aquatic life, plants, fish, marine ecosystems.

Suggestions for initial research could include artists who explore water in their work; significant water landmarks, e.g. steam geysers, waterfalls, reservoirs; water and climate change and water erosion and its impact on objects and the landscape.

Develop a proposal for:

- a film or animation responding to the visual qualities of water
- images for a visual display
- a documentary related to the theme
- an environment or character for a game
- photographs of over and underwater life
- your own idea.

Component 2 – Externally Set Assignment

Component 2 is an AS Level component. This is an externally set assignment that is marked by Cambridge International. There is a question paper for this component. You should check the *Cambridge Handbook* for the year candidates are taking the assessment for information on when the early question paper will be available and where to access the materials www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide. You may download the question paper and give it to the candidates as soon as it is released.

There are two elements to the assignment:

- supporting studies **and**
- a final outcome produced during a supervised test of 10 hours' total duration.

Cambridge International will assess the two elements together and award a **single mark** out of 100. Candidates choose **one** assignment from a choice of three on the question paper.

Supporting studies

The supporting studies are produced during the preparation period. The preparation period begins when the candidates receive the question paper, and it finishes before the supervised test.

During the preparation period candidates should research, plan, reflect on and develop ideas for their response to the assignment they have chosen from the question paper.

Candidates should carefully select work for the supporting studies to show:

- research and recording of ideas, observations and insights
- critical reflection on work and progress
- exploration and selection of appropriate media, materials and technology
- review and refinement of ideas as work develops
- development of ideas and concepts through investigations
- that investigations are informed by feedback and understanding of constraints
- a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes appropriate connections between ideas and digital media and design.

The supporting studies will be marked against the same criteria as the final outcome.

There is no limit to the preparation time, but candidates must have a minimum of four weeks to complete their supporting studies.

The focus of Component 2 is to develop a creative solution to a brief within a set timeframe. Candidates must show evidence of their research and development of ideas, while working towards a final outcome.

Where software is used, screenshots should be included to show how ideas have been developed, e.g. showing the selection of tools and manipulation of imagery using filters or layers.

Candidates **must** use their own imagery and credit all sources used in their research.

Final outcome

The final outcome is the finished assignment from the question paper.

Supporting studies should be taken into the supervised test. During the test candidates should record, edit and manipulate materials used in the examination piece.

Once the supervised test has started, the supporting studies must not be removed or added to. The supporting studies and the final outcome must remain under secure conditions throughout the test period.

Candidates should submit up to 10 sheets/screens of supporting studies. Moving image work should not exceed 5 minutes in duration and can be shorter.

Candidates submit their supporting studies and the final outcome to Cambridge International digitally.

You will find examination guidelines and submission dates for examined work in the *Cambridge Handbook* for the year of examination.

Component 3 – Personal Investigation

Component 3 is the A Level component.

This is an internally set assignment that is marked by Cambridge International.

There are two elements to the personal investigation:

- a final practical outcome **and**
- supporting studies including a written commentary of 1000–1500 words.

Cambridge International will assess the two elements together and award a **single mark** out of 100.

Component 3 is weighted at 50 per cent of the qualification. This component is marked against the A Level assessment criteria. The assessment criteria for Component 3 reflect the additional level of independent research required for this component and the supporting studies, including a written commentary that supports the practical outcome.

There is **no** question paper for this component.

Candidates identify a topic or theme of their choice that is informed by an aspect of digital media and design within one of the areas of study. You may provide guidance to help candidates develop an original focus and title.

Candidates are advised to write a statement of intent or project proposal before they start work on their personal investigation. The project proposal should describe the brief, context or scenario, including the client or audience, and how the assessment objectives will be met. Candidates should also outline the technical skills and resources required and show how they will review and evaluate their ideas as they develop. The statement of intent / project proposal can be developed in class with the teacher and does not need to be sent to Cambridge International for approval.

The aim of the Personal Investigation is for candidates to engage in a self-directed period of sustained and focused study. This study should bring together the skills they have developed so far and demonstrate that they are able to work independently to resolve a given idea.

The project should be personal, reflecting the interest and developing the skills most applicable to each candidate. The project may develop a theme or skills covered in one of the AS components, but the focus, scope and outcome should be different. It would not be appropriate for a whole class to do a similar project for Component 3. You may help candidates to plan their project and read drafts of the written element in its early stages.

Although you should regularly check progress and give advice on technical elements, where necessary, you must remember that this should be an independent project showing the creative ability and skills of the candidate in one of the areas of study.

The project does **not** need to be started straight away, and you may wish to spend time with candidates exploring potential themes and developing new skills before they decide on a project.

Enough time should be set aside for the research and completion of the project before the submission date.

Candidates should divide their time into research, development, gathering feedback and resolving creative challenges, with steps along the way to review progress and refine ideas.

Final practical outcome

Candidates must submit a final practical outcome demonstrating a resolved creative outcome in one of the areas of study.

Candidates may submit their final practical outcome in any appropriate format for the area of study. Moving image work should not exceed 5 minutes in duration and can be shorter.

Supporting studies including a written commentary

This is the A Level component and is a substantial piece of independent research. The supporting studies will demonstrate the research, insight, exploration, informed development and critical understanding which have been part of the personal investigation. The supporting studies should be accompanied by a critical written commentary of 1000–1500 words of continuous prose presented in a format that is related to the final practical outcome. Some candidates might choose to submit this as a supporting document, while others might use the word count thread throughout the entire project. The written commentary should clarify working and creative processes. It can also include images and screenshots of work as it progressed.

Candidates **must include** footnotes and a bibliography or references section; these and any quotations will **not** count towards the final word count.

Areas of the work which have been informed by contributions of others should be identified clearly.

Candidates **must** submit their final practical outcome and supporting studies to Cambridge International digitally.

Submission dates for this component will be found in the samples database at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/samples** for the year of examination.

Avoidance of plagiarism

Candidates must be taught the meaning and significance of plagiarism. Candidates should provide references to all source materials used in their research.

For Components 1 and 3, the candidate is required to complete a declaration stating the Portfolio / Personal Investigation is their own work and you confirm that you believe the work is that of the candidate. The declaration of authenticity is integrated into Submit for Assessment. You do not have to submit a copy of a separate declaration. Further details can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook*.

Assessment criteria for Component 1 and Component 2

AO1: Research and record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress **25 marks**		AO2: Explore and select appropriate media, materials and technology, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops **25 marks**		AO3: Develop ideas or concepts through investigations informed by feedback and constraints, demonstrating critical understanding **25 marks**		AO4: Produce a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes connections between ideas and digital media and design **25 marks**	
Excellent skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Highly accomplished** ability to reflect critically on work and progress.		Exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology is **excellent**. **Highly accomplished** and **sophisticated** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops.		**Excellent** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. Analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through **highly accomplished** and **mature** referencing of feedback and constraints.		**Excellent** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Highly accomplished** and **mature** connections made between ideas and digital media and design.	
	21–25		**21–25**		**21–25**		**21–25**
Confident skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Highly effective** ability to reflect critically on work and progress.		**Confident** exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. **Highly effective** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops.		**Confident** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. Analytical and critical understanding **confidently** demonstrated through **thorough** and careful referencing of feedback and constraints.		**Confident** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Highly effective** connections made between ideas and digital media and design.	
	16–20		**16–20**		**16–20**		**16–20**
Competent skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Good** ability to reflect critically on work and progress.		**Competent** exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. **Good** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops.		**Competent** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. **Good** analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through careful referencing of feedback and constraints.		**Competent** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Good** connections made between ideas and digital media and design.	
	11–15		**11–15**		**11–15**		**11–15**

AO1: Research and record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress 25 marks	AO2: Explore and select appropriate media, materials and technology, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops 25 marks	AO3: Develop ideas or concepts through investigations informed by feedback and constraints, demonstrating critical understanding 25 marks	AO4: Produce a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes connections between ideas and digital media and design 25 marks
Satisfactory skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Adequate** ability to reflect critically on work and progress.	**Adequate** exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. **Satisfactory** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops.	**Satisfactory** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. **Adequate** analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through some referencing of feedback and constraints.	**Satisfactory** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Adequate** connections made between ideas and digital media and design.
6–10	6–10	6–10	6–10
Limited skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Basic** ability to reflect critically on work and progress.	**Limited** exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. **Basic** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops.	**Basic** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided. **Limited** analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through basic referencing of feedback and constraints.	**Limited** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Basic** connections made between ideas and digital media and design.
1–5	1–5	1–5	1–5
No creditable work.	No creditable work.	No creditable work.	No creditable work.
0	0	0	0

Assessment criteria for Component 3

AO1: Research and record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress	AO2: Explore and select appropriate media, materials and technology, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops	AO3: Develop ideas or concepts through investigations informed by feedback and constraints, demonstrating critical understanding	AO4: Produce a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes connections between ideas and digital media and design
25 marks	**25 marks**	**25 marks**	**25 marks**
Excellent skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Highly accomplished** ability to reflect critically on work and progress. **Excellent** use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.	Exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology is **excellent**. **Highly accomplished** and **sophisticated** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. **Excellent** communication of ideas through visual and other forms.	**Excellent** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. Analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through **highly accomplished** and **mature** referencing of feedback and constraints. **Perceptive** integration of practical and written elements.	**Excellent** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Highly accomplished** and **mature** connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates an **excellent** level of engagement and independence.
21–25	**21–25**	**21–25**	**21–25**
Confident skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Highly effective** ability to reflect critically on work and progress. **Confident** use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.	**Confidently** explores and selects relevant media, materials and technology. **Highly effective** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. **Confident** communication of ideas through visual and other forms.	**Confident** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. Analytical and critical understanding **confidently** demonstrated through thorough and careful referencing of feedback and constraints. **Highly effective** integration of practical and written elements.	**Confident** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Highly effective** connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates a **highly effective** level of engagement and independence.
16–20	**16–20**	**16–20**	**16–20**
Competent skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Good** ability to reflect critically on work and progress. **Competent** use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.	**Competent** exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. **Good** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. **Good** communication of ideas through visual and other forms.	**Competent** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. **Good** analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through careful referencing of feedback and constraints. **Good** integration of practical and written elements.	**Competent** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Good** connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates a **competent** level of engagement and independence.
11–15	**11–15**	**11–15**	**11–15**

AO1: Research and record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress **25 marks**		AO2: Explore and select appropriate media, materials and technology, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops **25 marks**		AO3: Develop ideas or concepts through investigations informed by feedback and constraints, demonstrating critical understanding **25 marks**		AO4: Produce a personal digital outcome that realises intentions and makes connections between ideas and digital media and design **25 marks**	
Satisfactory skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Adequate** ability to reflect critically on work and progress. **Satisfactory** use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.		**Adequate** exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. **Satisfactory** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. **Satisfactory** communication of ideas through visual and other forms.		**Satisfactory** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations. **Adequate** analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through some referencing of feedback and constraints. **Adequate** integration of practical and written elements.		**Satisfactory** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Adequate** connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates an **adequate** level of engagement and independence.	
	6–10		**6–10**		**6–10**		**6–10**
Limited skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions. **Basic** ability to reflect critically on work and progress. **Limited** use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.		**Limited** exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology. **Basic** ability to review and refine ideas as work develops. **Basic** communication of ideas through visual and other forms.		**Basic** development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided. **Limited** analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through basic referencing of feedback and constraints. **Limited** integration of practical and written elements.		**Limited** realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response. **Basic** connections made between ideas and digital media and design. Work demonstrates a **basic** level of engagement and independence.	
	1–5		**1–5**		**1–5**		**1–5**
No creditable work.		No creditable work.		No creditable work.		No creditable work.	
	0		**0**		**0**		**0**

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
Consider, as part of reflect	review and respond to given information
Contrast	identify/comment on differences
Demonstrate	show how or give an example
Design	make or draw plans for something
Develop	take forward to a more advanced stage or build upon given information
Examine, as part of explore	investigate closely, in detail
Produce	bring something into existence; cause or provide a result
Record	create an account, or preserve evidence or information, take photographs, film or draw from observation
Refine	apply small changes which will make improvements
Reflect	consider, think deeply and carefully
Research	a systematic investigation and study in order to gain insight and information, and reach new conclusions
Review	an assessment or appraisal with a view to make changes where necessary

Glossary

There are some words in this syllabus that are specific to Digital Media and Design. Below are some of these with their definitions.

Words from the syllabus	Definitions
Audience	The group of people who read or watch your work.
Concept artwork	A rendering of an element or elements in a creative project, as part of the visual development of characters, costumes, environments, etc.
Critical understanding	Active engagement in analytical and independent thought. An ability to express an informed response.
Digital outcome	A work or product which is hosted in a digital environment.
Digital photography	Photography, where images are captured, digitised, and stored as a computer file.
Game design and mobile and multimedia applications	Digital applications which combine media, are accessed through mobile devices, or are designed for entertainment or educational purposes.
Ideas	Thoughts or concepts. Plans or creative intentions. Imagined images, experiences or memories.
Moving image	An area of creative practice which includes video, animation and documentary film-making.
Skills	An ability or accomplishment.
Pitch/presentation	Conveys information from a speaker to an audience. They are typically demonstrations of an idea or product.
Proposal	An act of putting forward or stating something for consideration. Design ideas of what a final outcome might look like.
Prototype	An early sample, model, or release of a product built to test a concept or process.
Realise	Produce work that successfully communicates or demonstrates the candidates' ideas and intentions.
Reference	An author that is mentioned in a piece of research.
Screenshots	A digital image that shows the contents of a computer display.
Storyboard	A graphic organiser that consists of illustrations or images displayed in sequence for the purpose of pre-visualising a motion picture, animation, motion graphic or interactive media sequence.
Thumbnails	Reduced-size versions of pictures or videos, used to help recognise and organise them, serving the same role for images as a normal text index does for words.
Visual language	Visual elements used to communicate ideas. For example, line, colour, shape, form, texture, scale etc.

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 completed a course in Art & Design or Design & Technology or Computer Studies equivalent to Cambridge IGCSE™ or Cambridge O Level. Previous study of information technology or an interest in this area would also be beneficial.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge International AS & A Level syllabuses to require about 180 guided learning hours for each Cambridge International AS Level and about 360 guided learning hours for a Cambridge International A Level. 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 an administrative zone. Each zone has a specific timetable.
Find your administrative zone at **www.cambridginternational.org/adminzone**

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

You can enter candidates in the June and November 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:

• syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Group awards: Cambridge AICE

Cambridge AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) is a group award for Cambridge International AS & A Level. It encourages schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum by recognising the achievements of learners who pass exams in a range of different subjects.

Learn more about Cambridge AICE at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/aice**

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 one 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 Cambridge International AS Level and Cambridge International A Level as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/retakes**

Candidates can carry forward the result of their Cambridge International AS Level assessment from one series to complete the Cambridge International A Level in a following series. The rules, time limits and regulations for carry-forward entries for staged assessment can be found in the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Candidates cannot resubmit, in whole or in part, coursework from a previous series for remarking. For information, refer to the *Cambridge Handbook* for the relevant year of assessment at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Marks achieved in Component 1, can be carried forward on their own to future series, subject to the requirements set out in the *Cambridge Handbook*.

Coursework marks can be carried forward by making entries for either of the following options:

- AS Level only awarding:
  the AS Level entry option, where the marks for Component 1 are carried forward and the candidate takes Component 1 and Component 2 in the same year.
- A Level awarding:
  the A Level entry option, where marks for Components 1 and 2 are carried forward and the candidate completes Component 3.

To confirm what entry options are available for this syllabus, refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries* for the relevant series.

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

The syllabus is designed to allow candidates to adapt projects to suit their individual requirements. This may include using adaptive technology, screen readers or modified software for editing.

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.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades a, b, c, d or e indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International AS Level. 'a' is the highest and 'e' is the lowest grade.

Grades A*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International A Level. A* is the highest and E is the lowest grade.

'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for the lowest grade (E or e). '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.

If a candidate takes a Cambridge International A Level and fails to achieve grade E or higher, a Cambridge International AS Level grade will be awarded if both of the following apply:

- the components taken for the Cambridge International A Level by the candidate in that series included all the components making up a Cambridge International AS Level
- the candidate's performance on the AS Level components was sufficient to merit the award of a Cambridge International AS Level grade.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge International AS & A Levels are shown as General Certificates of Education, GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level (GCE AS Level) and GCE Advanced Level (GCE A Level).

School feedback: 'Cambridge International A Levels are the 'gold standard' qualification. They are based on rigorous, academic syllabuses that are accessible to students from a wide range of abilities yet have the capacity to stretch our most able.'

Feedback from: Director of Studies, Auckland Grammar School, New Zealand

How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades

Cambridge International A Level

Assessment at Cambridge International A Level 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.

Cambridge International AS Level

Assessment at Cambridge International AS Level 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.

The outcomes help decide whether students part way through a Cambridge International A Level course are making enough progress to continue.

The outcomes guide teaching and learning in the next stages of the Cambridge International A Level course.

Changes to this syllabus for 2026, 2027 and 2028

The syllabus has been reviewed and revised for first examination in 2026.

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

Changes to syllabus content	• The themes for Component 1 have been updated. Candidates must select the themes available for the correct year of examination in 2026, 2027 and 2028. • Area of study Mobile and Multimedia Applications has been reworded and expanded with more scope and detail. • The syllabus text has been updated with references to visual language, creativity and contemporary practice. • Command words and Glossary have been added to the syllabus. • Sample Outline Proposals have been removed. • References to grade descriptors have been removed. • Section 'Accessibility and equality' has been updated.
Changes to assessment (including changes to specimen papers)	• Assessment objective 3 has been updated. • Assessment objective 4 has been updated. • The requirements for the Component 3 written commentary have been updated. • A new specimen paper has been developed for Component 2.

Significant changes to the syllabus are indicated by black vertical lines either side of the text.

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

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2019 are suitable for use with this syllabus.

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