



UNIVERSITY of CAMBRIDGE
International Examinations

Code of Practice



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Introduction

This Code of Practice is produced to set out University of Cambridge International Examinations' (CIE's) approach to assessment and to demonstrate CIE's aim of transparency in its dealings with those who use CIE's assessments. It represents a set of standards against which CIE's self-assessment will be conducted. It is a statement of intent, and may not always apply to assessments conducted in conjunction with one of CIE's partners, particularly where local conditions mean that other requirements and priorities are more appropriate. It is subject to revision in line with CIE's commitment to continual improvement.

CIE is part of Cambridge Assessment, which is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), a non-teaching department of the University of Cambridge and a not-for-profit organisation. CIE is accredited by the regulator of examinations in England (formerly QCA).

Chapter 1: **General Principles**

1.1 CIE and education

- (a) CIE will support and encourage the development of a worldwide community dedicated to educational improvement.
- (b) CIE will promote effective teaching and active learning through its curriculum, assessment and support.
- (c) CIE will share in the University of Cambridge's mission of contributing to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence. CIE's role in this mission will be to support excellence in education and learning in schools and in professional development.
- (d) CIE will remain dedicated to the development of well-informed, thinking and independent-minded members of society, capable of applying their skills to meet the demands of the modern world.
- (e) CIE will promote cultural breadth and an understanding of a range of different cultures and perspectives that equips young people to respond successfully to the challenge of international mobility.
- (f) The learning objectives of CIE's syllabuses will span not only knowledge and understanding but also higher-order cognitive activities.

1.2 CIE and assessment

- (a) As part of the University of Cambridge, CIE will remain committed to excellence and best practice in assessment.
- (b) CIE will develop mutually beneficial partnerships with education providers worldwide to ensure that its examinations are fair to all candidates.

- (c) CIE will offer a wide range of subjects, qualifications and flexible schemes of assessment to enable students of all abilities to do their best, whether progressing to further stages of education or into employment.
- (d) CIE will ensure that all candidates receive the results that their performance merits when judged against the relevant syllabus content and assessment criteria.
- (e) CIE will use the most appropriate assessment methods to measure candidates' skills, embracing new assessment techniques and technologies whenever they enhance the achievement of that objective.
- (f) CIE's models of assessment will include those that use banks of items, those that are awarding-based, and those performance-based assessments that use simulated or naturally-occurring activities that allow assessment against stated standards.
- (g) CIE will use expert judgements and statistical evidence to set and maintain internationally recognised performance standards.
- (h) CIE's assessments will be criterion-referenced or standards-referenced rather than norm-referenced.
- (i) CIE will comply with its customers' regulatory and procedural requirements and act in accordance with this Code of Practice to ensure that assessment standards are maintained.
- (j) CIE will take steps to encourage the appropriate use of the outcomes of its assessments.

1.3 CIE and quality

- (a) CIE will use customer feedback and self assessment to target areas for development, innovation and continual improvement.

- (b) CIE will develop the skills, knowledge and competencies of its staff, and provide the work environment necessary for them to excel in their work.
 - (c) CIE will educate its staff in the principles of the CIE Quality Management System and empower them to apply preventative and corrective action to ensure conformance to agreed standards and procedures.
 - (d) CIE will comply with the requirements of the ISO 9001 standard and achieve continual improvement through the application of its Quality Management System.
 - (e) CIE will ensure that for each process in its assessment system there is an audit trail that sets out the key evidence that supports the decision taken.
 - (f) CIE's assessment system will be transparent, in that the evidence on which decisions are based will be clear, it will be possible to audit the decision-making process and it will be possible for those making decisions to be held accountable.
 - (g) As part of a not-for-profit department of the University of Cambridge, CIE will fund research and development to enhance its assessments and services.
- a candidate to make some allowance for the fact that the candidate sat the examination under adverse conditions, affected by illness, bereavement or other acceptable circumstances described in CIE's Handbook for Centres. If a candidate misses a component for an acceptable reason, CIE may make an allowance to take account of the missing component, subject to the regulations in CIE's Handbook for Centres.
- (d) CIE will assess all candidates for a syllabus according to the same marking criteria.
 - (e) CIE will assess all candidates for what they show that they know and can do, not for what they might have achieved had circumstances been different.
 - (f) Special Arrangements and Special Consideration will not give a candidate receiving them an advantage over other candidates.
 - (g) Special Arrangements and Special Consideration will not interfere with the integrity of the assessment and will therefore be restricted in certain syllabuses.
 - (h) If, having received the result of any application for Special Arrangements or Special Consideration, a Head of Centre wishes to appeal against that outcome, the Head of Centre may submit an appeal to the CIE Appeals Committee in accordance with the regulations in CIE's Handbook for Centres.

1.4 CIE and access

- (a) CIE assessment materials will be designed to support equal access to candidates regardless of national, cultural or social background.
- (b) CIE will make Special Arrangements to allow candidates with substantial and long-term disabilities to gain access to the examination and to demonstrate their attainment in the most appropriate examination conditions. Special Arrangements available will include an extra time allowance, the provision of specially adapted papers, and assistance with reading or writing.
- (c) CIE will grant Special Considerations, i.e. make a small adjustment to the marks achieved by

1.5 CIE's reporting to Centres

- (a) To help teachers prepare students for future examinations, CIE will publish a report to Centres from the senior examiners for each externally-examined component after each examination session.
- (b) The reporting of individual candidates' performances will be in accordance with Chapter 5 of this Code.

1.6 CIE's support of Centres

CIE will provide clear documentation, procedures and guidance to support Centres in meeting their responsibilities relating to the conduct and administration of examinations and internal assessments.

1.7 Integrity of examinations

CIE will protect the integrity of its examinations by detecting and dealing with cases of malpractice by candidates or Centres, or maladministration by Centres, and by requiring the maintenance of the security of question papers and mark schemes until the examination is completed. Centres will be liable to rigorous audits both during the examination period and at other times.

1.8 Dealing with complaints and enquiries

- (a) CIE will regard the channel of communication as the Head of Centre or the designated Examinations Officer there. CIE will not normally deal directly with candidates or their parents.
- (b) CIE will provide a range of Enquiries about Results services for Centres that would like a candidate's result to be reconsidered. Such Enquiries must be submitted by the Head of the Centre by the date stated in CIE's Handbook for Centres, and will be the subject of a fee unless the Enquiry leads to a change in the candidate's grade.
- (c) The outcome of Enquiries about Results will be open to an appeal process. Appeals have to be submitted within the time stated in CIE's Handbook for Centres, and will be the subject of a further fee unless the appeal is upheld or leads to a change in a candidate's grade.
- (d) CIE will consider concerns about candidates' results only when they are submitted as Enquiries about Results.
- (e) The submission of certain types of Enquiry about Results will give Centres the right of access to the marked work that is the subject of the Enquiry.
- (f) Private candidates will have the same rights of Enquiry, appeal and access to their scripts as other candidates, but will be required to communicate with CIE via the Centre at which they took the examination in question.
- (g) CIE will provide opportunities for Centres to comment on question papers by means of a pro-forma available to all Centres. CIE welcomes such comments, which can inform the marking and grading decisions for the current examination session and the setting of questions for future sessions.
- (h) Centres' concerns or suggestions about any other aspect of CIE's products or level of service will be investigated and will receive a response. They should be submitted to CIE's Customer Support Manager.

1.9 Confidentiality

- (a) CIE will maintain the confidentiality of personal information collected from Centres about candidates.
- (b) However, CIE will pass candidates' results to third parties such as universities to facilitate prompt verification of their results for admissions purposes.

Chapter 2: **Syllabuses**

2.1 Rationale for syllabuses

- (a) Each syllabus will reflect a view of the knowledge, understanding and skills that it is appropriate to develop in students at the level being assessed.
- (b) Each syllabus will demonstrate how it is consistent with the current or desired curricular framework for the students for whom it is intended.
- (c) Syllabuses will not in themselves be courses of study but will be designed to help Centres devise courses that stimulate candidates' interest in the area of study and their enjoyment of it, and to facilitate and guide learning.
- (d) Each syllabus will satisfy a need that is not satisfied by another CIE syllabus.

2.2 Development of syllabuses

- (a) The preparation of a new syllabus will be preceded by a period of consultation with the relevant local assessment and curricular authorities and/or Centres expected to enter candidates for the syllabus.
- (b) Those responsible for the drafting and development of new syllabuses will be experienced both in the subject and in assessment.
- (c) Syllabuses will be available to Centres at least 25 months before the first examination to which they refer (or at least 13 months in the case of qualifications that typically have a teaching cycle of less than 2 years).

2.3 Contents of syllabus documents

- (a) Each syllabus will include a rationale that sets out its aims and assessment objectives, and an explanation of how the content and assessment will provide opportunities for these aims and assessment objectives to be fulfilled.
- (b) The learning content of each syllabus will be clearly specified, accurate and up-to-date.
- (c) Syllabuses will be accompanied by guidance material that clearly exemplifies the coverage and depth of treatment required in both the teaching of the learning content and its assessment. The existence of such additional guidance will not obviate the requirement that the syllabus itself should be stated in sufficient detail to give teachers a clear idea of the topics to be covered.
- (d) Each syllabus will state any special requirements (e.g. laboratory space or computer hardware or software)
- (e) Each syllabus will give an indication of the number of hours of teaching contact time for which the syllabus is designed.
- (f) Each syllabus will contain a statement of recommended prior knowledge or level of attainment.
- (g) Each syllabus will contain a statement of how it may facilitate progression to further study.
- (h) Each syllabus will specify any exclusions, i.e. combinations with another syllabus that are prohibited because of significant overlap of content or for some other reason so that a candidate may not offer both syllabuses in the same examination.
- (i) Each syllabus will include an indication of any Group Awards to which the syllabus may contribute, e.g. AICE or ICE.
- (j) Syllabuses will state in which sessions of the year they are available, which year they apply to and, if appropriate, the countries or regions to whose candidates they are available.

2.4 Revision and withdrawal of syllabuses

- (a) Each syllabus will be reviewed and revision of the syllabus considered at least once every six years.
- (b) Syllabus revision will be preceded by a period of consultation, and revised versions of syllabuses will be available to Centres at least 25 months before the first examination on the revised syllabus (or at least 13 months in the case of qualifications that typically have a teaching cycle of less than 2 years).
- (c) When a syllabus is withdrawn, Centres will be given enough notice to enable them to choose and implement an alternative. For qualifications that typically have a teaching cycle of 2 years, this will normally be a notice period of at least 30 months (ending with the date of the last examination).

2.5 Schemes of assessment

- (a) Each scheme of assessment will be fit for its purpose, which is to evaluate learning reliably and validly.
- (b) Where authenticity is an important aspect of validity, the scheme of assessment should encourage it. This may involve evidence drawn from the process of learning as well as the final task outcome.
- (c) Each scheme of assessment will be capable of measuring candidates' attainment across the target ability range, will be designed to reward positive achievement, and will provide candidates with the opportunity to show what they know, understand and can do.
- (d) Each scheme of assessment will set out:
 - (i) descriptions of all assessment components such as examination papers, practical tests, internal assessment and oral tests, and the weightings allocated to each;

- (ii) the knowledge, understanding and skills that are being assessed;
- (iii) the assessment methods and techniques to be used for each component;
- (iv) the time allocated to each timed component;
- (v) the requirements for internally-assessed work and the method of moderation to be applied;
- (vi) the ability range for which the component is intended;
- (vii) the grades available to candidates taking the syllabus, and any option within it;
- (viii) details of the availability of other items that are supplementary to the syllabus, such as notes for guidance or lists of resources.
- (e) The relationships between the assessment components and assessment objectives will be set out.
- (f) Schemes of assessment will not make unreasonable demands on candidates, teachers or resources.
- (g) Each component and type of question/task used will make a contribution to the achievement of the assessment objectives and will be appropriate for assessing the objective(s) it is designed for – e.g. recall of factual knowledge will be assessed only under test conditions.
- (h) The scheme of assessment will make clear the arrangements, if any, for a candidate to carry forward their result in an individual component from one session to another.
- (i) Schemes of assessment for Advanced Level will make clear what arrangements, if any, there are for carrying forward a result in an Advanced Subsidiary Level qualification to a subsequent Advanced Level.
- (j) Candidate performance will be assessed against the same standard regardless of the point in the course at which assessment takes place.

2.6 Structure of schemes of assessment

- (a) In order to reduce the impact of any irrelevant temporary factors on a candidate's recorded performance, it is desirable for syllabuses and options to include more than one component.¹
- (b) Schemes of assessment will include at least one component that is externally set or moderated and externally marked or moderated.
- (c) Components that are alternatives to one another will make comparable demands on candidates.
- (d) Schemes of assessment will not require a candidate to take more than four components, except when the need for a wider range of evidence outweighs due concern about examination pressure on students.
- (e) In the interests of practicability and pressure on candidates, no component that contributes to the total maximum mark for a syllabus/option should carry a weighting of less than 10% of that maximum mark.
- (f) Centre-assessed components in a syllabus will not contribute more than 50% of the total maximum mark for a GCE or IGCSE syllabus/option.
- (g) The acceptable combinations of components will be clearly specified. Each combination will satisfy the assessment objectives of the syllabus.
- (h) A syllabus will not have so many acceptable combinations of components that there is a threat to the reliability of the assessment.
- (i) Schemes of assessment should avoid 'hurdles', i.e. individual components in which a certain standard must be achieved if the candidate is to be eligible for a grade on the syllabus as a whole. If such a hurdle is considered necessary, it will be clearly explained in the scheme of assessment.

- (j) Tiered schemes of assessment will not require candidates to take a component the outcome of which is likely to be disregarded in computing their syllabus grade.
- (k) In order to avoid over-assessment, options and components will be designed to avoid unnecessary repetition of the testing of the same knowledge, understanding and skills.

2.7 Components

- (a) Where practicable, each component will have a title stating its nature or content.
- (b) The weighting attached to each component and skill will be appropriate for the subject, level and stated assessment objectives.
- (c) A timed written component will not normally be of more than three hours' duration for a Level 3 qualification such as AS Level, A Level or Cambridge Pre-U, or more than two and a half hours' duration for a Level 1/2 qualification such as IGCSE or O Level, unless the nature of the assessment makes this unavoidable.
- (d) The duration of a timed written component will broadly reflect its weight within the examination.

2.8 Regulations for Centre-based syllabuses

- (a) In exceptional circumstances, where Centres can demonstrate the needs of an identifiable population not already catered for by CIE's syllabuses, Centres may apply to CIE to offer a Centre-based syllabus at IGCSE or AS Level. Such syllabuses will comply with CIE's Code of Practice and procedures. There will be limitations on the number of such syllabuses approved.

Chapter 3: **Setting of question papers and mark schemes**

3.1 General

- (a) CIE will ensure that its question papers and mark schemes produce valid tests that have a positive educational impact and are practicable for all concerned.
- (b) Question papers and mark schemes will be developed alongside each other. The first draft of the mark scheme will be produced at the same time as the first draft of the question paper and will be written in sufficient detail to allow a full evaluation of the question paper.

3.2 Question Papers

- (a) Validity: conformity
 - (i) Question papers will be consistent with the syllabus and scheme of assessment for that year in terms of aims, assessment objectives, skills, learning content and any specification grid.
 - (ii) Question papers will be compatible with any published specimen paper or exemplar material.
 - (iii) Each individual question will fall within the syllabus.
 - (iv) The wording of papers will be at a suitable level of linguistic demand.
 - (v) Material used will be within the grasp of candidates given their age, nationality and language, and will not draw upon knowledge that is not required by the syllabus for the subject in question.
- (b) Validity: avoiding irrelevant effects
 - (i) Question papers will be such that the result of the test is unaffected by irrelevant effects (e.g. gender, language, socio-economic group), and anglocentric or other cultural bias will be avoided (unless the perception of such bias is itself what is being assessed).
 - (ii) The wording will be as brief, intelligible and unambiguous as possible.
 - (iii) The moderately well prepared candidate will have enough time for both reading the paper (or listening to the material) and answering the questions.
 - (iv) Material accompanying questions will not be redundant.
 - (v) Questions will not be so predictable that the paper assesses familiarity with the examination or rote learning under the guise of higher skills.
 - (vi) Question papers will avoid repetition of identical questions from one year to another, except that limited re-use of multiple choice questions may occur.
 - (vii) Questions submitted to CIE will be prepared exclusively for the examination, original, not previously used, and not designed to follow a particular textbook.
 - (viii) To safeguard the validity of the examination, as well as its equitability and reputation, questions and papers (and their associated mark schemes) will be kept secure at all stages of drafting, transmission, printing and delivery, whether in hard copy or electronic format, and all staff, Examiners and other contractors will be required to sign secrecy agreements.
 - (ix) To safeguard the validity of the examination, as well as its equitability and reputation, arrangements will be made to avoid conflicts of interest for those involved in the setting of question papers.
- (c) Validity and question choice
 - (i) If there is a choice of questions, alternatives will be of equal inherent difficulty (unless the alternatives are deliberately targeted at different ability ranges).

- (ii) If there is a choice of questions, it will not compromise the aims of syllabus coverage and avoiding overlap.
- (d) Discrimination and coverage
 - (i) Question papers will be able to discriminate among the candidates for whom they are intended.
 - (ii) Each question or task will contribute to the achievement of the assessment objectives. Question papers will not unnecessarily repeat assessment of the same thing, and will avoid overlap between questions and with other papers in the same syllabus in the same year.
 - (iii) The question papers for a syllabus will between them cover the whole syllabus – if not in a single year, then over a small number of years, with each year covering a representative sample.
- (e) Accuracy of content and level
 - (i) Question papers will be free of content errors and typographical errors.
 - (ii) Question papers will conform to house style, which will itself comply with international best practice with regard to such matters as scientific units and the presentation of diagrams and tables.
 - (iii) Any diagrams or illustrations will be clear, accurate and correctly labelled.
 - (iv) Translation of questions or tasks from the language in which they were written will not introduce any error or ambiguity, or change the level of language expected of the candidate.
 - (v) The paper will maintain the intellectual challenge and level of demand of the same question paper in previous years.
- (f) Rubrics and layout
 - (i) The rubrics and the layout of question papers will be clear, consistent in style and accessible to students.
 - (ii) If special equipment or materials are required, it will be clear what they are and whether they are provided by CIE, the Centre or the candidate.
- (g) Practicability factors

The duration of question papers will not be so long as to create problems for Centres or candidates.
- (h) Impact factors
 - (i) The nature of the tests and the material used for them will be conducive to good teaching.
 - (ii) Tests will be capable of good use by teachers after the examination.
 - (iii) Tests will be authentic, i.e. involve real-world tasks relevant outside the classroom, when that best supports the validity of the assessment.
 - (iv) Tests will require candidates to be conversant with the whole syllabus or their chosen options.
- (i) Other
 - (i) The source of materials will be given when it is relevant to the task set, but not if it would be a distraction or compromise the security of the paper.
 - (ii) Bearing in mind the different genders and national, ethnic and religious backgrounds of candidates, there will be nothing in the content of the paper that might be offensive or insensitive to any group.

3.3 Mark schemes

- (a) Conform with question paper
 - (i) Mark schemes will match the questions.
 - (ii) Mark schemes will show the number of marks correctly.
- (b) Conform with syllabus / intention of the assessment
 - (i) Mark schemes will reflect the assessment objectives of the syllabus in the correct proportions.
 - (ii) Mark schemes will maintain intellectual challenge from one examination session to another.
 - (iii) Mark schemes will award marks positively, rather than deducting marks for lack of attainment.
 - (iv) Mark schemes will not disproportionately penalise a candidate for a single error.
 - (v) Mark schemes will use 'levels of response' or analytic approaches where appropriate.
 - (vi) Mark schemes will give credit for correct answers that are beyond the scope of the syllabus but will allow full marks to be achieved by answers that do not go beyond the scope of the syllabus.
 - (vii) Mark schemes will be correct in terms of the subject matter.
- (c) Facilitate reliability of marking
 - (i) Mark schemes will provide enough detail to ensure reliability of marking.
 - (ii) Mark schemes will state the correct answer (where there is one), but will also include an indication of the nature and range of likely responses and will provide a rationale to allow markers to mark the different approaches that candidates might take. Mark schemes will not seek to list every possible response unless there is a closed set of acceptable responses.

- (d) Facilitate discrimination
 - (i) Mark schemes will allocate marks commensurate with the demands of questions/tasks.
 - (ii) Mark schemes will encourage a spread of marks.
- (e) Development and format

The mark scheme will be developed alongside the question paper in sufficient detail to serve its purpose at each stage, and there will be a single definitive version of it at each stage.

3.4 Personnel

- (a) There will be a Setter, a Reviser and a Vetter for each question paper. They will report to the Product Manager, who will be a member of CIE staff.
- (b) A Product Manager may additionally appoint one or more International Revisers for a paper. Their function will be similar to that of other Revisers but they will have current or recent relevant teaching experience outside the UK, and (where appropriate) will be familiar with issues arising when English is the second language of the candidates.
- (c) Setters and others involved in the drafting and revision of question papers will be expert both in the subject and in assessment (or at least in the teaching and learning of the subject at the level of the examination).

3.5 Question Paper Evaluation Committee (QPEC)

A Question Paper Evaluation Committee (QPEC) will evaluate each question paper and draft mark scheme for a syllabus and ensure that the requirements of this Code of Practice and CIE procedures are met. When there is a meeting, the Setters and Revisers responsible for the papers under consideration will attend. Other experts may also attend in order to ensure that the consideration of any question paper includes at least one person other than the Setter, the Reviser and the Product Manager.

3.6 Security

- (a) All question papers, mark schemes and associated material are confidential up to the date of the examination.
- (b) Contingency plans will be in place to allow CIE to react swiftly in the event of question paper security being breached before an examination.
- (c) The same level of security will apply to Centre-based examination papers as to board-based papers. Any breach of security requirements will result in approval to run school-based syllabuses being withdrawn.
- (c) Each question paper compiled from an item bank will have a Setter, a Reviser and a Vetter, and may have an International Reviser. The roles of these Examiners and of the Product Manager will be broadly similar to their roles in other tests, but there will additionally be the role of an Item Writer who submits items for inclusion in the bank. The Setter's first function will therefore be to compile the first draft of a question paper and its associated key or draft mark scheme from items submitted by Item Writers. In doing so they will use a test specification and objective testing criteria provided by CIE.
- (d) The aim will be to have a similar difficulty for different versions of the same test or for the same test in different sessions.
- (e) Items will be pre-tested whenever it is practicable to do so without compromising security and in circumstances in which the pre-test results will be reliable predictors of the likely outcome in a live test.
- (f) Items that appear to be invalid when used in a live test will be disregarded in the computation of a candidate's mark.
- (g) After an item has been used in a live test and performed satisfactorily, it may be returned to the item bank for re-use, and post-test data will be stored. However, the item may not be used again until two clear years have elapsed (e.g. an item used in a 2008 paper may be used in a 2011 paper).

3.7 Tests compiled from item banks

- (a) When a test is compiled from an item bank, CIE will maintain a bank of items suitable for inclusion in the test and will commission new items from Item Writers regularly as required.
- (b) Each item will be classified by content and by skill or assessment objective, and in any other way that may be appropriate (e.g. use of verbal, numeric or diagrammatic material) in order to facilitate the compilation of a balanced paper that satisfies the requirements of the syllabus.
- (h) Not more than one-third of the marks in a live test will be obtainable from re-used items.
- (i) No live multiple-choice test will include more than two items from the same previous paper.
- (j) Each multiple choice test will be compiled in such a way as to ensure comprehensive coverage of the syllabus across the components in a session.
- (k) Each multiple-choice question will have one unambiguously correct answer and three incorrect but plausible distractors.

3.8 Performance-based assessments

- (a) Equipment or materials required for any practical test will be specified in sufficient detail for the test to be carried out properly; the requirements for any such test will not make unreasonable demands on Centres.
- (b) Practical operations will be chosen with proper regard to the health and safety of candidates.
- (c) All practical operations will be thoroughly tested prior to inclusion in a draft practical paper and will be practicable for the conditions under which they will be taken.
- (d) Practical tasks will be appropriate for an international context.
- (e) Practicals, Orals and other special examinations will have clear instructions for supervisors / those administering the test.

3.9 Coursework

- (a) In cases where Coursework tasks are set by the Centre, CIE will specify the assessment criteria and will provide the necessary training.
- (b) In cases where Coursework tasks are set by the Centre, CIE will provide advice on the suitability of tasks that are submitted for consideration in order to ensure that each task enables the candidate to fulfil the assessment objectives.
- (c) When CIE sets Coursework tasks for marking by teachers, it will provide a mark scheme that teachers will be required to use.
- (d) Each Coursework task will fall within the syllabus for the subject concerned.
- (e) So far as possible, Coursework tasks will be authentic and will assess candidates in skills that are not assessed in the other components taken by the same candidate.

3.10 Special Arrangements

- (a) Provided that the Centre makes application by the date stated in CIE's Regulations, CIE will produce modified question papers for candidates who are visually impaired. These will be available in Braille (with visual information simplified or removed and presented as verbal information), large print or large format.
- (b) Provided that the Centre makes application by the date stated in CIE's Regulations, CIE will produce modified question papers for candidates who have a hearing impairment. These will be available in a simplified carrier language, so that complex sentences will be broken down into simpler sentences. The questions themselves will be the same as for other candidates, and technical vocabulary will remain unchanged. Such modified papers will not be available in language or literature examinations.

Chapter 4: **Marking**

4.1 Types of marking and types of Examiner

- (a) Examiners may mark paper scripts completed by candidates or images of those scripts (or parts of scripts) made available to them electronically, or candidates' answers may be marked mechanically or electronically. In each case the method used will be appropriate for the marking task.
- (b) Marking will normally be undertaken by an Expert Examiner, but if the nature of the marking task permits, marking may instead be undertaken by a Subject Examiner or a General Examiner.
 - (i) General Examiners will have adequate language proficiency in the language in which the scripts are written. If marking on-screen, they will have adequate IT skills and facilities for marking on-screen.
 - (ii) Subject Examiners will have expertise in the subject in addition to satisfying the requirements of (i).
 - (iii) Expert Examiners will be experienced in the likely performance of candidates at the level of the examination in addition to satisfying the requirements of (i) and (ii). This will normally involve three years' recent and relevant teaching experience.
- (c) Examiners will receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out their duties.

4.2 Reporting lines

- (a) The Examiners for a component in an examination session will be led by a Principal Examiner, who will take appropriate steps to ensure accuracy and consistency in marking.
- (b) Principal Examiners will be responsible to the Product Manager, who will ensure that the examination as a whole meets the requirements of the syllabus and maintains standards year on year.

4.3 Allocation of marking to Examiners

- (a) CIE will seek to avoid allocating all of a candidate's work in a subject to the same Examiner. Sometimes the need to allocate work to Examiners of sufficient expertise will make this unavoidable; additional levels of quality assurance will then be applied.
- (b) Allocations of scripts and schedules of dates will be such as to give Examiners enough time to do the job properly.
- (c) The work allocated may be complete scripts or parts of scripts.
- (d) The work allocated to each Examiner will be such as to maximise reliability and enable it to be monitored.
- (e) A candidate's work will be allocated for re-marking by a second Examiner when the checks required by Section 4.7 of this Code suggest that the first Examiner may not be marking consistently.
- (f) Examiners will not be allocated work from Centres or candidates with whom they have any connection and will notify CIE at once if any such work is inadvertently apportioned to them.

4.4 The standardisation process

- (a) Examiners will understand the mark scheme, will be familiar with examples of the application of the mark scheme and will be able to apply the principles that they illustrate. They will submit trial marking for evaluation. They will also be trained in the administrative procedures required of them and in the ways in which they are to indicate and justify their marking.
- (b) The standardisation of Examiners will be conducted either by a meeting or electronically. If it is conducted by a meeting, it will be a condition of service for each Examiner that they attend the Standardisation Meeting.

- (c) If standardisation is conducted electronically, there will nevertheless be a meeting of the Principal Examiner and some of the other Examiners for the component or item group in order to finalise the mark scheme and the definitive marks for the scripts to be used in the standardisation process.
- (d) Examiners may not submit marks unless they have completed the standardisation process.
- (e) All Examiners will use the same version of the mark scheme, finalised during the standardisation process.

4.5 Marking of scripts

- (a) Examiners will adhere to the mark scheme and will not be influenced by extraneous factors.
- (b) Marked scripts will give a clear indication of how marks have been awarded, as instructed in the mark scheme.
- (c) Examiners will be able to annotate the scripts that they mark. The purpose of such annotations will be to clarify their application of the mark scheme.
- (d) The meaning of all Examiners' comments and annotations on the scripts will be clear to anybody else who was involved in the standardisation process for the paper.
- (e) Marks will not be deducted for breaches of CIE regulations that cannot have given the candidate an advantage, e.g. writing in red pen.
- (f) In the event of an apparently accidental rubric infringement, the candidate will be awarded the highest possible mark consistent with the rubric. (Systematic violation of rubrics by candidates from identifiable Centres may be treated differently.)
- (g) There will be the facility to exclude a question from all candidates' total marks and reduce the maximum raw mark available if the question has proved inappropriate, whether it is marked conventionally or as a multiple-choice item.

4.6 Checking of accuracy of recording of marks

- (a) The mechanism for recording the Examiners' marks will minimise the risk of transcription or arithmetic error.
- (b) When the Examiner's marks are recorded manually on a mark sheet, it is the responsibility of the Examiner to appoint a Checker to check the Examiner's addition of the marks awarded and their transcription of the total to the mark sheet. A transcription check on the total mark will also be conducted by CIE.

4.7 Monitoring Examiners and sampling their marking

- (a) Checking of Examiners' work will be sufficiently extensive and frequent to pick up errors or deviations from the normal application of the mark scheme.
- (b) The mechanism for detecting such deviation will be robust and, as far as possible, objective.
- (c) The marks of Examiners who are consistently lenient or severe will be adjusted. If the necessary data are available, Examiner scaling will be applied at the level of individual questions in cases where there is a choice of question.
- (d) When a senior Examiner awards a mark that is different from the original Examiner's, it will be the senior Examiner's mark that prevails, subject to any pre-established tolerance within which it is agreed that marks will not be adjusted.
- (e) Before the issue of results and after the grading process (Section 5) has been completed, there will be a targeted re-marking by senior Examiners of the work of candidates who are most at risk of receiving inappropriate results because they are close to grade thresholds.

4.8 Loss, absence or late arrival of evidence

- (a) There will be a clear and fair mechanism for estimating the mark that a candidate would have obtained on a paper when the script is irretrievably lost before marking or the candidate is absent with good reason from that component of the examination. This mechanism may make use of the candidates' performance on other components of the same examination, the grade forecast by the school for the candidate, statistical correlations between components or between subjects for similar candidates or candidates at the same school, or any other relevant evidence available.
- (b) All scripts received or found late will be marked, irrespective of whether the results have been despatched.

4.9 Principal Examiner's Report

- (a) Each Principal Examiner will write a report for publication to Centres about the performance of candidates on the component that they marked. Principal Examiners will comment on every question, unless there were too few responses to a question to make general comment appropriate, in which case they will say so. They will indicate the correct answer, where there is such a thing.
- (b) Principal Examiners will give guidance about what Examiners were seeking in answer to each question, will comment on frequent errors by candidates and on parts of the syllabus that seem to be causing particular problems for candidates. They will include examples and give praise where appropriate.

4.10 Review of marking after issue of results

Review of marking undertaken in response to a school's enquiry or appeal after the issue of results will not be done by the original Examiner, unless there was only one Examiner for the component.

4.11 Computer-marked items

Appropriate quality control systems will be in place to confirm the accuracy of computer-marked items.

4.12 Marking of Coursework by teachers

- (a) The administration and marking of Coursework will not place such a heavy burden on teachers or the Awarding Body that the quality of assessment is impaired.
- (b) Teachers accredited by CIE to mark Coursework will have the skills, training, time and willingness to do so.
- (c) There will be contingency arrangements for circumstances when there is no teacher who meets the requirements of (b) above, including circumstances where a teacher's marking is believed to be unreliable.
- (d) The criteria for marking the Coursework tasks will be sufficiently specific to minimise inconsistencies in interpretation, even when they are applied to different tasks by teachers of different experience and expertise.
- (e) Teachers will show clearly how they have awarded

marks in relation to the marking criteria specified in the syllabus and associated documents.

- (f) There will be clear and enforceable rules on how far candidates have the opportunity to re-draft and re-submit work after initial feedback from the teacher.

4.13 Moderation of Coursework

Teachers' marks awarded for Coursework will always be subject to moderation by a CIE Moderator. The purpose of moderation is to bring the marking of an internally-assessed component to an agreed standard in all participating Centres.

- (a) Moderation will be by sampling, either postal or (exceptionally) by visit.
- (b) Moderation of marks awarded by different teachers within a school will occur within that school before proceeding to external moderation.
- (c) The sampling will cover the range of marks awarded by the school, and will entail the submission of all the Coursework that contributed to the final mark for that component for the candidates in the sample.
- (d) The size of the sample will be adequate for the moderator to make a confident judgement about the general standard applied.
- (e) The candidates to be included in the sample will be determined by CIE.²
- (f) A Moderator will ask for additional work from a Centre in exceptional circumstances if the sample is inconclusive.
- (g) Moderators will not re-mark the work with a view to changing the mark of individual candidates but will ensure that the work is appropriate for the syllabus and that the agreed standard is applied to all candidates.

- (h) The relative rank order of two candidates marked by the same teacher will not be reversed by the process of moderation.
- (i) Moderation will lead to feedback to teachers on reasons for changes to marks.
- (j) The moderators will have the skills, training and time to review the school-based assessment.
- (k) Moderators will not annotate the work of candidates.
- (l) CIE will seek to avoid allocating more than one component of a candidate's work in a subject to the same Moderator or Examiner. Sometimes the need to allocate work to Moderators or Examiners of sufficient expertise will make this unavoidable; additional levels of quality assurance will then be applied.

4.14 The outcome of moderation

- (a) To achieve parity of standards the Moderator may, where necessary, recommend one or more of the following actions for each Centre:
 - (i) increase or reduce marks uniformly over part or all of the total range.
 - (ii) increase or reduce marks by differing amounts over part or all of the total range.
 - (iii) increase marks uniformly or by differing amounts over part of the total range and reduce marks uniformly or by differing amounts over another part of the total range.
- (b) CIE will make the final judgement on marks, and will be informed by the moderated and unmoderated marks and, where appropriate, statistical information, which may include individual Centres' results for previous years and for different examination components.
- (c) CIE will not issue a mark for a Coursework component unless the moderation process has been completed.

²To be implemented from the May/June 2010 examination session, except for speaking tests.

4.15 Report on Moderation

Each Centre will receive a report for each Coursework component for which it has entered. The nature of any adjustment to the Centre's marks will be indicated.

4.16 Retaining evidence

CIE will ensure that candidates' original scripts are available for reference until results are issued and for a sufficient period of time thereafter to allow for the possibility of Enquiries about Results. Some scripts may also be retained for other purposes.

Each Centre must retain all its candidates' Coursework work until after the end of the period allowed for submission of appeals against results. CIE's Handbook for Centres will specify the associated documentation to be retained.

Chapter 5: **Grading and the Reporting of Results**

5.1 The format of results

- (a) The results of CIE's examinations will be reported in the form of a grade for each syllabus examined. The grade will be numerical or alphabetical or both.
- (b) Additional information, such as uniform marks or grades for individual components of an examination, may be supplied to meet the needs of users.
- (c) A Grade U ('ungraded') will not represent a pass in a syllabus. Any syllabus in which the candidate obtains a Grade U will not appear on the candidate's certificate.
- (d) The grades available for particular qualifications will be stated in CIE's *Handbook for Centres*.
- (e) Any changes to the way in which results are presented will be explained to all stakeholders.

5.2 The grading process

- (a) The mechanism for translating marks awarded by markers into reported results will be transparent.
- (b) CIE's grading processes will use a combination of professional judgement and statistical evidence. The statistical evidence used will relate to more than one previous examination session.
- (c) CIE's grading processes will entail the setting, after the marking for each examination session, of minimum marks (thresholds) for each grade for the syllabus (or for each option, where syllabus options exist).
- (d) CIE's grading processes will ensure that the standard of a qualification is maintained from one year to another, so that CIE's results will be standards-referenced. Due consideration will be paid to the need for alignment with any equivalent qualification taken in the UK.
- (e) The Product Manager will be responsible for the initial grading of a syllabus, but at least one other person will be involved. Where appropriate,

representatives of Ministries or other partner assessment organisations will be involved in the grading process.

- (f) The outcome of the grading process for each syllabus will be endorsed by CIE's Chief Executive, if necessary after the production of further evidence to support it.

5.3 Maintaining standards

- (a) If the assessment tasks for a component are unchanged or are believed to be of equal inherent demand, the grade thresholds will remain unchanged from one year to another. Otherwise grade thresholds will be raised or lowered from one session to another.
- (b) CIE will seek the views of teachers about the difficulty of question papers and consider them when making grading decisions.
- (c) If there is reason to think that the standard established in the base year for a syllabus was in some way unfit for purpose, there may be changes to examination outcomes beyond those justified by the need to maintain the standard.
- (d) CIE will increase the proportion of successful candidates when the knowledge, understanding and skills being assessed have improved over time, but no such improvements in results will arise from mere improved familiarity with the nature of the test.³
- (e) Wherever possible, CIE will use an independent measure of the ability of the cohort (e.g. their results in previous examinations or in control/reference tests) to confirm any belief that they are better than some other cohort and should therefore do better in an examination.
- (f) Consideration will be given to changes in the aggregates of forecasts from candidates' Centres as an indication of whether teachers perceive the candidates to be of the same ability as those in previous years.

(g) CIE will maintain an archive of candidates' marked scripts on each syllabus to illustrate the standard required at the key thresholds and to act as a comparator when thresholds for the current session are set.

5.4 Considerations of equity and validity

- (a) Where CIE issues grade descriptors, they will aim to recognise positive achievement and avoid ambiguity about which level a candidate has reached.
- (b) The outcome of grading will be such that candidates' results are consistent with the grade descriptors.
- (c) The aim in the determination of grade thresholds will be that alternative options within papers, alternative papers within syllabuses, alternative syllabuses in the same subject, and alternative subjects within the same qualification will be equally demanding of candidates.

5.5 Using professional judgement

- (a) The Principal Examiners supplying their professional judgement for the grading process will have sufficient experience, expertise, training, and familiarity with current and archive scripts and marking schemes for their judgement to be informed.
- (b) Each Principal Examiner will make a report to the Product Manager for their paper stating and explaining the minimum mark that they recommend should be taken for each of those thresholds designated as 'key' thresholds. They will do so at the end of the marking period and before the grading process itself.

(c) Enough of the thresholds will be 'key' thresholds to ensure that consideration has been given to thresholds at widely different levels of ability (and/or those that are most critical for progression to the next stage of education), even if the remaining thresholds are then extrapolated or interpolated.

5.6 Scheduling and logistics

- (a) The grading process will occur when the return of marks by markers is complete, quality checks on the marking have been completed and there is no likelihood of changes to distributions of marks (except for those arising from the post-grading checks specified in 5.8 below).
- (b) The amount of time allowed for grading will be sufficient to facilitate the use of available evidence and to ensure the quality of the judgements made.
- (c) Those responsible for decisions about grade thresholds will sign a record of the outcome.

5.7 Conversion of marks to grades

- (a) A candidate's syllabus grade will be calculated directly from the total of their marks on the components that they took (weighted in accordance with the syllabus), not from the component grades calculated for them.
- (b) When the marks for different papers or components are aggregated in the calculation of an overall syllabus result, CIE will use weightings to ensure that the weights stated in the syllabus are observed.
- (c) Candidates' marks will also be adjusted before they are used in grading if it is necessary in order to align different Examiners for the same component (including cases where teachers mark school-assessed components) or because the candidate has been granted Special Consideration.

- (d) The number of marks necessary to achieve a certain grade in a subject will be the sum of the weighted marks necessary to receive that grade in the individual components that comprise it, except that at the higher grades a mark lower than the aggregate of the weighted marks may be taken within limits determined by the statistical evidence and the professional judgement.
- (e) The determination of grade thresholds will be such that the value of an additional mark achieved by a candidate will as far as possible remain constant across the mark range.
- (f) When results in individual subjects contribute to a Group Award which is itself classified, CIE will ensure that stakeholders are informed of the method of aggregating the results in the subjects.

5.8 Final checks before the issue of results

- (a) Checks on the likely accuracy of prospective results will be conducted by reference to benchmark Centres, a control group of Centres or other cohorts of candidates.
- (b) Centres where the prospective results in a subject differ greatly from the previous year or from the forecast grades will be identified, and a sample of their results will be checked before issue.
- (c) Particular attention will be paid before the issue of results to candidates around critical borderlines that are commonly used for the determination of progression to the next stage of education or where failure negates or reduces candidates' success in other examinations (e.g. for a Group Award).
- (d) Checks will be run on patterns of answers in order to detect possible malpractice.

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