

# Cambridge International AS & A Level

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**DIGITAL MEDIA & DESIGN****9481/03**

Paper 3 Personal Investigation

**October/November 2025****MARK SCHEME**Maximum Mark: 100

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**Published**

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the October/November 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

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This document consists of **7** printed pages.

**PUBLISHED****Generic Marking Principles**

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:**

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:**

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:**

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:**

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:**

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:**

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

**Annotations guidance for centres**

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

**Annotations**

| Annotation                                                                        | Meaning                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
|  | Indicates that a page has been seen by the examiner |

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

**PUBLISHED**

| <b>AO1: Research and record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.</b>                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>AO2: Explore and select appropriate media, materials and technology, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.</b>                                                                                                                                      | <b>AO3: Develop ideas or concepts through investigations informed by feedback, testing and constraints, demonstrating critical understanding.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>AO4: Produce a personal digital response that realises intentions and, where possible makes connections between digital and design elements.</b>                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Competent</b> skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions.</p> <p><b>Good</b> ability to reflect critically on work and progress.</p> <p><b>Competent</b> use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.</p>           | <p><b>Competent</b> exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology.</p> <p><b>Good</b> ability to review and refine ideas as work develops.</p> <p><b>Good</b> communication of ideas through visual and other forms.</p>                | <p><b>Competent</b> development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations.</p> <p><b>Good</b> analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through careful referencing of feedback, testing and constraints.</p> <p><b>Good</b> integration of practical and written elements.</p>            | <p><b>Competent</b> realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response.</p> <p><b>Good</b> connections made between digital and design elements.</p> <p>Work demonstrates a <b>competent</b> level of engagement and independence.</p>        |
| 11–15 marks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 11–15 marks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 11–15 marks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 11–15 marks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>Satisfactory</b> skill in researching and recording observations and insights from a variety of sources, relevant to intentions.</p> <p><b>Adequate</b> ability to reflect critically on work and progress.</p> <p><b>Satisfactory</b> use of specialist language and appropriate technical vocabulary.</p> | <p><b>Adequate</b> exploration and selection of relevant media, materials and technology.</p> <p><b>Satisfactory</b> ability to review and refine ideas as work develops.</p> <p><b>Satisfactory</b> communication of ideas through visual and other forms.</p> | <p><b>Satisfactory</b> development of ideas or concepts, with reference to the brief provided, through focused investigations.</p> <p><b>Adequate</b> analytical and critical understanding demonstrated through careful referencing of feedback, testing and constraints.</p> <p><b>Adequate</b> integration of practical and written elements.</p> | <p><b>Satisfactory</b> realisation of intentions demonstrated through a personal digital response.</p> <p><b>Adequate</b> connections made between digital and design elements.</p> <p>Work demonstrates an <b>adequate</b> level of engagement and independence.</p> |
| 6–10 marks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 6–10 marks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 6–10 marks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 6–10 marks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

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