

Cambridge International Project Qualification

CAMBRIDGE IPQ**9980/01**

Paper 1 Project

May/June 2026**MARK SCHEME**Maximum Mark: 80

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

This document consists of **10** printed pages.

General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: - the specific content defined in the mark scheme - the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions - the standard of response required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award whole marks (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks positively . This means that: - marks are not deducted for errors or omissions - marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for other valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate - the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged only when the mark scheme indicates that these features are specifically assessed in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must consistently apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and must not award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

**Social Sciences-Specific Marking Principles
(for point-based marking)****1 Components using point-based marking:**

- Point marking is often used to reward knowledge, understanding and application of skills. We give credit where the candidate's answer shows relevant knowledge, understanding and application of skills in answering the question. We do not give credit where the answer shows confusion.

From this it follows that we:

- a** DO credit answers which are worded differently from the mark scheme if they clearly convey the same meaning (unless the mark scheme requires a specific term)
- b** DO credit alternative answers/examples which are not written in the mark scheme if they are correct
- c** DO credit answers where candidates give more than one correct answer in one prompt/numbered/scaffolded space where extended writing is required rather than list-type answers. For example, questions that require n reasons (e.g. State two reasons ...).
- d** DO NOT credit answers simply for using a 'key term' unless that is all that is required. (Check for evidence it is understood and not used wrongly.)
- e** DO NOT credit answers which are obviously self-contradicting or trying to cover all possibilities
- f** DO NOT give further credit for what is effectively repetition of a correct point already credited unless the language itself is being tested. This applies equally to 'mirror statements' (i.e. polluted/not polluted).
- g** DO NOT require spellings to be correct, unless this is part of the test. However spellings of syllabus terms must allow for clear and unambiguous separation from other syllabus terms with which they may be confused (e.g. corrasion/corrosion)

2 Presentation of mark scheme:

- Slashes (/) or the word 'or' separate alternative ways of making the same point.
- Semi colons (;) bullet points (•) or figures in brackets (1) separate different points.
- Content in the answer column in brackets is for examiner information/context to clarify the marking but is not required to earn the mark (except Accounting syllabuses where they indicate negative numbers).

3 Calculation questions:

- The mark scheme will show the steps in the most likely correct method(s), the mark for each step, the correct answer(s) and the mark for each answer
- If working/explanation is considered essential for full credit, this will be indicated in the question paper and in the mark scheme. In all other instances, the correct answer to a calculation should be given full credit, even if no supporting working is shown.
- Where the candidate uses a valid method which is not covered by the mark scheme, award equivalent marks for reaching equivalent stages.
- Where an answer makes use of a candidate's own incorrect figure from previous working, the 'own figure rule' applies: full marks will be given if a correct and complete method is used. Further guidance will be included in the mark scheme where necessary and any exceptions to this general principle will be noted.

4 Annotation:

- For point marking, ticks can be used to indicate correct answers and crosses can be used to indicate wrong answers. There is no direct relationship between ticks and marks. Ticks have no defined meaning for levels of response marking.
- For levels of response marking, the level awarded should be annotated on the script.
- Other annotations will be used by examiners as agreed during standardisation, and the meaning will be understood by all examiners who marked that paper.

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
AN	Analysis of sources or data
EVAL	Evaluation of sources or data
CON	Conclusion
DES	Design and planning
J	Justification of the research methods
L1 L2 L3 L4	Levels of assessment for the log and the bibliography
M	Research method or methods
P	Project
Supp	Comments supporting the sources and research process in the log
REF	Reflection
AQ	Overall answer to the research question
Q	Justification for the research question
+	A strength of the research method or the project
~	A limitation of the research method or the project

Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria overview: Cambridge International Project Qualification		
AO1 Research, Analysis and Evaluation		
Research	- Develop and justify an appropriate research question - Design and manage own project, using appropriate research methods - Maintain a research log to support the process of research	24 marks
Analysis	Analyse findings and/or sources used in order to answer the research question	20 marks
Evaluation	Evaluate the research methods and sources used	12 marks
AO1 Total		56 marks
AO2 Reflection		
Reflection	- Reflect on the strengths and limitations of the project - Discuss how and why personal views on the topic have changed or developed as a result of the research conducted	12 marks
AO2 Total		12 marks
AO3 Communication		
Communication	- Communicate clearly throughout the report, using appropriate subject-specific terminology, referencing and citation techniques - Structure the report and communicate findings clearly and in an appropriate format	12 marks
AO3 Total		12 marks
TOTAL		80 marks

AO1: Research, Analysis and Evaluation**Table A: AO1 Research (24 marks)**

Level	Descriptors	Marks
4	- The question chosen has been thoughtfully justified. - The question has clearly guided the research conducted and content of the report. - The research methods and/or sources used are highly appropriate for the project and clearly justified. - The project is very well-designed and there is evidence of careful planning throughout. - The research log has been consistently maintained and there is evidence that it has been used to support the research process throughout.	19-24
3	- The question chosen has been reasonably justified. - The question has largely guided the research conducted and content of the report. - The research methods and/or sources used are appropriate for the research project and there is a reasonable justification for their selection. - The project is well-designed and there is evidence of planning at times. - The research log has been maintained throughout the project and there is evidence that it has been used to support the research process at times.	13-18
2	- There is an attempt to justify the question chosen. - The research conducted and content of the report are broadly related to the question. - The research methods and/or sources used are either appropriate for the project or there is a reasonable attempt to justify their selection. - The project is reasonably well-designed but there is little evidence of planning. - The research log has been used to record information relating to some aspects of the research process.	7-12
1	- A question has been chosen but there is no serious attempt to justify it. - Much of the research conducted or content of the report is only vaguely related to the question. - At least one research method and/or a range of sources has been used but these are not well suited to the project and there is little attempt to justify their selection. - The research log is superficial and gives little evidence of the research process.	1-6
0	A mark of zero should be awarded for no creditable content.	0

Table B: AO1 Analysis (20 marks)

Level	Descriptors	Marks
4	- Excellent analysis of findings and/or sources used. - The analysis is consistently focused on the research question. - Conclusions drawn are clearly supported by the evidence presented. - There is a clear answer in response to the research question which is reflective of the evidence presented in the report.	16-20
3	- Good analysis of findings and/or sources used. - The analysis is relevant to the research question. - Conclusions drawn are supported by the evidence presented. - There is an answer in response to the research question relevant to the evidence presented in the report.	11-15
2	- Some analysis of findings and/or sources used. - The analysis is partially relevant to the research question. - Conclusions drawn are only partially supported by the evidence presented. - There is an answer in response to the research question but this is only partially relevant to the evidence presented in the report.	6-10
1	- Some limited analysis of findings and/or sources used. - The analysis lacks relevance to the research question. - Conclusions drawn are limited or not supported by the evidence presented. - There is an answer in response to the research question but this is limited or not relevant to the evidence presented in the report.	1-5
0	A mark of zero should be awarded for no creditable content.	0

Table C: AO1 Evaluation (12 marks)

Level	Descriptors	Marks
4	- Detailed and insightful discussion of the strengths and limitations of the research method(s) used. - Explicit and effective evaluation of a range of sources.	10-12
3	- Detailed discussion of the strengths and limitations of the research method(s) used. - Explicit and effective evaluation of at least one source.	7-9
2	- Some discussion of the strengths and/or limitations of the research method(s) used. - Some explicit evaluation of a range of sources.	4-6
1	- Some limited discussion of a strength or limitation of the research method(s) used. - Some explicit evaluation of at least one source.	1-3
0	A mark of zero should be awarded for no creditable content.	0

Table D: AO2 Reflection (15 marks)

Level	Descriptors	Marks
4	- Detailed and insightful reflection on the strengths and limitations of the project. - A thoughtful discussion of how and why personal views on the topic have changed or developed, which is clearly and directly related to the research conducted.	10-12
3	- Detailed reflection on the strengths and limitations of the project. - A clear discussion of how and why personal views on the topic have changed or developed, with direct reference to the research conducted.	7-9
2	- Some reflection on the strengths and/or limitations of the project. - Some discussion of how personal views on the topic have changed or developed, with some reference to the research conducted.	4-6
1	- Some limited reflection on a strength or limitation of the project. - Some discussion of personal views on the topic.	1-3
0	A mark of zero should be awarded for no creditable content.	0

Table E: AO3 Communication (12 marks)

Level	Descriptors	Marks
4	- The report is well-structured and very clear to follow. - A range of subject-specific terminology is used consistently and accurately throughout the report. - Research findings are communicated clearly and in a highly appropriate format. - Citation and referencing of sources are complete, consistent and in an appropriate format.	10–12
3	- The report is well-structured and clear to follow. - A range of mostly accurate subject-specific terminology is used throughout the report. - Research findings are communicated clearly and in an appropriate format. - Citation and referencing of sources are mostly complete and consistent and in an appropriate format.	7–9
2	- The report is mostly well-structured and fairly clear to follow. - Some accurate subject-specific terminology is used. - Research findings are communicated with some clarity. - Citation and referencing of sources are mostly complete and consistent.	4–6
1	- The report is not well-structured, making it difficult to follow. - Some subject-specific terminology is used. - Research findings are included. - Citation and referencing of sources is attempted but incomplete.	1–3
0	A mark of zero should be awarded for no creditable content.	0