

IGCSE Mathematics (0580), IGCSE Mathematics (with coursework) (0581)

Frequently Asked Questions

Can students use tracing paper in the examination to help them to answer questions on transformations?

Yes students are able to use tracing paper in all the IGCSE Mathematics papers. You will notice that it is an optional item on the front of the examination paper.

Will students be given a formula sheet to help them in the exam or do they need to memorise this information? On the examination paper it says that they may use Mathematical Tables - are these provided with the exam?

There is no formulae sheet provided with Mathematics examinations. The mathematical tables stated are optional, available from our publications department but not supplied automatically by CIE. Most candidates use calculators, in permissible components, but mathematical tables are allowed instead if a candidate has no access to a calculator. Students are not expected to memorise complicated formulae but may need to remember simple equations such as the area of a circle or volume of a cube.

Can students write in pencil on the mathematics examination paper?

In section 3.2.6 Stationery, Materials and Other Equipment in the Handbook to Centres it states:

“Candidates must write their answers legibly in black or blue ink. Candidates should be warned that the use of pale blue ink contributes to illegibility. Red ink must not be used. Soft pencil (type B or HB is recommended) must be used for multiple choice tests. Pencils or pens in other colours may be used for diagrams and maps only.”

Mathematical constructions and graphs would fall into the same category as the last sentence and so it is permissible to use a pencil for questions assessing these skills. Other than that, blue or black ink should be used as (a) it can't be altered after the examination and (b) the examiner can see the way the student was developing the question even though the final answer may be incorrect.

Can students have extra paper for rough work?

For Paper 1 students should write all their answers and working on the question paper. For Paper 2 students should be provided by their centre with sufficient lined answer paper and graph paper (where specified). Students should not use squared paper or graph paper unless specified in the question.

What are the main differences between IGCSE and O Level Mathematics?

IGCSE Maths is available with or without Coursework, whereas O Level Maths is only available without Coursework.

IGCSE has Core and Extended options (grades C-G and A* to E available respectively), O level has grades A to E available.

O level Maths has a non-calculator paper whereas IGCSE Maths requires a calculator for both papers.

Examining time: 4.5 hours for O level Maths compared with 3 hours for Core IGCSE Maths and 4 hours for Extended IGCSE Maths.

There is no question choice for IGCSE Maths; for O level Maths there is limited question choice in Paper 2.

O level Maths question paper weighting is 50% per paper; IGCSE Maths is 35% for the first paper, 65% for the second.

I want to use last year's papers with my students. What were the pass marks for each grade?

The pass marks for grades A, C, E and F are published in the Principal Examiner's report for each paper. This report can be obtained from the Teacher Support website or from our publications department. The mark scheme for each component is also available in this way.