



How to interpret the marks on candidates' scripts

Scripts marked on paper

This factsheet will help you understand how we mark scripts and how to interpret the marks and annotations you will see on your candidates' scripts. This factsheet applies to scripts that are marked on paper.

Receiving a copy of the candidate's script

After results release, you can ask us to check your candidates' results by submitting enquiries about results through CIE Direct. We offer a number of services depending on the check you would like us to carry out. For some services, we upload a copy of the candidate's script to CIE Direct with the outcome of your enquiry, for example:

- a clerical re-check with copy of script (Service 1S)
- a review of marking with copy of script (Service 2S).

Components where no candidate script is produced

For some components where no candidate script is produced, e.g. for components with practical work or recordings, a working mark sheet may be provided which will show Examiner marks and, where appropriate, Examiner annotations.

What is a script and how is it marked?

A script is the name we give to a candidate's answers submitted in an exam. When we mark your candidates' scripts, we allocate each script to a particular marker ('Examiner'). In the majority of cases a candidate has to take more than one paper in a subject. The various papers are allocated to different examiners who are expert in their field. Each Examiner must mark according to the mark scheme for that paper.

What will I see on a candidate's script?

During the marking period, some of the marking of each Examiner is checked by a senior Examiner. This monitoring process can lead to some marks being changed, so you may see more than one mark on a candidate's script.

Annotations that may appear on a candidate's script

- Where appropriate, we encourage Examiners to write comments on scripts, indicating the way in which candidates have met (or not met) the requirements of the mark scheme. These comments are intended for other Examiners rather than for schools or candidates. The comments you see may be those of the original Examiner, the reviewing Examiner, or both.
- If an Examiner is unsure about how to apply the mark scheme to a particular script, they can refer the script to a more senior Examiner. A note to this effect may appear on a candidate's script.
- For each script, we check that all parts of the script were marked and that the marks were totalled correctly. You may see evidence of these checks on a candidate's script. If these checks have led to a change in the candidate's mark, this will also appear on a candidate's script.
- Further evidence of marking, checking or other processes may appear on a candidate's script.
- For example, you may see an Examiner's initials or number. If a candidate has answered too many questions, known as a rubric infringement, the Examiner may indicate this on a candidate's script.

There are different types of mark, some of which do not appear on the candidate's script

The mark the Examiner gives to a candidate's script is called the 'raw' mark. This is the mark that appears on the candidate's script. It does not always match their final mark for any of the following reasons:

- **Examiner scaling:** We increase or decrease the marks of all candidates marked by a particular Examiner for a paper. This happens if an Examiner's marking has been consistently slightly generous or slightly severe compared with the agreed standard set out by the Principal Examiner. Individual marks may be changed as part of checks on the marking.
- **Special consideration:** Following a successful application for special consideration from a centre, we make a post-exam adjustment to a candidate's mark, to make allowances for any adverse circumstances, for example illness, bereavement or temporary injury.
- **Weighting:** We multiply the marks of all candidates for a paper by a weighting factor so that the paper carries the correct weight compared with other papers in the subject.

We make these adjustments to ensure consistency across the marking process and the different Examiners that we use.

Which marks appear on the candidate's script?

In this example, the candidate's raw mark is 17 but their final mark is 28.5. The following table explains why we made adjustments to the candidate's raw mark.

Candidate's raw mark	17 out of 40	This is the mark that appears on the candidate's script.
Candidate's scaled mark	18 out of 40	We have increased the candidate's mark because the Examiner was consistently slightly harsh compared with the Principal Examiner's standard. We made this adjustment for all candidates marked by this Examiner for this paper. This scaled mark does not appear on the script.
Candidate's adjusted mark	19 out of 40	The centre applied for special consideration because the candidate was unwell at the time of the exam. We approved the application and increased the candidate's mark. This mark does not appear on the script.
Candidate's final (weighted) mark	28.5 out of 60	We adjusted the maximum mark for this paper so that the paper carried the correct weight compared with other papers in the subject. This mark does not appear on the script.

Component marks reports

In countries where we supply component marks reports, the report shows your candidates' raw, adjusted and final marks for each paper. There is a guidance section at the front of the report to help you understand the information provided. The report is uploaded to CIE Direct shortly after results release. Specific dates are communicated to you before results are released.

When does a candidate's mark change following an enquiry about results?

When an enquiry about results is made, we correct any errors in objective marking. Objective marking is when an answer is either correct or incorrect e.g. multiple choice questions.

However, not all questions can be marked objectively. Some exams require subjective marking, where deciding if the answer is correct or incorrect is not straight forward, e.g. essay questions. In these cases, the Examiner makes a decision using their professional judgement as they apply the mark scheme. We take great care to train our Examiners to apply their professional judgement consistently and have a number of checks in place to make sure this happens.

During the enquiry about results process, a senior reviewing Examiner looks at the subjective marking for that script and states whether they agree or disagree with the original Examiner's marks. If the reviewing Examiner disagrees with the original Examiner's marks, we review the level of difference between the marks given.

If the difference in the marking is greater than the agreed 'tolerance' (typically one or two marks), we amend the marks. We amend the original marks because there is a significant difference in professional judgement between our Examiners and we accept the judgement of the senior reviewing Examiner.

If the difference in the marking is equal to or lower than the agreed 'tolerance' then the original marks stand. We allow the original marks to stand because this is a small difference in professional judgement between our Examiners, and not an error in the way the mark scheme has been applied. We apply this principle regardless of whether the reviewing Examiner's mark is higher or lower than the original mark. We use tolerance in this way both at the enquiry about results stage and during the main marking period. This helps to ensure that we want are fair to all candidates, including those who do not request an enquiry about results.

In the following examples, the candidate's mark **is changed** after an enquiry about results. This table explains why.

Original mark	Reviewer's mark	Reason for difference in marks	Comments
23	25	Error in original mark	The candidate's mark changes because the reviewing Examiner found a definite error in the original marking.
22	26	Judgemental difference between two Examiners	The candidate's mark changes because: the reviewing Examiner's mark differs from the original Examiner's mark by more than the tolerance for the paper.

In the following examples, the candidate's mark **is not changed** after an enquiry about results. This table explains why.

Original mark	Reviewer's mark	Reason for difference in marks	Comments
36	37	Judgemental difference between two examiners	The candidate's mark does not change because the reviewing Examiner's mark differs from the original Examiner's mark by less than the tolerance for the paper. However, the reviewing Examiner's mark will appear on the candidate's script.

If the original Examiner is the Principal Examiner

If the original Examiner is the Principal Examiner, we only adjust the candidate's mark if the reviewing Examiner identifies a definite error in the original marking or if the reviewing Examiner's mark differs from the original by more than the predetermined tolerance for the paper, and only if the Principal Examiner agrees to the change.