CAMBRIDGE IGCSE

Biology 0610

Assessment Overview

Examinations 2026, 2027 and 2028

How the qualification is assessed

The table shows the papers and components described for this syllabus. Some rows are alternatives: use the route explanation above to identify your required combination. A component's raw mark is the total available on that assessment; its weighting is the share of the qualification result, which may differ from its share of raw marks.

Paper or component	Duration	Raw marks	Weighting	Question or task structure
1 / 2: Multiple Choice	45 min	40	30%	Core takes 1; Extended takes 2; 40 compulsory questions
3 / 4: Theory	1 h 15 min	80	50%	Core takes 3; Extended takes 4; compulsory short and structured responses
5: Practical Test	1 h 15 min	40	20%	Hands-on experiments; alternative to Paper 6
6: Alternative to Practical	1 h	40	20%	Written experimental-skills questions; alternative to Paper 5

Read the weighting against your qualification route. A longer paper or a larger raw-mark total does not automatically mean a greater final weighting. Prepare for every component that applies to you, including practical, oral or coursework requirements where specified.

What each component requires

Assessment focuses on scientific knowledge and understanding, information handling and problem-solving, and experimental and investigative skills.

Every candidate takes three papers through either the Core or Extended route.

Core candidates take Paper 1 and Paper 3. Paper 1 is a 45-minute multiple-choice examination containing 40 questions. It carries 40 marks and contributes 30 per cent. Paper 3 is a theory examination lasting one hour and fifteen minutes. It contains short-answer and structured questions, carries 80 marks and contributes 50 per cent.

Extended candidates take Paper 2 and Paper 4. Paper 2 has the same duration, number of questions, marks and weighting as Paper 1, but it assesses both Core and Supplement content. Paper 4 is a one-hour-and-fifteen-minute theory paper carrying 80 marks and contributing 50 per cent.

All candidates also take either Paper 5 or Paper 6.

Paper 5 is a hands-on Practical Test lasting one hour and fifteen minutes. Paper 6 is a written Alternative to Practical examination lasting one hour. Both assess experimental skills, carry 40 marks and contribute 20 per cent of the qualification.

All papers are externally assessed, and calculators may be used throughout the examination.

Core candidates can receive grades from C to G. Extended candidates can receive grades from A star to G.

Preparing the right kind of response

For numerical answers, show a clear method and units. For data questions, distinguish a description of the results from an explanation using scientific ideas. In investigation questions, identify variables, measurement methods and specific improvements. A general statement such as "make it more accurate" needs an explanation of how.

The assessment objectives are visible in the response itself: relevant knowledge, appropriate use of the stimulus or task, a clear method or explanation, and a conclusion where requested. The command word and mark allocation help show the depth required. An answer should respond to the actual question, not reproduce a memorised passage that only partly fits.

Timing and examination arrangements

Begin preparation with accurate, untimed work, then move towards the duration and conditions of your required component. Use mark allocations to guide pacing while allowing time to read instructions and check the response. Any practice pacing advice is study guidance, not a new Cambridge time rule.

Examinations are available in the June and November series, with an additional March series in India. Private candidates are permitted to enter.

An approved examination centre confirms entries, available component options, deadlines and any practical or speaking arrangements. Preparation-course access does not itself constitute an examination entry.

Key pointers: Know your required components, follow question choices precisely and practise the relevant response formats. **Next:** Open **Learning Resources** to see which materials support this preparation.