

CAMBRIDGE IGCSE

Computer Science 0478

Assessment Overview

Examinations 2026, 2027 and 2028

How the qualification is assessed

The table shows the papers and components described for this syllabus. All candidates take the required components described below. 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: Computer Systems	1 h 45 min	75	50%	Compulsory questions on topics 1-6
2: Algorithms, Programming and Logic	1 h 45 min	75	50%	Compulsory questions, including a 15-mark programming scenario

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

All candidates take two externally assessed papers.

Paper 1 is Computer Systems. It lasts one hour and forty-five minutes, carries 75 marks and contributes 50 per cent of the qualification. It contains compulsory short-answer and structured questions based on Topics 1 to 6.

Paper 2 is Algorithms, Programming and Logic. It also lasts one hour and forty-five minutes, carries 75 marks and contributes the remaining 50 per cent. It contains compulsory short-answer and structured questions, together with a 15-mark scenario-based programming problem.

Most programming solutions in Paper 2 must be written in the pseudocode defined by Cambridge. For the 15-mark scenario question, you may use Cambridge pseudocode, Python, Visual Basic or Java. Other programming languages are not accepted for that question.

Although both examinations are written, regular hands-on programming practice is essential for learning how to write, run, test and debug solutions.

Calculators are not permitted in either paper. Final grades range from A star to G.

Preparing the right kind of response

Use the scenario to decide which facts or techniques are relevant. Explain why a design choice meets a requirement. Where a practical component applies, develop fluency in the permitted environment, save work correctly and produce the requested evidence. For written algorithms, use the conventions required by the syllabus.

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. Computer Science 0478 uses written examinations. It must not be confused with the separate digital Computer Science 0265 syllabus.

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.