

GCSE

Computer Science

J277/01: Computer systems

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Mark Scheme for June 2026

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

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MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARATION FOR MARKING RM ASSESSOR

1. Make sure that you have accessed and completed the relevant training packages for on-screen marking: *RM Assessor Assessor Online Training*; *OCR Essential Guide to Marking*.
2. Make sure that you have read and understood the mark scheme and the question paper for this unit. These are posted on the RM Cambridge Assessment Support Portal <http://www.rm.com/support/ca>
3. Log-in to RM Assessor and mark the **required number** of practice responses (“scripts”) and the **number of required** standardisation responses.

YOU MUST MARK 10 PRACTICE AND 10 STANDARDISATION RESPONSES BEFORE YOU CAN BE APPROVED TO MARK LIVE SCRIPTS.

MARKING

1. Mark strictly to the mark scheme.
2. Marks awarded must relate directly to the marking criteria.
3. The schedule of dates is very important. It is essential that you meet the RM Assessor 50% and 100% (traditional 40% Batch 1 and 100% Batch 2) deadlines. If you experience problems, you must contact your Team Leader (Supervisor) without delay.
4. If you are in any doubt about applying the mark scheme, consult your Team Leader by telephone or the RM Assessor messaging system, or by email.
5. **Crossed Out Responses**
Where a candidate has crossed out a response and provided a clear alternative then the crossed out response is not marked. Where no alternative response has been provided, examiners may give candidates the benefit of the doubt and mark the crossed out response where legible.

Rubric Error Responses – Optional Questions

Where candidates have a choice of question across a whole paper or a whole section and have provided more answers than required, then all responses are marked and the highest mark allowable within the rubric is given. Enter a mark for each question answered into RM assessor, which will select the

highest mark from those awarded.
necessary in the time allowed.)

(The underlying assumption is that the candidate has penalised themselves by attempting more questions than

Multiple Choice Question Responses

When a multiple choice question has only a single, correct response and a candidate provides two responses (even if one of these responses is correct), then no mark should be awarded (as it is not possible to determine which was the first response selected by the candidate).

When a question requires candidates to select more than one option/multiple options, then local marking arrangements need to ensure consistency of approach.

Contradictory Responses

When a candidate provides contradictory responses, then no mark should be awarded, even if one of the answers is correct.

Short Answer Questions (requiring only a list by way of a response, usually worth only **one mark per response**)

Where candidates are required to provide a set number of short answer responses then only the set number of responses should be marked. The response space should be marked from left to right on each line and then line by line until the required number of responses have been considered. The remaining responses should not then be marked. Examiners will have to apply judgement as to whether a 'second response' on a line is a development of the 'first response', rather than a separate, discrete response. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate is attempting to hedge their bets and therefore getting undue benefit rather than engaging with the question and giving the most relevant/correct responses.)*

Short Answer Questions (requiring a more developed response, worth **two or more marks**)

If the candidates are required to provide a description of, say, three items or factors and four items or factors are provided, then mark on a similar basis – that is downwards (as it is unlikely in this situation that a candidate will provide more than one response in each section of the response space.)

Longer Answer Questions (requiring a developed response)

Where candidates have provided two (or more) responses to a medium or high tariff question which only required a single (developed) response and not crossed out the first response, then only the first response should be marked. Examiners will need to apply professional judgement as to whether the second (or a subsequent) response is a 'new start' or simply a poorly expressed continuation of the first response.

6. Always check the pages (and additional objects if present) at the end of the response in case any answers have been continued there. If the candidate has continued an answer there, then add a tick to confirm that the work has been seen.
7. Award No Response (NR) if:
 - there is nothing written in the answer space

Award Zero '0' if:

- anything is written in the answer space and is not worthy of credit (this includes text and symbols).

Team Leaders must confirm the correct use of the NR button with their markers before live marking commences and should check this when reviewing scripts.

8. The RM Assessor **comments box** is used by your team leader to explain the marking of the practice responses. Please refer to these comments when checking your practice responses. **Do not use the comments box for any other reason.**
If you have any questions or comments for your team leader, use the phone, the RM Assessor messaging system, or e-mail.
9. Assistant Examiners will send a brief report on the performance of candidates to their Team Leader (Supervisor) via email by the end of the marking period. The report should contain notes on particular strengths displayed as well as common errors or weaknesses. Constructive criticism of the question paper/mark scheme is also appreciated.
10. For answers marked by levels of response:
 - a. **To determine the level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
 - b. **To determine the mark within the level**, consider the following

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this level and the one below	At bottom of level
Just enough achievement on balance for this level	Above bottom and either below middle or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and either below top of level or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Consistently meets the criteria for this level	At top of level

11. Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	Omission mark
	Benefit of doubt (must be accompanied with a tick)
	Cross
	Follow through (must be accompanied with a tick)
	Not answered question
	Benefit of doubt not given
	Repeat
	Tick
	Too vague
	Blank pages, pages with no annotation, no attempt to answer the question, page seen on QER
	QER Level 1 mark awarded
	QER Level 2 mark awarded

Annotation	Meaning
L3	QER Level 3 mark awarded

12. Subject Specific Marking Instructions

Mark scheme conventions:

- Each mark point is worth 1 mark unless stated otherwise
- Each mark point can only be awarded once
- A word/phrase that is underlined needs to be exact in the answer to award the mark point
- A word/phrase that is **bold** needs that concept to be in the answer (but can be given in multiple ways) to award the mark point
- 3 dots at the end of one mark point and at the start of the next mark point mean that the second mark point cannot be awarded without the first being awarded, unless the mark scheme states otherwise (for example a reasonable attempt with some inaccuracies)
- 3 dots at the start of a mark point, without 3 dots at the end of the mark point above, means the sentence carries on and there is no dependency
- Any text in brackets is not required to gain the mark point
- Single / means alternative word
- Double // means an alternative statement that is acceptable for the same mark point
- Enlarged font is used for visibility reasons only

Annotating scripts:

- Blank pages at the start of the script need SEEN annotation
- Any questions answered elsewhere (e.g. on the first blank pages, separately on the page) need to be linked within RM Assessor and annotated with ticks/crosses/SEEN as appropriate
- 1 tick for every mark awarded, if a question is given 3 marks there must be 3 ticks (apart from QER question)
- A BOD or FT annotation needs to be accompanied by a tick
- QER question 6 – One annotation from: L1, L2 or L3, according to the level awarded, the page not annotated with the level needs a SEEN annotation. Do not include any ticks, crosses or other annotations on this question – other than SEEN and one from: L1, L2 or L3
- Any answers with no candidate response need a SEEN annotation and NR entered as the mark.
- Any questions where the candidate has not attempted the question e.g. answered 'don't know' need a SEEN annotation and NR entered as the mark.
- All questions must be annotated throughout the marking process.

Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
1	(a)	1 mark for ticking the 1 st box: • 1000 gigabytes is equivalent to 1 petabyte	1	
1	(b)	1 mark for: • 202	1	
1	c	i 1 mark for 40	1	
1	(c)	ii 1 mark for smallest: 0 1 mark for largest: F	2	Must be 1-digit only
1	(d)	1 mark each: • Left shift • 2 places	2	Correct answer only, needs to identify not actually do the shift
1	(e)	1 mark for: • Computers are made of switches / logic gates / transistors	1	No marks for defining what binary is e.g. 1 and 0, on and off
1	(f)	1 mark for the 3 correct carries 1 mark for answer 1 1 1 1 1 1 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 1 1 1 1 ----- 1 1 1 1 0 0 0 1	2	

Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
2	(a)	1 mark each to max 2 • Over a large geographical area // it is in multiple buildings/locations • Will need to use external infrastructure // uses hardware owned by third-party // hospital does not own (all) the hardware • Non-dedicated hardware // hardware is also used by other businesses/people // shared hardware • The WAN is multiple LANs // It is several networks connected together	2	Accept reverse e.g. why it isn't a LAN
2	(b)	1 from • Compatibility • Allow different hardware (from different manufacturers) to work together/communicate • Make sure different devices are using the same rules	1	Question is asking for purpose i.e. compatibility, not what is a standard

	Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
2	(c)	1 mark each to max 3 • Scramble / jumble / mix-up / cypher / encode the data (before transmission) • Encrypt/decrypt using a key // Encrypt/decrypt using an algorithm // Uses a key/algorithm • Data is meaningless // Data cannot be understood / deciphered (if intercepted) // data is illegible (BOD)	3	MP1 accept when decrypted the data is decoded, unscrambled etc. ‘change’ on its own is TV, but ‘turn into a code’ is ok. MP2 needs more than just ‘has a key’, the key must be ‘used’ to do something. Accept ‘key is needed to access/read/understand the message’ for use of the key. MP3 do not accept ‘cannot be read’ or ‘cannot be accessed’ TV

	Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
2	(d)	1 mark each to max 2 for each Client • Client sends request for (patient) data/action/process/file/access (to the server) // Sends request to the server • Receives (patient) data (from the server) // by example • Displays (patient) data Server • Stores all (patient) data • Receives (request for patient) data // by example • Processes request // searches/accesses for data • Returns/sends the (patient) data (to client/back) // returns error • Keeps a log of access/requests/changes • Checks authorisation // approves requests // by example	4	Accept data/files / messages etc. BOD 'information' Make sure responses are giving more than provided in the question. Server MP4 'responds' is TV. Mark each section separately. Make sure it is the correct client/server (i.e. not the doctor/patient) that is performing the action e.g. the doctor sends a request for data is TV for MP1.

	Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance								
2	(e)	1mark each <table><tr><th>Protocol</th><th>Purpose</th></tr><tr><td>POP (Post Office Protocol)</td><td> - Storing/accessing/retrieving/receiving/downloading emails (stored on the client computer) - Emails are deleted (from the server) after download </td></tr><tr><td>HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)</td><td> - Load/access/view/download/transfer webpages/website Transfers data/request to/from webserver/browser - Use hyperlinks </td></tr><tr><td>IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol)</td><td> - Accessing/retrieving/receiving/ downloading emails (from a central mail server) - Allows access to email from multiple devices // emails are not deleted after they are read - Synchronise emails (between devices) </td></tr></table>	Protocol	Purpose	POP (Post Office Protocol)	- Storing/accessing/retrieving/receiving/downloading emails (stored on the client computer) - Emails are deleted (from the server) after download	HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)	- Load/access/view/download/transfer webpages/website Transfers data/request to/from webserver/browser - Use hyperlinks	IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol)	- Accessing/retrieving/receiving/ downloading emails (from a central mail server) - Allows access to email from multiple devices // emails are not deleted after they are read - Synchronise emails (between devices)	3	Accept mail for email. ‘message’ is TV for email. ‘transfers’ is TV for POP and IMAP storing/accessing
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Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
3	(a)		1 mark for • (All) the characters a computer can represent/use • The characters and their (binary) codes/values	1	Accept 'characters' by example e.g. letters and numbers, letters and symbols. Do not accept 'values' for characters without exemplification.
3	(b)		1 mark for any one of the three values given. 2 marks for all correct and in correct order with no additional 66 101 100	2	Look at the whole page. For the second mark, values must not be added together i.e. $66 + 101 + 100 = 267$ would only get 1 mark.
3	(c)		1 mark each to max 2 • More characters available to use // by example • Larger file size // uses more storage // uses more memory • Will take longer to transfer/transmit/download/upload • Will use more bandwidth	2	MP2 BOD larger file (without size), but, 'File takes up more space' is TV without 'storage' MP2 do not accept 'document' for file MP3 – not longer to 'load' or 'open' Do not accept 'more data per character'

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
4	a		The Arithmetic Logic Unit/ALU performs the mathematical operations within the CPU, for example adding numbers together. The result of each calculation is stored in a register called the accumulator. The Control Unit/CU sends signals on each clock pulse. The signals are used to synchronise operations within the computer. The clock sends a pulse a set number of times each second. This is known as the clock speed. A clock speed of 2GHz sends 2 billion pulses each second. One fetch-execute cycle can be completed in each clock pulse. The higher the clock speed, the more fetch-execute cycles can be completed each second. A computer can have multiple cores, for example a quad core processor has four cores.	7	Ignore spelling, missing parts as long as clearly that option has been selected Arithmetic Logic Unit//ALU accumulator//ACC Control Unit//CU operations billion // 000 000 000 higher four // 4
4	b	i	1 mark each to max 2 • RAM is volatile, ROM is not volatile • RAM's content can be changed, ROM's content cannot (usually) be changed • RAM stores currently running data/instructions, ROM stores start up instructions/BIOS • RAM is (usually) larger in memory size // ROM is (usually) smaller in memory size • RAM has a faster access speed // ROM has a slower access speed	2	MP1 accept RAM is volatile, ROM is not. MP2 accept RAM's content can be changed/written to, ROM's cannot. Award across whole answer space.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
4	b	ii	Virtual (memory) // VM	1	BOD swap space, page file
4	c	i	1 mark for ticking the 3 rd box: To perform housekeeping and maintenance tasks	1	
4	c	ii	1 mark each to max 2 • Move files so they are contiguous // store data contiguously // move empty space to be contiguous • ... so the device does not have to physically move as far to get the next part/page • To increase (disk) access/read/write speed // by example	2	MP1 allow together, in sequence etc. for contiguous MP3 increase speed alone is TV. MP3 BOD transfer
5	a		1 mark • Long term/permanent storage (of data/files) • Store data after the computer is turned off // Store non-volatile data	1	Do not accepttousewhen RAM/primary is full. Do not accepttoanexample of what secondary storage isusedtostoreon its own e.g. to store software,tobackupdata. MP1 BODmemoryforstorage Accept 'data'byexample. BOD 'information'.

	Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
5	b	i	1 mark for each feature, 1 for justification for tablet e.g. • SSD is small in physical size // SSD is lightweight • ... can fit in the small device // (makes the tablet) portable // easy/light to carry around Requires little power • ... tablet runs on battery • Robust/durable/no moving parts • ... tablet might be dropped // less likely to be damaged • High storage capacity • ... can store large amount of data for files and programs // unlikely to run out of storage space // do not need to buy additional storage device • Generates less heat • ... does not overheat the device // is not dangerous when held • Fast access speed • ... less delay to display/store data // more responsive • Runs quieter • ... less likely to be distracting	4	Max 2 for features. Max 2 for valid justification to the tablet. Mark across the whole answer space. Do not award reliability.

	Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
5	b	ii	1 mark each • Magnetic • Optical	2	BOD magnet, optic. Do not accept examples on their own. Award if full term given e.g. 'magnetic tape'
6	(a)		1 mark each to max 2: e.g. • Colour/bit depth // number of colours • Date of creation/edits/save • Time of creation/edits/save • File type • File size • Owner/creator/user • Protection/security • Computer/software data • File/folder name // file path • Geolocation	2	Do not accept resolution / dimensions / number of pixels / height / width (REP). Allow references to cameras/photos. Accept any example of metadata for an image. Mark first in each answer space
6	(b)	i	1 mark each to max 2 • Reduce file size • Faster transmission rate/speed // faster loading/download/upload • Reduce storage space used/needed // Free up storage space • To meet email attachment size restrictions // to meet upload/download limits // the file is too large // by example	2	MP1 do not award 'make image smaller' MP2 do not accept 'easier' Mark any 2 correct statements (as long as not contradicted)

	Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
6	(b)	ii	1 mark each to max 2 • No data is lost • The original image can be retrieved • No loss of quality/detail // by example	2	The image can be decompressed is TV. MP2 do not award 'looks like' the original, or can't tell the difference. There is no difference. Accept in reverse e.g. why they shouldn't use lossy MP3 BOD high/higher resolution, more detail etc.
6	c	i	1 mark for • Storing/accessing data/software on (remote/external) servers • Remote/online storage/software/processing	1	
6	c	ii	1 mark • Can access anywhere // Can access it at home and school // by example • Can access from any device • Reduce local storage required • (Cloud provider) will manage hardware/backup/security/by example • If student's device is damaged, data is still accessible • Student does not need to transport data in a storage device • Can share access	1	Do not accept answers to do with cost. Read whole answer.

Question			Answer	Mark	Guidance
7	a	i	Any two e.g. • May be recording everything // Recording constantly // Records without person knowing • ... for example account information / conversations • Do not know where data is stored • ... it could be unprotected // ... outside of DPA // ... in another country // by example • Do not know what/how data is used/analysed/shared/stored • ... could be used for other purposes // by example • Devices could be accessed externally / hacked / misused / by anyone // Virus/spyware can be installed • ... and used to listen in to what you are doing // used to access your account data/conversations	2	Accept 'listening' for recording.

	Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
7	a	ii	Any two e.g. • People can use it without knowing how to use a computer // People can speak instead of having to use a computer • ...reducing digital divide // more people can access • ... gives people greater access to data/information • ... people with disabilities have more opportunities • May not understand/misunderstand different accents/languages/voices/commands • ... increase digital divide // disadvantages people who cannot use it • People may rely on the device // People talk to the device too much/only • ... reducing human interaction • Some people cannot afford it // Some people are unable to access technology // Not everyone will be able to use it // People may feel pressured to purchase it // by example • ... increases digital divide // they are at a disadvantage // by example	2	Do not accept privacy concerns or environmental factors. Only award reference to digital divide once.

	Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
7	b		1 mark each to max 2 • Dedicated to one task // Has limited functions • Dedicated microprocessor/hardware • Limited memory/processor • Function cannot be changed // Software is difficult to update • Built inside the light bulb/device	2	Be careful not to award MP1 twice MP2 BOD 'specific' for 'dedicated' MP5 allow 'system' for device
8			Mark Band 3–High Level (6-8 marks) The candidate demonstrates a thorough knowledge and understanding of a wide range of considerations in relation to the question; the material is generally accurate and detailed. The candidate is able to apply their knowledge and understanding directly and consistently to the context provided. Evidence/examples will be explicitly relevant to the explanation. The candidate is able to weigh up both sides of the discussion and includes reference to the impact on all areas showing thorough recognition of influencing factors. <i>There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured. The information presented is relevant and substantiated.</i> Describes both, at least 1 benefit and 1 drawback of each. Recommendation with justification. Application to this scenario e.g. small number of devices, wireless devices, small area. Some inaccurate statements (e.g. requirements of server for star) limit to the bottom of the band if not intrusive.	8	The following is indicative of possible factors/evidence that candidates may refer to but is not prescriptive or exhaustive: Indicative Content: Star • Central device • All computers connect direct to central device • All data goes through central device • Faster transmission as dedicated lines • Central device may be expensive • Central management gives more control • If one device goes down only that device is affected • Single point of failure • Specialist needed to setup Mesh • Each device is independent

	Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
			Mark Band 2-Mid Level (3-5 marks) The candidate demonstrates reasonable knowledge and understanding of a range of considerations in relation to the question; the material is generally accurate but at times underdeveloped. The candidate is able to apply their knowledge and understanding directly to the context provided although one or two opportunities are missed. Evidence/examples are for the most part implicitly relevant to the explanation. The candidate makes a reasonable attempt to discuss the impact on most areas, showing reasonable recognition of influencing factors. <i>There is a line of reasoning presented with some structure. The information presented is in the most part relevant and supported by some evidence.</i> Describes both mesh and star. Benefits and/or drawbacks, or recommendation with justification. May have inaccurate statements. Top of band needs benefits/drawbacks for both, bottom of band may only be mesh or star. Mark Band 1-Low Level (1-2 marks) The candidate demonstrates a basic knowledge of considerations with limited understanding shown; the material is basic and contains some inaccuracies. The candidate makes a limited attempt to apply acquired knowledge and understanding to the context provided. The candidate provides nothing more than an unsupported assertion.		• Partial mesh—all devices are connected to at least 1 other device • Full mesh—all devices are connected to every other device • No central management—security risk • More complex set-up for wired connections • Cost of more wires needed • No single point of failure//no reliance on central device • Can expand wireless range • Suitable for use with wireless devices (do not have wired ports) Choice accepted either, example justification: Star: • Small number of devices means direct connection to central device is reasonable • Wireless transmissions supported by connecting straight to central device • More direct control over network management • A new device can be added by just directly connecting to the central device • Better performance, data is routed direct to recipient and not between other devices Mesh:

	Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance
			<i>The information is basic and communicated in an unstructured way. The information is supported by limited evidence and the relationship to the evidence may not be clear.</i> Correct points about mesh or star, may also include many inaccurate statements. No benefits/drawbacks. Recommendation may be given but no justification. 0 marks No attempt to answer the question or response is not worthy of credit		• Small number of devices so setting up multiple routes is practical • Small area so can support wireless mesh • More coverage // reliability with other routes • if a route fails • A new device can be added by connecting to at least one other device (partial) • No limit on number of devices • No reliance on central device that if fails, network will fail • No bottleneck/reliance on central device • More supportive of the wireless devices •
9	a		1 mark for answer • 8800 KB 1 mark for a correct working stage • $44000 \times 2 // 44000 \times 16$ • $\dots \times 100 // \dots \times 200$ • $\dots / 1000 (/1024)$	2	Working MPs 2 and 3, accept ... as any value. Ignore crossing out of work, mark any correct working seen in the answer space.
9	b		1 mark each to max 2 • Decrease in file size // BOD file is smaller ... • ... because fewer samples (are taken each second) // because each sample has fewer bits • Less accurate sound recording // further from the original sound // decrease in (playback) quality ... • ... because fewer samples (are taken each second) // because more spaces between	4	Expansions, do not award sample rate is reduced, or bit-depth is reduced. These need to be described. Mark any two impacts across whole answer space with their expansions. Dependent marks. Expansions cannot be awarded without the matching impact.

	Question		Answer	Mark	Guidance										
			samples // because a smaller range of possible amplitudes are recorded // smaller dynamic range												
10			1mark each <table><tr><th>Scenario</th><th>Legislation being broken</th></tr><tr><td>A company that runs a social media site refuses to give users the information they have stored about them and their online activities</td><td>DPA//data protection act</td></tr><tr><td>A student guesses a teacher's password and logs on to their laptop</td><td>CMA // computer misuse act</td></tr><tr><td>A teacher finds an old external hard disk drive that has personal data about ex-students</td><td>DPA // data protection act</td></tr><tr><td>An individual creates a copy of their favourite music tracks and sells it to their friends</td><td>CDPA // copyright design and patents act</td></tr></table>	Scenario	Legislation being broken	A company that runs a social media site refuses to give users the information they have stored about them and their online activities	DPA//data protection act	A student guesses a teacher's password and logs on to their laptop	CMA // computer misuse act	A teacher finds an old external hard disk drive that has personal data about ex-students	DPA // data protection act	An individual creates a copy of their favourite music tracks and sells it to their friends	CDPA // copyright design and patents act	4	DPA accept GDPR Ignore missing 'act' First row, BOD freedom of information Last row, BOD copyright on its own
Scenario	Legislation being broken														
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