CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

BIOLOGY **0610/53**

Paper 5 Practical Test **May/June 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 40

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

This document consists of **12** printed pages.

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General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: • the specific **content** defined in the mark scheme • the specific **skills** defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions • the **standard of response** required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks **positively**. This means that: • marks are not deducted for errors or omissions • marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for **other valid answers** which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate • the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged **only** when the mark scheme indicates that these features are **specifically assessed** in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must **consistently** apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the **full range of marks** defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and **must not** award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

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Science-Specific Marking Principles

1	Examiners should consider the context and scientific use of any keywords when awarding marks. Although keywords may be present, marks should not be awarded if the keywords are used incorrectly.
2	The examiner should not choose between contradictory statements given in the same question part, and credit should not be awarded for any correct statement that is contradicted within the same question part. Wrong science that is irrelevant to the question should be ignored.
3	Although spellings do not have to be correct, spellings of syllabus terms must allow for clear and unambiguous separation from other syllabus terms with which they may be confused (e.g. ethane / ethene, glucagon / glycogen, refraction / reflection).
4	The error carried forward (ecf) principle should be applied, where appropriate. If an incorrect answer is subsequently used in a scientifically correct way, the candidate should be awarded these subsequent marking points. Further guidance will be included in the mark scheme where necessary and any exceptions to this general principle will be noted.
5	‘List rule’ guidance For questions that require ***n*** responses (e.g. State **two** reasons …): • The response should be read as continuous prose, even when numbered answer spaces are provided. • Any response marked *ignore* in the mark scheme should not count towards ***n***. • Incorrect responses should not be awarded credit but will still count towards ***n***. • Read the entire response to check for any responses that contradict those that would otherwise be credited. Credit should **not** be awarded for any responses that are contradicted within the rest of the response. Where two responses contradict one another, this should be treated as a single incorrect response. • Non-contradictory responses after the first ***n*** responses may be ignored even if they include incorrect science.

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6 Calculation specific guidance

Correct answers to calculations should be given full credit even if there is no working or incorrect working, **unless** the question states 'show your working'.

For questions in which the number of significant figures required is not stated, credit should be awarded for correct answers when rounded by the examiner to the number of significant figures given in the mark scheme. This may not apply to measured values.

For answers given in standard form (e.g. $a \times 10^n$) in which the convention of restricting the value of the coefficient (a) to a value between 1 and 10 is not followed, credit may still be awarded if the answer can be converted to the answer given in the mark scheme.

Unless a separate mark is given for a unit, a missing or incorrect unit will normally mean that the final calculation mark is not awarded. Exceptions to this general principle will be noted in the mark scheme.

7 Guidance for chemical equations

Multiples / fractions of coefficients used in chemical equations are acceptable unless stated otherwise in the mark scheme.

State symbols given in an equation should be ignored unless asked for in the question or stated otherwise in the mark scheme.

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Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
	correct point or mark awarded
	incorrect point or mark not awarded
^	information missing or insufficient for credit
A	allow or accept
I	incorrect or insufficient point ignored while marking the rest of the response
CON	contradiction in response, mark not awarded
BOD	benefit of the doubt given
ECF	error carried forward applied
SEEN	point has been noted, but no credit has been given or blank page seen

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Annotation	Meaning
	correct awarding one mark from marking point or marking group 1. similar numbered ticks are used for marking point or marking groups 2, 3, 4 etc.
	pages are linked together
	used to highlight parts of an extended response
	used to highlight parts of an extended response
	Point already given
	Maximum mark reached
	Key point attempted / working towards marking point / incomplete answer / response seen but not credited / blank page seen
	Maximum number of marks for a marking point has been awarded.

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Mark Scheme Abbreviations:	
;	separates marking points
/	alternative responses for the same marking point
R	reject the response
A	accept the response
I	ignore the response
ecf	error carried forward
AVP	any valid point
ora	or reverse argument
AW	alternative wording
underline	actual word given must be used by candidate (grammatical variants excepted)
( )	the word / phrase in brackets is not required but sets the context
max	indicates the maximum number of marks that can be given
MP	marking point

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(a)(i)	0.5 (%) **;**	**1**	
1(a)(ii)	table drawn with minimum of two columns and a header line **;** suitable headings with units for percentage concentration (of salt solution) **and** (final) length / mm **;** recording of five concentrations and measurements for final length **;** trend – cylinder in test-tube E (4%) is smaller than cylinder in test-tube A (0%) **;**	**4**	**R** units / headings, in data cells **ecf** from **1(a)(i)** **A** measurements in cm if heading matches e.g. percentage / %, concentration (salt solution) | (final) length / mm 0.0 0.5 1.0 2.0 4.0
1(a)(iii)	five correct change in length calculations that match the data in the candidate's table **;**	**1**	must include negative sign for values that are decreases
1(a)(iv)	concentration closest to 0 mm change **;**	**1**	**A** test-tube letter **A** a range or intermediate value
1(a)(v)	salt (solution) concentration **;**	**1**	

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
1(a)(vi)	*any two from:* volume of (salt) solution **;** species / type, of potato / tissue **;** starting length (of the potato cylinders) **;** diameter of the potato cylinders **;** (soaking) time **;** temperature **;**	**2**	
1(a)(vii)	*any two from:* repeat **;** measure the mass **;** greater range of concentrations **;** narrower intervals between concentrations **;** soak for a longer period of time **;** soak all pieces for the same length of time / do each cylinder separately / at intervals **/** AW **;**	**2**	
1(a)(viii)	*hazard:* use of knife / cutting **;** *safety precaution:* cut away from, body / fingers / hand **OR** cut (downwards) on a, tile / flat surface / hard surface **;**	**2**	
1(b)	blue-black **;**	**1**	

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(a)(i)	*Outline:* single clear line no shading **;** *Size*: drawing occupies at least half the available space **;** *Detail 1:* protrusions on top right **and** to right hand side of middle hole **;** *Detail 2:* egg-shaped middle hole with a flat 'floor' shown **;**	**4**	**A** two minor errors **R** major errors e.g. large gaps **R** shading / stippling / hatching / use of ruler / compass **R** if drawing, touches print / encloses print / goes off the page
2(a)(ii)	length of **AB** is 105 ±1 (mm) **;** 2.4 (mm) **;;**	**3**	MP1 correct measurement of line **AB** MP2 correct calculation to any number of significant figures MP3 correct rounding to two significant figures **ecf** from previous step **AB** of 104 mm gives 2.4 mm **AB** of 106 mm gives 2.5 mm

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
2(b)(i)	*any six from:* *independent variable:* **1** (at least) two different, temperatures **;** *dependent variable:* **2** measuring pH after set time **OR** measuring time to reach a certain pH **;** ***3*** and ***4*** *method (max two from)* **;;** • use of pH meter / pH paper / (named) indicator • method of maintaining water temperature • ref. to equilibration **5, 6,** and **7** *variables kept constant (max three from)* **;;;** • volume of milk • type of milk / same milk / fat content of milk • volume of, lipase / enzyme • enzyme /lipase, concentration • volume / concentration of indicator **8** two or more repeats / total of three or more trials **;** **9** relevant safety precaution e.g. use of goggles / gloves **;**	**6**	**A** measuring change in pH over time
2(b)(ii)	biuret (reagent) **;**	**1**	

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Question	Answer	Marks	Guidance
3(a)(i)	axes labelled with units **;** linear scale and occupies at least half the grid in both directions **;** all points plotted accurately ± half a small square **;** suitable line drawn **;**	**4**	*x-axis* time / years **and** *y-axis* number of plants all points joined dot-to-dot (± ½ small square) with a ruler with no extrapolation beyond the data for 99 years **A** extrapolation of the line to 0 because of information in the question (1 plant in 1925)
3(a)(ii)	*any two from:* as the time increases the number of plants increases and decreases **;** peaks, at 80 years / in 2005 **;**	**2**	
3(a)(iii)	number of plants **;**	**1**	
3(b)(i)	*mean:* 0.225 (per m^2) **;** *area:* 330 000 (m^2) **;** *estimate:* 74 250 (plants) **;**	**3**	 MP3 **ecf** from previous steps
3(b)(ii)	it would take too long / the meadow is too big / AW **;**	**1**	

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