



Guidance for A-Level Maths Marking

General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the last candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the first.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification/indicative content will not be exhaustive.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, a senior examiner must be consulted before a mark is awarded.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

General Principles for Core Mathematics Marking

(But note that specific mark schemes may sometimes override these general principles).

Method mark for solving 3 term quadratic:

1. Factorisation

$$(x^2 + bx + c) = (x + p)(x + q), \text{ where } |pq| = |c|, \text{ leading to } x = \dots$$

$$(ax^2 + bx + c) = (mx + p)(nx + q), \text{ where } |pq| = |c| \text{ and } |mn| = |a|, \text{ leading to } x = \dots$$

2. Formula

Attempt to use correct formula (with values for a , b and c).

3. Completing the square

$$\text{Solving } x^2 + bx + c = 0: \quad (x \pm \frac{b}{2})^2 \pm q \pm c, \quad q \neq 0, \quad \text{leading to } x = \dots$$

Method marks for differentiation and integration:

1. Differentiation

Power of at least one term decreased by 1. ($x^n \rightarrow x^{n-1}$)

2. Integration

Power of at least one term increased by 1. ($x^n \rightarrow x^{n+1}$)

Use of a formula

Where a method involves using a formula that has been learnt, the advice given in recent examiners' reports is that the formula should be quoted first.

Normal marking procedure is as follows:

Method mark for quoting a correct formula and attempting to use it, even if there are small mistakes in the substitution of values.

Where the formula is not quoted, the method mark can be gained by implication from correct working with values, but may be lost if there is any mistake in the working.

Exact answers

Examiners' reports have emphasised that where, for example, an exact answer is asked for, or working with surds is clearly required, marks will normally be lost if the candidate resorts to using rounded decimals.

Answers without working

The rubric says that these may not gain full credit. Individual mark schemes will give details of what happens in particular cases. General policy is that if it could be done "in your head", detailed working would not be required. Most candidates do show working, but there are occasional awkward cases and if the mark scheme does not cover this, please contact your team leader for advice.

General Instructions for Marking

1. The total number of marks for the paper is 100

2. These mark schemes use the following types of marks:

- **M** marks: Method marks are awarded for 'knowing a method and attempting to apply it', unless otherwise indicated.
- **A** marks: Accuracy marks can only be awarded if the relevant method (M) marks have been earned.
- **B** marks are unconditional accuracy marks (independent of M marks)
- Marks should not be subdivided.

3. Abbreviations

These are some of the traditional marking abbreviations that will appear in the mark schemes.

- **bod** – benefit of doubt
- **ft** – follow through
- the symbol \checkmark will be used for correct ft
- **cao** – correct answer only
- **cs** - correct solution only. There must be no errors in this part of the question to obtain this mark
- **isw** – ignore subsequent working
- **awrt** – answers which round to
- **SC**: special case
- **o.e.** – or equivalent (and appropriate)
- **d** or **dep** – dependent
- **indep** – independent
- **dp** decimal places
- **sf** significant figures
- * The answer is printed on the paper or ag- answer given

4. All M marks are follow through.

A marks are 'correct answer only' (cao.), unless shown, for example, as A1 ft to indicate that previous wrong working is to be followed through. After a misread however, the subsequent A marks affected are treated as A ft, but answers that don't logically make sense e.g. if an answer given for a probability is >1 or <0 , should never be awarded A marks.

5. For misreading which does not alter the character of a question or materially simplify it, deduct two from any A or B marks gained, in that part of the question affected.

6. Where a candidate has made multiple responses and indicates which response they wish to submit, examiners should mark this response.

If there are several attempts at a question which have not been crossed out, examiners should mark the final answer which is the answer that is the most complete.

7. Ignore wrong working or incorrect statements following a correct answer.

8. Mark schemes will firstly show the solution judged to be the most common response expected from candidates. Where appropriate, alternative answers are provided in the notes. If examiners are not sure if an answer is acceptable, they will check the mark scheme to see if an alternative answer is given for the method used. If no such alternative answer is provided but the response is deemed to be valid, examiners must escalate the response for a senior examiner to review.