

Conducting the Cambridge International AS & A Level Computer Science (9618) practical test – November 2021

These instructions are for exams officers or supervisors responsible for administering the Cambridge Computer Science practical test. They describe the procedures you should follow if your school is offering the Cambridge Computer Science practical test during the November 2021 exam series.

Important You must use the correct version of the question paper. We have sent you a replacement question paper for 9618. The replacement packets are red and have white labels. The replacement question paper is printed on vanilla coloured paper.

Who is responsible for administering the Computer Science practical test?

A suitably competent supervisor, who may be the candidates' tutor, is responsible for administering the Computer Science practical test. The supervisor is also responsible for preparing the hardware and software for the test.

When should the Computer Science practical test be held?

You have a one-day window to conduct the Cambridge International AS & A Level Computer Science practical test.

Paper	Zone	Test dates
9618/41	Zone 2	5 November 2021
9618/41	Zone 3	5 November 2021
9618/41	Zone 5	5 November 2021
9618/42	Zone 4	5 November 2021
9618/42	Zone 5	5 November 2021
9618/43	Zone 1	4 November 2021
9618/43	Zone 6	5 November 2021

Candidates must complete the practical test in a single session.

Wherever possible, candidates from the same centre should sit their test at the same time. If you need to run more than one session, see section 1.2.4 of the Cambridge Handbook.

When arranging the test, consider the time you will need to set up the systems. It is also helpful to plan in some 'reserve' time for additional tests. This is because something may happen that means you have to reschedule a test. For example, you may experience a hardware failure or other technical difficulty.

What do I need to do to prepare for the Computer Science practical test?

The following materials are required to conduct a practical test:

Material	Method of delivery
Question paper	Printed copies sent to centres
Source file(s) and evidence file	Available for centres to download from DFD

If you do not have any of the materials listed above, please contact our Customer Services team:

info@cambridgeinternational.org

There are several things you need to do before the test starts.

Testing the hardware and software

The hardware and software the candidates use during the test must be in full working order, to allow them to meet all the performance criteria set out in the syllabus. We cannot consider errors caused by faulty software or hardware when marking candidates' work. Therefore, it is important for the supervisor to work through a past or specimen paper **before** the test, using the hardware and software that the candidates will use.

Question papers

We do not send Computer Science practical test question papers as electronic files. We despatch printed question papers to the exams officer at each school. **Do not open the question paper packet before the start of the test.**

Source file(s)

Centres must download the required source file or files from the Digital File Despatch (DFD) area of the Cambridge website. These are available three calendar days before the test date window for Cambridge International schools. Cambridge Associates can download the source files five calendar days before the test date window to allow enough time to securely distribute the source files to their Associate Centres.

The source file(s) will be in .txt file format.

Additionally, each candidate will have a Microsoft Word document called **evidence.doc** for recording evidence of work. This must contain candidate details and solutions, as specified in the evidence document and the question paper.

If you experience any difficulties receiving the files, or opening any of the files, please email us:

info@cambridgeinternational.org

Spare equipment in case of hardware failure during a test

Centres must have enough spare computers available in case there is a hardware failure during a test.

Secure setup

Use secure areas on all machines or change the default settings so candidates do not have access to other candidates' work. The use of a shared folder is not allowed. Each candidate must be issued with an individual password-protected work folder for each test. The password for this folder must be unique for each candidate.

How many invigilators should there be for the test?

One invigilator must be present for every 20 candidates. There must always be at least one invigilator who has not been involved in preparing the candidates for the test.

In addition, a suitably experienced supervisor must be present in the test room to deal with any technical difficulties. The supervisor can be someone who was involved in preparing candidates for the test. The supervisor must not be counted as an invigilator.

It is your responsibility to appoint suitable personnel, but we encourage you to appoint an extra technician, in addition to the invigilators and supervisor.

You can find invigilation regulations in sections 4.6 and 5.7.4 of the Cambridge Handbook, which you can download from www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficersguide

Are candidates allowed access to any other equipment during the test?

Candidates **must not** have access to the following during the test:

- internet and email.
- their own electronic files or personal notes.
- any pre-prepared templates or other files or programs (other than a **single code editor** and word processing software to open and update the **evidence.doc** file).
- textbooks or manuals.
- computers that have not been provided by the centre.
- portable storage media, such as memory sticks, CDs, DVDs, or hard disks.

This list is not exhaustive, and centres must also see section 5.1.7 of the Cambridge Handbook.

Candidates are allowed to use the following items during the test, **as long as these do not use the internet**:

- English or simple translation dictionaries.
- spell-checkers.
- software help facilities.
- software wizards provided by the original software supplier.

Can supervisors or invigilators give candidates any help during the test?

Apart from helping a candidate if the equipment fails, the invigilators, supervisors or technicians must not give any help to the candidates during the test.

Can candidates communicate with each other during the test?

No. Candidates must not communicate with each other in any way during the test. This includes using the internet and using email via the internet or intranet. Each candidate's work area needs to be secure. We recommend you set up individual passwords to control the login process for each candidate, and make sure only authorised people can access the files.

What should happen at the end of the test?

Check all candidates have saved their work to their test folder, and that the naming convention provided below has been followed before candidates leave the test room.

Keep all copies of the question paper under secure conditions until 72 hours after the end of the test window date.

Candidates are not allowed to keep:

- copies of the question paper
- any electronic files which form part of the test or that have been produced during the test.

What do I do if we experience technical problems during a test?

If there is a technical issue, you must respond in a way which does not put the integrity or security of the test at risk. If the problem is caused by faulty equipment or software, you may allow the candidate to move to a spare computer, if appropriate. If you can fix equipment or software, you should do this. It is at the discretion of your centre to give the candidate reasonable time to compensate for the time lost whilst moving the candidate to a spare computer or fixing the equipment.

If equipment failure makes it impossible to continue with the test on the test window day, you must contact Cambridge International immediately.

If a candidate's work is lost or corrupted, contact us as soon as possible.

How do I submit candidates' work for marking?

All candidates' work must be submitted within five days of the exam.

Submitting candidates' work through Submit for Assessment

For guidance on how to submit work through Submit for Assessment, see the *Submit for Assessment Administrative Guide* at www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficersguide

You must securely store a copy of all candidates' work until the end of the enquiry about results period in case we need it. For example, if any issues occur when we are marking your candidates' work, we may contact you to ask for a copy.