EXAM MASTERY INTERNATIONAL · FREE RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS

IGCSE OxfordAQA IGCSE Mathematics

Spec code: 9260 · Command Word Guide & Grade Boundary Tracker

Grade Thresholds

Session	Max	A*	A	B	C	D	E
Jun 2024 Extension (9260E)	200	146	125	104	83	63	43
Nov 2024 Extension (9260E)	200	143	123	103	83	63	43
Jun 2024 Core (9260C)	160	—	—	—	103	81	61
Nov 2024 Core (9260C)	160	—	—	—	104	81	61

OxfordAQA Extension tier (Papers 1E + 2E): max 200 marks, grades A–E available. Core tier (Papers 1C + 2C): max 160 marks, highest grade C. Extension Paper 1 is non-calculator; Paper 2 is calculator. Source: OxfordAQA published grade boundaries. Always verify at oxfordaqa.com.*

Command Word Mastery

Mark schemes attach specific meaning to each command word below. Misreading one of these costs marks that working had already earned.

Command Word	What It Demands	Common Student Error	Workshop Fix
Show that	Demonstrate the given result through fully evidenced working. Every algebraic step must appear — the answer is stated; the marks are in the route.	Writing the target result at the top and working backwards to "prove" it. This circular method earns zero.	Students write the target on a sticky note and hide it. They work from the starting point; the hidden target is revealed only to check arrival.
Hence	Connect directly to the immediately preceding result. The link must be stated — "using the result from part (a)" — before proceeding.	Reworking from the beginning. Time lost, method link mark lost.	Paired question practice: Part (a) is solved and circled. Part (b) must contain a written reference to the circled result.
Prove	Formal logical argument from given premises to stated conclusion. For algebraic identity proofs: work one side only.	Assuming the identity is true and rearranging it. This is invalid and earns zero regardless of the quality of algebra.	Students write "LHS only" or "RHS only" at the top of every proof question before starting. Peer review blocks starting on the wrong side.
Calculate	Find the numerical answer using the given information. Show the formula and the substitution before computing.	Entering numbers directly into a calculator without writing the substitution. An error in the calculation leaves no method marks to award.	Formula → substitution → answer: three mandatory lines for every Calculate question. Peer reviewer confirms all three before checking the answer.
Describe fully	"Fully" means all required parameters. A transformation description without the complete parameter set (e.g. rotation without centre, angle, direction) is incomplete.	Writing only the type of transformation. "Rotation" earns one mark out of three.	CADR checklist: Centre, Angle, Direction, Reflection-line — depending on type. Students tick parameters before writing.

Estimate	Round to one significant figure first, then calculate with those rounded values. The rounded figures must appear in the working.	Performing a precise calculation and presenting it as an estimate. Without visible rounded values, the method mark cannot be awarded.	Estimation practice opens with a calculator ban for that specific question. Students write the rounded values first, then compute.

How EMI uses this: OxfordAQA 9260 is less widely taught than Cambridge or Edexcel IGCSE but is growing in international schools — particularly in the Middle East and South-East Asia. The Extension tier closely mirrors AQA's UK GCSE content structure, which means EMI's AQA-trained facilitators bring directly applicable examiner intelligence. A key distinction: OxfordAQA Extension Paper 1 is non-calculator, meaning algebraic fluency without a calculator is tested from the first paper. Workshops practise non-calculator techniques explicitly.