



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge O Level

History 2147

Use this syllabus for exams in 2023.

Exams are available in the June and November series.



Version 2

Please check the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/2147 to see if this syllabus is available in your administrative zone.

Cambridge
Pathway 

Why choose Cambridge International?

Cambridge International prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Our Cambridge Pathway gives students a clear path for educational success from age 5 to 19. Schools can shape the curriculum around how they want students to learn - with a wide range of subjects and flexible ways to offer them. It helps students discover new abilities and a wider world, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can achieve at school, university and work.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for learners to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.

Our mission is to provide educational benefit through provision of international programmes and qualifications for school education and to be the world leader in this field. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged - equipped for success in the modern world.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge students from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with the Cambridge Pathway.

'We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.'

Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA



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Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001

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Important: Changes to this syllabus

For information about changes to this syllabus for 2023, go to page 35.

The latest syllabus is version 2, published February 2022.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2020 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.



1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

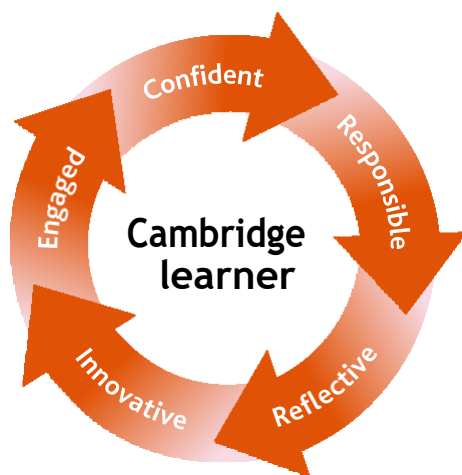
Cambridge O Level is typically for 14 to 16 year olds and is an internationally recognised qualification. It has been designed especially for an international market and is sensitive to the needs of different countries. Cambridge O Level is designed for learners whose first language may not be English, and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process.

Cambridge O Level History offers the opportunity to study world history from the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. It encourages learners to raise questions and to develop and deploy historical skills, knowledge and understanding in order to provide historical explanations. Learners will explore history from a diversity of perspectives, including social, economical, cultural and political, and are given the opportunity to:

- develop an interest in and enthusiasm for learning about and understanding the past
- explore historical concepts such as cause and consequence, change and continuity, and similarity and difference
- appreciate historical evidence and how to use it
- gain a greater understanding of international issues and inter-relationships
- learn how to present clear, logical arguments.

Our programmes balance a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

Our approach encourages learners to be:



'Cambridge O Level has helped me develop thinking and analytical skills which will go a long way in helping me with advanced studies.'

Kamal Khan Virk, former student at Beaconhouse Garden Town Secondary School, Pakistan, who went on to study Actuarial Science at the London School of Economics

International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge O Level History gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades A* to C are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level History.

Cambridge O Levels are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge O Levels or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

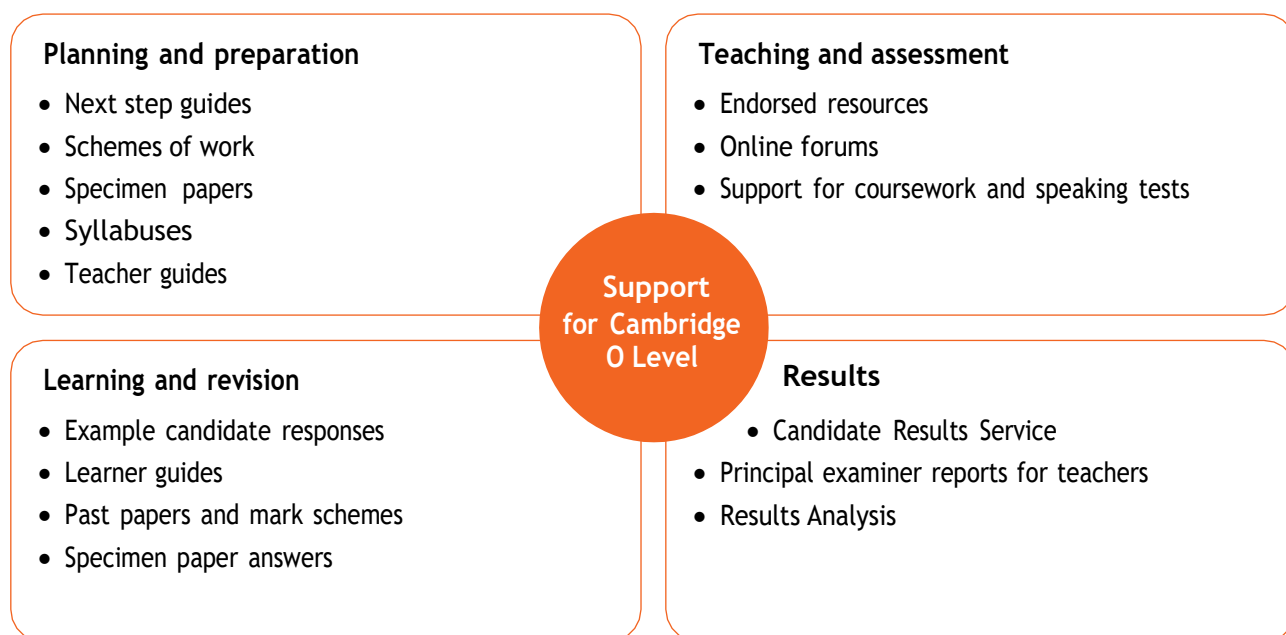
Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition

Supporting teachers

We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge O Level. To find out which resources are available for each syllabus go to our School Support Hub.

The School Support Hub is our secure online site for Cambridge teachers where you can find the resources you need to deliver our programmes. You can also keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community through our online discussion forums.

Find out more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support



Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services at www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates

Professional development

We support teachers through:

- Introductory Training - face-to-face or online
- Extension Training - face-to-face or online
- Enrichment Professional Development - face-to-face or online

Find out more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/events

- Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications

Find out more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/profdev



Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers. Find out more at: www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to:

- stimulate an interest in and enthusiasm for learning about the past
- promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of individuals, people and societies in the past
- ensure that learners' knowledge is rooted in an understanding of the nature and use of historical evidence
- promote an understanding of key historical concepts: cause and consequence, change and continuity, and similarity and difference
- provide a sound basis for further study and the pursuit of personal interest
- encourage international understanding
- encourage the development of historical skills, including investigation, analysis, evaluation and communication skills.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



Content overview

All candidates study all the Core Content:

The nineteenth century: the development of modern nation states, 1848-1914

The content focuses on the following Key Questions:

- Were the Revolutions of 1848 important?
- How was Italy unified?
- How was Germany unified?
- Why was there a civil war in the United States and what were its results?
- Why, and with what effects, did Europeans expand their overseas empires in the nineteenth century?
- What caused the First World War?

In addition, all candidates must also study the Depth Studies of:

- **Russia, 1905-41**



This O Level syllabus shares content with other History syllabuses. For further support see the School Support Hub for IGCSE History. Textbooks endorsed to support IGCSE History are suitable for use with this syllabus.

Assessment overview

All candidates take **two** components. Candidates will be eligible for grades A* to E.

All candidates take:		and:	
Paper 1	2 hours	Paper 2	2 hours
Written paper	55%	Written paper	45%
60 marks		50 marks	
Candidates answer two questions from Section A (Core Content) and one question from Section B (Depth Studies)		Candidates answer six questions on one prescribed topic taken from the Core Content. There is a range of source material relating to each prescribed topic. The prescribed topic changes in each examination session - see Section 4	
All questions are in the form of structured essays, split into three parts: (a), (b) and (c)		Externally assessed	
Externally assessed			

Information on availability is in the Before you start section.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1

An ability to recall, select, organise and deploy knowledge of the syllabus content.

AO2

An ability to construct historical explanations using an understanding of:

- cause and consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference
- the motives, emotions, intentions and beliefs of people in the past.

AO3

An ability to understand, interpret, evaluate and use a range of sources as evidence, in their historical context.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in O Level %
AO1	28
AO2	36
AO3	36
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1	33	20
AO2	67	-
AO3	-	80
Total	100	100

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting topics, subject contexts, resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

All candidates study all the Core Contents:

The nineteenth century: the development of modern nation states, 1848-1914

In addition, all candidates must also study the Depth Studies.

The Core Content is structured by **Key Questions** and **Focus Points**. The Focus Points provide guidance on what is involved in addressing each Key Question. There are times when a Focus Point is used to set the scene for a Key Question, but without apparently bearing on the Key Question itself. This helps to indicate what is required for the Key Question itself to be addressed adequately.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the Key Questions and Focus Points, using knowledge of relevant historical examples.

The following description of content is not intended to be rigidly prescriptive of a school course.

Core Content:

The nineteenth century: the development of modern nation states, 1848–1914

The Core Content in Option A focuses on six Key Questions:

- 1 Were the Revolutions of 1848 important?
- 2 How was Italy unified?
- 3 How was Germany unified?
- 4 Why was there a civil war in the United States and what were its results?
- 5 Why, and with what effects, did Europeans expand their overseas empires in the nineteenth century?
- 6 What caused the First World War?

1 Were the Revolutions of 1848 important?

Focus Points

- Why were there so many revolutions in 1848?
- Did the revolutions have anything in common?
- Why did most of the revolutions fail?
- Did the revolutions change anything?

Specified Content

- The nature of revolutions in 1848, and the influence of liberalism and nationalism
- Causes and events of revolutions in France, Italy, Germany and the Austrian Empire
- Reasons for the failure of the revolutions

2 How was Italy unified?

Focus Points

- Why was Italy not unified in 1848–49?
- How important was Garibaldi's contribution to unifying Italy?
- Did Cavour help or hinder the unification of Italy?
- How important for other European countries were moves towards Italian unification?

Specified Content

- Austrian influence over Italy
- Italian nationalism and the role of Mazzini
- Events of 1848–49
- Victor Emmanuel II and Cavour: Plombières, war with Austria in 1859
- Garibaldi and the invasion of Sicily and Naples
- The creation of the Kingdom of Italy, completion of unification by 1870

3 How was Germany unified?

Focus Points

- Why was Germany not unified in 1848-50?
- How did Bismarck bring about Austria's defeat of 1866?
- How did Bismarck bring about France's defeat of 1870?
- How far was Bismarck responsible for the unification of Germany?

Specified Content

- German nationalism
- The Zollverein
- The 1848 revolution in Prussia
- The setting up and eventual failure of the Frankfurt Parliament
- Re-establishment of Austrian influence in Germany by 1850
- Bismarck as Prussian Minister-President
- Bismarck's foreign policy to 1871:
 - Schleswig-Holstein
 - the Austro-Prussian War and its consequences
 - relations with France
 - the Spanish Succession and the Franco-Prussian War
 - the creation of the German empire

4 Why was there a civil war in the United States and what were its results?

Focus Points

- How far did slavery cause the Civil War?
- What was the significance of Lincoln's election as president?
- Why was the North able to win the war?
- Did the war change anything?

Specified Content

- Causes and consequences of the American Civil War, 1820-77:
 - differences between North and South
 - slavery, slave states and free states
 - abolitionism
 - the 1860 election and secession of the Southern states
 - reasons for the North's victory
 - the role of Lincoln
 - reconstruction
 - how successful was reconstruction?

5 Why, and with what effects, did Europeans expand their overseas empires in the nineteenth century?

Focus Points

- What were the motives behind European imperialism?
- How varied were the impacts of European imperialism on Africans?
- Why, and with what effects, did Indians resist British rule?
- Why, and with what effects, did the Chinese resist European influence?

Specified Content

- Reasons for imperialism: economic, military, geopolitical, religious and cultural motives
- Europeans in Africa: case studies of French, British and Belgian imperialism, and their impacts on Africans:
 - the French model of assimilation and direct rule; Faidherbe and Senegal
 - the British model of indirect rule; Lugard and Nigeria
 - the Belgians and private imperialism; Leopold II and the Congo
- The British in India: the Mutiny, and changes it brought to British rule
- Europeans and China: the Opium Wars, the Boxer Rising and their results

6 What caused the First World War?

Focus Points

- Did the Alliance System make war more likely or less likely?
- How far did colonial problems create tensions between the Great Powers?
- Why were problems in the Balkans so difficult for the Great Powers to solve?
- How did the assassination of Franz Ferdinand lead to war?

Specified Content

- The origins of the First World War, 1890-1914:
 - the Alliance System
 - the arms race
 - colonial rivalries
 - developments in the Balkans
 - the crisis of June–July 1914 and the outbreak of war

Depth Studies

Depth Study: Russia, 1905–41

1 Why did the Tsarist regime collapse in 1917?

Focus Points

- How well did the Tsarist regime deal with the difficulties of ruling Russia up to 1914?
- How did the Tsar survive the 1905 Revolution?
- How far was the Tsar weakened by the First World War?
- Why was the revolution of March 1917 successful?

2 How did the Bolsheviks gain power, and how did they consolidate their rule?

Focus Points

- How effectively did the Provisional Government rule Russia in 1917?
- Why were the Bolsheviks able to seize power in November 1917?
- Why did the Bolsheviks win the Civil War?
- How far was the New Economic Policy a success?

3 How did Stalin gain and hold on to power?

Focus Points

- Why did Stalin, and not Trotsky, emerge as Lenin's successor?
- Why did Stalin launch the Purges?
- What methods did Stalin use to control the Soviet Union?
- How complete was Stalin's control over the Soviet Union by 1941?

4 What was the impact of Stalin's economic policies?

Focus Points

- Why did Stalin introduce the Five-Year Plans?
- Why did Stalin introduce collectivisation?
- How successful were Stalin's economic changes?
- How were the Soviet people affected by these changes?

Specified Content

- The main features of Tsarist rule and Russian society before the First World War:
 - the 1905 Revolution and its aftermath
 - attempts at reform
- The First World War and its impact on the Russian people
- The March Revolution of 1917
- The Provisional Government and the Soviets, the growing power of revolutionary groups
- Reasons for the failure of the Provisional Government
- The Bolshevik seizure of power, the role of Lenin
- The main features of Bolshevik rule, the Civil War and War Communism, and reasons for the Bolshevik victory
- The Kronstadt Rising and the establishment of the New Economic Policy
- Lenin's death and the struggle for power
- Reasons for Stalin's emergence as leader by 1928
- Stalin's dictatorship:
 - use of terror
 - the Purges
 - propaganda and official culture
- Stalin's economic policies and their impact:
 - the modernisation of Soviet industry
 - the Five-Year Plans
 - collectivisation in agriculture
- Life in the Soviet Union:
 - the differing experiences of social groups
 - ethnic minorities and women

4 Details of the assessment

For information on the assessment objectives (AOs), see section 2.

Paper 1 Written paper

Written paper, 2 hours, 60 marks

Candidates answer two questions from Section A and one question from Section B.

Section A contains eight questions: four questions will be set from the nineteenth century Core Content in Option A and four questions will be set from the twentieth century Core Content in Option B. Candidates answer any **two** questions.

Section B contains two questions on each of the seven Depth Studies. Candidates answer **one** question.

All questions are in the form of structured essays, split into three parts: (a), (b) and (c).

This is a compulsory component.

The paper is an externally set assessment, marked by Cambridge International.

Paper 2 Written paper

Written paper, 2 hours, 50 marks

Candidates answer six questions on either the prescribed topic from the Core Content in Option A or the prescribed topic from the Core Content in Option B.

Each option includes a range of source material relating to the prescribed topic, and the six questions are based on the source material provided.

The prescribed topic changes in each examination session.

For the examination in 2023, the prescribed topics are:

Nineteenth century Core Content (Option A):

- Why, and with what effects, did Europeans expand their overseas empires in the nineteenth century? (*June examination*)
- What caused the First World War? (*November examination*)

Twentieth century Core Content (Option B):

- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939? (*June examination*)
- How secure was the USSR’s control over Eastern Europe, 1948-c.1989? (*November examination*)

This is a compulsory component.

The paper is an externally set assessment, marked by Cambridge International.

Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exam. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
Describe	state the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things evident / provide why and/or how and support with relevant evidence

Additional guidance

Phrases such as ‘How far do you agree...?’ and ‘How significant...?’ may also be seen in the assessment for this syllabus.

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have studied a history curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge O Level syllabuses based on learners having about 130 guided learning hours for each subject during the course but this is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to local practice and their previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

Cambridge O Levels are available to centres in administrative zones 3, 4 and 5.

You can enter candidates in the June and November exam series. You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge IGCSE History (0470)
- Cambridge IGCSE (9-1) History (0977)
- Cambridge IGCSE American History (0409) (for centres in the United States)
- Cambridge O Level History (Mauritius) (2162)
- Cambridge O Level History (Singapore) (2174)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge O Level, Cambridge IGCSE™ and Cambridge IGCSE (9-1) syllabuses are at the same level

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has a copy of this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to one administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make your entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at www.cambridgeinternational.org/entries

Equality and inclusion

We have taken great care to avoid bias of any kind in the preparation of this syllabus and related assessment materials. In our effort to comply with the UK Equality Act (2010) we have taken all reasonable steps to avoid any direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present barriers for candidates with impairments. Where a candidate is eligible, we may be able to make arrangements to enable that candidate to access assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. We do not agree access arrangements if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed.

Candidates who cannot access the assessment of any component may be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have completed.

Information on access arrangements is in the *Cambridge Handbook* at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades A*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge O Level.

A* is the highest and E is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge O Level is shown as GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (GCE O LEVEL).

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge O Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement
The assessment:
 - confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.
- to show likely future success
The outcomes:
 - help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
 - help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement candidates awarded particular grades are likely to show. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

Grade descriptions for Cambridge O Level History will be published after the first assessment of the syllabus in 2020. Find more information at www.cambridgeinternational.org/2147

Changes to this syllabus for 2023

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 2, published February 2022.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Changes to version 2 of the syllabus, published February 2022

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Other changes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This syllabus version is now for exams in 2023 only. Please refer to the updated syllabus for exams in 2024, 2025 and 2026. |
|----------------------|---|

Changes to version 1 of the syllabus, published September 2020

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Changes to syllabus content | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The prescribed topics for Paper 2 have been changed for 2023. Please see section 4 of this syllabus for the prescribed topics for 2023. |
|------------------------------------|---|

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2020 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.

