Japanese A

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0-6	7-13	14-20	21-26	27-34

The range and suitability of the work submitted

This first session of the new assessment model saw not too many inappropriate approaches or oversight of new requirements. Some candidates continue to add personal identifiers to their work, when all assessment material should be submitted in an anonymised way. There has been a significant increase in the number of category 3 EEs compared to previous years and also many EEs about young authors and relatively new genres like Manga, Keitai novels, Virtual novels, etc. Some candidates did not indicate the category of their essay. Certain candidates did not phrase their research question in an appropriate question form.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: focus and method

The choice of research question and the topic were usually appropriate and well-selected. Some candidates selected research questions that were too broad to discuss within 8000 characters. Some Category 3 EEs employed inappropriate methodology for the task with weak conclusions. The importance of identifying appropriate sources should be considered more closely by students, and if they cannot access certain sources, supervisors should help to identify alternatives, or a revised approach to their research question.

Criterion B: knowledge and understanding

Most candidates did well here. Some candidates analysed the work(s) without establishing an effective connection with the research question. Some category 3 essays attempted to demonstrate knowledge and understanding supported by internet sites and books without really understanding the content of the source or using them in a critical manner.

Criterion C: critical thinking

This is the most demanding criterion and is key in differentiating between candidates. There are many occasions where candidates produced good analyses, but they failed to discuss and evaluate it in a way that enabled an effective conclusion. There were also EEs where the conclusion is good, but there is no evidence to support it.

Criterion D: presentation

Normally for this criterion most candidates were able to achieve the higher marks. Provided candidates follow the EE presentation requirements and presented their work in an appropriate, academic way, then this criterion and its requirements should be relatively straight-forward to fulfil.

Criterion E: engagement

As this is the new section to candidates and teachers, there were often candidates who failed to score the higher marks. Many students just stated facts without any reflective thought.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Candidates who choose category 3 must ensure that there is adequate opportunity for analysis otherwise they will get a low score in criterion C.

As this is a new EE assessment model, teachers should find some effective workshops and participate them – this is the best way to understand the new requirements. Some teachers continued to prepare students using the old assessment guide, and this often led to lower scores.

Candidates, teachers, schools, and examiners all have access to, and use, the same information about the assessment, criteria and their requirements. It is therefore crucial that teachers especially teachers read and understand the section entitled "Best-fit approach and markbands" and how the marks are applied. This is particularly important with criterion C, which is made up of multiple markbands.

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