

FILM

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-15	16-33	34-44	45-57	58-67	68-80	81-100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-15	16-33	34-46	47-59	60-69	70-82	83-100

Introductory comments on the overall performance of this group of candidates

The second administration of examinations in the pilot of the Film course once again demonstrated that the course is capable of eliciting a full range of work from candidates, including a good proportion of work at the highest levels, especially among HL candidates. The best-performing candidates demonstrated a mature and sincere engagement with the subject, together with an ability to express themselves with both enthusiasm and imagination. The work of candidates such as these is a credit to themselves, to their schools and to their teachers, as well as being an endorsement of the course and its assessment.

A disappointing tendency that sometimes resulted in candidates' lower marks, was the tendency not to have read and/or understood the guide and assessment details closely enough. As a result, some candidates were penalised because either they or their teachers had not taken sufficient care to understand and address the exact requirements of each assessment task.

A number of problems in administration have plagued this set of examinations. Almost all of them could be characterised as the result of not having read the Film Guide and the examination instructions closely enough. Coversheets were omitted or wrongly or only partially completed; some two-sided coversheets were missing their second side; some schools failed to submit the Production Portfolio work of all candidates as they had been asked to do, submitting instead only the sample listed on Examnet; portfolio work was submitted in format that had not been previously identified by the school as the format to be used; some candidates submitted their Presentation work using films from last year's list.

Independent Study

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20	21-25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20	21-25

The Independent Study asks candidates to produce a script for a short documentary film on a topic of film history or film theory for an audience of their peers.

The areas of the course and assessments in which candidates' strengths were apparent

The best work at both SL and HL showed that candidates had carefully chosen IS topics that were both challenging and engaging for them. These candidates understood the expectation that their approach to film must be serious and academic, recognised the importance of clearly linking the visual and sound elements of best scripts, chose references carefully and acknowledged them clearly, and fulfilled the formal requirements of the task meticulously. Arguments and expositions in the work of these candidates were carefully structured, logically presented, well illustrated with visuals and properly supported from a variety of sources which included academic as well as popular and 'trade' information. The work of these candidates tended to be structured in a way that clearly showed an understanding of the task as being the development of a line of argument using illustrations from appropriate films, rather than a discussion of the chosen films individually. It is also clear that these candidates took note that the guide requires them to engage 'in some depth with a previously unfamiliar cinematic tradition'. The manifest enjoyment of exploring and explaining new cinematic concepts was a very positive quality in the work of these candidates.

The areas of the course and assessments where candidates performed less well

Perhaps the most common characteristic of the work that was weak was that candidates seemed to assume that their casual and recreational exposure and knowledge of film was an adequate substitute for a serious and academic study. Many scripts at both SL and HL listed no sources other than 'pop' websites operated by film industry marketers or fan clubs. These scripts frequently used promotional 'hype' or celebrity anecdotes taken from Internet sites in place of serious discussion and argumentation.

The syllabus clearly calls for a topic 'exploring an aspect of film theory or history' that is 'previously unfamiliar'. Too many candidates selected a topic related to film content, focusing their script on narrative and character in a literary fashion, without making proper connection to film history or theory or discussing their topic in film language. Also, many candidates opted for a topic that did not require them to explore new ground.

Almost all candidates listed their sources, but very many listed Internet sources as only a web address with no indication of what the site contained or how it was used. Internet sources need to be properly annotated. Many candidates used not print sources at all, and many also restricted their Internet

sources to sites related to marketing, promotion and fandom. Only a very few candidates acknowledged the sources for quotations used in their voice over (v/o) through the use of footnotes or other indicators. Some candidates did not list the films studied in their sources. Some candidates quoted from sources that were neither listed nor footnoted. In some cases, this practice was flagged for plagiarism.

Some scripts produced what was best described as an illustrated essay, where the sound elements carried all the weight and the visuals were added only as support for the words. In these instances, the visuals often relied very heavily on ‘talking heads’ or consisted of only vague references to the films under discussion. Occasionally a script did the opposite, where the v/o was just an accompaniment to the images.

Care is needed by candidates to develop a voice in the v/o that will connect well with the intended audience of peers (16-19 years old). Too often, the voice was that of promotional film language, hyping the films in marketing language. This is inappropriate for the serious film candidates. Occasionally, the voice was too erudite for the intended audience, relying too heavily on long academic quotations without clarification from the candidate-host of the documentary. The guide requires that the voice of the documentary should be that of the candidate, yet a number of candidates ignored this requirement, presenting no voice at all other than a string of quotations from various sources without connecting commentary.

Candidates who performed poorly in this task tended to misunderstand, minimise or omit discussion of the cultural background of the chosen films.

Some candidates padded out their scripts to the required minimum length by using:

- Oversized margins, headers and footers.
- Extra large font size.
- Large imported images.
- Offset sound and visual columns, leaving blank space rather than keeping sound and visuals side by side.

Recommendations and guidance of the teaching of future candidates

- It is not possible to overstate the importance of a close and exact reading of the syllabus and assessment details. The point is particularly important for the 2005 examination sessions because of recent modifications.
- Candidates must be clearly informed of the specific requirements for the presentation layout and length of their scripts.
- Candidates need guidance in selecting topics related to film theory and film history and need to be steered firmly away from topics that do not meet the criteria.
- Candidates still need assistance understanding the differences in various film cultures.
- Teachers should continue to use exemplar pieces of Independent Study work in class in conjunction with the detailed analysis of the assessment criteria.
- The close analysis of short documentary films in class can help candidates understand how to structure an argument in film and how best to link sound and visual elements.
- Teachers should continue to emphasise instruction on the appropriate selection, listing and acknowledgement of sources.

Film Presentation

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-9	10-13	14-16	17-20	21-25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-9	10-13	14-16	17-20	21-25

The Presentation requires candidates to deliver an audio taped critical analysis of an extract from a given film ‘relating its features to the film as a whole and to the wide sociocultural context’. Candidates make their own selection of material from the film and spend four weeks on a close study of the selection researching the broader context of the film.

The areas of the course and assessment in which candidates’ strengths were apparent

The most successful presentations, disappointingly few in number, showed candidates to have used their preparation time effectively. In these, candidates had engaged enthusiastically with their chosen films and had displayed incisive analytical and critical skills. These candidates were able to incorporate well researched and judiciously selected broader information. They had carefully selected their extract so that it could be used effectively to make points about the film as a whole. they were able to draw together areas of analysis such as framing, lighting or mise-en-scene and consider patterns of analysis rather than going through the chosen sequence shot by shot. Candidates were generally aware of the appropriate language to use when discussing filmic texts. The most successful presentations moved fluidly between their selected extract, the film’s narrative and, more broadly, the work of those involved and the wide sociocultural context of the film. The most successful presentations did not use the selected extract as a visual aid. It was encouraging to see that many candidates attempted presentations on what might be considered more difficult film texts.

The area of the course and assessments where candidates performed less well

The most common weakness was that candidate did not support their ideas with sufficient textual evidence. There was a lack of detailed planning and research in preparation for the presentations. The majority of candidates had difficulty in constructing a coherent and richly detailed presentation which used the selected extract as a means to discuss connected and developed points, relating its features to the film as a whole and to the wider sociocultural context. Candidates tended either to focus in too much detail on the extract itself, making few broader connections, or were too vague in their presentation, not providing enough detailed analysis. On the whole, candidates were limited in their discussions of the purpose and effect of directional choices and did not provide enough support for any assertions they made. Candidates were often descriptive in their approach without being analytical. Too often, candidates rooted their presentations in the literary features of the film, spending excessive time discussing character, theme, plot and screenplay elements at the expense of more relevant analyses of how these are presented cinematically. There was a general lack of awareness as to how the camera communicates, and the importance of framing was often overlooked. Few candidates really got to grips with detailed analysis of how and/or why specific meanings were constructed. Elements such as generic characteristics, directorial intent or positioning the film in the

broader, sociocultural context were frequently omitted. Some candidates were clearly reading all of their prepared presentations word for word, thus disqualifying themselves from the upper mark bands. A small number of candidates appeared to be thinking through their ideas almost for the first time.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- It is not possible to overstate the importance of a close and exact reading of the syllabus and assessment details. This point is particularly important for the 2005 examination sessions because of recent modifications.
- As it is not appropriate for candidates to present a shot-by-shot running commentary, the need to play any parts of the extract during the presentation should be limited to assisting the candidate illustrate important points.
- Candidates need to approach this task as they would any research essay and plan in great detail.
- Long before the examination itself, candidates should be given substantial practice with textual analysis using extracts from films that have not been set for the examination.
- Exemplar presentations should be studied in class in conjunction with the detailed analysis of the assessment criteria.
- Candidates need guidance in the use of the terminology and in researching the sociocultural context of films.
- Candidates need help and guidance in the preparation of useful notes as aides-memoire.
- Candidates should be given the opportunity to practice their presentations before the examination.
- It is vital that candidates use the four weeks allocated to research the film, its director, other significant crew members, their work, the production conditions of the film, its importance as a cultural/historical text, as well as critical and academic writing about the film.
- Candidates must link the evaluative interpretation of the extract to broader, relevant information.
- Preparatory time must be spent on constructing a detailed argument that connects supported points and moves towards a reasoned conclusion.
- Candidates need to show they understand by analysing how and why the techniques they emphasise are used.
- Teachers should be aware of when to prompt candidates and of the kind of prompting that is appropriate during the presentation. Only if the candidates presents for significantly less than the minimum time should there be any need for teacher intervention, and then only to ask the candidate to further develop points already made. Equally, if the candidate does present for less than the minimum time, it is recommended that teachers do attempt to elicit more from the candidate.

Internal Assessment: Production Portfolio

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-9	10-12	13-15	16-17	18-20	21-25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-9	10-13	14-16	17-18	19-21	22-25

The Production Portfolio is internally assessed and externally moderated. At HL, candidates make two completed film projects of approximately five minutes in length, and at SL only one such piece. Each production base is accompanied by a portfolio of a support material consisting of a rationale of 200 to 400 words, a written commentary of approximately 1000 words and up to 20 pages of relevant photocopied material from production files.

The areas of the course and assessment in which candidates' strengths were apparent

There were some excellent examples of candidate work, especially in fiction formats, where candidates clearly displayed professional dedication and artistic flair in their productions. A range of topics were explored, the most successful of which were dealt with sensitively and maturely.

The most successful commentaries explored the candidate's individual role in detail, discussing choices made and looking critically at the production process.

Many candidates were highly professional in their undertaking of production roles. Throughout the schools, there was a range of technology available, with some better resources than others, yet the quality of productions showed that some candidates using less advanced equipment were equally capable of producing excellent final images. Many candidates were adept at creating meaning through editing and the use of available resources during post production was at its most impressive. Camerawork, generally, was effective.

The areas of the course and assessment where candidates performed less well

Higher Level candidates found the most demanding aspect of the course the creation of two successful contrasting productions. In many cases, one production was more effectively executed than the other, and candidates appeared to have difficulties balancing their time commitments between the two. Candidates who performed less well gave little consideration to audience. Documentaries, on the whole, were less successful, with candidates having difficulty in creating a coherent narrative thread from their footage. There were one or two examples of experimental/avant-garde film-making and these showed some flair and imagination, although not always an awareness of the conventions they were deviating from. The less successful productions were often characterised by poor planning, particularly in the initial scripting stages of fiction films, or in the organisation of subjects/questions/approaches to documentary. Selections from the production files would have benefited from greater consideration. Rather than containing a selection of well-chosen material to illustrate the individual contribution to the finished film production, the selected file material tended to be common to all group members rather than selected as best exemplifying the role played by the

individual candidate. There were some examples of inappropriate/inaccurate framing, with candidates occasionally reluctant to use the close-up. Lighting and sound were the two most neglected areas in completed productions. In some cases, it appeared that the first time candidates had used specific technical equipment was in the production of their finished film. Many candidates completed successful film productions which were, however, not accompanied by detailed commentaries of logistical and artistic analysis. Many commentaries were descriptive and general in nature. In some cases, it was problematic to ascertain the precise roles undertaken by candidates. Some submissions contained no commentary section at all.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- It is not possible to overstate the importance of a close and exact reading of the syllabus and assessment details. This point is particularly important for the 2005 examination sessions because of recent modifications.
- Ensure candidates have solid, clear scripts/plans/outlines before embarking on productions.
- Encourage familiarity with equipment in exercises throughout the course for candidates to be able to make reasoned choices as to their own areas of interest/expertise when deciding upon production roles.
- Monitor the allocation of roles within film production crews and ensure that each candidate's contribution is appropriate. Emphasise the importance of focusing on their individual roles in creating the finished production and how this should be the focus for their commentary/production file selection.
- Focus on exercises that emphasise the use/importance of lighting and sound in film.
- It is vital that they clearly indicate the roles for which they wish to be assessed, and that teachers ensure these roles are suitable for assessment purposes.
- Teachers should continue to focus their own comments on the cover sheets so as to be of most guidance and assistance to the moderator.

Conclusions

The requirement at HL for candidates to produce two separate and complete productions is clearly problematic. A number of candidates suffered because their second production could not maintain the excellent standards achieved by their first one, creating the anomalous circumstance of excellence being penalised. Teachers must note that starting in the next set of examinations, requirements for HL Production Portfolio have been significantly changed to redress this situation. Other modifications to the guide and assessment details affecting both HL and SL candidates have also been made for immediate implementation, and individual teachers must make themselves familiar with these changes for the next school year.

The Film course has again shown that it is capable of eliciting outstanding work from candidates. Schools which show a full understanding of the intent of the guide and assessment and which clearly set a high standard of expectation for candidates to aspire to seem to have been most successful. There appears still to be a basic rift of understanding between those candidates for whom film is a casual and recreational cultural indulgence, and those for whom film is a serious art worthy of academic investigation. Clearly the latter group is better equipped to excel in this course. They and their teachers have taken an extra step beyond film enthusiasm into film scholarship, and have provided some exemplary work to demonstrate that film is an artistic discipline worthy of serious study.