

## FILM

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 14	15 - 29	30 - 42	43 - 55	56 - 67	68 - 79	80 - 100

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 13	14 - 28	29 - 40	41 - 53	54 - 67	68 - 80	81 - 100

#### Introductory comments on the overall performance of this group of candidates

The work presented in the May 2007 session showed some improvements as well as some issues that, disappointingly, continue to be a problem in spite of the fact that they have been commented on in previous subject reports. There is still a marked difference between the centres who have guided their candidates appropriately and those who do not follow readily available advice. **It is essential that all Schools read and strictly follow the current version of the Film guide and the Vade Mecum.** Schools and their candidates must follow instructions precisely. Failure to do so causes unnecessary problems and can result in candidates failing to achieve their full potential.

It is encouraging to see candidates who, at their best, have engaged enthusiastically and with flair, imagination, knowledge and insight to the demands of the programme both at HL and SL. Most schools clearly support their candidates with care and sensitivity.

## Production portfolio

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 23	24 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 40	41 - 50

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 21	22 - 28	29 - 34	35 - 41	42 - 50

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

The overall range of the work at HL is good whilst at SL, although there has been a marked improvement from previous sessions, work is clustered in the middle range of marks for each criterion. At both HL and SL candidates do seem to have a clearer idea of what a short film can and cannot do. If there has been any trend this year, it is that most participating pilot schools understand the nature of the assessment more fully. The overall competence demonstrated seems higher than previous sessions with fewer schools performing at the very low end of the assessment criteria.

Of some concern is the fact that many of the weakest projects are planned and completed in a very short time: a production period starting in March or February is often mentioned. Given that the assessment is worth fully half the marks of the course this is wholly inadvisable. It would not be advisable for students to complete this assessment as part of year one activities. At this stage the students should be provided with plenty of opportunities to practice and experiment with camerawork, lighting and sound capture. There is no reason why planning, preparation, and even filming of the project cannot be started during the break between first and second year, and returned to with renewed vigour during the second year.

The wording in the current guide with regard to copyright material has substantially clarified the ruling in that there be must no copyright material in student work (regardless of the legality of its inclusion).

Some students continue to leave out materials and commentary related to the trailer at HL. Besides being ignored in some cases, Rationales are frequently misunderstood to be simply a synopsis of the work.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### **Criterion A – Planning and Research**

This continues to be the most significant challenge, particularly as regards the inclusion of production materials as detailed by the guide. Some students fail to detail production beyond their own role, but the most common failing is to fail to include any evidence of production materials to support the documentation of work. At HL materials and commentary on the trailer are sometimes ignored. While the inclusion of production materials to serve as evidence for the documentation is a general problem, it is much more pronounced among SL candidates. The absence of evidence of the candidate's role (whether it be screen grabs, storyboards, or excerpts from production documents), together with the occasional absence of rationales for the commentary, suggest that – if the students have been made aware of the criteria for this assessment – they have not always been made aware of the other requirements in the guide.

From time to time, appendices are presented, suggesting that a centre is working from a past copy of the guide.

While there is sometimes a problem with documentation and evidence, most students do present an over-view of the three production stages in the commentary.

### **Criterion B – Reflection and Evaluation**

The most frequently ignored descriptor for this Criterion is “with good critical evaluation of the project as a whole.” Often, if there is any summative consideration of the project at all, it is simply: “I am happy with my work”. Most students seem to ignore this entirely, and it is possible that this may be the result of having too little time between the completion of the film and the assessment. Candidates must have sufficient time after completion of their film to offer measured and objective reflection and evaluation. This is another good reason for beginning the project and completing it in an appropriate time frame. Otherwise, most students understand the idea of an “artistic and logistical analysis” even though the commentaries tend to lean toward the logistical rather than the artistic.

### **Criteria C [Professional and Technical Skills] and D [Effective use of film language]**

To most candidates, the film seems to be the thing that they feel counts above all else, and overall, the responses to these criteria have always been strong. Candidates sometimes regard these as the whole of the assignment (to their detriment as it means they have ignored the requirements of Criteria A and B). It should be made clear that each criterion carries the same number of marks. Students seem to be clear that they can only choose to be assessed for one role in production, but they do not always seem to choose the best possible role for assessment.

### **Criterion E – Originality and Creativity**

Overall there was significant improvement over the previous session as students seem better equipped and more willing to embrace the concept of only using original sound. However there are still too many clichés being seen, whether it is the shot of the alarm clock that begins the film, students chatting on cell phones, or even the clichéd depiction of teenagers borrowed from the archetypes of commercial films, the imaginations of these students do

sometimes fail them. However it is always most pleasing and encouraging to see unique visions and, again, spending more time on these productions would probably greatly improve the results.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Try to follow Robert Rodriguez's advice: "Got a dog, make a movie about a dog." The biggest resource that is unique to these students is their own life, but frequently the work we see is the re-created work of other filmmakers. Encouraging students to look for subjects around them would probably help many, particularly the weaker students, to find a better focus for their work.
- Emphasise the fact that this is an assessment with specific prerequisites, not simply a film. In their Portfolio commentary candidates frequently complain about conditions of the assessment especially the restriction on length. Candidates must recognise that they have to plan a 6-7 minute film at HL or a 4-5 minute film at SL [and at HL and individual trailer to showcase the film]. This must be undertaken within the specific role that they have chosen. A ten-minute cut that they feel is superior is irrelevant. The film must be planned from the start to run seven minutes. Discussing the criteria and re-visiting them with the students, highlighting all the descriptors, will help them see this as an assessment and not just "my I.B. Film."
- Watching a variety of short films and trailer examples will help the students focus on the possibilities inherent in the short feature genre. A frequent mistake is trying to make a 2-hour feature in seven minutes. Ultimately, students should be introduced to this project as early as possible so that planning and production can start early.
- The time spent practicing production skills is a major factor in success with this component. Some centres present work that appears to be from students who are not really familiar with cameras, lights, editing equipment, or other tools of production. While availability of time and equipment will vary by centre, students should be encouraged to undertake several exercises each year in order to build up the necessary skill sets to be successful in their contribution to the film making process.
- Candidates may only present themselves in one role for assessment. The specific role must be made clear throughout the written supporting material.
- Teachers must pay very close attention to the requirements for completing the cover sheets, and should not underestimate the importance of their comments in assisting the moderator.
- Candidates need to be carefully guided in selecting the role for which they choose to be assessed in their production, and in constructing their portfolio to make it clear how they have fulfilled this role.

## Further comments

One would expect that student filmmakers would have a clear expertise in their chosen production role, and have studied international masters of elements of film making such as editing, writing and cinematography. Unfortunately this is not always the case. Students fall

into their roles accidentally or half-heartedly and the result is often mediocre work with basic, but uninspired storytelling.

If we take cinematography as an example, basic storytelling involves selecting camera angles, framing and lighting that communicate the story clearly. The next level of sophistication would be an inventive, non-standard angle or composition, something unusual that contributes in a relevant way to the meaning: in other words, it does not merely tell the story, it adds to it. However it must be understood that the inventive angle has a purpose beyond merely its novelty. Finally, on the deepest level, one might select an inventive angle that not only reinforces and adds to the meaning, but ironically reverses or challenges the surface meaning of the story. Very few candidates achieve this. The same set of levels of creativity can be explored in every production role. Sound should not merely match the story, but add to it or go against it. Writers frequently present projects mainly as three-act structure films. Although these are welcome and may be the best choice for students, there are many other ways to present appropriate material, and it would be interesting to see some broader engagement with film beyond this dominant form.

In summary, if there was a shortcoming in this session it was an overall lack of ambition on the part of some students.

There has been much improvement in the presentation of work from the pilot schools. Most work now is sent on DVD, which overcomes most of the pitfalls of varying television standards like PAL and NTSC when viewed on a computer. DVD is the best medium for work when properly transferred and is advised for all schools. **[It should be noted that as of 2009 all productions will have to be presented on DVD. Work entered on VHS will not be acceptable.]**

There are still a few schools that are including an APPENDIX with work, which implies they are using an old version of the guide. Centres should make sure they are working from the latest version of the guide. However, most work has been presented in appropriate form with correct paperwork.

## Independent study

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 25

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 25

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

The strongest examples of the Independent Study made excellent use of the documentary format by skilfully linking audio and visuals to support their arguments. These were well-structured scripts featuring original and challenging ideas using the voice of the student writer as narrator, and were engaged in a meaningful way with the target audience.

Some schools demonstrated a high level of film history and film theory knowledge and obviously encouraged the students to discuss their topic in cinematic terms. These scripts included well-worded, clear rationales that explained the goal of the script.

The best IS work reflected the candidate's passion for, and understanding of, the topic, the filmmaker's intentions, and the sociological and cultural contexts. These candidates explored how documentary films make meaning and made excellent use of a wide variety of annotated sources.

## The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Many candidates had difficulty choosing a topic that "explored an aspect of film history or film theory ... discussed primarily in cinematic language". These candidates often chose topics that encouraged a discussion in literary terms or one that demanded nothing more than a description of the film's story. These scripts were often framed by incomplete or poorly worded rationales and very limited use of sources; usually relying on IMDB, Wikipedia, or the promotional "special features" found on the DVD versions of the source films.

The guide requires candidates to engage in a culture unfamiliar to their own, but many scripts compared cultures that are arguably similar ( US and UK films for instance) and thus restricted any opportunity for exploration.

The student is to act as the prime voice of the documentary (acting as host, narrator and/or voice-over). A number of IS scripts at HL and SL did not follow this requirement and instead had actors, directors, friends or deceased film critics speaking words written

by the candidate. These words could not be verified in sources. Other scripts featured over-developed narrator sequences, sometimes so elaborate that they distracted the audience from any arguments being made about film theory or history (or, in some cases, seemed designed to cover up the lack of these arguments).

Many scripts at HL or SL did not have annotated sources and did not refer to their primary film sources. Sources such as IMDB were often listed without including which web pages were consulted.

Teachers and candidates are reminded that the IS component does not require the script to be produced as an actual documentary film. If a film is produced it must not be included when the script is sent to the examiner.

Some candidates failed to refer to the required number of films. Some HL scripts included the correct number of films but limited discussion to one or two, giving cursory attention to the others. Scripts at both HL and SL often ran over or under the required number of pages, failed to include rationales and/or source pages, used an incorrect font size or style, or

included duplications, blank spaces and other methods of padding out scripts. Many scripts were not spell-checked and often scripts did not include page numbers.

The distinction between the kinds of knowledge and understanding of film expected of a serious student of film/cinema, and the levels commonly found in people who are enthusiastic - but often uncritical - consumers of film/cinema continues to be a major discriminator between the most and least successful work in the IS. A disappointing number of candidates fall into the trap of repeating anecdotes about celebrities, retelling the story of a film, using unsupported assertion and hyperbole – creating a documentary that is more promotional tool than considered analysis.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers and candidates must read the current guide and pay particular attention to the formal requirements, the intent of international mindedness, and the requirement to use the language of cinema.
- Teachers should prepare a summary sheet and allow sufficient time to develop the IS.
- The concept of “a culture unfamiliar to their own” must be emphasized and illustrated through film study, discussion, and student research.
- Candidates should select topics that offer the opportunity to engage in a discussion related to film theory/film history. The films chosen must be from more than one country and HL students should be reminded that comparison between the four films is required.
- Instruction on selecting appropriate source material, annotation, and conventions for listing references should be given. Candidates should be encouraged to look at film textbooks and articles as sources.
- Candidates should watch a variety of documentary films, paying particular attention to structure and how visuals and audio work in tandem to present information, make an argument, and engage the audience.
- Teachers should use the IB supplied support material, particularly the samples of good practice.

## Film presentation

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 25

## Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 25

### The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

More candidates are trying to integrate analysis of the extract in relation to the film as a whole with detailed analysis of specific elements rather than merely presenting chronological shot by shot descriptions. It is also encouraging to see that candidates are engaging enthusiastically with the films and are reflecting detailed knowledge of the films selected for study as well as a broader understanding of the study of film. At their best candidates were able to integrate a thorough understanding of the themes, issues and socio-cultural contexts of the films with a close, detailed textual analysis of their chosen extract. It should be noted, however, that whilst it is necessary to reflect a clear understanding of the broader context of the films, this must be explored in conjunction with a close analysis of the chosen extract. It is not appropriate for candidates to restrict themselves to a simple commentary on the film as a whole. Candidates should also avoid simple and unnecessary summaries of the narrative of the film.

Most candidates are organising their presentations effectively and are preparing fully. This is indicated by those candidates who complete their presentation close to the time allowed. Candidates are clearly using well organised notes as *aides memoire* but it should be pointed out that candidates are not allowed to read their presentations almost verbatim from a prepared script. Candidates who do read their presentations are penalised.

Candidates are using precise filmic language to effect but there are still far too many instances of imprecise terminology.

### The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

A significant number of candidates are still finding it difficult to make the transition from simply describing their chosen extract and summarising the narrative to offering detailed textual analysis. Sometimes the descriptions are very detailed but this description and detail constitutes only what they see and hear rather than how meaning is constructed or why specific techniques were used to represent elements such as themes, ideas and character.

Of considerable concern is the fact that a small but significant number of candidates are not fulfilling all the requirements at HL and SL. There were some candidates who managed to present a detailed analysis of the extract itself and nothing more. Candidates must address the film's genre, its place in a broader socio-cultural context and director's intentions. In addition at HL candidates must also refer to responses from audiences, reviewers, critics and scholars at the time of the film's original release and/or subsequently. These requirements are clearly set out in the Film course.

It is absolutely essential that teachers read the film guide thoroughly and ensure that their candidates fulfil all requirements. Some candidates are offering presentations that are either

substantially over or under their allocation of time whether at HL or SL. Should a candidate go over their permitted time anything that the candidate then says cannot be credited. Candidates whose presentations are very short are unlikely to achieve their full potential. Careful planning and preparation should remedy these issues.

In spite of repeated reference in previous subject reports some teachers are intervening inappropriately during their candidates' presentations. The instructions are very clear and are set out again below in Guidance for teachers.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers must not intervene during the candidate's presentation apart from stating, "You have X minutes left. Do you have anything more to say? Or do you want to elaborate on areas that you have already covered?" Teachers may not refer to specifics even by mentioning by name areas that they think that the candidate has not fully explored. Anything that a candidate says in response to an inappropriate teacher intervention cannot be rewarded.
- Candidates must be given substantial opportunities to practice textual analysis before embarking upon their examination pieces.
- Candidates must be given practice in timing for their presentations. Too many are either too short or too long. Anything that a candidate says after their allowed time has elapsed cannot be credited.
- Teachers cannot give students guidance as to the socio-cultural context of any of the films of the prescribed list; however students do clearly need guidance to be able to discuss the broader contexts of films. Some candidates seem to think that to list the film's date of production and any awards received is sufficient as a context.
- Teachers must check the sound levels before sending the recorded presentations to be examined. Some candidates' presentations were almost inaudible.
- Once recordings have been started they must not be paused, or stopped and restarted. Should a candidate wish to watch the extract through before the presentation, this must be done before recording commences.
- All recordings onto CDs must be able to be accessed with a conventional domestic CD player. Presentations in files such as Mpeg, Quick Time or Media Player are not acceptable.
- Teachers must not allow candidates to read their presentations. Brief notes are acceptable.
- Recordings of the presentations must be in a private place: not, for instance in an open class room. Make sure as far as possible that the candidate will not be interrupted by outside noise. Some candidates were interrupted, sometimes several times by loud school announcements via tannoy.

**Please note that as from 2009 no presentations will be accepted on audio cassette. All will have to be presented on CD, readable on a domestic CD player.**