Film

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 13	14 – 29	30 – 41	42 – 54	55 – 67	68 – 80	81 – 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 13	14 – 28	29 – 41	42 – 54	55 – 68	69 – 81	82 – 100

Production portfolio

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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

Standard level

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Work at both standard level and higher level continues to be affected by two main factors that divide excellent films from the less accomplished films. The first factor is the amount of time that the candidates have devoted to the work, with some groups clearly accomplishing the task in a week or less, while more proficient groups have spent months conceptualizing, planning, and taking their films through the stages of pre-production, production, and post-production. Finding the time to make a film at both standard level and higher level is a complex organizational task for candidates within the diploma programme, but clearly some groups spent little time preparing for this major assessment.

The other factor that is significant is the range of skills developed. While most candidates at both levels have some understanding of visual narrative, there were many who seemed tentative in terms of technical skills, with some candidates reporting that they had never worked in the role they had chosen before. It is important that candidates complete this final assessment confidently, having had time to develop the technical skill necessary and the understanding of film language and visual expression related to their chosen role.

Despite the Film assessment clarification document being available on the OCC since September 2015, there are still candidates who use royalty free sites with finished music instead of using music creation programs with royalty free loops. While this is permitted, the original creation of a soundtrack (whether it is composed music or not) is always preferable to the simply adding on of a song, and teachers should help candidates devise ways to be involved in the creation of original music. Further, at both levels, there were films that were significantly under or over the times permitted for the film in the guide. As noted previously, taking time to plan the film carefully (including its running length) with a clear understanding of the criterion descriptors will help candidates immensely in being successful in this assessment. At the same time, the suggestions for content and treatment have been followed well for the most part, and there seems to be a welcome departure from trying to reproduce big-budget feature films. Instead, candidates are creating films that focus on stories and themes that are important to their own lives and the issues that affect them.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Neglecting to discuss the trailer in the body of the commentary is the most common reason for higher level candidates to not be able to achieve higher marks. Criteria A and B specifically cite the trailer as a descriptor, so without written discussion and visual evidence to support the work on the trailer, the marks will be limited.

Criterion A

The strongest responses were from candidates who covered all the production stages in their commentary, with a special focus on their chosen role, without diverting into discussion of other roles they may have also worked in or too much discussion of their inspirations and sources (though some discussion of this is significant). At both levels, some candidates neglected to present the required evidence of work in role (screen captures, production documents, set photos, storyboards, call sheets, script rewrites and other significant supporting documents). This was another reason for low marks to be awarded.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Criterion B

It is most important that the logistic and artistic reflection and evaluation is focused, for the most part, on the role of the candidate. While the roles of others may be 'appropriate', the essential source for reflection - both artistic and logistic - is the work in the candidate's chosen role. Further, many candidates do not remember to include a critical evaluation of the project as a whole, which should be a clear-eyed reflection on the finished film with an understanding of both the successes and short-comings of the film.

Criterion C

As noted previously, some candidates come to this assessment without enough experience to really understand their chosen role. The strongest candidates demonstrated understanding and technical skill in both their films and their written commentary (though for this criteria evidence in either the film or the commentary is enough). Most candidates have some understanding of the skills necessary to work in each of the film roles, but candidates should give some consideration to which role they are strongest in before they begin their film.

Criterion D

The evidence for this criterion is the use of film language in the film itself. While the mark is frequently close to the mark for criterion C, a candidate may be able to explain their intentions but not bring those intentions to fruition. In this case, the mark for criterion C might be slightly higher than the mark for criterion D. As noted before, the key areas for success are the length of time which has been used for planning and making the film, and the understanding of the chosen role.

Criterion E

The use of sound (and visuals) not of the candidate's own creation had a negative impact on marks for some candidates here. It is important to follow the spirit of the course in terms of candidates being the original creators of visuals and sounds used in the film wherever possible. Many candidates did a good job of focusing on stories from their own lives, as opposed to merely trying to copy feature films. There was much creativity from candidates who created very original and personal work, but some work that used the conventions of genre film also demonstrated much creativity and understanding of cinema conventions.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

It is important that all candidates have some experience working with sound, so that the idea of creating their own sound effects and 'music' is not an impediment to the creation of the final film. This is as important as the jobs of writer, director, cinematographer, or editor, but for some reason it is viewed very tentatively as if candidates have to be a musician in order to create a soundtrack. The skills that are necessary are not any more complicated than the skills in the other roles, but they have to be practiced throughout the course.

Candidates should watch short films, since the pacing and structure they are trying to mirror is that of short films and not feature films.

Candidates should have practice in ramp-up assignments collecting graphic and photographic evidence to support their production process and work in their role. They particularly need to collect evidence that will show how they met the artistic and logistic challenges of their individual chosen role. They should consider how any evidence they present will support their commentary. To do this well, they need to have a real appreciation of the roles of the writer, director, cinematographer, editor, and sound designer/sound editor.

In addition, at higher level, candidates should have experienced watching a variety of styles of trailers from different times and different countries, so that they can approach the trailer section of the assessment with a variety of responses.

Further comments

Many of the films this year showed an excellent understanding of techniques learned from studying great directors, the conventions of many genres, and the visual language of many different cultures. When candidates combined knowledge like this with a passion for communicating their own ideas, they created excellent films.

There should be time enough in the process building up to this final assessment for candidates to make mistakes, re-direct themselves, and still complete a fully-realized film.

Candidates should be encouraged to pitch their ideas and constantly refocus them, spending the time to develop the film before they begin shooting.

Finally, it is very important that the candidates are aware of the descriptors in the criteria, and have an understanding of the requirements of the assessment. Overall, the task is not to create the best film they can, but to create the film that best shows evidence that they have accomplished the levels of communication and creativity embodied by the criterion descriptors. This is a subtle distinction, and teachers will need to make sure that candidates are clear about the content requirements and restrictions and the work/evidence required in the film and commentary in order to be successful.

Independent study

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 10	11 – 13	14 – 17	18 – 20	21 – 25

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 10	11 – 13	14 – 17	18 – 20	21 – 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Candidates submitted a diverse range of films and topics. There are perennial favourites like film noir, Disney v Myazaki animation, kung fu films, the male gaze and so on. Many also took the opportunity to pursue personal film passions in some depth. Even when candidates chose a more technical aspect for examination, it is most essential that the discourse be linked to an aspect of film theory or history, as clearly outlined in the task. If the discussion remains anchored in say, lighting or editing, the discussion invariably becomes limited and superficial, reliant on plot, rather than analysing the deeper meanings and uses of these technical aspects. Format issues or problems were pretty minimal in 2016, showing that candidates are getting the message about the required presentation. Independent studies that were too short were usually an indication of lack of preparation rather than problems with format.

The strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual areas

Poorly expressed rationales are of continuing concern in this task. It is not a summary of the work, but needs to set the framework and areas of reference for the argument. Personal preferences, like "I've loved Disney movies since I was a child" are irrelevant and a distraction. This was written last year and worth repeating: A good rationale is one that is anchored in cinema history or theory, avoids personal preferences, is expressed in film language and has a clear and achievable range and purpose.

The best studies opened out the topic into logical and related sub-points. These papers, particularly at higher level, made excellent cross comparisons and contrasts with the required number of films. Although not a requirement at standard level, linking between the films is encouraged because such thinking is only going to expand and enrich the scope and depth of the argument being presented. It should be emphasised that the markband mentions "argument" implying that the candidate needs to take a critical standpoint. So those candidates who merely present plot summaries or scene descriptions are self-penalising with this descriptor.

The use of the AV format continues to be an area that needs proper attention. Weaker candidates either ignored the visual completely, or used it as a kind of backdrop to an essay type of format in the audio. Remember that the overall impact needs to be an informed and engaging narrator taking us on a visually dynamic journey which edifies the target audience over a question of cinema theory or history. The best candidates provided a "paper documentary" where the reader was thoroughly engaged with both visual and audio detail.

The annotated bibliography needs to be more than an afterthought or a shopping list of sources. Far too many candidates rely on their own subjective interpretations so the Independent Study reads like a collection of mini text analyses. The best candidates could interweave critical opinion from others with their own justified opinions. They also went beyond predictable and often superficial sources like Wikipedia and IMDB. There is now a deep critical range of sources candidates can now draw upon to enrich the depth of their argument. The majority neglect this.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The Independent Study is probably the most criticised and misunderstood aspect of assessment in diploma programme Film. Teachers should avoid compartmentalising it as a separate component, but use it as a framework to help their candidates as practitioners, as well as critics of film. So if a candidate is making a film noir piece for their Production Portfolio, use the Independent Study as a means for them to research the theory and history behind it. All aspects of diploma programme Film, theory and practice, are meant to interlink. Teachers should spend a lot of time mentoring their candidates with the Independent Study. Strategies like helping to explore the complexities of the argument, breaking down analyses into bite sized chunks are good ways of dismantling what can seem to be an overwhelming task at the outset into an achievable step by step process. Comparisons with the same approach needed for an Extended Essay are useful.

It is worth repeating the advice given to standard level candidates last year as this problem continues: It is recommended that standard level candidates try to go beyond the minimum required two films in developing their Independent Study. The evidence is that if the paper is restricted to just these minimum requirements, candidates struggle to achieve scope and depth required. In both higher level and standard level, candidates who embrace the investigation of a question beyond the limitations of the required films better fulfil the intentions of the task and score accordingly.

Further Comments

It is fairly obvious from comments made on the OCC forum that the Independent Study garners a lot of dismissive criticism from some teachers: the difficulties of format, the demands of the task or indeed its relevance. It is imperative that teachers learn from the successes and weaknesses of their cohort so that it informs their teaching practice about the most engaging and successful methods to manage this task for the benefit of their candidates. Candidates pick up a lot from their teachers about the "worth" of a task. So an overly negative approach may result in candidates taking an equally dismissive response that may jeopardise their performance in this quite weighty aspect of their overall assessment in diploma programme Film.

Film presentation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 8	9 – 12	13 – 16	17 – 20	21 – 25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 – 3	4 – 7	8 – 10	11 – 13	14 – 17	18 – 20	21 – 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most candidates focused their Presentation on the selected extract but few used the rest of the film as an opportunity make links and contrasts. Too many of the weaker candidates delivered longs lists of facts, information, quotes and statistics without uses as jumping-off points for analysis. With Breaking Bad, very few candidates made any connections to the other episode. There seemed to be fewer instances of reading from a prepared script.

Very few candidates submitted presentations that contained long list of awards and too much emphasis on factual information about the film. The majority of candidates focused on the extract rather than the film as a whole. Fewer candidates retold the plot and described the use of film language (mostly a list of camera shots) without any evaluative analysis. While most candidates concentrated on how film language created meaning, the poorer presentations devoted too little time to this. Better candidates used their allotted time to discuss the extract with pertinent links to other parts of the film. Weaker candidates spent too much time giving factual information about the film as a whole.

Selecting the right extract is an important part of a successful presentation. Stronger candidates often selected an extract that included more than one scene, thus allowing for comparison and contrast.

The strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual areas

Historic/socio-cultural context: A surprising number of candidates dealt poorly (or simplistically) with this. Better candidates did not treat it as a separate category but integrated it into their presentation. Weaker candidates simply identified the genre while stronger candidates discussed how the film conformed to, subverted or changed the genre.

Candidates should be reminded that that they may include genre, socio-cultural context or both. The film they choose should dictate what is the best of these three options. A significant number of candidates omitted a rationale for selecting the extract. Weaker candidates often dealt with it in a single sentence, usually related to plot turning point. Better candidates used this as an opportunity to introduce the presentation.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teacher should instruct candidates to:
- focus on the extract.
- get to the analysis as quickly as possible.
- use "What were the intended effects of the director's choices?" as the overall guiding question for analysis of film language rather than addressing "director's intent" in a single sentence.
- avoid retelling the plot and being overly descriptive.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

- pay special attention to the following words in the rubric: "coherent", "evaluative", "detailed" and "how film language creates, meaning". Teachers should ensure that candidates understand the expectations connoted by these words and phrases. "Coherent" relates of structure, planning and how convincing the conclusions are, not fluency of delivery. Weaker presentations tended to plod through a checklist of "director's intentions", "genre" and so on. so there was no coherence to the presentation.

"Director's intention" should be embedded throughout the presentation rather than be dealt with as a separate section.

In discussing reactions to the film (at higher level), citing the Rotten Tomatoes score is of little value. Better candidates used quotes from experts as a launching point for their own opinions, comments and analysis. Some standard level candidates included a section devoted to reactions to the film. This is not required at this level and used up valuable time that could be spent on analysis.

Some candidates find it difficult to make links to the rest of the film in terms of anything other than plot. Genre conventions may be a useful way to do this, as well as directorial intent, foreshadowing, repetition of stylistic features, and script structure.

Candidates are expected to research their film. The strongest candidates were able to integrate research on either genre or sociocultural context smoothly with the interpretation of the scene. Weaker candidates' presentations showed no evidence of research or used sources that could not be considered scholarly or academic.