

## November 2017 subject reports

### FILM

#### Overall grade boundaries

##### Higher level

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

##### Standard level

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

#### 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

Both standard level and higher level students provided a wide range of satisfactory work. Often, suitability of work and achievement seemed to be greatly affected by the presentation of the assessment to the students. Teachers should be careful to present the requirements over the two years of the course. At times, the focus of the student film is inappropriate for assessment. An example is a number of documentary films that presented topics that could hardly avoid copyright and/or creativity problems. (i.e. Doing a documentary about a band which plays copyright music.) Students need careful guidance in terms of developing their films. The best work was imaginative and done by students who had clearly had many experiences working in different film roles throughout their course. There were many examples of creativity and imagination in film language focused on issues that were important to the students and their peers.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A

The best work fully detailed the work in pre-production, production, and post-production in terms of the student's individual chosen role. Some students tended to meander through all the details of the production without relating those moments to their role. As always, the best commentaries included graphic or photographic evidence of the work completed at each stage. Again, weaker students tended to ignore some stages of the work. At times, higher level students failed to cover the work on their trailer in their commentary.

### Criterion B

In detailing the artistic and logistic problems confronted in their work in role, some students failed to use graphic or photographic evidence which is clearly important for this criterion. In addition, a critical reflection on the completed film is required but some students failed to include this - presenting instead a more general discussion of the overall production process, or nothing at all. The strongest work engaged with the student's role at all stages of the production process and presented a clear-eyed critical reflection. At times, higher level students failed to cover their work on their trailer in their commentary.

### Criterion C

There were varying amounts of success in terms of technical skills on view. Clearly, the more experience students had in exploring the roles before coming to the final film, the more successful they were in terms of this final assessment. Students should not attempt a role that they have never experienced for this final assessment.

### Criterion D

The expression of ideas in visual language is one of the strongest areas for most students. It was good to see students attempting to express complex, creative, and meaningful ideas in film language.

## Criterion E

Overall, there was much creativity on view. It is important to remember that the film program intends that students be the original creator of all materials used in the creation of their film, or have input in its creation. That is, students may work with musicians to create a soundtrack - for example - but they should describe the creative process and not simply 'choose' previously created work. This is a creativity issue and not a copyright issue, and teachers should keep this in mind.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers are reminded that all criteria should be shared with students and that they should have a clear understanding of the focus of this assessment. Too often, instead of making a film that will fulfil the criteria, students seem to be engaged in simply making a film - which results in inappropriate work being presented. (See the comment on documentaries above.)

It is very important for teachers to present experiences of all five roles throughout the course. In this way, students will be comfortable with the final assessment, and have some ability to choose the role that they can fulfil most expertly.

More and more it seems that students are exploring ideas that are personally meaningful and not attempting to re-create Hollywood features in 5 minutes. This is excellent. The more focus students have on using film language to express ideas they are passionate about, the better the final product seems to be.

Some experience in creating a 'soundtrack' for their films before this assessment will mean that students come to the final assessment task with more confidence and do not fall back on simply choosing 'Creative commons' music. (Often the students cite SoundCloud or other copyright free sources and it is clear that they have had no part in the creation of the soundtrack. This does not fulfil the expectations of the course. Since higher level students must produce an individual trailer, it is most important that some time during the class is spent looking at trailers from different countries and historical periods, so that the higher level students come to this part of the assessment with a wide range of influences.

## Further comments

Ultimately, the more practical filmmaking experiences that the students can have throughout the course, the more competent they will be when completing this assessment. There needs to be enough experience so that the student chooses a role they feel they have the required skills for, which will greatly help in the student being successful in this assessment.

Teachers are urged to re-iterate to students the following :

- The minimum and maximum time limit for the film and trailer. A number of schools exceeded the limit or were too short.
- The details of the creativity and copyright statement, as outlined in the Film assessment

clarification document, which is available on the Programme Resource Centre (PRC). Many are confused about the emphasis on creativity, and simply avoid copyright by choosing 'non-copyright' music from sources like SoundCloud with the filmmakers having no creative engagement with the musicians. It is important to remember that all students - regardless of role - should briefly explain how music was created (and explain how insert visuals were created if this is significant or could be unclear). At higher level, it is most important that the students address the creation of the trailer in the body of the commentary, otherwise they may be limited in the marks they receive for criteria A and B.

- Some students are presenting a lengthy analysis of films that are 'inspirations.' It should be noted that 'inspirations' are not limited to other films when the group conceives its own film. Sometimes the commentary seems to be a list of films that scenes are drawn from, to the point where creativity of the group itself seems somewhat compromised. Students are very comfortable, it seems, talking about inspirations that come from elsewhere but less confident when discussing their own ideas. It is a good idea to stress the fact that this assessment is not about re-mastering other films, and lists of 'inspirations' should be kept to a minimum. Further, sometimes the 'inspirations' listed seem to have no direct effect on the film presented. ("We were inspired by the French New Wave..." with no discussion of a significant New Wave film that was inspirational)
- As with every other element of the commentary, students should dwell on what is meaningful to their role, their execution of it, and their film.
- Finally, as the assessment is a short film, it is most important that students have multiple experiences of viewing, analyzing, and understanding the short film format throughout their course.

## Independent study

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher 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

#### 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 range and suitability of the work submitted

Broadly, most of the work submitted for assessment in this component was appropriate, with genre and gender representations evident in their usual popularity. There were one or two unusual approaches to historical topics, and the exploration of 'realisms' seemed notable by its rarity among this cohort. There were very few topic choices which could not have been made suitable with appropriate research and focus. This isn't to say that all of these more marginal topics were ultimately unsuccessful. Although, where students stated a clear cinematic focus for their study and were consistent in exploring their topic through the cinematic elements, they were frequently successful in developing interesting arguments and demonstrating control over the documentary format, despite any doubts one might have had over the topic itself.

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

It seemed clear that genuine engagement with topics would result in successful outcomes in the Independent Study. Many of the topics of work which scored in the top band were quite unusual, but were all successful in developing cogent arguments which were developed through clear understanding and highly competent control over the documentary screenplay form.

There were notable weaknesses resulting from topic selections which really shouldn't have been problematic; for example, far too many 'genre studies' failed to even mention critical approaches to genre, or to explore their topics through a cinematic focus, relying instead on superficial plot points. This seemed particularly evident in topics exploring horror as a genre. Another all too frequent weakness in topic selection was evident in the exploration of 'emotion' in cinematic expression. This is a vague and largely unarguable area, which equally failed to encourage thoughtful and effective use of sources or the documentary screenplay format. Exploring how audiences responded to material on screen is largely not researchable, better to shift focus to the intentions of film makers evident in their cinematic choices. This invariably sets sequences in a cultural context, as the making of meaning in film is most often a negotiated area between the coded intentions of film makers, the film itself and audiences' decoding of this.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Topic selection is key to success in the Independent Study and guidance should be offered to candidates so that they choose a topic which meets all the requirements of this component and has the potential to engage their curiosity and research skills effectively over an extended period of time. The topic choice should also permit a clear cinematic focus and development of an argument through the deployment of an appropriate range of audio/visual material.

The Independent Study should involve the student pursuing a topic area they can engage with, but guidance should be provided so that they meet the requirements of the component: the formal requirements, which teachers must ensure candidates are aware of, and the requirements for content; the minimum number of films to study; the requirement for films

studied to originate in different film cultures, and for there to be a film history and/or theory topic, and a cinematic focus for the study.

Finally, ensure that candidates clearly focus their ideas into their rationale, so that they can remain focused in their exploration of the topic.

## Further Comments

In the November 2017 session there were several responses which might have scored in the top mark bands, but which were capped at 15 for failing to meet the formal requirements for the Independent Study. Candidates' work needs to be thoroughly checked before submission to ensure that their work meets their full potential, without penalty for avoidable errors which have nothing to do with the abilities evident in their work.

## 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 – 8	9 – 12	13 – 16	17 – 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 range and suitability of the work submitted

Candidates selected suitable films and extracts. They selected a fairly wide range of films with a marked preference for more recent releases. *The Social Network* and *Spirited Away* were the most popular choices. Most candidates stayed within the time limit and there were only a few cases of self-penalization by giving short presentations. There are very few presentations in the lowest markband.

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

Most candidates focused on the analysis of film language in the extract. Weaker presentations devoted too much time to discussion of the film as a whole, and some candidates still included plot summaries and long lists of facts about the film and the director. The best candidates discussed the reactions to the film rather than simply quoting famous critics. They used the quotes as a starting point to add their own comments on the film. When discussing *Spirited Away*, weaker presentations remained focused on characterisation and symbolism while ignoring most of the film language elements. These film elements are equally important in an animated film as in a live action film. When discussing *The Social Network*, weaker candidates devoted too much time to the history of social media rather than analysing Fincher's choices in film language. Many candidates, including some with strong presentations, included weak or underdeveloped rationales. The best presentations spent a majority of the time discussing the extract, with a strong focus on the intended effects of choices made in the use of film language.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates need to be aware that the focus should be on the analysis of film language and its intended effects in the extract. Candidates should avoid plot summaries and long lists of facts (earnings, awards, Rotten Tomatoes scores and IMDB rankings). To score in the top markband, reactions to the film should be discussed rather than simply quoted. When analysing an animated film, film elements are equally important as in a live action film. These elements include shot types, composition, framing, and “camera” movement. The best candidates interlinked the socio-cultural context with their selected film, rather than simply setting the socio-cultural background. When discussing *The Social Network*, candidates should focus on the film language rather than giving a history of Facebook and the growth of social media unless this is specifically linked to the extract.

## Further Comments

Other students should not be present during the recording of the presentation.

Reading a presentation from a prepared script will be reported and may be considered as a case of academic misconduct.