

## PHILOSOPHY

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 12	13 - 24	25 - 40	41 - 53	54 - 66	67 - 78	79 - 100

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 12	13 - 27	28 - 41	42 - 54	55 - 65	66 - 76	77 - 100

### Higher and standard level internal assessment

#### Component grade boundaries

##### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

##### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

### General comments

Generally, IAs were of a high quality, using a wide range of non-philosophical material and a great variety of philosophical topics and material.

Two main problem areas were identified in this session's samples:

- Firstly, many candidates failed to respect formal requirements. Bibliographies and references were especially weak in quite a number of IAs. Some centres sent entire samples without references of any sort (no footnotes nor parenthetical references, no bibliography, nor referencing of the stimulus).

- Secondly, although a vast majority of candidates displayed a good understanding of the nature of the IA, there were quite a few who seemed to miss the point. Those candidates tended to approach the stimulus as if they were writing an art critique, focusing entirely on the non-philosophical material instead of focusing on the philosophical issues arising from the material. Some candidates spent a long time giving biographical details about artists or writers, for instance, at the expense of real philosophical analysis. Some pieces made no mention of philosophical concepts, theories or scholars. A couple of schools sent samples that were entirely constituted of such pieces, showing that candidates had probably been ill advised about the nature of the assessment.

Despite these cases, most IAs were of a good quality and most candidates had clearly been advised well. IAs often included helpful comments from teachers, justifying the marks awarded. This practice should be encouraged.

The only criterion that was marked a little too generously was criterion A, as teachers often tend to ignore formal requirement infringements as if they were unimportant. However, the IA is a good chance for candidates to learn to produce work within a certain framework and following a given format. If they fail to follow the few requirements outlined under criterion A, they must, and ultimately will, be penalized consistently.

## Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

Despite a few exceptions, forms were generally complete and samples sent in a timely manner. Teachers should make sure they use the newest version of the 3/CS form.

It is recommended that candidates be given clearer instructions about the formal requirements. Candidates should have access to assessment criteria and teachers should highlight the importance of criterion A, as so many marks were needlessly lost under that criterion.

## Range and suitability of the work submitted

### Stimuli

Stimuli were varied and often original. The range seemed wider than in previous years, with many candidates opting for contemporary pieces and steering away from stimuli that were becoming too commonplace, such as extracts from *The Matrix*.

Visual pieces (photographs, paintings etc.) and short written pieces (songs, poems, quotes, short extracts) were most commonly and successfully used. Candidates who attempted to summarise longer film scenes or book extracts were often less successful, due to a certain lack of focus.

There were still some candidates who used entire films or books, which is not appropriate. A few candidates decided to use several stimuli, causing confusion and focusing too strongly on the non-philosophical material, at the expense of the philosophical analysis. Finally, in a couple of instances, the stimulus was of a philosophical nature instead of being non-philosophical. These practices will usually result in lower marks under criterion C, but will often affect the quality of the whole IA. The selection of a good stimulus is therefore crucial.

It is felt, however, that the overwhelming majority of stimuli were appropriate, engaging and original.

### **Format and nature of the philosophical analysis**

In very few cases, the IA was written as philosophical dialogue. Although this practice is rare, it is worth noting that it is perfectly acceptable and often successful.

There are many ways to write a good philosophy essay and candidates used all kinds of formats successfully, as long as they followed the assessment criteria.

However, some candidates still struggled with balance and the following errors were fairly common:

- Overdeveloped personal response and opinion with no reference to philosophical material
- The opposite approach: a catalogue of references to authors and theories, written with little depth, evaluation or personal response
- Great focus on the stimulus, with very little focus on philosophical themes arising from the stimulus
- The opposite approach: no reference to the stimulus at all (apart from a very brief mention in the introduction)
- Discussing *many* of the philosophical themes that can arise from one stimulus instead of focusing on a single theme.

Although balance is difficult to achieve, the most costly mistake was to have too great a focus on the stimulus itself. A significant number of candidates spent a lot of time describing their stimulus and critiquing it in a non-philosophical way. For instance, some candidates dwelled on the meaning of the use of certain colours in a visual piece, without any direct connection to philosophy. A particular essay was entirely concerned with the biography of a renowned sculptor. These pieces were not appropriate: they mistook philosophical analysis with art criticism and missed the point.

## **Candidate performance against each criterion**

### **Criterion A: expression**

Many candidates lost marks because they did not respect formal requirements. As a reminder, the following “offences” automatically attract a zero for criterion A:

- Work outside the word limit
- No references
- Stimulus is not referenced (no source, unclear origin)

- Stimulus (or at least a 200-word summary of the stimulus) not included
- No obvious link with the syllabus
- Two or more other formal requirements (i.e. explicit connection with the syllabus, word count, title etc.) missing

The most common problem found in this session was the absence of references. Quite a number of papers had no bibliography, in-text references or footnotes. The referencing method is unimportant, as long as it is consistently and rigorously applied within each piece of work. Work lacking proper referencing borders on plagiarism, which is a serious offence, and examiners will alert the IB to this. The IA is an excellent opportunity to learn about the requirements of academic work.

Many bibliographies were of a poor quality. Some only included one or two websites such as Wikipedia. Others mentioned titles and authors, but failed to include publishers, dates and places of publication.

These formal requirement infringements are all the more unfortunate when candidates performed well in other areas of Criterion A. The use of philosophical language was generally competent and some candidates used vocabulary very efficiently indeed.

### **Criterion B: knowledge and understanding**

A majority of candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of philosophical issues. It was clear that many candidates had been exposed to a varied range of theories and authors.

Some candidates had a tendency to list theories and authors without properly demonstrating that they understood the references used.

Weaker essays sometimes included no explicit references to specific theories or authors, instead over-focusing on the stimulus or on the candidate's own opinion.

### **Criterion C: identification and analysis of relevant material**

The papers at the higher end of the scale displayed impressive analytic skills and treated philosophical themes with rigor. However, most candidates still need to distinguish between philosophical knowledge and philosophical analysis. Candidates who truly analyze material tend to engage with it on a deeper and more personal level. The best candidates, for instance, tended to find their own counter-examples and counter-criticisms, in addition to famous criticisms.

Given how difficult it is to score high marks under criterion C, it was a shame to see some candidates lose valuable points because of the unsuitable nature of their stimulus (i.e. whole book or film).

### **Criterion D: Development and Evaluation**

Some candidates managed to strike a perfect balance between the use of philosophical theories and scholars, and a relevant personal response. However, many candidates still lean on one side or the other, either developing their opinion without the support of philosophical material, or analyzing philosophical material in a rather disengaged manner, without a personal response. Personal response should be present but also informed and justified.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Highlight the importance of formal requirements including referencing. Show candidates how to reference work within the body of the text as well as in the bibliography. Make sure bibliographies include all relevant details (title, author, date and place of publication, publisher). Avoid a single, general website as a bibliography.
- Make sure candidates possess a good grasp of the nature of the IA. The stimulus is there to trigger philosophical reflection. Philosophical analysis should be at the centre of the essay. The stimulus itself is not there to be analyzed in the manner of an art or literary criticism.
- Conversely, the stimulus should not simply disappear after a quick mention in the introduction. The best candidates tend to refer to the stimulus throughout the essay, but always in relation to a main philosophical issue.
- A maximum of 2000 words means that it is much more advantageous for candidates to stick to one philosophical issue, even if their stimulus raises several. This approach allows candidates to show depth of analysis and include several perspectives, arguments, counter-arguments as well as thorough evaluation and personal response. All these elements must be present and none should be neglected.
- The IA is, to a large extent, a balancing act: if candidates are introduced to the different skills they are supposed to display (knowledge, understanding, analysis, evaluation, and personal response), they are perhaps less likely to write an entire essay stating their opinion or listing philosophers without real analysis.

## Higher and standard level paper one

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 8	9 - 17	18 - 33	34 - 45	46 - 58	59 - 70	71 - 90

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 8	9 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 31	32 - 37	38 - 44	45 - 60

## Higher level paper one

### General comments

Teachers are encouraged to send their commentaries by means of the G2 form. This feedback is very useful and it is taken into account during the grade award meeting, and also for the preparation of future examinations.

54% of the G2 responses indicated that compared with last year's paper, this exam was of a similar standard. However, around 25% thought it a little more difficult. Nearly all found the level of difficulty appropriate, or close to it.

While some schools expressed some concerns over the stimulus, it would be useful to recall that candidates should concentrate on the stimulus presented and not any additional information (such as the film that the image was taken from). The lack of knowledge of the film did not play any role in the quality of the answers; even more, from all answers achieving excellent marks not one commented on the film. A few teachers expressed concern over questions 5 and 11, indicating that they were too specific. Regarding question 5 which addresses theme 2, the question addresses an explicit possible topic for study within this theme (distribution of wealth- ethical responsibilities to humanity". Question 11 is constructed around the central issue of "justice in a society", relating in different ways to the other two main topics of civil society, the state and Government, and liberty and rights. These comments clearly raise the issue of how to read the P1 questions and how to deal with them. As the subject reports repeat in different ways over the last years, candidates should structure their answers and begin by unpacking the question, defining terms and concepts, and then with supportive examples, begin to explore and evaluate the material they use to create their response. If candidates were better prepared and made aware to take this approach, they certainly would have better chances at tackling questions such as 5 and 11.

In comparison with M12, the performance with regards to this paper has improved. Last year the responses presented a relatively significant improvement regarding two central aspects: the writing of outlines which are really helpful in the structure of the answer, and secondly, the effort to present counter-arguments (even though in many of these cases they were artificial to some extent). This tendency has improved further this session. also In addition, it has also

been observed that there was an improvement in the general level of knowledge, and to some extent the skills, particularly that of analysis. Furthermore, since having some reasonable knowledge is a condition for developing the skills required in P1, this improvement in knowledge seems to have a beneficial effect overall. The relevance of information being presented is also improving.

Generally speaking, the essays were satisfactory, and demonstrated reasonable organization (criterion A), and knowledge and understanding (criterion B).

Achievement of level 7 seems to continue to be difficult, but this is to be expected given the demanding nature of expected performance.

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

As in previous sessions, exams are generally speaking of a satisfactory level. There is still however a significant gap between the central and more demanding Diploma Philosophy course expectations and the actual work that is being produced. The main goal is the construction of an argument, though descriptive answers are still common. Regarding the approach to the exam and the task, many candidates do not consider the actual, explicit demands of the question, and some even disregard the question and apply what they have learnt regardless of what is being asked. This results in prepared answers or general expositions which consider the general theme of the question (for example knowledge or truth) and write about that without considering the requests of the question *per se*. There was evidence of preprepared answers being applied to questions regardless of the theme or direction of the question itself.

Similarly to previous years, there was no area of the programme that stood out as unusually difficult. The main difficulties, pointed out by examiners, which were similar to previous examination sessions, were as follows:

**Present an argument in an organized way.** Different issues were found in the construction of a logical argument. In a relevant number of cases, what is placed after an original premise did not follow logically. There were answers that did not present a well-organized argument. Some of the candidates seemed to be unclear as to how to organize and develop an argument; others seemed to be unclear on structure and purpose. However, some candidates had a clear, explicit and conscious structure in their essay and knew exactly where they were going and how each point contributed to the answer.

**Use clear, precise and appropriate language.** There were answers that did not employ clear, precise or appropriate language to philosophy. A weakness of a selection of scripts was the inability to write in a straightforward, concise manner which was economical in expression. There were scripts where candidates did not know how to write essays, but rather, they produced a series of unjustified assertions without explicit connection.

**Develop a clear and focused argument.** There is still a problem with candidates being overly descriptive and not philosophical enough. A significant number of answers lacked a clear argument. Some responses did not address the very specific and particular requirements of the question, answering in a very general manner. In the weakest cases there was evidence that only general knowledge had been shared.

In the philosophy exams in general, but specifically in Paper 1, answers are expected to develop an argument. To show knowledge of specific philosophical theories, names or positions is not an end in itself, but a means to develop the answer into a specific argument regarding the issue raised by the question. A clear example of this misunderstanding is the following kind of answer. It starts with “x has long been debated by many philosophers”, where x stands for the general topic of the theme. The assertion is then usually followed by a list of positions or theories without concern either for the specific issue or for developing an argument. Moreover, our philosophy questions have to be read as opportunities to examine and explore the possibilities opened by the question.

Examiners pointed out that as can be seen from the total number of marks available in the assessment criteria for knowledge and understanding (5), as opposed to those available for identification and analysis (10) and evaluation (10), it is vital that candidates should realize that the Diploma Philosophy course is not primarily a test of knowledge (for example of past philosophical positions, arguments and writers). In this course it is critical that candidates have the chance to develop their own skills of philosophical analysis and evaluation, which can be deployed in both the examination and the IA.

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

Generally speaking, many candidates demonstrated the ability to structure a satisfactorily appropriate response to a challenging question. They showed a reasonably satisfactory grasp of the conventions of the language employed. The language register was usually at the appropriate level of academic formality.

Some candidates had a good understanding of the function of the introductory paragraph. A significant number of candidates displayed between satisfactory and good knowledge and arguments relevant to the core/optional theme to which the question referred. Within this group of candidates, some exams presented abilities, levels and a depth of understanding ranging from the very good to the outstanding. The pertinent features of these essays were their fluency with, and knowledge of, philosophical terms and conventions. They were also characterized by a subtle and considered tone, and strong evidence of personal thought.

Compared with previous sessions the scripts presented a relatively significant improvement regarding two central aspects: a) the writing of outlines which are really helpful in the structure of the answer, and b) the effort to present counter-arguments (even though in many of these cases they were artificial to some extent).

In correspondence with the approach to the previous section, good preparation mainly refers not to specific areas but to the skills and approach. All the questions tested general skills in writing in a clear manner, advancing a substantive philosophical position in an orderly way and offering justified reasons for the conclusion reached. Some questions also tested more specialized skills and understanding of philosophical ideas. Most of the candidates were prepared within the context of the current programme and its objectives. Candidates demonstrated the ability to structure a philosophically appropriate response to a challenging question and to develop a well-balanced and focused personal response. They showed a satisfactory grasp of the conventions of the language employed.



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

### Section A

#### Core Theme: What is a human being?

In general the answers are becoming more relevant and the issues identified have some more sense in general than in previous sessions. There is still the difficulty of just identifying something which has little or no relation to the stimulus, and there is the continuing problem of preprepared answers. The intention of the question format is to give an opportunity to relate some background philosophical knowledge with an issue arising from the stimulus which presents something relevant for a reflection on the human condition. This is sometimes misinterpreted: a group of answers just took the opportunity to present memorized materials without any attempt to apply ideas to a specific issue/situation. The main problem is the tendency to not achieve the specific objectives of the programme, which in this case means using all the "material" learnt to construct an argument relevant to the stimulus, which is rarely successful.

A significant number of responses merely stated that the stimulus raised the philosophical question of what is a human being, which is just the core theme in general.

#### Question 1

This passage encouraged a reflection on the nature of human relationships, and how interaction with others brings about opportunities for human development and reflection on identity. Many answers were able to identify these issues and develop very good analysis exploring different approaches.

Candidates generally reflected on what constitutes the essence of a human being and if that essence is subject to change as a result of interaction. Many good answers also analyzed the claim in the passage that human beings are currently losing a sense of continuity in understanding our identity because of a concentration on the momentary. Some excellent answers sustained that in the virtual space there is no time, no past or future; confronting this, they claimed that we are our body. Many answers did not present two approaches. A group of answers were not able to give a conceptual identification of an issue. Weak answers merely described the passage.

#### Question 2

The picture invited a consideration of the nature of being human. The best answers explored the differences and similarities between human and non-human animals. Other very good answers took the opportunity to focus on what is the essence of being human or what must be the case for communication with others to occur. Issues that were considered include the role of reason and emotion in understanding the human condition; capacity for empathy with others; language; agency; aggression; moral values. Other issues were: Could animals or machines be persons? Is human behaviour distinct from that of animals or programmed machinery? What is the role of learning and communication in developing the self? What is the significance, for our understanding of humans and non-humans, of self-consciousness, self-awareness and consciousness?

**Section B**

Practically all scripts dealt with optional theme 2 (mainly question 6) and optional theme 3 (mainly question 8), with a significant number of exams having chosen both.

**Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology****Question 3**

This question asked for a critical appraisal of the claim that knowledge is no more than justified true belief. Only few answers gave explanations and defences of the three conditions supposed to be sufficient for knowledge, that is to say, the truth condition, the belief condition and the justification condition. A partially successful way of doing this was to present empiricism and rationalism.

**Question 4**

Satisfactory answers analyzed different forms of skepticism or claims allegedly related to it, demonstrating a reasonable knowledge of this position. Only some very good answers critically evaluated the specific skeptical claim, which is usually dubbed “global skepticism”, arguing that openness to genuine enquiry means that never-ending questioning must always be possible. They analyzed whether particular discoveries made in the course of our investigations of the world can count as knowledge, relating it to the world’s complexity.

**Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics****Question 5**

The best answers were clearly focused on the issue of whether moral responsibility is a matter only of individual ethical concern, an element within collective ethical concern or both. Notions of ethical responsibility were investigated from the point of view of ethical positions, for example, teleological ethics, utilitarianism, deontological ethics, virtue theories. Weaker answers were only able to present these positions without attempting an argument.

**Question 6**

This was without doubt the most popular choice. Based on adequate knowledge, the majority of answers demonstrated at least a satisfactory level of performance. Happiness or human fulfilment was seen from the point of view of ethical positions in for example, teleological ethics, deontological ethics, and virtue theories. Some very good and excellent answers were able to successfully connect trying to be happy with moral obligation. Some excellent answers developed unified arguments sustaining that living in accordance with moral standards is central in human nature and living in accordance with one’s human nature is key to attaining happiness.

**Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion****Question 7**

Adequate knowledge was presented in all the answers of candidates who were prepared to be assessed in this theme. The weaker answers showed lack of, or minimal preparation. The answers explained the nature of religious experiences. The very good and excellent answers demonstrated wide and detailed knowledge, and insightful understanding of the scope and possible limits of religious experience.

### Question 8

The answers to this question attempted two main strategies: just presenting and in the best cases discussing the standard arguments of God's existence (in the worst cases completely disregarding the specific question) or trying to tackle the specific question, the nature of faith in a Higher Being. The good and very good answers considered faith as an attitude of mind and an act of will that forms the basis of a system of belief. They also contemplated the relationship between faith and reason, and faith and certainty.

### Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art

#### Question 9

Some good and very good answers analyzed whether aesthetic value lies in the object itself, independent of us. Some of these answers argued that by contemplating art, we glimpse a set of values beyond our own immediate world of experience, so art has a significance and means of evaluation that transcends individual tastes. The social/political experience of art was pointed out by means of adequate examples, e.g. Picasso's *Guernica*.

#### Question 10

Some answers here which mainly attempted the question in general terms. The best answers adequately argued that intentionality is only one of a number of other necessary criteria that frame a work of art. These answers also demonstrated in many cases knowledge of good and relevant examples.

### Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy

#### Question 11

Few answers attempted this question. The best of them presented an idea of justice, for example, it is the fair and equitable treatment of individuals and groups, which was employed to analyze other dimensions of the question, e.g. the extent of the universalization that the realization of justice in a society might imply. Good answers made good references to the theories of both Plato and Rawls.

#### Question 12

The challenge of evaluating whether gender equality is a necessary condition for democracy was satisfactorily answered at least in general terms. Rousseau's and Locke's conceptions were appropriately employed to develop the argument of the case. Plato's political philosophy was often discussed.

### Optional Theme 6: Non-Western traditions and perspectives

**Question 13**

Only a small number of candidates attempted this question. They referred to Confucian conceptions, Buddhist approaches or Taoist philosophy. A couple of very good answers provided detailed arguments based on Confucianism.

**Question 14**

Again, very few candidates attempted this question. They referred to Confucian conceptions, Buddhist approaches or Taoist philosophy.

**Optional Theme 7: Contemporary social issues****Question 15**

There were few weak answers here, which only provided common sense considerations showing no proper preparation for this optional theme.

**Question 16**

In both Optional Themes 7 and 8 there is a quite clear tendency to find an answer without any specific preparation, a process which simply does not produce a response with even minimal philosophical relevance. It has to be stressed that answers without specific preparation and study do not succeed in answering questions of Optional Themes 7 and 8, no matter how familiar they might seem to be.

**Optional Theme 8: People, nations and cultures****Question 17**

This question was poorly answered by quite a small number of candidates who seemed to select the topics without a prior knowledge base to build upon. There seemed to be no clear idea of how to begin a thoughtful discussion of the topic. Many candidates who chose this question simply expressed their personal opinion without involving any philosophical discussion.

**Question 18**

A group of basically satisfactory answers examined issues related to cultural inferiority and/or superiority, without more clearly identifying the specific request for discussing the possible *criteria* used in making judgments about cultures.

**Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates**

The course is strongly oriented towards the development of skills synthesized under the expression “doing philosophy”. The following comments are the result of the shared examiner experience which might contribute to improve the performance of future candidates.

- Make sure candidates read the questions. Candidates can also use the internal rubrics published in the question paper to assist in guiding the way responses should

be formulated. Teachers should reinforce the idea that the answer needs to be explicitly tied to the demands of the question.

- Candidates must pay particular attention to, and carefully follow, the initial bullet points displayed at the beginning of the exam which clarify what they are expected to do. They should: argue in an organized way using clear, precise language, which is appropriate to philosophy, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of appropriate philosophical issues, analyse, develop and critically evaluate relevant ideas and arguments, present appropriate examples providing support for your overall argument, identify and analyse counter-arguments, provide relevant supporting material, illustrations and/or examples and offer a clear and philosophically relevant personal response to the examination question. ~~present an argument in an organized way; use clear, precise and appropriate language; develop a clear and focused argument; identify counter-arguments to their response, and address them if possible; provide relevant supporting material illustrations and/or examples where appropriate; conclude by making a clear, concise and philosophically informed personal response to the examination question.~~
- Learn to be clearly focused on the question. Candidates need to be made aware that the beginning of an essay in philosophy must examine the precise nature of the question being asked, and which terms need careful definition. They must also be aware that a plan or strategy for tackling the problem should appear near the beginning, so that the reader can follow the argument as it unfolds. Therefore, more work on using the introduction as an outline of the proposed approach to the problem would be very useful.
- It is important for teachers to teach their candidates how to plan their essays or answers, bearing in mind that the question at the top of the response will probably need to be explained in the first or second paragraph. In addition, it will need to be discussed from one or more perspectives in the body of the essay, and be clear in the concluding paragraph. Attention should be given to the stem of the question so that the answer is properly focused.
- During the course, these ideas should be understood and exercised by means of producing arguments. As stated above, candidates are expected to construct an argument. The more opportunities that candidates have to practice this, the better.
- The candidates should learn how to tackle the questions based on the central skills developed during the course, and not only or mainly on the knowledge of specific issues or positions. That means they should have learned how to argue, for example in ethics, philosophy of politics or philosophy of religion.

## Standard level paper one

### General comments

There was consensus that this cohort of candidates was seemingly stronger than in previous years. The cause of this improvement would seem to be that candidates commanded material better and generally tried to answer the set questions. There were no bizarre answers encountered and even the weaker responses had merit in some ways as they presented a partially structured answer. There was only one case of a high degree of illegibility seen and as always it is handled with care so as not to be over penalized for flaws in presentation..

Time management did not seem to be a problem this year.

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

There continues to be many responses to section A that seem to ignore the stimulus material or only make a one sentence reference to it and then proceed to a written response about a favourite or learnt area. There was an increase in the number of responses for A that did present two positions but as usual weaknesses arose in comparisons and evaluation, and an integration of a personal response into the answer.

Weaker responses across both sections did not present a clear introduction and outline a direction of approach.

As in previous years the weaker candidates seemed to respond to the latter part of the Paper, Question 13 onwards. It has to be asked whether Questions 13 onwards are answered because candidates think them easier, perhaps involving less philosophical analysis, or have they been prepared for them (their answers do not reflect this) or because of a lack of preparation of other options can only attempt these questions.

Much as command of content has improved it must be stressed that in Section B straightforward content will only gain a maximum of 5 points. A well-structured essay must have a commitment toward analysis and evaluation. This means that good answers will take apart the issues of the question, critical judgment positions and incorporate a personal perspective in that judgment. The good answer will also be reinforced with pertinent and effective examples. Therefore more high marks can be given in criteria C and D.

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

Many more candidates presented good structured answers with clear introductions and conclusions that seemed to bring closure. Even in strong responses there was an absence of good original examples. Many had knowledge at a high level, and yet the inability to produce the balance between solid knowledge and a critical evaluation meant that it would seem that few candidates' scripts went to the high 50s.

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

### General

Weaker responses seemed to appear in optional theme 1 and then questions 5 and 11, as well as optional themes 7 and 8. The complexity of the structure of question 11 tended to mislead responses while in question 5 the example given limited the breadth of response. It might be concluded that in optional theme 1 either candidates were not well prepared or could not apply their knowledge of epistemology in a critical way. Question 6 drew answers that often lacked clear definitions and some of the weaker responses to question 8 resulted in a recounting of proofs of God.

### Section A

#### Question 1

There was evidence of learnt answers being presented. Good answers stayed close to the stimulus and developed an argument around the issue of building relationship and the human need for such interactions.

#### Question 2

By far the most popular, but only one answer concluded that the ape might be more human as the human was losing many of the characteristics of humanness which was an interesting perspective. There was evidence of many learnt answers that made little reference to the stimulus

### Section B

#### Question 3

Of those who did this question, few were good as they did not evaluate the claim. Good answers explored the nature of belief and knowledge as well as investigating how we arrive at knowledge.

#### Question 4

Not well done, as the varying skeptical positions were not presented and then evaluated. Very few candidates challenged the assumption that 'all' implied 'complete' knowledge and whether this was ever attainable

#### Question 5

A popular question but it often resulted in wayward answers. Few explored the relationship of the individual and the community and how the issue of accountability could come about.

#### Question 6

This was a very popular question which resulted in classic comparisons of 'duty' and utilitarianism. Few explored the issue of what a moral obligation is and the degree to which happiness could be evaluated.

**Question 7**

This was a popular question, that in general produced good answers. In some cases there were very competent critiques of the classic views of the nature of religious experience.

**Question 8**

Popular but prone to draw answers that focused on proofs of a Higher Being rather than the nature of faith.

**Question 9**

Some good answers but few gave examples of the three experiences and how they might overlap. Candidates could have demonstrated how the claim might be true for some art forms and not others.

**Question 10**

Few attempted this question but of those that did answers were clear and the best explored the 'must' element.

**Question 11**

Few answers here explored the nature of justice and the issue of inclusivity and long-term consequences.

**Question 12**

Many good answers appeared here. Some showed depth of understanding of the related key issues of political philosophy.

**Question 13**

Answers tended to be descriptive for this question.

**Question 14**

Although answers were descriptive, few demonstrated an understanding of differing conceptual nature of authority within the traditions.

**Question 15**

Often this question drew answers that had little philosophical analysis. Those that were good did not reach out to explore the nature of betterment and progress.

**Question 16**



Some good answers appeared supported by effective examples. There was evidence that strong candidates were using knowledge perhaps acquired while studying political philosophy.

**Question 17**

This drew many general responses and few explored and evaluated the relationship of identity and tradition.

**Question 18**

This question might have invited a rather systematic approach but few took this opportunity. Very few discussed the problems of making judgments across cultures.

**Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates**

- Teachers should stress the need for candidates to practice structuring their answers and begin by unpacking the question, defining terms and concepts, and then with supportive examples explore and evaluate the material they use to create their response. Responses should always reflect the actual question and when possible clear challenges to the assumptions of the question should be developed.

## Higher and standard level paper two

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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#### Standard level

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<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 23	24 - 30

### General comments

In this session several teachers took advantage of the opportunity of completing the G2 document for M13 HL and SL Paper 2. This represents an encouraging level of participation especially since the G2 document constitutes an important tool by means of which the quality and standards of the HL and SL Paper 2 examination scripts can be evaluated critically from the perspective of the classroom teacher. In addition, the information supplied in the G2 document helps to improve the quality of future examination scripts in several ways (for example, the nature of the questions set, clarity of wording, presentation of the paper, syllabus coverage). Finally, the G2 document constitutes a critically important tool at the Grade Award meeting, especially in the context of the establishment of the definitive grade boundaries. School administrators and especially IB Coordinators of their respective schools ought to encourage their philosophy teachers to take advantage of this important facet of the Philosophy programme. The G2 document is always available online on the Philosophy OCC site and can be submitted electronically. Alternatively, a hard copy can be provided by a school's IB co-ordinator.

The findings of the G2 documents received for the M13 examination session (SL/HL Philosophy Paper 2) can be summarized as follows:

- In terms of ***the level of difficulty*** of this year's paper, 60 teachers responded with 58 indicating that this year's paper was 'appropriate' in terms of level of difficulty and 2 indicating that the paper was 'too difficult'. There were no responses indicating that the paper was 'too easy'.
- ***Compared to last year's paper***, 57 teachers responded with 42 indicating that the paper was 'of a similar standard', 4 reporting that it was 'a little easier', 9 observing that it was 'a little more difficult', none reporting that it was 'much more difficult', none reporting that it was 'much easier' and 2 indicating 'not applicable'.
- With regard to the ***clarity of the wording*** of this year's paper, 62 teachers responded with 36 observing that it was 'good', 22 that it was 'satisfactory' and 4 that it was 'poor'. In terms of the ***presentation of the paper***, 60 teachers responded with 36 judging that it was 'good', 22 that it was 'satisfactory' and 4 that it was 'poor'.

- 31 teachers agreed that the questions were **accessible to candidates with special needs**, 9 disagreed and 23 were neutral on this topic. With regard to the question as to the **accessibility of the questions to candidates irrespective of their religion, gender or ethnicity**, 47 teachers agreed, 4 disagreed and 12 were neutral on the topic.

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

An analysis of the overall performance of candidates in the HL and SL Paper 2 examination in English, Spanish and French, provides satisfactory evidence that, in the majority of cases, the prescribed text chosen for study had been read, analyzed and evaluated under the direction of the teacher. This judgment is based on the evidence provided by the examination scripts which demonstrated

- the ability of most candidates to focus on those arguments of the text which were relevant to the question set
- knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the arguments of the text as expressed by the author of the text
- the use of appropriate philosophical terminology in general and, more specifically, the terminology of the text and of its author.

The better responses were able to be distinguished from the weaker ones especially in terms of candidates' abilities to:

- execute a planned, coherent and focused response
- understand how to identify and use the relevant information drawn from a text in developing a response to the question set for that text
- analyze relevant material included in the response
- enter into a critical evaluation of the elements of the argument presented
- identify counter-arguments
- include a relevant personal response.

Nevertheless, taking these specific difficulties into account, all examination responses from the best to the weakest were situated comfortably within the scope and parameters of the various achievement levels of the assessment criteria and were able to be assessed without any difficulties.

Some of the specific difficulties and weaknesses faced by candidates in the formulation of their responses could be addressed by assuring that candidates:

- Read and observe the bullet-pointed recommendations found at the top of the second page of the examination script. These recommendations have been formulated with

the assessment criteria in mind and can, therefore, help candidates write their responses in the most effective manner possible

- Read the examination question carefully and completely. Some candidates occasionally fail to address in a focused and precise manner all or, in some cases, some of the requirements stated in the question. This difficulty was apparent in responses that often began with the phrase *'Before I answer the question I would like first to define ...'*
- understand and address precisely the command term(s) of the question (eg. *evaluate, to what extent, explain and discuss*)
- engage in a critical and evaluative manner with the examination question, its implications and with the textual material incorporated into the response
- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the text itself
- offer personal reflections on and demonstrate personal engagement with the text, the question and the arguments developed in the response
- incorporate into the response relevant supporting examples and illustrations
- avoid investing a disproportionate amount of time developing lengthy, descriptive summary outlines of the details of the supporting examples or illustration (eg.. the descriptive details of Plato's analogy of the cave)
- identify and appropriately explore relevant counter-arguments and/or counter-positions
- distinguish between a simple exposition, description, summary or explanation of the relevant arguments of a text from a focused analysis, critical evaluation, examination and discussion of those arguments
- offer more than a simple descriptive, general outline of the main points of an author's overall philosophical perspectives much of which might bear little relevance to the question set for the text
- develop a response which incorporates those elements of the text which are relevant to the demands of the question
- develop a concluding paragraph that includes critical comments and observations and might also indicate briefly outstanding issues outside the specific focus of the question but relevant to the argument.

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

Most candidates demonstrated satisfactory to excellent familiarity with the content, arguments and terminology of the variety of chosen prescribed texts. Similarly, judged from the point of view of an understanding of key terms, major textual issues, and an appreciation of the main strengths and weaknesses of the arguments developed by the authors of the prescribed texts, candidates were able to analyze and evaluate the relevant material with a degree of success

that ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Weaker candidates were unable to engage with the text in more than what was, occasionally, a superficial manner.

In more specific terms, only the strongest candidates began their responses with introductory paragraphs which situated the argument in the general context of the prescribed text as a whole, briefly identified the objectives of the forthcoming response and highlighted important issues that would be addressed in the response. This is an important factor in the development of a coherent, focused and convincing textually based argument. Again, stronger candidates were able to proceed to an analysis of the portions of the selected text which were, in fact, relevant to the question set, incorporate useful illustrations and examples, acknowledge relevant counter positions and counter arguments, and go on to develop a convincing conclusion. Lastly, some of the stronger candidates displayed knowledge of the perspectives gleaned from secondary source material regarding professional, academic interpretations of a text.

Weaker candidates often found it difficult to focus on the precise demands of the question chosen. In the worst cases, a very small number of candidates were unable to answer the chosen question due to an apparent unfamiliarity with the text. Alternatively, several were only able to provide broad, general outlines of the philosophical positions of the author of the chosen text rather than focusing on relevant text material with regard to the question asked, failed to enter into a critical treatment of the material incorporated into the response, or gave little or no evidence of personal engagement with the pertinent arguments of the text.

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

Please find observations regarding the strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual questions below.

### Question 1: Bhagavad Gita

Candidates answering this question presented responses that were generally quite well focused on the requirements of the question itself and demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of the relevant arguments of the text. Most responses outlined a textually-based perspective on the nature of Brahman and the role of bhaktis the best means to acquire knowledge of Brahman. The strongest responses explored in a more comprehensive manner some of the other paths and techniques that could be used in the search for the knowledge of Brahman. Weaker responses were descriptive and listed broad generalities about Eastern philosophy and religion with little connection to the arguments of the text or the specific demands of the question. The use of critical evaluation and detailed analysis of material incorporated into the response remained a matter of concern for almost all candidates answering this question.

### Question 2:

For the most part, responses tended to deal in broad generalities about the nature of body and spirit. Some of the weaker responses gave little evidence of sufficient familiarity with the arguments of the text regarding dehin, spirit or soul in the understanding of human identity. The best responses were able to explore in an in-depth manner the meaning and significance of dehin and its relationship to an

understanding of human identity. The weaker essays demonstrated a very basic appreciation of the relevant portions of the text and usually failed to engage critically with the material assembled in the response.

### **Question 3: Confucius: The Analects**

The majority of the responses to this question demonstrated a cursory knowledge of the relevant sections of the text and, especially in the case of this question, the relevant terminology. Responses tended to remain quite general without attention to detail. Only a few of the candidates answering this question provided evidence of a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the text. An outstanding weakness in most responses was a failure to engage in critical analysis and evaluation.

### **Question 4:**

The better responses presented clear, coherent and textually-based treatments of the question. The best responses developed satisfactory treatments of several key Confucian notions that were required for the correct understanding of the will of Heaven and the notion of the gentleman. The weaker responses usually provided little evidence that the text had been read and studied in sufficient detail and usually relied on common sense generalizations about Eastern philosophy and religion.

### **Question 5: Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching**

Responses were generally disappointing and tended to show little knowledge of how the text approached the theme outlined in the question. As a result of this weakness, responses generally provided outline descriptions of some of the key notions of the text (for example, the sage, wu-wei) without indicating how this information specifically addressed the demands of the question. Only in a few cases were candidates able to construct a clear, coherent, textually-based response which included careful analysis and evaluation.

### **Question 6:**

This question asked for a treatment of one of the most central concepts of the text and of Confucian philosophy. As a result, most responses were quite well constructed. Almost all candidates were able to demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of wu-wei. In general, responses explored the practical, moral and intellectual aspects of the claim raised in the question. The implications of non-action with the natural flow of events in one's personal life, in the world and in nature were treated in a satisfactory manner. The best responses entered into a sophisticated exploration of the notion of passivity. In these cases, an analytical and evaluative exploration of the precise meaning of inaction was developed. A prevalent weakness in several responses was the failure to explore in a detailed and in-depth manner the very notion of passivity. The weakest candidates were unable to do more than repeat the claim that 'by doing nothing everything gets done.'

### **Question 7: Plato: The Republic, Books IV-IX**

The question dealt with a central set of ideas developed by Plato in the text. The question itself left room for some ambiguity. Some candidates responded directly to

the distinctions which Plato drew between knowledge and belief. Others understood the question in terms of a distinction between knowledge and opinion, considering opinion and belief to be synonymous. Examiners were advised to accept both approaches without prejudice in marking responses. Taking into account this aspect of the question, all candidates who chose to answer this question were quite successful in developing clear, focused and coherent responses. The best responses approached the question from the perspective of Plato's 'divided line' with the support of ideas taken from the simile of the sun and the analogy of the cave. These responses incorporated references to arguments throughout the text, convincing examples, identified counter-arguments and displayed a good level of personal engagement. Weaker responses, while offering evidence of satisfactory knowledge of relevant material, tended to display weaknesses in critical analysis and evaluation. One prevalent weakness was a tendency to engage in lengthy descriptions of the details of the divided line, the sun and the cave analogies without focusing adequate attention of the demands of the question.

**Question 8:**

As in the case of the first question on this text, this question asked about another central idea of the text. Due to this, almost all candidates successfully answered this question. The better responses made effective use of relevant text information. These responses included supporting examples and illustrations taken both from the text itself (the ship of state) or from contemporary political situations, and also demonstrated effective levels of analysis and evaluation. Weaker responses tended to remain quite descriptive of the characteristics of a philosopher-ruler without focusing attention of why such a ruler would be desirable. Personal engagement was quite evident in almost all responses.

**Question 9: René Descartes: Meditations**

The best responses were those that were able to address the specific demands of the question about Descartes's idea of certainty by incorporating the main arguments from the relevant meditations of the text itself in an analytical and evaluative manner. These responses demonstrated clear and precise knowledge and understanding of Descartes's arguments and were familiar with the appropriate philosophical terminology associated with those arguments. Weaker responses tended to launch into a descriptive outline of major elements of Descartes's philosophical positions or about his methodology without focusing precisely on the demands of the question. Only the very best candidates were able to offer evidence of a personal response to the strengths and weaknesses of Descartes's position on the notion of certainty

**Question 10:**

Almost all candidates were able to engage with the demands of the question by developing responses that focused on the mind-body relationship in Descartes's perspective. The better responses were able to explore the implications of Cartesian dualism critically and effectively making relevant connections with the relationship of a captain and his ship. These responses demonstrated a good use of appropriate terminology drawn from the text. Weaker responses tended to fall into general and/or lengthy descriptions of the methodology Descartes used to establish the distinctions

between mind and body without addressing the demands and implications of the question.

#### **Question 11: John Locke: Second Treatise on Government**

Successful responses were able to enter into a satisfactory explanation and analysis of explicit and tacit consent. These responses went on to explore how consent operates in the state of nature and in civil society. They also showed how consent in civil society is essential in matters of punishment, protection, property and rights. Some interesting connections were made between consent and the legitimate right to revolution when the government fails to safeguard those rights entrusted to its protection by the citizens. Weaknesses in many responses could be noted in terms of critical evaluation and personal engagement with the arguments of the text. Some responses were unable to proceed beyond random summaries of some of the basic ideas of Locke's philosophy without regard for the demands of the question.

#### **Question 12:**

In almost all cases, candidates were able to provide evidence of a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Locke's position on the state of nature. Several candidates offered convincing comparative analyses with the views of other past and contemporary social contract philosophers. Some weaknesses could be noted in the areas of analysis and evaluation, the use of supporting examples and illustrations and personal engagement with the demands of the question. A final weakness was a failure to see how the state of nature set the stage for the movement to civil society and selection of a form of government.

#### **Question 13: John Stuart Mill: On Liberty**

The main strength of responses to this question could be seen in the satisfactory ability of almost all candidates to make convincing connections amongst the notions of utilitarianism, individual liberty, ethics and the permanent interests of all people. Another strong point of many responses was the evidence of a satisfactory understanding of relevant arguments drawn from the text itself. An outstanding weakness of several responses was a tendency to become entrapped in a description and detailed explanation of utilitarianism in general or of Mill's place in the history of utilitarianism without making connections with the text or with the demands of the question. In general, the levels of careful analysis and critical evaluation could have been developed more fully.

#### **Question 14:**

The better responses to this question explored and analysed the notion of paternalistic interference in a convincing manner distinguishing weak from strong paternalism. The notion of "competent adult" as the person who was the most reliable judge of his or her personal interests was also seen as central to the discussion. Lastly, Mill's 'harm principle' was introduced as an important element in the context of interference in the lives of competent adults. Major weaknesses of some responses could be found in the failure to develop an evaluative treatment of the argument and to lose focus on the actual demands of the question.



**Question 15: Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals**

In general, responses were quite successful as the question focused on several central themes of the text. The majority of candidates were able to explore Nietzsche's notions of self-mastery and overcoming of the self. The better responses were able to address the apparent inconsistency between the nature of a being that acts naturally out of instinct and a being capable of asserting a self, especially an individual aristocratic self. These responses also explored the roles played by conscience, the will, sovereignty and responsibility. The absence of critical treatment and a tendency to produce lengthy summary descriptions of some of Nietzsche's key ideas without focusing them on the demands of the question are two of the major weaknesses of some of the responses.

**Question 16:**

The majority of candidates were able to write responses that generally focused successfully on the relevant arguments of the three essays the text. Candidates demonstrated satisfactory to excellent knowledge of some of the key notions of the text that allowed for the development of an answer to the actual question set (eg. will to power, resentment, master and slave moralities). The better responses included careful analysis, critical evaluation, supporting examples and illustrations and personal response. Weaker responses tended to offer descriptive summaries of key points without fully developing the relationships amongst ideas. A major weakness of some responses was found in the tendency to slip into a lengthy description of slave and master moralities without applying this information to the demands and implications of the question.

**Question 17: Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy**

Candidates were generally successful with this question. Some of the strengths of responses included the exploration of the possibility of distinguishing certain truths as self-evident in a sense which ensures infallibility. Another strength evident in the better responses was the investigation of knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. Successful responses also examined the nature and role of intuitive knowledge in the search for truth and the role of logic in the reasoning process. Two general weaknesses in all responses were the lack of a developed, focused critical evaluation of the arguments presented and the absence of the identification of counter-arguments.

**Question 18:**

Candidates presented responses that varied from satisfactory to very good. The strengths of the more successful essays rested in the ability of candidates to explore the issues of the acquisition of knowledge and the nature and role of general principles from the perspective of the principle of induction and the processes of inference and deduction. These candidates investigated the relationship of general propositions (a priori) to empirical generalisations (a posteriori) along with the controversy between empiricists and rationalists with regard to knowledge issues. Weaker responses were unable to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the arguments of the text and launched into general descriptions of some of the ideas expressed by Russell. In general, responses tended to show weaknesses in the detailed analysis

and critical evaluation of the material incorporated into the response and in a treatment of counterarguments.

**Question 19: Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition**

In most instances, candidates were able to provide a description or informative outline, based upon the arguments of the text, of what Arendt meant by labour, work and action. The better responses were able to develop the response with attention to relevant detail. In addition, these responses provided clear evidence of analytical and evaluative treatment, incorporated useful supporting examples and illustrations, attempted to deal with counterarguments, and demonstrated coherent personal response. Weaker essays tended to remain on the descriptive level without developing connections amongst ideas and without incorporating a critical treatment of the themes and issues. A significant weakness of some responses was the failure to answer the central demand of the question to evaluate the success of labour over work and action.

**Question 20:**

The better responses dealt effectively with a discussion and evaluation of the Arendt's notions of freedom and action along with an exploration of the importance of these notions in the public sphere in the life of an individual human being. These responses situated Arendt's understanding of freedom into the context of the main themes and perspectives of the arguments of the text. Weaker responses were generally unable to base responses specifically on general positions on freedom and its importance which bore little relation to the arguments of the text or dealt in generalities drawn from contemporary political situations about freedom and political action.

**Question 21: Simone de Beauvoir: The Ethics of Authenticity**

In general, responses were satisfactory in terms of connections with the relevant arguments of the text and tended to engage in a discussion of living alone and living with others in the spirit of existentialism as presented in the text. The best of the responses demonstrated an awareness of de Beauvoir's perspectives and attempted to engage in a critical treatment of the key themes and ideas. These responses were able to explore de Beauvoir's notion of ambiguity in relation to the demands of the question. Weaker response tended to rely on descriptive summaries of some of the general themes of existentialism without analytical or evaluative treatment.

**Question 22:**

Responses to this question demonstrated satisfactory to very good knowledge of the relevant arguments of the text. The best of these responses were able to engage in a precise and detailed analysis of de Beauvoir's position of the issue of freedom and the flight from the security of childhood which were raised in the question. Weaker responses were characterized by a lack of knowledge and understanding of the actual arguments of the text. The weakest of these responses offered only common sense views of the situation of children growing into adulthood.

**Question 23: Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity**

This question focused upon a central and fundamental theme of the text. Due to this, the majority of candidates responding to the question demonstrated satisfactory to excellent knowledge and understanding of the relevant arguments of the text and were precise in the use of appropriate terminology drawn from the text. The better responses were able to engage in a critical discussion with the relevant arguments presented throughout the text and included appropriate supporting examples and illustrations drawn from the text itself as well as from aspects of several contemporary political situations. Weaker essays tended to slip into descriptive summaries of some of the ideas of the text which were relevant to the question but failed to develop a critical treatment of the material.

#### Question 24:

As in the case of the first question set for this text, the question asked for a treatment of two of the most central concerns of the text, that is to say, instrumental reasoning and authenticity. In most instances candidates demonstrated convincing familiarity with the relevant arguments of the text and accurately and effectively used the appropriate textually based terminology. While almost all responses were very strong in terms of a descriptive treatment of relevant material, not all responses provided evidence of a focused critical treatment of the material. Similarly, not all responses included evidence of personal engagement with the arguments of the text. One significant weakness of some responses was a tendency to remain engaged in a description of instrumental reasoning, flattened individualism and soft despotism without applying this information to the precise demands of the question.

### Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers must choose for critical study only one prescribed text whether the course is taught at HL or SL. The study of one text allows for a reasonable degree of precision, insight and critical appreciation into the prescribed text chosen at each of the subject levels.
- Candidates must be reminded to read and take into account the list of bullet points found on page 2 of the HL and SL examination paper that precede the actual examination questions and follows the heading '*In your response you are expected to:*' These bullet points provide clear, precise and helpful suggestions that can assist candidates in the development of successful responses. Teachers should explain and discuss the meaning of these bullet points in order to help candidates perform successfully in the examination.
- Teachers should supply their candidates with a copy of the guide and further, the glossary of command terms found within. This document contains the terms that occur in the examination questions (for example, *analyse, evaluate, discuss, explain, etc.*), and outlines the demands of the terms.
- Candidates must learn to read carefully, address clearly, and answer completely the examination question. The omission of parts of the question and/or the failure to perform the required task(s) set out in the question can have serious consequences.
- Candidates must pay particular attention to the wording of those examination

questions that ask candidates to make connections or establish relationships between or amongst ideas, themes, or issues raised in a prescribed text.

- While the discussion, analysis and evaluation of a prescribed text in a classroom situation is absolutely essential, it might be a good idea to provide candidates with, or direct candidates to, at least one dependable 'commentary' which offers a critical exploration of the text chosen for study.
- Teachers ought to help candidates understand the difference between the simple exposition and/or description of an author's argument and a critical analysis and evaluative treatment of the elements of that argument.
- Teachers should encourage candidates to develop concise introductory and concluding paragraphs that help set the stage for the development of the response and assist in bringing the essay to a successful and convincing conclusion.
- Teachers should help candidates understand the importance of making direct and indirect references to the text in the development of their responses.
- Teachers should introduce their candidates to a variety of interpretations of the chosen text. This information can be used effectively in the development of counter-arguments.
- Candidates should be encouraged to develop relevant contemporary applications of the arguments of the prescribed text. This is especially the case with those authors that tend to treat of political matters.
- Teachers should use more effectively the IB's online resources (OCC) for assistance and sharing of information regarding the prescribed texts studied in class. Whenever appropriate, this information should be shared with candidates.
- Teachers should provide their candidates with past Paper 2 examination questions. In this way, candidates will become familiarised with the style and format of typical Paper 2 examination questions appropriate to the prescribed text(s) studied in class. This suggestion can be addressed quite readily since the IB has published the IB Philosophy question bank which contains past questions, markschemes and subject reports. Similarly, teachers might want to collect sample scripts from their own candidates that can be made anonymous and used in class to demonstrate strengths and weaknesses in actual candidate responses.
- Teachers ought to read carefully the annual Subject Reports that are published on the OCC philosophy page. The information supplied in these reports offer useful observations and suggestions for the preparation of candidates for the various components of the Philosophy examination.
- Teachers ought to take advantage of completing and submitting the official G2 form at the end of every examination session.

## Higher level paper three

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 5	6 - 9	10 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

#### General comments

Though it is a generalization, and therefore hard to substantiate, it is the view of the senior examiners for the paper that candidates handled the unseen passage better this year than they have in the past couple of years despite it being a more challenging text. It could be, of course, that the cohort was more talented, but we think it was because the unseen text advanced quite specific claims. This gave candidates the opportunity to reflect on, and then indicate, the reasons for their agreement or disagreement, whereas previous texts mostly came from introductions to textbooks that were less concerned with staking out a particular position.

Be that as it may, the opportunity to express agreement or disagreement about the claims made in the text enabled candidates to present a reasoned case for their view (whether by way of an alternative to that in the text, or one similar to it), which is what the better ones did. Less able candidates tended simply to register their agreement or disagreement with the claims in the text. In doing so they revealed themselves as less able philosophically because doing philosophy requires more than merely expressing opinions about other people's views.

Many scripts were disappointing in that candidates did not do a good job of carrying out the assigned tasks, in particular, of critically analyzing and evaluating a previously unseen philosophical text, and relating their own experience of doing philosophy to matters raised in the text. The candidates who did these things stood out. Large numbers of candidates (including a good many who wrote thoughtful essays) seem not to have taken on board that these are the tasks required of them. Instead, they summarize the text, or use the text as though it is a stimulus for word associations, or express unsubstantiated opinions about various philosophical topics, or wax lyrical about various topics they have covered in the classroom.

While there were fewer candidates than in previous years who simply wrote an essay that they would have written no matter the text, weaker candidates almost always gave insufficient attention to the key tasks of analysis and evaluation of the text. Candidates need to have it reinforced that the primary focus with P3 is the text (even when they are relating their experience of doing philosophy), and, in particular, the analysis and evaluation of the text. Of course, it is a prerequisite for doing that analysis and evaluation that the candidate understands the text. Examiners look to see evidence that the candidate has grasped the text as a whole, even when errors are made along the way, so candidates have to show that they know how to understand, analyze and evaluate a philosophical text. References to the experience of doing philosophy during the course should illuminate the analysis and evaluation; they are not supposed to be substitutes for the analysis and evaluation of the text.

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

In light of the above general remarks, the most plausible conclusion to draw is that many candidates were not prepared well for this component. Some candidates (albeit fewer than in previous years) appear to have come to the examination armed with material that they intended to write about regardless of what was in the unseen text. Often those who approached the task in this way showed evidence of having been provided with a particular take on philosophy. The upshot was that such candidates found it difficult to focus on the unseen text, subject it to critical analysis and evaluation, and relate their experience of doing philosophy to the textual analysis and evaluation. Thus they did least well in relation to criterion C and criterion D. Other candidates showed that they had difficulty in reading the text and extracting from it the key points being made by the author. Such candidates (and there were many of them) ignored the key points and, instead, commented about all sorts of other matters. In the process they showed they had a poor grasp of the philosophical material they were given to analyse and evaluate.

Though most candidates showed they had given thought to their experience of doing philosophy many failed to understand that they were required to relate that experience to their evaluation of the philosophical activity raised in the text. Candidates who understood the importance of satisfying this requirement again stood out - it seems likely that they were made aware of the significance of this requirement when being prepared for the examination.

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

Candidates performed best in relation to criterion A and criterion B in that answers were generally quite well expressed, the issues to be explored were often accurately identified, and appropriate examples or illustrations used. Even so, few candidates recognized the importance of using their introductory paragraphs to set out an essay plan establishing a clear structure for the essay that followed. It should come as no surprise that those who gave careful thought before writing the essay to how they would organize their response were those who managed the required tasks most coherently. The very best of them used their introductory paragraph(s) to accurately summarize the claims made in the text and then to set out a plan for their essay. Thinking about, and then executing, a plan, greatly increases the likelihood that the candidate will produce an organized and coherent essay and, incidentally, make clear to the examiner the process by which the candidate developed the ideas in her/his essay. It continues to surprise that some candidates spend time scribbling out a page or more of notes prior to beginning their essays and then launch into their essays without giving any indication of the essay's structure. Equally, it continues to surprise that some candidates think that summarizing each paragraph consecutively reveals a grasp of the text as a whole.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

Candidates need to be given better preparation for critically reading a philosophical text. The unseen text was not difficult even though it was more challenging than the texts set in previous years. Nevertheless, significant numbers of candidates failed to grasp the main claims being made in the text and the implications of those claims for philosophy more generally. Thus, for example, many candidates ignored the central contention in the text that the use of imaginative literature should be ascribed the role traditionally played in philosophy

by rational argument (and hence made no attempt to evaluate it). Even more ignored the fact that the author supported his far-reaching claims about the best way of doing philosophy by reference to a narrowly circumscribed area of the subject, namely, applied ethics. Far too few raised the obvious question of whether this narrow evidence base could sustain those far-reaching claims.

As mentioned previously, the major strengths on display were in clarity of expression and the identification of topics to be explored (see criterion A and criterion B). Nonetheless, many candidates relied heavily on making unjustified assertions and too few took the opportunity to consider methodological issues. For example, very few responses developed material about the assumptions underlying what was being claimed in the extract. Only the better essays indicated that candidates had completed a unit that had assisted with their appreciation of what philosophical activity involves. There were some references to Bertrand Russell's (rather contentious) understanding of the nature of philosophical activity, and to the May 2012 P3 extract (presumably because this latter was set for mock exams), but beyond these references there were few indications of candidates having been given specific assistance with understanding, analyzing and evaluating a philosophical text. Furthermore, there were very few responses that included reference to the nature, function, methodology and meaning of philosophy as a reflective activity (see criterion C).

Many candidates not only did not handle well the key tasks of critical analysis and evaluation of the ideas in the text but they let themselves down further in their attempts to convey their own experience of doing philosophy by failing to integrate their experiences into their analysis and evaluation of the text. A candidate's own experience of doing philosophy is supposed to be drawn upon in ways that illuminate the analysis and evaluation of the text (see criterion D).

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should familiarize themselves with the assessment criteria for Paper 3 and, in particular, take note that the key tasks required of them are, first, critical analysis and evaluation of the text and, second, relating their own experience of doing philosophy to their critical analysis and evaluation of the text. Because these tasks are text-based the scope for use of material prepared in advance of the examination is, and should be, very limited.
- Candidates should be urged to consider the assumptions and presuppositions underpinning the extract so as to help them engage in critical analysis and evaluation of it rather than simply in giving a summary of its contents.
- Candidates should be advised that when a text seems to them to make an obvious error, they should re-read the text to confirm that the problem isn't the result of their own reading of the text. Since they are writing under the pressure of time, it is important that they do not skip this step because doing so may ultimately weaken their essay.
- Candidates should be made aware that essays that do little more than summarize the text, or are disorganized and lack a clear understanding of the thrust of the text reveal little understanding of the philosophical material. Moreover, they should be strongly advised to make use of an introductory paragraph(s) which show: their understanding of the overall point of the text in relation to doing

philosophy, how this understanding is illuminated by their experience of doing IB philosophy, and a plan setting out how the text will be analyzed and evaluated.

- Teachers should be advising candidates that details of their personal philosophical allegiances are not what matters for the purposes of P3, but rather the reasons they have for making whatever claims they make about the text, or for making reference to illustrative material from the course to illuminate their analysis and evaluation of the text.
- Teachers should establish a framework for philosophical understanding, analysis and evaluation and introduce candidates to different perspectives on what is involved in doing philosophy so as to help candidates better understand the demands of the paper.
- Teachers should prepare candidates by making use of previous papers by way of practice but also by encouraging them to read other philosophical texts in the ways required for Paper 3. They should also make use of the conceptual framework for analysis of a text like that in Paper 3 which has been made available to them via the OCC.