

PHILOSOPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

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

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 27	28 - 40	41 - 54	55 - 65	66 - 77	78 - 100

Higher and standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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

Standard level

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

General comments

IAs were generally of a good quality this year, showing a stronger understanding of the nature of the task. Topics were varied and non-philosophical material was appropriate in most cases.

Some issues identified in this year's samples were:

- Despite a general improvement in the formal presentation of IAs, there were still many pieces that lost marks unnecessarily under criterion A for failing to respect all formal requirements.
- Candidates generally found it difficult to strike a balance between over-using the non-philosophical material and under-using it. While some candidates almost never

referred to their selected stimulus in their essay, others focus their analysis on the stimulus itself instead of focusing it on a philosophical issue derived from the stimulus. Both approaches are imbalanced and tend to yield poor marks.

- Many candidates struggled to find the right balance between the use of philosophers' work and the development of their own arguments. Some candidates attempted to describe and analyse philosophers' work in great detail without developing a personal response or argument; others stated their opinion at length without exploring philosophical material. These two extremes were often congregated in specific centres.

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.

Marking criteria were generally applied in a consistent way, although formal requirement infractions were still seldom penalized by teachers.

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.

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Stimuli

Stimulus materials were generally appropriate. There seems to be a trend towards greater variety, which gives rise to some deeply original and engaging work. There is very little repetition in terms of stimuli, although some moderators reported a great number of essays on the theme of Freedom and Determinism.

Some candidates were still allowed to use entire films, books or TV series, which is inappropriate and penalized under criterion C. In a few, rare occasions, candidates used completely inappropriate material such as philosophical material, a vague life experience or a general theme such as "burglary". Such pieces were invariably of a low quality.

Many candidates successfully used songs, poems, film extracts, articles, blog extracts, adverts, photographs, cartoons, pictures of everyday objects, paintings etc. and identified an interesting associated philosophical theme.

Examples of particularly successful essays included:

- The analysis of a Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission document, exploring the themes of sexual orientation and differential treatment in the workplace (Contemporary Social Issues).
- The analysis of an extract from *The Life of Pi*, where the hero saves the tiger from drowning. This gave rise to a rich discussion on animal rights and dignity (Ethics/Can Animals Be Persons?).

- A philosophical exploration on the nature of time, based on a picture of a winged clock (Human Condition/Space and Time).
- The analysis of a Dr Who quote: “The soul is made up of stories”; this focused on Plato’s tripartite soul versus a narrative theory of the self (Self/Plato’s *Republic*).

Format and nature of the philosophical analysis

There are many ways to write a good philosophy essay and candidates used a variety of formats successfully, including dialogues.

However, the following mistakes were common:

- Too much emphasis on the stimulus: some candidates used the stimulus as the basis of their essay instead of choosing a related philosophical issue to focus on. Some candidates gave a list of all the possible philosophical issues that could relate to their stimulus, resulting in shallow essays that failed to explore any theme in depth. Other candidates, much fewer than last year, analysed the stimulus in a non-philosophical way, writing essays that read like art criticism. Second-guessing the motive of a character or analysing the meaning of colours in a painting is not philosophical in nature. It is also worth noting that a lengthy description of the stimulus *in the body of the essay* is unnecessary and takes many words away from true philosophical analysis which will gain marks. The stimulus description (which must be under 200 words) should be sufficient, and presented in a section that is kept separate from the essay itself, preferably on a different page.
- Not enough emphasis on the stimulus: in some cases, candidates seemed to use the stimulus as an excuse to write a fairly unrelated essay. Those candidates typically mentioned the stimulus in their introduction and never again in the rest of the essay, except perhaps briefly in the conclusion. Although some such essays were still fairly good, they were generally not as successful as those making better use of their stimulus.
- Too much emphasis on personal response and candidate’s own arguments: although necessary, they should not dominate the entire essay. Some candidates failed to acknowledge any philosopher or philosophical theory that was not their own. This often lead to groundless arguments and statements of opinion, and such candidates often scored less well.
- Too little emphasis on personal response and candidate’s own argument: on the other hand, some candidates tend to give a lengthy account of various philosophers’ work without ever developing their own argument. Although those candidates sometimes display an impressive knowledge and understanding of philosophical theories, it is difficult to give them marks for personal response and evaluation (criterion D).
- A very small minority of candidates wrote essays that were clearly TOK or Psychology essays, containing little to no philosophical content.

The most successful candidates tended to:

- Select *one* philosophical theme, clearly related to their stimulus. Exploring several almost always lead to essays that lacked depth and were disconnected.
- Keep their essay focused with the help of a clearly formulated guiding question or thesis in the introduction.
- Explore their theme through the description, analysis and evaluation of a few philosophers' work on the subject.
- Develop their arguments and personal response throughout the essay.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: expression

Candidates generally possessed a satisfactory to good grasp of philosophical language, and organized their ideas in a clear manner.

Unfortunately, many candidates still lost marks for failing to respect all formal requirements.

Generally, more candidates seemed to respect the word limit, and many more indicated a clear link between their IA and the syllabus.

Although criterion A clearly states that IAs should include a bibliography **and** references, many candidates (often congregated in the same centres) did not. Some centres still seemed to allow candidates not to have referencing at all. Stimulus materials were often unreferenced, especially in the case of pictures.

Criterion B: knowledge and understanding

Some candidates possessed an impressive knowledge and understanding of philosophers' work. The range of theories used was broad overall, showing that teachers are using a wide variety of scholars to explore the syllabus.

A minority of candidates used no philosophical material at all and relied on their own arguments, which led to lower marks against this criterion.

Criterion C: identification and analysis of relevant material

Stronger candidates tended to do extremely well under criterion C, mainly thanks to good connections between their stimulus and the philosophical theories that were explored in depth.

Candidates are reminded that philosophical material must be analysed, illustrated with examples and tested with the help of counter-arguments, rather than simply described at length.

Criterion D: development and evaluation

Some candidates developed their own arguments and justified personal response with great confidence and subtlety. Those candidates understood the implications of their own position.

Some candidates tended to neglect supporting evidence when expressing their own views. Their arguments lacked rigour and were often reduced to statements of opinion rather than well-founded and well-constructed philosophical arguments.

Other candidates got too wrapped up in the description of philosophical theories and neglected to formulate their own arguments.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Focus on balance between the over-use and under-use of the stimulus. Candidates could, for instance, read and critique essays that illustrate both extremes.
- Focus on balance between philosophers' arguments and candidates' own arguments. Setting specific guidelines will help candidates strike that delicate balance (for instance, teachers may request the exploration of a certain (limited) number of philosophers/theories in each essay, and ask candidates to dedicate a certain number of words to evaluation and personal response).
- Highlight the parallel between philosophers' work and candidates' own arguments: from the philosophers and theories they study, candidates can learn how to build arguments that are philosophical in nature, rigorous and well founded. Candidates should strive to emulate great philosophers in order to "do philosophy" without falling into the mere statement of opinions.
- Encourage candidates to focus on one main philosophical theme or issue. Candidates should frame that theme clearly in the introduction, either in the form of a question or a thesis, in order to keep their work focused.
- Make sure candidates understand the difference between in-text referencing and bibliographies. Review good referencing practice. Highlight the importance of respecting formal requirements, as a skill that will be useful in candidates' future academic and professional life.

Higher and standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

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

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 - 17	18 - 23	24 - 31	32 - 38	39 - 45	46 - 60

Higher level paper one

General comments

From the point of view of the quality of the skills demonstrated this session, the performance of candidates was generally comparable to May 2013, maintaining the improvement which was seen last May.

The strengths and the weaknesses encountered this session lead to a general impression of a satisfactory level cohort, with reasonable organization (criterion A) and satisfactory knowledge and understanding (criterion B). These findings were generally echoed with regards to performance against criteria C and D.

Many responses demonstrated good to very good performance. Some of these very good responses were stymied with regards to reaching level 7 because of a distinct lack of balance between answering the given questions, and analysing the issues (as opposed to just displaying knowledge).

This session there was some evidence of the third answer tending to be weaker than the previous two, which is supported by some G2 comments with regards to candidates running out of time.

With regards to G2 responses, 32.35% of respondent teachers claimed that the paper was too difficult, whereas at SL only 14% claimed the same.

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

As with previous sessions, responses are of a satisfactory level. However, there is still a gap between the central and more demanding DP Philosophy course expectations and the actual work produced. Some of the difficulties and shortcomings are:

A significant number of answers do not consider the actual requests of the question, some simply disregard the question and apply what they have learnt, thus remolding the aims of the question to suit their memorized response. In extreme cases some of these responses deal solely with the optional theme in a very broad manner, focusing directly on, for example, ethics or philosophy of

religion. There was a tendency this session to take the question as a “stimulus” (something which is referred to many times in this year’s responses).

In general many responses do not pay any attention to the central instruction given by the command terms “discuss” or “evaluate.” Candidates should be reminded of the requirements of each command term as outlined in the Philosophy subject guide.

There was also a strong tendency this session to transform the question from the discussion of an issue as stated and required by the question, into purely a request for a presentation of knowledge. These answers present two main issues: they are not focused on the specific question (lacking relevance) and they transform analysis into exposition of knowledge. Knowledge must always develop into analysis as per the requirements of the question and component. Some responses also confirm very poor examination preparation techniques.

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

Many candidates demonstrated the ability to structure a satisfactory and appropriate response in general terms 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 with regards to academic formality. There was, however, a group of Spanish responses that communicated in a very colloquial style which was not academically appropriate.

This session an increasing number of candidates demonstrated 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 responses, some responses demonstrated abilities, levels and depth of understanding which ranged from very good to 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.

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

Section A

Core Theme: What is a human being?

In general there is still the difficulty of identifying something which has little or no relation to the stimulus, and there is the continuing problem of pre-prepared answers. The intention of the question format is to give an opportunity to relate some background philosophical knowledge to an issue arising from the stimulus which presents something relevant for a reflection on the human condition. This is sometimes misinterpreted: a group of responses just presented memorized materials without any attempt to apply ideas to a specific issue/situation. The main problem with this approach is very simply that the attempts do not achieve the specific objectives of the programme, (that is to say, using all the material learnt to construct an argument relevant to the stimulus) and this leads very rarely to successful responses.

A significant number of responses merely stated that the stimulus raised the philosophical question of what is a human being, without developing the idea any further.

Question 1

This passage required a reflection on the knowledge of others and other associated issues such as human nature, where skepticism about the knowledge of others is a fundamental element in the human condition. Many responses were able to identify these issues and develop very good analysis exploring different approaches. Candidates also reflected on what constitutes the essence of a human being and whether that essence is subject to change as a result of interaction. Quite frequently the problem of solipsism was analysed as an opposite view. Many responses did not present two approaches. Some responses were not able to give a conceptual identification of an issue. Weaker answers merely described aspects of the passage.

Question 2

The cartoon invited a consideration of the self and personal identity. A selection of excellent responses identified two senses of identity implicit in the stimulus: the legal view on identity, and the persistent or diachronic view, where the philosophical value lies. Other very good responses took the opportunity to focus on what the constituent elements of an identity are, and the question of persistence. In the standard responses to the question of “who am I?” candidates considered: psychological criteria, bodily criteria, and narrative arguments. Locke’s memory criterion was often cited. Physicalism and forms of reductive materialism were used as explanation of self-consciousness. Weaker answers presented similar characteristics as described for responses to question 1 with regards to description.

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

This question opened discussions on the conditions required for knowledge and was approached from different positions (mainly foundationalism and relativism). Its analysis was closely related to the question of knowledge itself. There were also different answers according to different positions: knowledge initially gained through the senses (empiricism, a *posteriori* knowledge) or through rational intuition (rationalism, a *priori* knowledge).

Question 4

This question was focused on a central epistemological issue of objective knowledge, its explanation and discussion. In general, approaches to this question were descriptive, and at times trivial.

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

This question was quite a popular choice. Some very good to excellent responses demonstrated very good knowledge and analysed ethical non-cognitivism, considering various versions such as Ayer’s emotivism, Blackburn’s projectivism (quasi-realism), and Mackie’s error theory. These responses discussed central tenets of non-cognitivism: moral judgments are neither true nor false as they are not appropriate for truth evaluations; they are

not beliefs supported by cognitive/empirical evidence. Weaker answers here also tended to be descriptive.

Question 6

This question was the most popular choice amongst candidates. Based on adequate knowledge, the majority of answers demonstrated at least a satisfactory level of performance. The best answers were clearly focused on the issue of whether knowing the consequences of an action can tell you what is best, but it cannot tell you what is right. However some responses also demonstrated a problematic approach: candidates were at times mainly concentrated on the presentation of positions, philosophers or schools forgetting that the question asks for a problem to be analysed, and not only for knowledge to be presented.

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion

Question 7

The question invited an evaluation of the claim that it can be rational to believe in the existence of God (or, the gods), the past, etc, without needing to provide evidence that others would judge adequate. The claim amounts to a rejection of the view that a belief can only be rationally acceptable if it is based on adequate evidence, or, on a good argument. As stated in the relevant part of the Philosophy Guide the question asked for an examination of the nature of religion, starting with the analysis of rational arguments for and against various religious views. Only some answers were clearly focused on the question considering the specific comparison with the evidence of the past. However, in general the results were at least satisfactory with a significant number of responses graded in the higher levels of performance.

Question 8

The question (in relation to the issue presented by the Philosophy guide: 'can morality be based on religious experience?') invited an evaluation of the claim that morality is consequential upon divine commands. Among the considerations that have been proposed in favour of the relationship between God and morality, responses maintained that consequential to the dependency of humans on God as their creator, humans are dependent on God for morality. Many responses argued that an answer to the question relies on the belief of God's existence. Here, in general, the quality of responses was at least satisfactory with a significant number of responses achieving the higher levels of performance.

Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art

Question 9

Most responses mainly attempted the question in general terms. There were some that demonstrated good general knowledge of this optional theme. Some very good answers were engaged with the traditional separation which is claimed to exist.

Question 10

Some good and very good answers analysed whether good art is art which portrays the world authentically. Some of these responses evaluated art's mimetic quality, examining whether

this is a basis for authenticity. Many responses presented good and relevant examples, in some cases however there was a lack of conceptual analysis.

Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy

Question 11

In general the responses demonstrated adequate knowledge of social and political philosophy in tackling this issue. The references to Mill practically always provided an adequate frame for relevant analysis. A significant number of good responses explored the scope and limits of individual freedoms and rights within a state.

Question 12

This question invited an evaluation of whether the power of the state will diminish if there is a rise in local political activity. Many responses tended to replace political activism with political activity. To an extent this approach in response was acceptable since the assessment is not purely content-oriented.

Optional Theme 6: Non-Western traditions and perspectives

Question 13

Only a small number of candidates attempted this question. They generally referred to Confucian conceptions, Buddhist approaches or Taoist philosophy.

Question 14

As with question 13, very few candidates attempted this question. They referred to Confucian conceptions, Buddhist approaches or Taoist philosophy.

Optional Theme 7: Contemporary social issues

Question 15

In both Optional Themes 7 and 8 there is a quite clear tendency to attempt to formulate a response without any specific preparation, perhaps themes which have not been studied in class. This is a process which produced responses with not even minimal philosophical relevance. It has to be stressed that responses without specific preparation and study do not succeed in answering questions for Optional Themes 7 or 8 (or any of the other Themes), no matter how familiar they might seem to be, as the issues that the questions raise are always asked through a philosophical lens which requires focused study throughout the course.

Question 16

There were few responses to this question, often providing commonsensical considerations showing no proper preparation for this Optional Theme as with the question above.

Optional Theme 8: People, nations and cultures

Question 17

Some satisfactory responses examined issues related to cultural identity. Only very few answers demonstrated specific philosophical knowledge and understanding.

Question 18

Some candidates demonstrated empathy with the central issues involved in this question, attempting an evaluation of the need to establish more world institutions because of the onset of globalization. They succeeded to some extent, but were more based on personal experience and general information than on specific philosophical knowledge and understanding.

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, with the command term as the departure point for the candidate to gauge what it is exactly that is expected in that specific response.
- 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.
- Candidates must 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 explain to candidates how to plan their essays or responses, 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 command term used for the question so that the answer is properly focused.

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

The paper seemed to be well received by standard level candidates. The variety and scope of questions invited adventurous and interesting answers. Some examiners commented on the fact that many candidates gave the impression that they enjoyed responding to the questions they attempted. As will be commented on later, there are large sections of the paper that are rarely attempted by candidates. The May 2014 cohort appeared to be stronger compared to previous sessions, with few examples of wasted time in the examination. Almost all seemed to have made a realistic attempt at answering the questions they attempted.

Section A

There was an even distribution of attempts between question 1 and question 2.

Section B

The most popular answers fell into Themes 2 and 3. Very few candidates attempted Themes 4, 6, 7, and 8. It would seem that weaker candidates attempted the questions associated with Theme 5.

Candidates were able to express themselves clearly and are improving at attempts to formulate an argument. At best candidates were cogent and incisive in their style of writing.

Some sound knowledge was displayed and concepts investigated. There were very few examples of confusion of knowledge or the invention of theories.

In Section A, criterion C was affected when candidates made no overt reference to the stimulus, and/or when they clearly produced a learnt response, despite demonstrating an understanding of Core Theme issues. Compared to previous years there seemed to be few learnt responses.

In Section B strong candidates showed depth of analysis and good use of original examples to support their argument. Very few candidates showed evidence of completely missing the point of the question. Levels of evaluation and strong critical personal insight varied. There was an increasing development of the style of using 'I think' or 'I believe', but not always fully supporting this claim with a logical argument.

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

If number of responses is an indication of difficulty then Themes 4, 6, 7, and 8 might have been seen as difficult. Very few candidates attempted questions 14 and 16, and therefore it might be concluded that the length of the questions put candidates off or made it difficult for them to comprehend what was required.

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

As has been said in the General Comments section, there was increasing evidence of candidates writing a clearly developed argument and giving some personal perspective.

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

General

Weaknesses in responses to questions 1 and 2 were largely based on learnt responses being presented or insufficient cross-references to the stimulus. Stronger responses were able to use a variety of philosophical approaches and showed good techniques of comparison and contrast.

Section B

Question 3

The word 'attain' in the question was not explored enough.

Question 4

Differences and associated problems related to 'objective' and 'subjective' were well explored.

Question 5

This was a popular question amongst candidates, though there was a shortfall in description and not enough evaluation.

Question 6

This question was popular and appropriately handled.

Question 7

This question was popular and well-handled.

Question 8

Most responses kept the right balance between the relationship of religion and human behaviour.

Question 9

This question was attempted by very few candidates.

Question 10

This question was attempted by very few candidates.

Question 11

There were few responses to this question, and those produced were generally weak.

Question 12

There were few responses to this question, and those produced were generally weak.

Question 13

There were very few responses to this question.

Question 14

There were very few responses to this question.

Question 15

There were very few responses to this question.

Question 16

There were very few responses to this question and those that were produced struggled with linking gender and identity.

Question 17

There were very few responses to this question.

Question 18

There were very few responses to this question.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers seem now to clearly understand the need to train candidates in formulating an argument, and this is being evidenced in the increase in work of middling to good candidates. There was evidence of weaker candidates perhaps not experiencing a two-year philosophy course and maybe merely using experience of TOK or just general lessons to respond to the broader questions within the paper, with the consequence that their responses lacked depth and substance.

Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 23	24 - 30

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 23	24 - 30

General comments

This session 55 teachers took advantage of submitting the G2 form for May 2014 Paper 2. This represents an encouraging level of participation especially since the G2s constitute an important tool by means of which the quality and standards of the Paper 2 examination scripts can be evaluated critically from the perspective of the classroom teacher. In addition, the information supplied in the G2s help to improve the quality of future examination scripts in several ways (e.g. the nature of the questions set, clarity of wording, presentation of the paper, syllabus coverage, accessibility). Finally, the G2s are critically important when it comes to the Grade Award meeting, especially in the context of the establishment of the definitive grade boundaries compared to previous sessions. School administrators and IB Coordinators in their respective schools ought to encourage their philosophy teachers to take advantage of this important facet of the Philosophy programme. The G2 form is always online on the Philosophy OCC site and can be submitted electronically.

The Paper 2 specific findings of the G2s received for the May 2014 examination session can be summarized as follows:

- In terms of **the level of difficulty** of this year's paper, 55 teachers responded with 51 indicating that this year's paper was appropriate in terms of level of difficulty and 4 indicating that the paper was more difficult.
- **Compared to last year's paper**, 55 teachers responded with 39 indicating that the paper was 'of a similar standard', 2 reporting that it was 'a little easier', 8 observing that it was 'a little more difficult', 3 reporting that it was 'much more difficult', none reporting that it was 'much easier' and 3 indicating 'not applicable'.
- With regard to the **clarity of the wording** of this year's paper, 55 teachers responded with 38 observing that it was within the range of good to excellent and 17 reporting that it was in the range of very poor to fair. In terms of the **presentation of the paper**, 55 teachers responded with 47 judging it in the range of good to excellent and 8 judging it in the range of very poor to fair.
- Teachers agreed or agreed strongly that the questions were **accessible to**

candidates with special educational needs, 9 disagreed and 23 were neutral on this topic.

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

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

- Satisfactory focus on the arguments of the texts relevant to the sense and demands of the questions set.
- Satisfactory knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the texts themselves as well as of the position of the authors of the various texts.
- The use of appropriate philosophical terminology in general and, more specifically, the terminology of the texts and of their authors.

Factors which helped distinguish stronger from weaker responses include:

- Precise focus on the wording, demands and implications of the question set.
- Precise treatment of the command terms of the question.
- Evidence of a planned, coherent and focused response.
- Identification, understanding and use of the relevant information drawn from a text in developing a response to the question set.
- Analysis of relevant material.
- Critical evaluation of the elements of the argument developed in a response.
- Identification of counter-arguments.
- Incorporation of a relevant personal response.

Taking these observations along with the evidence of the performance of candidates into account, all examination responses from the best to the weakest were situated comfortably within the parameters of the various achievement levels of the assessment criteria and were able to be assessed without any difficulties.

Some of the specific difficulties experienced by candidates in the development of their responses might 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 (e.g. *evaluate, to what extent, explain and discuss*).
- Engage in a critical and evaluative manner with the examination question and its implications, and with the relevant material drawn from the text and incorporated into the response.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the text and its arguments.
- 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 (e.g. 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 prescribed texts. The same levels of performance were evident with regard to 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 analyse and evaluate the relevant material with a degree of

success that ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Weaker candidates were only able to engage superficially and/or basically with the text.

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. Given that this question focused attention on a central notion of the text and of the philosophy represented in the text, most responses outlined a textually-based perspective on the nature of the central concepts of *moksa*, *karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti*. The strongest responses explored in a convincing manner the paths and techniques that could be used in the search for spiritual enlightenment. Weaker responses were descriptive and listed broad generalities about spiritual enlightenment in Eastern philosophies and religions with little connection to the relevant arguments of the text or the specific demands of the question. The engagement 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: *Bhagavad Gita*

For the most part, responses tended to deal in broad generalities regarding the notion of *dharma*. Some of the weaker responses gave little evidence of sufficient familiarity with the arguments of the text regarding this notion. The best responses were able to explore in an in-depth manner the meaning and significance of *dharma* and its relationship to an understanding of human identity, behavioural expectations, family and caste. The weaker essays demonstrated a very basic appreciation of the relevant portions of the text and usually failed to engage critically and/or personally 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. Not all candidates answering this question provided convincing evidence of a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the text and of the arguments of the text relevant to developing an answer to the question set. There was a marked tendency to define and explain the notion of *li* but little attempt to explain its connection with the achievement of harmony. Only the strongest responses demonstrated an awareness of the relationship of *li* to propriety, courtesy and reverence – all essential aspects of an individual's correct character. An outstanding weakness in most responses was a failure to engage in critical analysis and evaluation.

Question 4: Confucius: *The Analects*

The better responses presented clear, coherent and textually-based treatments of the question. The best responses developed were able to explore several key Confucian virtues that were required for correct familial relationships. These responses went on to make clear and relevant applications to good government as presented in the text along with examples and illustrations of how these points might be applicable to contemporary political situations. 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*

This question offered candidates an interesting and challenging opportunity to apply their knowledge of the text to modern society. Responses were generally of high quality demonstrating good knowledge and understanding of the text and the use of correct terminology drawn from the text. In general, responses were adequately detailed, with presence of examples taken from present day societal and political situations. Candidates who chose to answer this question developed responses which demonstrated a clear effort in doing philosophy and reasoning based upon their understanding of the prescribed text.

Question 6: Lao Tzu: *Tao Te Ching*

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

and showed that candidates were able to demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of the *Tao*. However, not all candidates were completely successful in demonstrating how the *Tao* '... denotes nature itself in terms of the spontaneity of the world and man' which is what the question specifically asks. Another outstanding weakness noted in some of the responses was the absence of critical evaluation and personal response.

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

The question was one of the most popular questions answered by candidates and dealt with central ideas developed by Plato in the text. The quality of responses varied greatly from poor to excellent. In general, stronger candidates who chose to answer this question were able to focus on its demands and develop responses that reflected knowledge of the relevant arguments of the text. The best responses developed a critical exploration of the virtues required in each individual and the corresponding reflection of those virtues in the state. Most importantly, these responses explored the role education played in the state, especially in terms of the isomorphism between knowledge and virtue. These responses tended to be rich in details, with a good use of the text and an appropriate terminology. Nonetheless, even the best responses were more descriptive and informational leaving little room for criticism or personal views, which were occasionally limited to the mention of some counter arguments expressed quickly just at the end, mostly as a duty rather than a real necessity of the argument. Weaker response presented limited and/or merely descriptive accounts of wisdom, courage, temperance and justice and a general presentation of how these virtues were present in the three classes of citizens of the ideal state. Additionally, weaker responses became involved in detailed accounts of the various stages of the educational programme developed by Plato with connecting this information to the demands of the question. Only the best responses included focused and fairly well developed evaluative critiques of the relevant arguments of the text.

Question 8: Plato: *The Republic*, Books IV-IX

This question asked about another central idea of the text. As a result, candidates were generally successful in answering this question. The better responses made effective use of relevant text information and explored Plato's method of the macro-view (the state) and the micro-view (the individual) in developing the sense of harmony required for the presence of justice in both the individual and in the state. These responses included supporting examples and illustrations taken both from the text and from real life situations and also demonstrated effective levels of analysis and evaluation. Weaker responses tended to remain quite descriptive of the virtues required in an individual and in the state without focusing attention of why justice was primarily a matter of internal harmony. Personal engagement was quite evident in almost all responses but only the better responses focused personal views on the sense of the question set.

Question 9: René Descartes: *Meditations*

The best responses were those that were able to address the specific demands of the question connecting Descartes's arguments for the existence of God to the problem of circular reasoning in the quest to establish the reliability of human reasoning.

These responses demonstrated detailed familiarity with the relevant arguments of the text, and incorporated examples, counter-arguments and personal response. These responses demonstrated familiarity with the appropriate philosophical terminology associated with the arguments of the text. Weaker responses tended to launch into descriptive outlines or summaries of Descartes's arguments for the existence of God with only a passing mention of circular reasoning.

Question 10: René Descartes: *Meditations*

Almost all candidates were able to engage with the demands of this question by developing responses that focused on Descartes's use of methodological-hyperbolic doubt to establish clear and certain knowledge. The better responses were able to explore the implications of Cartesian methodology critically and effectively making relevant references to the distinctions between clear and distinct ideas. 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 Descartes's method of doubt without addressing precisely the demands and implications of the question set.

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

This was a very popular question. The more successful responses were able to enter into a satisfactory explanation and analysis of Locke's approach to property both within the state of nature and within civil society. These responses explored the connection of labour and property and went on to investigate the issue of ownership and distribution of property and the impact of money on ownership of property. 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 specific demands of the question.

Question 12: John Locke: *Second Treatise on Government*

In almost all cases, candidates who chose to answer this question were able to provide evidence of a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Locke's position on the status of children in the family and their eventual entry into civil society as free individuals. The best responses explored the issues of parental power over children, coercion, legitimate restriction of freedom and the role of education in producing good contributing citizens. 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.

Question 13: John Stuart Mill: *On Liberty*

This was a very popular question. The main strength of responses to this question could be seen in the satisfactory ability of almost all candidates to make convincing connections amongst ideas drawn from utilitarianism, Mill's views on individual liberty, ethics, the permanent interests of all people with regard to themselves and to others. Another strong point of most responses was the evidence of a satisfactory understanding of Mill's 'harm principle'. Some outstanding weaknesses of several responses were: a) a tendency to become entrapped in a description and detailed

informative explanation of Mill's general philosophical perspectives; b) provide an explanation of how Mill's utilitarianism demands that we not harm others if general happiness is to be brought about in society; and c) limit the investigation to an analysis of Mill's 'harm principle' without engaging with the precise demands of the question. In general, the levels of careful analysis and critical evaluation could have been developed by all candidates more fully.

Question 14: John Stuart Mill: *On Liberty*

This was a problematic question for many of the candidates who chose to answer it. Several candidates focused on Mill's understanding of liberty solely from the perspective of his 'harm principle' without exploring – as the question precisely asks – 'the distinction between sanction and persuasion, between coercion and free choice, ultimately between rules of law and rules of opinion.' The better responses to this question identified and explored the notions of imposition by the obligations of law as well as by the imposition of instruction and persuasion by opinion and example. These responses then went on to explore the impact of an application of the 'harm principle', and an appreciation of the ideas of self-regarding virtues and other-regarding actions that influence Mill's notion of liberty. Major weaknesses of some responses could be found in the failure to develop an evaluative treatment of the argument, to incorporate personal response and to maintain focus on the actual demands of the question.

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

This question focused on several central themes of the text. However, responses provided evidence that suggests that many candidates were unable to appreciate fully or precisely the demands of the question. Problematic responses launched into a detailed but descriptive explanation of Nietzsche's account of the origins of morality and then proceeded to outline the distinction between master and slave morality. These responses did not, however, show how Nietzsche's account of morality increased responsibility to individuals for their moral lives. Due to this oversight, many responses provided only partial responses to the specific demands of the question. Nevertheless, most candidates were able to demonstrate familiarity with the text and with the philosophical terminology employed by Nietzsche in his analysis of the origins of morality. Major weaknesses were the absence of critical treatment, a tendency to produce lengthy summary descriptions of some of Nietzsche's key ideas (not always relevant to the demands of the question), a failure to identify and explore counter-arguments and a failure to provide personal response or demonstrate personal engagement.

Question 16: Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Genealogy of Morals*

The majority of candidates were able to write responses that generally focused successfully on the relevant arguments of the text, particularly the arguments of the third essay. Candidates demonstrated satisfactory to excellent knowledge of some of the key notions of the text that allowed for the development of an explanation and discussion of Nietzsche's account of asceticism. Stronger candidates included careful analysis, critical evaluation, and incorporated supporting examples and illustrations, which gave evidence of a personal response. Weaker candidates tended to offer descriptive summaries of some of the key points of asceticism 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 Nietzsche's account of asceticism.

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

As this question dealt with a central idea of the prescribed text, candidates were generally successful in developing responses which were based on the relevant information drawn from the text. Stronger candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of the key terminology and were able to analyse Russell's arguments in a convincing manner. References to Russell's views on the positions developed by Descartes and Berkeley showed sophistication in assessing the sense-data theory of perception. Another strength evident in the better responses was the investigation of the relationship between the sense-data theory of perception and Russell's accounts of knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. Two general weaknesses in all responses was the lack of a developed, focused critical evaluation of the arguments presented and the absence of the identification of counter-arguments.

Question 18: Bertrand Russell: *The Problems of Philosophy*

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 critically the issues of the acquisition of knowledge through the principle of induction as well as from the processes of inference and deduction. Weaker candidates 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 throughout the text but not always relevant to the topic asked in the question. Weaknesses in the detailed analysis and critical evaluation of the material incorporated into the response and in a treatment of counterarguments account for some of the difficulties candidates experienced in developing convincing arguments.

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 the public and private realms. The place of labour, work and action was also considered, again in a descriptive manner. The strongest candidates were able to provide clear evidence of analytical and evaluative treatment, incorporating useful supporting examples and illustrations, while attempting to deal with counter-arguments, and demonstrating 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 explain and discuss the relation between the public and the private realm.

Question 20: Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition*

Few candidates responded to this question. Those that did were only able to address the demands of the question in most general terms. Descriptive accounts of the faculty of promising were not backed up by relevant critical evaluation.

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

Candidates demonstrated a sufficient level of accuracy in descriptions, use of the text, references and use of specific terminology. The best responses demonstrated connections or references to other authors and philosophical perspectives and a certain level of critique tended to emerge almost always clearly as a result of the issues referred to in the question itself. Weaker responses would have benefited deep analysis and more focused critical evaluation.

Question 22: Simone de Beauvoir: *The Ethics of Ambiguity*

Candidates who chose this question were able to develop satisfactory to excellent responses as the question focused attention on one of the most central themes of the prescribed text. The best responses were able to engage in a precise and detailed analysis and evaluation of de Beauvoir's position of the issue of freedom and to situate her views in the wider context of existential philosophy and philosophers. Weaker responses were characterized by a lack of knowledge and understanding of the actual arguments of the text. The weaker of these responses offered only common sense views of freedom.

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 of Taylor's notions of 'manner' and 'matter' in the context of the quest for authenticity. Supporting examples and illustrations drawn from the text itself as well as from aspects of several contemporary societal and political situations served to strengthen the development of the responses. Weaker essays tended to slip into descriptive summaries of some of the ideas of the text which were only occasionally relevant to the demands of the question but failed to develop a critical treatment of the material. The major obstacles to the development of excellent responses to this prescribed text remain the absence of focused and precise critical treatment and a difficulty to engage personally with the arguments of the text.

Question 24: Charles Taylor: *The Ethics of Authenticity*

As in the case of the first question set for this text, the question asked for a treatment of certain of the most central concerns of the text, i.e. instrumental reasoning, individuality, and the ideal of 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 slip into a simple 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 should 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 students perform well in the examination.
- Teachers should supply their students with a copy of the glossary of command terms found in the current Philosophy guide, and should explain and discuss these terms in class. This document contains the terms that occur in the examination questions (for example, *analyse, evaluate, discuss, explain, etc.*).
- Candidates must learn to read carefully, address clearly and 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.
- 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. The definitions of, for example, the skills of analysis and evaluation can be found at the end of the current subject guide.
- 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.
- 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 familiarized 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 site. 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

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

General comments

This year saw a different style of extract from last year. Examiners felt that candidates did not handle the unseen passage as well as last year in a number of areas. While the text was accessible, it was not as challenging as last year and as a consequence candidates were drawn into a false sense of security. Paper 3 is a task that differentiates candidates, as the task requires them to demonstrate the skills of doing philosophy by reflecting upon them and their associated issues. It requires them to be sensitive to another philosopher's argument and through critical engagement, provide a demonstration of the skills of analysis and evaluation while constructing their own position; even if it is largely in agreement with the position in the extract.

This year the extract did not advance specific claims, rather a more general sense that philosophy is a discipline and one that fitted firmly within the expectations of 'doing philosophy' established by Plato. Similar to a number of previous texts that were also drawn from introductions to textbooks, the extract was less concerned with staking out a particular position on the issue of 'doing philosophy' and therefore provided a challenge. Candidates struggled to engage with the claims in the text as in many ways they were consensus claims. As a result they were not provoked into reflecting upon the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophy in a manner that last year's text provided. It was felt that, on the whole, candidates found it hard to analyse the claims because they tended to agree with them. This agreement meant that they struggled to reflect on, and then indicate, the reasons for their agreement or disagreement. Consequently a significant number of the responses simply reflected the extract and provided examples rather than engaging in structured analysis and evaluation.

It was pleasing to see that there were fewer candidates than in the early years of Paper 3 who simply wrote an essay that they would have written no matter what text had been presented. These still occurred but they are few in number.

Therefore, one key point to take from this paper is the need to develop critical engagement with an extract and the points it contains. 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. Even if a candidate agrees with the extract and its points then the implications need to be explored in comparison with other approaches. In not doing so, they revealed themselves as less able philosophically because 'doing philosophy' requires more than merely expressing opinions about other people's views.

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

Many responses were disappointing in that candidates were not competent in carrying out the assigned tasks, in particular, of critically analysing and evaluating a previously unseen philosophical text, and relating their own experience of doing philosophy to matters highlighted by 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.

There is an allocation of at least 20 minutes to read and analyse the text and develop an outline of a response. The expectations of the examiner are that a candidate is given time to undertake analysis of the extract and develop a structured response; in other words, time to 'do philosophy'. The essay is therefore an outcome of careful consideration using the full time allocation to complete the task. An understanding of exam technique in relation to Paper 3 therefore still seems to be an issue.

With this in mind, there was a tendency for weaker candidates to almost always give insufficient attention to the key tasks of analysis and evaluation of the text. Candidates need to have it reinforced that the primary focus with Paper 3 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 or misunderstandings are made along the way, so candidates have to show that they know how to understand, analyse 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.

Many candidates understood the need to include examples of 'doing philosophy'. However, these are perceived to be simply statements of classroom experiences rather than illustrations of the nature, function, methodology and meaning of philosophy. For example, many responses contained references to classroom debate that 'opened their eyes to different perspectives'. Very few however contained an explanation of how this came about. What was the trigger? And therefore what insight/point was drawn from the experience of doing philosophy? Was it a demonstration by another candidate of the assumptions in a particular way of thinking, an analysis of the argument highlighting a previously unseen weakness in evidence or the use of evidence, or the implications of holding a particular position?

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 and allows them to make a series of points about doing philosophy without connecting them clearly to the text in the latter half of the response.

Candidate performance against each criterion

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. Candidates need to be given better preparation for critically reading a philosophical text and greater awareness of their own understanding of philosophy. This requires a critical perspective on the key aspects of doing philosophy established by Plato, including the assumptions and implications of such an approach. Only the better essays indicated that candidates had completed a unit that had assisted with their appreciation of what philosophical activity involves. Many candidates reflected on doing philosophy evident in their Optional Themes, in particular the Philosophy of Religion. These examples tended to slip into a debate about an issue in this Optional Theme rather than an analysis of the underlying principles of doing philosophy they encountered while completing the unit. Very few candidates drew upon examples specifically in relation to doing philosophy. As a consequence there was not the quality of connection with the issues identified in the text and the examples and the experience of doing philosophy.

The major emphasis in this criterion is on the final dot point, 'How well does the response demonstrate an understanding of philosophical activity?'. This demonstration emerges out of an analysis of the points being made in the text in relation to doing philosophy and alternative perspectives on these points, including the candidate's own informed perspective. This conveys the awareness referenced in the descriptors. Furthermore, there were very few responses that included reference to the analytical framework suggested in the support material - the nature, function, methodology and meaning of philosophy as a reflective activity (see criterion C).

The weakest skill remains evaluation. The major emphasis in this criterion is 'How well does the candidate evaluate the philosophical activity raised in the text?'. Many candidates did not handle the key task of evaluation of the ideas in the text with any conviction. There was a particular absence of awareness of different understandings of, and approaches to, doing philosophy. As a consequence, responses remained declarative or rhetorical about their own positions on doing philosophy limiting the demonstration of analysis. This is then not used to

support an evaluation of individual points or general perception of doing philosophy contained within the text. Greater explicit awareness of varied perspectives on doing philosophy would enable candidates to contrast their own position for the purposes of illustration and then evaluation. This would provide greater insight into their own perspective and provide more substantial justifications of the position being taken in relation to the extract. There are further shortcomings in their attempts to convey their own experience of 'doing philosophy' by failing to use their own experiences to assist with the critical analysis and evaluation of the text. Sometimes they remained disconnected to the extract other than by simple association. *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).* Weaker candidates saw the inclusion of this experience more as a diary entry than part of the process of analysis and evaluation.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be encouraged to understand that the Paper 3 assessment task is designed to assess their ability to read a philosophical extract, understand the argument and individual points being offered, evaluate them by reference to the candidate's own understanding of doing philosophy and support this understanding by using illustrations of alternative perspectives on doing philosophy drawn from examples and experiences of doing philosophy in the course they have completed. This is different in nature from the other Papers and their sections and therefore requires a different approach in preparation. There are consistencies between all assessment tasks in Philosophy and these can be built upon to prepare candidates. However, Paper 3 is different in many ways and equally candidates must be aware of the nature of a good response in this assessment task and ensure they are sufficiently prepared for its unique features.

- Candidates should familiarize themselves with the assessment criteria for Paper 3 and, in particular, take note of what 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. As these tasks are text-based, the scope for use of material prepared in advance of the examination without controlled application is, and should be, very limited.
- Candidates should be encouraged to look at the extract from an overall perspective and then 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 or repeating points being made in the text uncritically.
- 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 demonstrates: their understanding of the overall point of the text in relation to doing philosophy, convey their own position on doing philosophy in relation to this, how this understanding is illuminated by their experience of doing IB philosophy and examples of philosophers they have studied in the course, and outline how the text will be analysed and

evaluated to support their own position. Candidates should not simply summarize the points identified in the extract as if they are writing a report.

- Overall, it is recommended that while candidates are encouraged to broadly engage with the issue of doing philosophy as they proceed through the course there should also be a section of the course that is designed to specifically engage with the issues of doing philosophy. This can be done in a number of ways; for example, by looking at how different philosophers conceive philosophy as the result of different influences and context, how its role in understanding the world and the role of humans within it has changed, alternative approaches to achieving the broad ambitions of philosophy, and so on. This can then be related to the different experiences of doing philosophy in the course. The role of philosophy in contemporary debates is also an excellent starting point as well as comparisons with different approaches posed by key philosophical questions in other disciplines and other traditions of thought. The role of TOK is significant here although candidates must understand that Paper 3 is not a TOK essay. Teachers should therefore 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. This can then be drawn upon and supplemented as the candidates proceed through the core and optional themes and the prescribed text.
- Teachers should be developing their candidates' ability to justify their own position on 'doing philosophy' by offering reasons for their position, for whatever claims they make about the text, and for making reference to illustrative material from the course to illuminate their analysis and evaluation of the text. They should be actively demonstrating why a claim is valid and why an example or illustration supports the point with which it is being associated.
- 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, especially extracts from different perspectives that can be used to encourage further reflection on their own position. 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 in the Philosophy guide and via the OCC.