PHILOSOPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 24	25 - 40	41 - 54	55 - 66	67 - 79	80 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 25	26 - 40	41 - 53	54 - 64	65 - 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

General formatting and referencing was problematic in some of the work submitted. In some cases bibliographies were absent; there was no word count, nor always explicit connection to the syllabus. The absence of either a word count or connection to syllabus does not necessarily disqualify the candidate from receiving a high mark for criterion A, but failing to reference, or problems with the bibliography can compromise the integrity of the work.

Range and suitability of the work submitted

In general the work submitted is clearly attempting to address the aims of the IA, and some work showed a very good level of achievement of the objectives for this component. In these cases, stimuli were varied and often original. Here, the stimulus material lent itself to a focused discussion and

analysis, usually of one idea, and not a general overview of a whole area of debate. At all times the focus and emphasis was on philosophical analysis and evaluation. Reference to the stimulus material was to highlight or clarify a philosophical concept. These good pieces of work developed an argument and discussion rather than briefly stating the tenets of a position before concluding. Different approaches and philosophical standpoints were often used to create interesting debates. The exercises also showed a very good formulation of titles and a clear intellectual engagement with the analysis. The evaluation of arguments in the good samples maintained a degree of personal reflection; the problem had been given time to develop intellectually and personally.

The central objective of the exercise is depth of analysis. In this sense, focussing on fewer positions or philosophers might increase the chances of accomplishing this rather than comparing and contrasting the views of too many authors, particularly when these are, e.g. Descartes, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Hegel, and Sartre.

Candidates who attempted to summarize longer film scenes or text extracts were often less successful, due to a certain lack of focus.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: expression

Most candidates were able to demonstrate a satisfactory level of organization; they could assemble an argument with clarity of expression and use appropriate philosophical language. As mentioned above, the main problem with this criterion was in candidates meeting the full set of formal requirements.
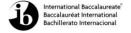
Criterion B: knowledge and understanding

A majority of the candidates comfortably managed to demonstrate some knowledge of philosophical issues and achieve a 3 for this criterion. They were able to construct arguments to support the positions they were presenting, though they were not always convincing or coherent. Weaker candidates tended to paraphrase philosophical ideas poorly and often in a cursory and perfunctory manner without demonstrating that they actually understood what they were writing about.

Criterion C: identification and analysis of relevant material

In general, the material used was highly relevant and the examples were appropriate. The problem still remains with the analysis aspect of this criterion. It was often the distinguishing feature between poor, good, and excellent pieces of work. In these cases, a description of the concept or idea was given, but with no distinguishing points made: there was no emphasis on one point (or set of points) and so rather than an analysis of an idea, it ended up being a descriptive essay. There must be discussions on counter positions in order to warrant a mark of 6 or above for this criterion.

Criterion D: development and evaluation

The main problem with this criterion is not the inability to hold an opinion, but in stating a philosophical evaluation of that opinion with an adequate justification. Candidates who performed poorly in this criterion needed to explore the implications of their judgments and observations in a more critical/analytical fashion, and not just state a position and give details. This was the area of performance in which most candidates still experienced difficulty. The lack of a convincing personal perspective on the relevant issues accounts for most of the problem.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers must be reminded to carefully and attentively read the instructions in the current subject guide for the Internal Assessment component

- Incorporate the IA requirement into the curriculum at an early opportunity and revisit this task over the 18 months prior to final submission. This will greatly assist in the understanding and development of ideas

- When connecting the topic to a part of the syllabus, the candidate should have one theme in mind, not two or more. This helps the candidate to, again, focus on the topic from one main perspective

- Candidates should also have a copy of the requirements and marking criteria to aid their understanding of the nature and assessment of the task

- Encourage wider reading on the part of the candidates. This greatly helps to put the topic into a larger philosophical perspective and allows candidates to display a more detailed knowledge of the subject area

- Encourage candidates to display a personal as well as an intellectual engagement with the topics and issues discussed.

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 - 34	35 - 47	48 - 59	60 - 72	73 - 90

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 - 16	17 - 23	24 - 30	31 - 38	39 - 45	46 - 60

General comments

Difficulties

The range of work submitted was generally satisfactory. However, there is still a significant gap between the requirements of the philosophy course and the standard of some of the work produced. The main goal is the construction of an argument, however many candidates produced merely descriptive, (all the while relatively well informed) answers.

With regards to the approach to the exam and the task, there is a number of candidates who do not consider the actual requests of the question, some disregard the question and apply what they have learnt, thus reshaping the aims of the question to suit their memorized response. This results in prepared answers that very rarely address the question successfully. They consider the theme (example.g. knowledge, truth) and write about them without considering the requests of the question per se.

Strengths

The language used was usually at the appropriate level of academic formality. Answers showed a reasonable grasp of the conventions of the language employed specific to philosophy, both in English and Spanish. Many candidates demonstrated that they were reasonably well prepared from the point of view of knowledge and general information. Candidate work varied in level of ability and depth of understanding from very good to outstanding. The pertinent feature of the most successful essays was their knowledge of and fluency in using philosophical terms and conventions, along with their subtle and considered tone, with strong evidence of personal thought.

Some impressions

The work submitted this session, on the whole, was of a satisfactory level, supported by reasonable organization (criterion A) with many candidates being awarded the full 3 marks; and satisfactory knowledge and understanding (criterion B) with most candidates achieving 2/3 marks.

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

As in previous sessions, scripts were generally satisfactory. Regarding the approach to the paper, many candidates did not consider the actual requests of the question, some disregard the question entirely and apply what they have memorized. This results in prepared answers or general expositions which consider the general theme of the question (e.g. knowledge, truth). It is difficult to score highly if this is done, as the specifics of the question are not being addressed.

As with previous years, there was no single 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:

- Presenting an argument in an organized way

  o Various issues were found in the construction of a logical argument. There were answers that did not present a well-organized argument, and some seemed to be unclear as to how to organize and develop an argument while others seemed to be unclear on structure and purpose. However, some candidates presented a clear, explicit and conscious structure in their essay and knew exactly where they were going and how each point contributed to the answer.

- Using clear, precise and appropriate language

  o There were answers that did not employ clear, precise or appropriate language to philosophy. A weakness of a small group of scripts was the inability to write in a straightforward, concise manner. There were scripts where candidates did not know how to write essays, but rather, produced a series of unjustified assertions without explicit connection.

- Developing a clear and focused argument

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

For the philosophy exams in general, but specifically in Paper 1, answers are expected to develop an argument. Demonstrating knowledge of specific philosophical theories, names or positions is not an end in itself, but a means to develop the answer as a specific argument regarding the issue addressed 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 course is not only a test of knowledge (e.g. 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 the examinations and in the IA.

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

Many candidates demonstrated the ability to structure an appropriate response in general terms to a challenging question. They showed a reasonable 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 demonstrated between satisfactory and good knowledge, with arguments relevant to the core/optional theme to which the question referred. Within this group of candidates, some scripts presented abilities, levels and depth of understanding ranging from the very good to the outstanding. The pertinent features of these scripts 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 an 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.

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?

Question 1 (A passage by Galen Strawson on the "I")

Many candidates referred to the self as the main issue, identifying different approaches. A number of answers critically discussed Strawson`s list of I-characteristics. Critical discussions of this kind were evaluated according to the quality of the analysis, and some of them were considered satisfactory answers.

Question 2 (A passage by Herrnstein and Murray on IQ and intelligence

This question was probably the most popular question in section A. Many answers selected intelligence as the main issue, presenting and exploring only one main view in general, e.g. that intelligence is a distinctive human trait, conceived in the tradition as reason. Many of the answers explored Aristotle's central ideas. Many other answers thought that the main question at stake was determinism, and here again, candidates compared Plato and Sartre, tending in many of these cases to exaggerate or simplify aspects of Plato's thought presenting him as a modern determinist.

Section B

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

Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology

The questions on epistemology produced answers which tended to explain epistemological concepts with little or no concern for the specific demands of the question.

Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics

Question 5) was without doubt the preferred choice out of all optional themes. Accordingly, answers displayed the whole range of achievement levels. In general, the answers to this theme showed that candidates had learned theories and problems of ethics.

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion

The answers to the question interpreted "human experience" in at least two different ways: as experiencing God, and as related to experience as a form of epistemological justification, sometimes in relation to science. Question 8 was only occasionally answered, and answers were based on general common sense and general descriptions of religious life in the world.

Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art

Question 9 was tackled by many candidates, with many of them showing good knowledge of central aspects of the art theories of Plato, Aristotle and Nietzsche, however, there was a significant number of cases where knowledge was mainly explained, and was not built upon with a view to analyse the specifics of the question.

Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy

With regards to question 11, answers showed a reasonably good knowledge of both forms and ideologies of government. Many answers also showed a reasonably clear understanding of the question; however, only seldom were there well-constructed arguments sustained for the duration of the answer.

Weaker answers presented theories, positions, and sometimes lengthy factual descriptions.

Optional Themes 6, 7 and 8

There were too few responses to comment on.

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.

- Ensure that 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:

  - present an argument in an organized way

  - use clear, precise and appropriate language

  - identify any assumptions in the question

  - develop a clear and focused argument

  - identify the strengths and weaknesses of their response

  - 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

- 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.

- Candidates must be reminded 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.

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Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 23	24 - 30

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

Seven teachers took advantage of the opportunity of completing the G2 document. This level of response remains disappointing as the G2 document constitutes an important tool by means of which the content, quality and overall standards of the HL and SL Paper 2 examination papers can be evaluated critically from the perspective of the classroom teacher. The information supplied in the G2 document can help 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. The G2 document also constitutes an important tool at the Grade Award meeting. Schools and/or the IB Coordinators of their respective schools ought to make every effort to encourage their philosophy teachers to take advantage of this important facet of the Philosophy programme.

The evidence provided by the N13 SL and HL Paper 2 scripts suggested that the prescribed text selected for study had been read and analysed under the direction of the teacher. Hence, all Paper 2 examination responses were able to be assessed comfortably within the scope and parameters of the various achievement levels of the official assessment criteria.

While the responses varied in terms of the achievement/performance levels described by the formal assessment criteria, most candidates were able to perform successfully in this component of the programme. Particular and specific difficulties and/or problems with regard to performance in terms of the various assessment criteria will be discussed later in this report. Some of the more outstanding difficulties might be effectively addressed by making certain that candidates always:

- Read and respond to the bullet-pointed recommendations found at the top of the second page of the Paper 2 examination paper. These recommendations are intended to help candidates write the best possible response

- read the examination question carefully and completely

- respond to the question exactly as it is presented

- understand and address precisely the command terms of the question

- engage in a critical and evaluative manner with the examination question and its implications

- maintain consistent focus on the arguments of the text that are relevant to developing an answer to the question

- incorporate into the response supporting examples and illustrations that help in the development of the response

- identify and explore relevant counter-arguments and/or counter-positions

- distinguish between a simple exposition or description of the arguments of a text from a critical evaluation, examination and discussion of those arguments

- offer more than a simple descriptive, general outline of the main points of an author's general philosophical perspective

- demonstrate personal engagement with and/or a personal response to the relevant arguments of the text

- consider the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments of the text.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

In general, candidates demonstrated satisfactory to very good knowledge and understanding of the prescribed texts. More specifically, candidates exhibited familiarity with the arguments of the text relevant to the question set, the use of appropriate philosophical language and of the idiom of the text, and an awareness of the arguments developed by the authors of the text. 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 various authors, most candidates performed in a satisfactory manner. Stronger candidates gave evidence of an expertise and sophistication in the areas noted above. Weaker candidates were unable to engage with the text in more than a descriptive and occasionally superficial manner. Only the weakest candidates were unable to present evidence that the text had been read and analysed.

The strongest candidates were able to situate specific arguments on the text into the general context of the prescribed text as a whole. These 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 were able to demonstrate familiarity with secondary source material regarding professional, academic interpretations of a 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. If a text or question is not listed, it is because there were no responses to it.

Question 5: Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

Few candidates responded to this question. Those that did were able to focus upon the relevant sections of the text that addressed the demands of the question and were equally able to provide an explanation of the key points taken from the arguments of the text. The predominant weakness of responses was the absence of a critical evaluation of the material incorporated into them.

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

This question was a very popular choice amongst candidates. The best responses convincingly demonstrated an understanding of Plato's approach to the creation of the ideal state and why this approach required 'wiping clean' the slate of human society and human habits. The best responses offered supporting examples and illustrations from the text. Weaker responses tended to focus on a description of the ideal state, the virtues that were to be present in it and the classes of citizens in the state. A weakness noted in several responses was an absence of personal response and/or personal engagement with the arguments presented.
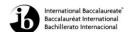
Question 8: Plato: The Republic, Books IV-IX

While this was a popular choice amongst candidates, most responses presented a detailed description of Plato's educational programme in its several stages without investigating its purpose and value as required in the wording of the question. As a result, only a few responses addressed the demands of the question in a complete and evaluative manner.

Question 9: René Descartes: Meditations

This question was chosen by several candidates. Responses generally identified and explained the various steps in Descartes's methodological doubt. The best responses were able to develop critical and analytical investigations of how this method would relieve the mind of reliance upon the senses in the quest for indubitable truths. These responses incorporated supporting examples and illustrations taken from the text. Weaker responses remained descriptive in approaching the demands of the question, failed to engage in evaluation and did not show evidence of personal engagement with the arguments of the text.

Question 10: René Descartes: Meditations

This question was a popular choice. As it focused on a central argument of the text, almost all candidates were able to show satisfactory knowledge of the example of the piece of wax and its place in the text. The best responses showed sound knowledge of Descartes's use of this example in his theory of knowledge. Weaker responses tended to describe the example of the piece of wax without engaging in the critical analysis and evaluation of the relevant textual material.

Question 12: John Locke: Second Treatise on Government

Candidates who chose to respond to this question demonstrated a satisfactory knowledge of the relevant ideas of the text. The best responses not only provided sound explanations and discussions of the relevant material but also demonstrated convincing levels of analysis and evaluation. Weaker responses remained on the descriptive level and failed to incorporate evaluation and evidence of personal engagement.

Question 13: John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

This was a popular choice amongst candidates. In general, almost all responses demonstrated an acquaintance with Mill's position on the importance of freedom of thought and discussion, as presented in the text. The best responses demonstrated satisfactory to very good levels of analysis and evaluation.   Weaker responses remained somewhat descriptive without developing a critical approach to the relevant textual material. A notable weakness in several responses was the failure to explore the limits to freedom of thought and discussion in a society.

Question 14: John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

This was not a popular choice amongst candidates. Candidates who did respond to this question demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the Harm Principle and the principle of utility as presented by Mill in the text. The better responses entered into a critical evaluation of the material. Weaker responses remained descriptive of both the Harm Principle and the principle of utility without making the connections between the two as required by the question itself.

Question 15: Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

As this question focused on one of the central notions of the second essay of the text, candidates who chose to answer this question were able to respond quite successfully. While some responses described Nietzsche's idea of bad conscience without any critical treatment, the performance of candidates was, in general, quite good. Two weaknesses that could be noted were the absence of personal engagement with the arguments of the text and the failure to identify and briefly treat counter-arguments.

Question 16: Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Those that did tended to present a description of Nietzsche's treatment of the will to truth in the third essay of the text without connecting this treatment with the need for a genealogical analysis.

Question 17: Bertrand Russell: The Problems of Philosophy

This was not a very popular choice amongst candidates.   Responses demonstrated a satisfactory to good knowledge and understanding of the relevant arguments of the text. Weaker responses tended to engage in a comparison of knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance without completely addressing the demands of the question. Weaknesses included the absence of counter-arguments and personal engagement.

Question 24: Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

This was not a very popular choice amongst candidates. In general, responses demonstrated a reasonably clear knowledge of the relevant arguments of the text. Weaker responses tended to offer a summary of the three sicknesses of contemporary culture without actually addressing the demands of the question. The better responses demonstrated clear knowledge and understanding of Taylor's views, convincing analysis and evaluation, supporting examples and illustrations and some level of personal engagement.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must 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 help candidates develop successful responses.

- 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 for the assessment of a candidate's response.

- Candidates must pay particular attention to the wording of those examination questions that ask candidates to make connections 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' on the relevant text. If the purchase of such a text is not possible for budgetary reasons, internet sites can be explored for electronic copies of such texts.   Recommendations for websites providing access to electronic versions of philosophical texts can be found on the philosophy OCC site (resources link).

- 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. It might be helpful to introduce them to some of the techniques used: quoting key words or short, key phrases; summarising lengthier central arguments, *etc.*

- Teachers should introduce their candidates to a variety of interpretations of the chosen text. This information should be used in the development of counter-arguments.

- Candidates should be taught to develop contemporary applications of the arguments

of the prescribed texts studied in class. This is especially the case with those authors that tend to treat 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. To assist in this, the IB has published a 'questionbank' resource for philosophy. This can be a very useful resource for preparing candidates for the Paper 2 examination questions. In this way, candidates will become familiar with the style and format of typical Paper 2 examination questions appropriate to the prescribed text(s) studied in class. 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 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 20	21 - 24	25 - 30

General comments

Paper 3 provides Higher Level candidates the chance to demonstrate several important skills that distinguish a HL candidate from a SL candidates. The stated purpose of this examination (using, as it does, an unseen text extract to provide the context of candidate responses) is "to allow candidates to demonstrate an understanding of philosophy as an activity by means of a holistic application of the philosophical skills [...] they have developed throughout the course." In the context of the P3 examination, HL candidates are challenged to read the text extract and, on the basis of the text extract, engage the following skills:

- Critically read, understand and analyse an unseen text written by a philosopher about philosophical activity

- Develop a concise description of philosophical activity as presented in the text

- Explore pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text relating this to the experience of doing philosophy throughout the whole of the course

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- Make appropriate references to the text that illustrate a candidate's understanding of philosophical activity

- Develop a personal evaluation and response to the issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text.

Paper 3 has continued to prove to be a relevant and challenging component of the HL Philosophy programme. The information, comments and suggestions incorporated into the Subject Report should serve as a useful resource for teachers presenting this course component to their HL candidates. Hopefully, this information will:

- Enable teachers to reflect upon the examination performance of their candidates

- Prepare more effectively their future candidates for this examination

- Enable them to make the most of the opportunities, challenges and innovations afforded by HL Paper 3.

The Text Extract

The text extract that appeared in November 2013 HL Paper 3 examination was of a reasonable length and enabled candidates to reflect satisfactorily on the nature of philosophy, the skills involved in philosophical activity, as well as the experience of doing philosophy from a variety of perspectives. While there is certainly no correct or incorrect way to respond to the content of the text extract, successful responses focused on the skills noted above in the **General comments** section. The more successful responses were those of candidates who identified, made reference to and utilized the pertinent issues arising from the extract in the development of their responses and then drew upon all aspects of the course they studied at HL showing how the nature of philosophy as described in the text extract reflected their own experience of doing philosophy in the course. The more obvious relevant experiences and references included the experience of the philosophy classes themselves (e.g. the experience of debate, group discussion or research for assignments), specific experiences had during the treatment of the various course components (including the Internal Assessment and Extended Essay), a comparison between the activity of philosophy and that encountered with other subjects in the IB Diploma and finally, references to how skills learned in the philosophy course find application outside the classroom situation (e.g. reading a newspaper article, viewing a film, listening to the lyrics of a song, etc.). The evidence provided by candidate responses demonstrates that the extract provided a reasonable number of opportunities for candidates to engage personally with the text and its arguments.

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

Major areas of concern include the following:

- Failure to take into account the bullet points found at the top of page two of the examination paper under the heading "*In your response you are expected to:*". . These points are intended to help candidates optimize their performance in this examination paper

- Failure to address precisely and completely each of the tasks identified in the four

bullet points that constitute the specific directions for writing the response

- The tendency on the part of the majority of candidates to treat Paper 3 as an invitation to develop a detailed, descriptive summary of the text extract. The exam rubric asks only for a concise description of philosophical activity presented in the text

- Failure to make specific references to relevant portions of the text itself (key words, short phrases, brief sentences, paraphrases, *etc.*) and to incorporate these references into a focused and developed response

- Failure to incorporate a personal, textually informed response to the issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the extract

- Failure to develop an effective evaluation of the issues raised in the text extract

- Failure to make clear, specific and relevant references to the personal experience of philosophy and philosophical activity encountered in the HL course

- Failure to provide an indication of how the candidates personally understand the nature of philosophical activity. The absence of this perspective makes it almost impossible to demonstrate how the text reflects their personal understanding of philosophical activity – one of the specific requirements for the development of the Paper 3 response.

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

The major areas in which most candidates appeared well prepared include the following:

- The presentation of clearly organised, coherent responses using appropriate philosophical language

- The ability to remain focused on the arguments of the text and to develop responses following the arguments of the text extract from beginning to end

- The incorporation of clear and concise references to the text

- The ability to identify, at least descriptively, the main ideas, themes and topics raised in the text extract

- The ability to make references to their own experience of doing philosophy throughout the course in a convincing and effective manner. This skill constitutes one of the central expectations of Paper 3 and all candidates should be encouraged to use their analysis of the text extract as a basis for discussing their own reflections of what doing philosophy actually involves

- The ability to identify and incorporate relevant counter-arguments and/or counter-positions to points made and arguments found in the text extract

- The ability to use the overall sense of the text's approach to the nature of philosophical activity as a stimulus to develop a personal reflection on 'doing philosophy'.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Expression

Candidates were generally successful in the aspects of the response treated by this criterion. Responses were organized, the language was appropriate to philosophy, responses were easy to follow and the answers tended to be, in most cases, adequately focused and sustained. The various achievement levels of this assessment criterion were able to distinguish the best from mediocre responses. Weaker candidates failed to develop coherent responses as a result of an apparent absence of planning and organization.

Criterion B: Exploration

Criterion B continues to be a problematic area for candidates. Several candidates make no reference to their own experience of doing philosophy throughout the course. On the other hand, those that were able to accomplish this specific requirement did so in a clear and convincing manner. The overwhelming evidence of the examination scripts confirms that far too many candidates are not familiar with this requirement of the examination and/or were not sufficiently prepared (or in some cases not at all prepared) to draw on their experience of the whole course or to make relevant references to their own experience of doing philosophy as a result of following the course. In a more positive light, many candidates were able to identify pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text. Candidates generally found it difficult to incorporate relevant supporting examples and/or illustrations into their responses.

Criterion C: Relevance of the response and understanding of philosophical activity

The best responses demonstrated a detailed, focused and in-depth understanding of the philosophical activity discussed in the text extract. The better responses developed a coherent critical analysis of the issues raised in the text regarding the nature of philosophical activity. While almost all candidates made reference to ideas presented in the text, only the better candidates used the text in the strategic development of a convincing and compelling response. The weaker responses tended to remain descriptive, only summarizing what was said in the text extract and thus lacked the levels of personal understanding required by this criterion.

Criterion D: Evaluation and personal response

This criterion assesses a candidate's ability to engage personally with the text. The best responses avoided making generalized and/or over-simplified statements of broad opinion, but contained considered and textually-justified comments on how the extract enabled them to reflect on philosophical activity and their experience of the HL course. The strongest responses offered a focused and convincing critical evaluation of the main arguments of the text. Unfortunately, not all candidates were able to respond optimally to the expectation of this criterion in terms of the development of an evaluation of the philosophical activity raised in the text extract. Some of the weakest responses were characterised by the incorporation of general remarks about philosophy or philosophical activity that bore little, if any relation to the perspectives of the text itself.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

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- Introduce candidates early on in the course to the format and rubric of the Paper 3 examination script

- Identify, explain and practice the various skills that will be required in the examination situation

- Carefully read and reflect upon the portions of the current Subject Guide that outline the nature of this course component

- Carefully read and reflect upon the part of the Teacher Support Material (TSM) devoted to HL Paper 3

- Consult the relevant discussion threads on the Philosophy OCC devoted to various aspects of Paper 3 and the resource links that contain materials relevant for Paper 3 preparation

- Integrate Paper 3 related exercises into each of the course components. This is critically important as preparation for Paper 3 should take place throughout the course and not be devoted to a single block of teaching time

- Develop a collection of sample texts extracts of varying lengths that could be used in class to practice the skills that are required in the examination situation

- Make certain that candidates learn how to make references to their experience of doing philosophy and of following the philosophy course when reading texts that provide descriptions of philosophical activity

- Help candidates understand the difference between a descriptive summary of a text which describes the nature of philosophical activity and a detailed, textually-based analysis of such a text along with an evaluation of the issues raised in the text

- Help candidates develop the ability to formulate a personal response both to the issues raised in the text extract and to their personal experience of engaging in philosophical activity

- Take part in IB teacher workshops which offer detailed sessions on Paper 3 presentation and preparation.