

PHILOSOPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 24	25 - 40	41 - 53	54 - 66	67 - 78	79 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 25	26 - 41	42 - 54	55 - 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

Range and suitability of the work submitted

In general the work submitted this session showed a clear understanding and consistent accomplishment of the Internal Assessment objectives with varying levels of achievement. Quite clearly in the English, and in a number of the Spanish samples, there was a good level of consistency. There were good and creative choices of stimulus materials and interesting topics for discussion. Generally there was a good command of philosophical language and critical analysis applied to non-philosophical material. Different approaches and philosophical standpoints were used to create interesting debates. In very good examples the work also showed clear intellectual engagement with the analysis.

As in previous sessions general formatting and referencing of IAs were the main problems encountered. In certain cases bibliographies and word count were missing, and there lacked explicit connection to the syllabus. While the absence of, in a single instance, either a word count or connection to syllabus does not necessarily disqualify the candidate from receiving a high mark for Criterion A, the absence of referencing and bibliographies does compromise the integrity of the work. This is a formal requirement and the conventions must be followed. Some samples presented very helpful teacher comments on the work.

In general the work done is clearly following instructions, and some samples received 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. These samples tended to develop into good argument and discussion, as opposed to simply stating the tenets of a position and concluding. Different approaches and philosophical standpoints were used to create interesting debates. The evaluation of arguments in the good pieces always had a degree of a personal reflection. Candidates who attempted to summarize longer film scenes or book 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.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

The majority of the candidates comfortably managed to demonstrate some knowledge of philosophical issues and achieve a mark of 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 (poorly and often in a cursory and mechanical manner) philosophical ideas 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 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 sample scripts. 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 analysis of an idea, it became an exercise in description. Counter positions must be discussed, not just mentioned or stated in passing, in order to warrant a mark above 6 in this criterion.

Criterion D: Development and evaluation

There is a problem with regards to this criterion not of candidates being able to hold an opinion, but in stating a philosophical evaluation of that opinion with adequate justification and substantiation. 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 exercise. To this end, a recommendation is to use an internal cover sheet that has a checklist of all the specific formal requirements of the IA as a check. This could be a direct copy of the section in the Subject Guide and made available to candidates.
- Included with the checklist could be a realistic explanation of why the formal requirements are important in terms of mark value.
- The selection of stimulus material helps to frame and place in context the philosophical issue or argument. It should help the candidate from wandering off the topic.
- There should be an emphasis on the type of IA task that this is, a critical analysis that helps the candidate to prepare for Paper 1, 2 (and for HL candidates) Paper 3, where 20 of the 30 marks on offer for each essay is concerned with development, analysis and evaluation. These are the crucial aspects of any philosophical essay.
- 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 help 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 more detailed knowledge of the topic.
- Encourage candidates to display a personal as well as an intellectual engagement with the topics and issues discussed.

Further comments

The IA exercise might explore the possibilities opened by the syllabus; e.g. using the exercise to improve the development of a unified and sustained argument. The sections dedicated to the preparation of future candidates of the respective Subject Report from the last May session might offer some further ideas.

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 - 46	47 - 59	60 - 71	72 - 90

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 8	9 – 16	17 - 24	25 - 31	32 - 38	39 - 45	46 - 60

General comments

Not being a new phenomenon at all this session we can quite clearly identify different types of scripts: 1) very good or excellent level of achievement (mostly in English and some in Spanish), 2) a weaker group, with some scripts not even attempting the three questions in HL, 3) a group of scripts that are unsatisfactory in terms of performance level. These scripts show some grasp of philosophy but appeared poorly prepared, using different “tools” not in line with the kind of skills, approach and formats expected according to the IB program, 4) more standard sets of answers at performance levels between 4 and 6 according to the levels of achievement regarding: clarity and organization, knowledge, understanding of the specific demands of the question and analysis, and development and personal response.

The satisfactory scripts presented knowledge of central concepts, such as Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Sartre (also J. Rawls, P. Singer and Marx) and were reasonably well employed to tackle the questions of the core theme, ethics, philosophy of art and political philosophy.

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

Scripts were generally of a satisfactory level and in some cases more general in their approach. However, as in previous sessions many scripts showed a significant gap between the central and more demanding IB Philosophy program expectations and the orientation of the actual work produced. The main goal is the construction of an argument, though candidates still tend to offer mere descriptions (relatively well informed in cases) instead of substantiated arguments and evidence of understanding. Regarding the approach to the exam and the task, there are 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 remoulding the aims of the question to suit their memorized response. This results in prepared answers that do not fulfil the aims of the question. They consider the theme (ethics, knowledge) and write sometimes at length without considering the requests of the question per se. They considered very generally the optional themes, which makes it easy to apply a taught answer to. As in previous sessions there are still some scripts that are very colloquial in their approach and lack academic formality.

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

The language register was usually at the appropriate level of academic formality. These answers showed a reasonably satisfactory grasp of the conventions of the language employed, both in English and Spanish. Many candidates demonstrated that they were reasonably well prepared from the point of view of knowledge and general information. Within this group of candidates, some exams presented abilities, levels and depth of understanding that ranged from the very good to the outstanding. The pertinent features of these essays were their fluency with, and knowledge of, philosophical terms and conventions. They were also characterized by a subtle and considered tone, and strong evidence of personal thought.

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

Section A

Question 1 (Passage from the *History of Animals* by Aristotle)

Many of the answers selected intelligence or reason as the main issue, but mainly presented and explored only one main view. Many of these answers explored Aristotle's central ideas. There were some different but not really adequate approaches to this question: taking only the core theme without identifying a more precise issue or concept, just commenting on the text and not exploring two different approaches.

Question 2 (Image: *Barcode Prisoner*)

This was the most popular question, particularly with regards to English scripts. Almost as a universal answer the issue at stake was freedom, being the approaches of libertarianism versus determinism. There were many excellent answers; freedom seemed to be central to what candidates submitted. A common trait in some weaker answers to both questions from section A was to choose an unclear core theme issue (e.g. related very generally to knowledge) and present an optional theme discussion.

Section B

Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology

Question 3 (on the importance of linking the origins of ideas and concepts to experience) was satisfactorily answered in some occasions. In general, with the exception of some answers where they understood the question and tackled the issue of justifying knowledge in the experience, the responses were mainly general, descriptive and at times weak. Question 4 (problems related to justifying beliefs as knowledge) presented some better answers. They analyzed Plato's definition of knowledge as "justified true belief" and aspects in relation to justification.

Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics

Both questions proved to be difficult for candidates in the following sense: there was a clear difficulty in identifying the specific question and developing it accordingly. The answers showed knowledge in general, but there was a clear tendency to explain epistemological

concepts or issues without making an attempt to relate this knowledge to the specific demands of the question. This was reflected in lower marks for criterion C.

Optional Theme 3: Philosophy of religion

There were very few answers to either of these questions. In both cases, no matter what the question asked, the candidate seemed to feel compelled to focus on God's existence or non-existence, and the different arguments and positions regarding it. In general, with the exception of a minority of good answers to question 8 which analyzed Kierkegaard's conception of faith, the responses were generally weak.

Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art

This theme was one of the most popular behind theories and problems of ethics. There was a tendency here to develop answers beyond or without concern for the specific demands of the questions. In the case of question 9 there was practically no discussion of all three main aspects of it (instrumentalism, non-essentialism, and inexistence of a single value shared by all works of art). Question 10 was precisely answered in some cases, where candidates were able to examine the relationship between people's emotional responses to art and their appreciation, understanding and evaluation of it, making reference to the views of Hume and Ayer. In general when the answers demonstrated good knowledge, they discussed relevant aspects of the art theories of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, however, also in a significant number of cases this knowledge was mainly explained instead of being used as platform to analyze the specific answer. In both cases many answers presented very good examples, however, as in previous sessions, candidates should learn how to use them effectively.

Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy

Question 11 (the role of consent as a basis of political obligation) was well understood giving rise to many answers with different levels of achievement from satisfactory to excellent. These answers explored the dominant approach towards political obligation which is found in theories of consent established through social contracts, and demonstrated good knowledge of the following positions: Hobbes, Locke Rousseau and in some cases Rawls. Question 12 (the view that we possess human rights simply by virtue of being human) also attracted a significant number of good answers. They analysed the notion of human rights and specifically the justifications how such rights arise. The UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights was considered in a number of answers.

Optional Themes 6, 7 and 8

There were no answers to optional themes 6 and 8; and very few and generally weak answers to question 16 (gender equality), based on generalities and common-sense approaches.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

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

- Make sure candidates read the questions. Candidates can also use the internal rubrics published in the question paper to assist in guiding the way responses should be formulated. Teachers should reinforce the idea that the answer needs to be explicitly tied to the demands of the question.
- Candidates must pay particular attention to, and carefully follow, the initial bullet points displayed at the beginning of the exam which clarify what they are expected to do. They should: 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.
- Learn to be clearly focused on the question. Candidates need to be made aware that the beginning of an essay in philosophy must examine the precise nature of the question being asked, and which terms need careful definition. They must also be aware that a plan or strategy for tackling the problem should appear near the beginning, so that the reader can follow the argument as it unfolds. Therefore, more work on using the introduction as an outline of the proposed approach to the problem would be very useful.

It is important for teachers to teach their candidates how to plan their essays or answers, bearing in mind that the question at the top of the response will probably need to be explained in the first or second paragraph. In addition, it will need to be discussed from one or more perspectives in the body of the essay, and be clear in the concluding paragraph. Attention should be given to the stem of the question so that the answer is properly focused.

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

A high number of scripts tend to present better responses addressing criteria A and B, while they tend to underestimate the weight and meaning of criteria C and D: even the stronger responses tend to consider the development of ideas superficially. In the stronger responses, analyses were wide, deep, well-linked, with references to other authors and a relevant presence of critical thought and personal viewpoints. It must be emphasized that even the best responses tend to present a limited use of the text, with little use of references and a lack of clear connections to the original text. Most candidates tend to take into account the knowledge and the description and stop short of meeting the full demands of the topics and of philosophy in general terms, as IB intends it in its wording of the assessment criteria. As a consequence, language tends to be mostly appropriate in the good answers, with clear knowledge of the technical terms.

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, stronger candidates exhibited familiarity with the arguments of the text relevant to the question set, and used appropriate philosophical language as well as showing an awareness of the arguments developed by the authors of the text. Weaker candidates were unable to engage with the text in more than a descriptive and occasionally superficial manner. The weakest candidates were unable to present evidence that the text had been read and analysed.

The strongest candidates were able to make specific arguments in light of the text, finding interesting and clear connections to other authors and/or concepts. These candidates were able to proceed to deep analyses, wide development and rich presence of quotes/references/examples. The critical analysis and personal evaluations were very well-structured, with sound connections.

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 or too few to comment on:

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

This question was a very popular choice amongst candidates, being the preferred question especially for English scripts. The best responses offered detailed and rich descriptions of Plato's philosophical and political views and great familiarity with his key-terms. They also showed good examples and references to the text. As in many cases, even for the best responses, personal engagement and/or critical development was often very limited.

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

This question was less popular than question 7. As with the previous question, the best responses offered rich description, while critical and personal analyses were very limited and not so common.

Question 9: René Descartes: Meditations

This question was chosen by few candidates. Generally, the responses showed a largely good knowledge of Descartes's philosophy and key-terms, though analyses were very limited, with scarce use of the text that lacked critical and personal investigations.

Question 10: René Descartes: Meditations

The better scripts tended to be always limited to description.

Question 13: John Stuart Mill: On Liberty

This was a popular choice amongst candidates submitting responses in English (there were no Spanish responses to this question). 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 stronger responses demonstrated satisfactory to very good levels of analysis and evaluation. Weaker responses remained somewhat descriptive with a lack of a developed critical approach to the relevant material.

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. Nonetheless, analyses were generally mainly descriptive, with little room for critical and personal thought.

Question 16: Friedrich Nietzsche: The Genealogy of Morals

Very few candidates chose to answer this question. Generally, the responses offered a very limited view of Nietzsche's topic, though some excellent responses showed detailed

descriptions, very good knowledge and understanding, good use of the text and wide critical analyses.

Question 23: Charles Taylor: The Ethics of Authenticity

This was a very popular choice amongst Spanish candidates. Responses were at varying marks, ranging from 0 to 25. The weaker responses did not offer satisfactory analysis of the topic, and offered only a small quantity of data, barely describing the argument, with not much reasoning or development. In a few cases, there were scripts with just a few lines as a response, which attained a mark of 0. The best responses, though well-structured, generally presented some development, with some use of text or references, but with not many connections; moreover, candidates tended to underestimate the meaning and function of the critical and personal analyses, focusing on them more as necessary elements rather than as natural steps of the development of their arguments. Language was not always appropriate, though the best responses showed clear knowledge of the most technical philosophical terms.

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 stronger 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 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 as these are a valuable part of the grade boundary setting process.

Further comments

A final consideration focuses on the limited range of chosen topics: candidates tend to choose a few topics only, which become very popular. Some topics are never chosen. This seems to reflect the popularity of some philosophers and/or arguments in the teaching: if this is the case, this could limit the real possibilities of the candidates to freely move within all the possible topics, resulting in a general limitation of their personal engagement and consideration of making philosophy.

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 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 23	24 - 30

General comments

Paper 3 provides Higher Level candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate several important skills that distinguish a HL student from his or her SL counterpart. 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 Paper 3 examination, HL students 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.
- 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 continues 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 students. Hopefully, this information will:

- Enable teachers to reflect upon the examination performance of their students.
- Help teachers prepare more effectively their future students for this examination paper.
- Enable teachers to make the most of the opportunities, challenges and innovations afforded by HL Paper 3.

A review of the information supplied by teachers on the G2 document provides important and relevant information about how teachers in the November 2014 examination session viewed the examination paper. It must be emphasised that the G2 document provides the formal channel for teachers to make observations regarding the content, presentation and quality of the examination paper. Teachers should not overlook this valuable opportunity for feedback in future examination sessions.

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 printed 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 optimise their general performance in this examination paper.
- Failure to address precisely and complete each of the tasks identified in the four bullet points that constitute the specific requirements for constructing the response to the unseen text selection. These four bullet points follow the indication printed on the examination paper which states: *In your response include:*
- A prevalent tendency to develop a very detailed and fundamentally descriptive summary of all of the arguments and points raised in the text extract. The exam rubric asks only for a concise description of philosophical activity as 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 textually relevant, focused and coherently developed response.
- Failure to incorporate a personal, textually informed response to the issues regarding philosophical activity as raised in the extract.
- Failure to develop an effective and focused 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 throughout the whole HL course.
- Failure to provide an indication of how a candidate personally understands the nature of philosophical activity in relation to that raised in the text extract.

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

The text extract that appeared in November 2014 HL Paper 3 examination was of a reasonable length and it enabled candidates to reflect satisfactorily on the nature of philosophy, the skills involved in philosophical activity, and the experience of doing philosophy from a variety of perspectives. While there is certainly neither a correct nor an 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 student responses demonstrates that the extract provided a reasonable number of opportunities for candidates to engage personally with the text and its arguments.

More specifically, some of the areas in which candidates appeared well prepared include the following:

- The presentation of clearly organized, coherent responses using appropriate philosophical language.
- The ability to remain focused on the arguments of the text and to develop responses following the main arguments of the text extract from beginning to end.
- The incorporation of clear, specific and concise references to the text either by citing specific words and/or short phrases or by referring to the relevant line numbers of the text.
- The ability to identify concisely 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.
- The ability to use their analysis of the text extract as the stimulus for discussing their own personal view of philosophical activity in relation to that presented in the text extract.
- 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 incorporate relevant information learned in the course (ideas, information, philosophical approaches, arguments of philosophers, etc.) into the response. The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions.

Candidate performance against each criterion

An effective and systematic method of addressing the strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of the question is to explore them in terms of the formal HL Paper 3 assessment criteria:

Criterion A: Expression

Candidates were generally successful in this respect. 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 criteria. Not all candidates provided evidence of weighing the arguments of the text against their own views of what constitutes philosophical activity.

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

- Introduce candidates early in the course to the HL Paper 3 specification (rubric and format).
- 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 (see pages 27-28, 49-52).

- Carefully read the Teacher Support Material (TSM) devoted to HL Paper 3 and incorporate relevant ideas and resources into the teaching of this component of the course.
- Consult the relevant discussion threads on the Philosophy OCC devoted to various aspects of HL Paper 3 and the resource links that contain materials relevant for HL Paper 3 preparation.
- Integrate HL 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 (e.g. in the final weeks of the course).
- Develop a collection of sample texts extracts of varying lengths that can be used in class to practice the skills that are required in the examination situation.
- Help 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.
- Encourage students to identify and appreciate how the skills associated with philosophical activity are engaged outside of the classroom situation in daily, real-life situations.
- 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.
- Invite students to formulate in writing their personal views of what constitutes philosophical activity and have them revisit it throughout the course as their understanding of philosophical activity grows.
- 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.
- Provide sufficient in-class unseen text 'practice essays' in order to gain experience and confidence in writing examination responses.
- Participate in IB Philosophy workshops which, by default, offer sessions on Paper 3 presentation and preparation.