

November 2015 subject reports

Philosophy

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-12	13-25	26-42	43-54	55-66	67-77	78-100

Higher level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

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

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general the work submitted is clearly on the right path, and some samples showed a very good level of achievement of the objectives for this component. In these cases, stimuli were varied and often original. Where this was the case, 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 good samples developed an argument and discussion rather than briefly state the tenets of a position and then conclude. Different approaches and philosophical standpoints were used to create interesting debates. The exercises also showed a very good formulation in the titles and a clear intellectual engagement with the analysis. The evaluation of arguments in the good samples 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 of their work; they could assemble an argument with clarity of expression and use appropriate philosophical language.

Criterion B: Knowledge and Understanding

A majority of the candidates comfortably managed to demonstrate some knowledge of philosophical issues and achieve 3 marks in 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 giving a description. Some 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

In the context of the good samples submitted, the problem here still seems to be not in holding 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 Philosophy subject guide for the Internal Assessment exercise.
- Candidates should also have a copy of the marking criteria to aid their understanding of the nature and assessment of the task.
- 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 gain focus on the topic

from one main perspective.

- Some candidates attempted to tackle too many theories or scholars, to the detriment of depth of analysis and the development of their own philosophical arguments. Teachers are also reminded to help students focus their essay on a few important approaches to their chosen theme, so that they achieve depth.
- Candidates should focus on philosophical skills and “doing philosophy”, so that they are less tempted to either describe theories without analysis, or describe their own opinion without supporting evidence.
- Encourage candidates to display a personal as well as an intellectual engagement with the topics and issues discussed.

Further comments

In general the assessments submitted this session indicated a clear understanding and consistent accomplishment of the of the Internal Assessment objectives according to the different levels of achievement. There was generally good choice in selecting stimulus materials, with interesting topics for discussion. 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. An example of an excellent achievement was the exercise “Is Strong Artificial Intelligence Philosophically Possible?”

As in previous sessions, general formatting and referencing of IAs were the main problems encountered in some samples. However this session it does not seem to have been a major problem.

Some samples presented very helpful teacher’s comments on the exercises.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-9	10-18	19-36	37-47	48-58	59-69	70-90

General comments

This session as a whole suggested a better achievement compared to previous sessions, though this is dependent on levels and languages. The English submissions for the most part are at the 5/6/7 level with around 20% achieving a grade 7. The HL Spanish sample being on the whole closer to more normal (historically for this paper) distribution shows significant achievement at the 5 and 6 grades. Within this context, two groups of answers are quite clearly identifiable: 1) a very good or excellent level of achievement, 2) the more usual set of answers

ranking between grades 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.

As in the previous session the satisfactory scripts presented knowledge of central concepts, e.g. Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Sartre (also J. Rawls and P. Singer and in English sample and Marx in the Spanish scripts) which were reasonably well used to tackle the questions of the core theme, ethics, philosophy of art, political philosophy and, in some cases, contemporary social issues. There were examples of reasonable good organization (criterion A) with most scripts achieving 3 marks and a significant number achieving a mark of 4, knowledge and understanding (criterion B) with probably most exams having at least 3 marks. A very similar situation is found in criteria C and D, with most scripts getting 5/6 marks on each. Among the reasons for the improvement in the achievement of this session are: the reasonably good knowledge demonstrated by candidates; the straightforward character of both stimuli allowing for the treatment of issues that are central to the core theme.

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

Scripts were at the very least satisfactory, and in many cases better than that generally. With regards to the approach to the exam and the task, there is a significant number of candidates who do not consider the demands of the question nor the approach and skills required basing their answers mainly in the deployment of knowledge. Other negative aspect to be remarked is the “mechanical” application of counterarguments. To be effective, counter arguments have to be related to the question and be well-integrated into the analysis and argument. As in previous sessions there is a group of Spanish exams which present a colloquial style.

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

The register was usually at the appropriate level of academic formality. The responses showed a reasonable grasp of the conventions of the appropriate language, both in English and Spanish. Many candidates demonstrated that they were well-prepared from the point of view of knowledge and general information. From this point of view the responses show a quantitative general improvement according to the descriptions for each of the four levels and languages as indicated above. Within the well prepared 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 responses 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 1. (Passage from B F Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*).

The weaker responses showed a tendency to repeat the rich conceptual material already present in the stimulus, while the others ranged from satisfactory to excellent achievement. In examples of the latter, the responses discussed relevant issues and positions, e.g.: the nature of humans and their position in the natural world, whether humans can be objectively investigated, Darwinian perspectives on humans, existentialism, and Plato's and Aristotle's anthropological concepts.

Section A 2. (Image: *Train station*).

The general approach in response to the rubric for this question was better here and the great majority of the answers were able to identify an issue, which quite often were: the possible inhumanity of mass human interaction, freedom and determinism, alienation and isolation in modern industrialized societies, or the effect of work on the changing nature of the human condition. Existentialism, Plato's model of society, Arendt and Taylor were often the approaches explored.

Optional Theme 1: Grounds of epistemology.

There were few answers to each of these questions and only some of them were relevant and well-prepared. The second one (Q. 4 asking for the dominant role of reason in our attempt to gain knowledge) elicited the better answers, and proved to be quite accessible for every student with at least some evidence of reasonable preparation in Plato's theory of knowledge.

Optional Theme 2: Theories and problems of ethics.

There were significant responses for this theme, but it was less popular than in previous sessions. Q. 6 (whether moral judgments are simply expressions of positive or negative feelings) was quite well analyzed through responses that had excellent results along the lines of Mill's and Nietzsche's arguments. There was, again, a tendency to answer to the theme and not to the question, e. g. a group of responses introduced Kant without being able to show a reasonable connection with the specific question (the increase of happiness as the purpose of ethics for utilitarianism).

Optional Theme 4: Philosophy of art.

This theme along with optional theme 5 were the most popular themes for the Spanish candidates. Here again there was a similar tendency to develop answers beyond, or without concern for, the specific demands of the questions. Some responses demonstrated good (or better than that) knowledge, discussed relevant aspects of the art theories of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Heidegger. This knowledge however was mainly explained instead of being used as a platform to analyse the specific answer. In both cases many answers presented very good examples. Candidates should be instructed on how to use examples effectively, and how to connect them with the question being asked.

Optional Theme 5: Political philosophy.

This was the most popular theme. The issues of each question (Q. 11 whether all humans should be equal before the law and Q.12 what makes government legitimate) proved to be clearly understood and many answers offered focused, straightforward and relevant discussions and arguments. Plato, Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx and Rawls offered quite solid platforms on which to construct the responses. A significant number of answers addressed why humans should be equal before the law and the conditions under which a government becomes legitimate.

There were very few responses to Optional Theme 3, 6, and 8, an insufficient number to give any clear observations. .

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Moving onto the new assessment model for May 2016 assessments onwards, the Philosophy guide still states (page 12) that the emphasis of the Diploma Programme philosophy course is on “doing philosophy”, that is, on engaging students in philosophical activity and encouraging them to develop into independent thinkers. Over the sessions, examiners have been sharing experience which might contribute to the improvement of performance of future candidates, having in mind this goal of making philosophers of the students; the following comments might be helpful in improving performance:.

- During the course, requirements of the papers and associated 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 identify 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 level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-9	10-13	14-16	17-20	21-23	24-30

General comments

The quality of responses are generally satisfactory. This session still presents some usual difficulties more evidence in Spanish scripts of a certain superficial consideration of the question and requirements. Very rarely does it seem that the candidate has in mind the real demand of the question, leading to a lack of clear development of the argument that they are trying to make. In stronger responses, analyses are wide, deep, and with very good connections and references to other authors, as well as a relevant presence of critical thought and personal view.

As stated for the last sessions (November 2014 and May 2015), it is still possible to identify significant differences in performance between the Spanish and the English scripts. Nonetheless, this session has shown a slightly reduced gap between the scripts in the two languages. The main differences still concern the quality of the response: generally, Spanish scripts tend to have a lower level of quality compared to the English scripts that have considered the same questions and texts. Generally, the Spanish scripts present shorter responses, that are mainly descriptive – though some of them are rich in details – and with limited development of the higher order skills required.

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

A great number of scripts, though satisfactory, tend to present better analyses in criteria A and B, while they tend to underestimate the weight and meaning of criteria C and D: even the better responses tend to consider superficially the critical and personal analysis, which seems to be presented more as a duty than as a real point of development of the argument. Nonetheless, there has been some improvement in candidate performance with regard to this aspect. In stronger responses, analyses are wide, deep, with very good connections and linkage, and references to other authors, with a relevant presence of critical thought and personal views. It is to be underlined that even the best responses tend to present a limited use of the text, with a little use of references or clear connections to the original text. Most candidates tend to take into account the knowledge and the description as opposed to concentrating on the full demands of the topics and of philosophy in general terms, as IB intends them to do. As a consequence, language tends to be mostly appropriate in the good answers, with a clear knowledge of the technical terms, but this conveys a descriptive quality to the response. One

main difficulty concerns the unbalanced weight given to the different assessment criteria by candidates, who should take into account the full demands of the topics and consider the importance of a personal and critical analysis – doing philosophy as well as knowing philosophy. There is a second difficulty in the limited use of the text, with scarce presence of references, very little use of quotes: it is important to understand that a satisfactory and complete response should begin with an accurate reading and analysis of the source. Thirdly, it is important for the candidates to understand that the critical and personal analyses are not to be thought of as bullet points of a checklist, but as logical parts of the development of their own responses. So, it is possible to synthesize the issues and weaknesses as follows:

- 1) There is a general lack of personal and critical analysis –the issue is based on the fact that such analyses are often presented as a necessary, conclusive part at the very end of the script, instead of being an organic part that is disseminated along the development of the argument;
- 2) Lack of or very limited use of bibliographic references or clear, direct textual use; candidates rarely seem to demonstrate knowledge of the text. Generally there is very weak use of the source and there is a lack of evidence that the text is well known/understood/read. The presence of direct quotations from texts is a rarity.
- 3) Tendency to populate the script with as many authors or theories as possible, with a limited analysis of them is something that is seen often. Candidates seem to consider the mention of numerous names in the form of listing as a replacement for the skills that they are asking to exhibit through their responses.

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

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, 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. 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 of the text into the general context of the prescribed text as a whole, finding interesting and clear connections to other authors and/or concepts. These candidates were able to proceed with deep analyses, wide development and rich presence of quotes/references/examples. The critical part was very well-structured, with sound connections. This was the case too for personal evaluations that stronger responses advanced to.

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

Nietzsche, Plato and Mill were the most popular texts amongst the English submissions, confirming the trend of last year – except for Descartes that had a less popularity this year amongst the candidates. Generally, the best scripts were very well-structured, presenting consistent arguments, detailed descriptions, good and wide use of the text, rich use of

references and linkages, appropriate language and a personal and critical analysis, which is integrated in the whole response. With regards to the Spanish submissions the most popular texts were Plato, Locke, and Taylor. There is a clear predominance of scripts responding to Taylor. As usual, the worst responses did not offer any satisfactory analysis of the topic, with small quantity of data, barely describing the argument, with not much reasoning or development or good grasp of language. The best responses, though well structured, generally present limited development, with little use of the text or appropriate references and not many connections. Candidates tend 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 is not always appropriate, though the best responses show a clear knowledge of the most technical philosophical terms.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

The main issues in candidates' performance is due to a lack of preparation for the task as it is required by the IB. Paper 2 is not just about testing general philosophical knowledge and understanding in isolation. Teachers much reinforce the need to develop opinions, arguments and critical analyses of what the candidates are writing. Without this, the higher order skills which often attract the higher marks, become unachievable and not satisfied. The following are suggestions related to the experienced issues:

- 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 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 deal with political matters.
- Teachers should use more effectively the IB's online resources (OCC) for assistance and sharing of information regarding the prescribed texts studied in class. Whenever appropriate, this information should be shared with candidates.
- Teachers should provide their candidates with past paper 2 examination questions. In this way, candidates will become 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. Please be reminded that the format of paper 2 changes from first assessment May 2016.
- Teachers ought to read the subject reports carefully. The information supplied in these reports offer useful observations and suggestions for the preparation of candidates for the various components of the Philosophy assessment. A final consideration focuses on the limited range of chosen topics: candidates tend to choose few texts, which become very popular. Some texts are never chosen but offer valuable philosophical perspectives and insights. 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 doing philosophy.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

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 candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate several important skills that distinguish HL students from their SL counterpart. More specifically, and as stated in the subject guide, "...HL students will spend time, as part of the course, reflecting on their experience of doing philosophy as an activity—as encountered in all the components of the course." The stated purpose of this examination 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 students are challenged to read the text extract and, on the basis of the content of that 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 as feedback on the examiner provides important and relevant information about how teachers in the November 2015 examination session viewed the examination paper.

Unfortunately, only three schools filed observations on the N15 HL Paper 3 examination paper. Of the schools responding, the level of difficulty of the paper was judged to be appropriate and the N15 examination paper was judged to be of a similar standard to last year's examination paper. The clarity of the wording of the paper and the presentation of the paper was judged to be good. Lastly, respondents agreed that the accessibility of the paper to all candidates and its cultural, religious and ethnic biases were without problems.

It must be emphasised that the G2 (teacher comments) 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 which 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 completely *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 2015 HL Paper 3 examination was of a reasonable length and was particularly suitable to enable candidates to reflect 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 utilised 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 organised, 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

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

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 organised, 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 summarising 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 generalised 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 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.