Philosophy

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 10	11 - 22	23 - 39	40 - 53	54 - 67	68 - 81	82 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 25	26 - 37	38 - 51	52 - 63	64 - 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 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

Standard level internal assessment

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 11	12 - 15	16 - 18	19 - 21	22 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In almost all instances the work submitted was focused clearly on the requirements for the Internal Assessment as set out in the current subject guide. Many of the samples exhibited very good to excellent levels of achievement of the objectives for this component of the course. Specifically, there was ample evidence demonstrating the selection of non-philosophical stimulus items that were varied and, in many cases, original. The selected stimulus items lent themselves well to the derivation of relevant philosophical issues and themes. This factor facilitated good levels of critical analysis and evaluation. Candidates were able to enter into philosophically informed discussions of the philosophical issues under consideration. The majority of the samples showed clear and coherent organisation and sound use of appropriate philosophical vocabulary. Many samples demonstrated convincing instances of personal engagement and the use of supporting examples and illustrations. A variety of philosophical approaches, standpoints and methods were used to create interesting and engaging debates.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: Identification of issue and justification (3 marks)

In almost all cases, candidates were able to identify clearly the philosophical issue raised by the non-philosophical stimulus item. However, not all candidates were able to demonstrate and to justify the connection between the stimulus item and the issue identified. In the best cases the identification was clear, crisp and focused and the justification of the connection was presented in a convincing and coherent manner.

Criterion B: Clarity (4 marks)

Most candidates presented work that was effectively organized, well-structured and focused on the development of a convincing analysis. The best samples were clear and coherent in the manner in which the analysis was presented.

Criterion C: Knowledge and understanding (4 marks)

The levels of knowledge and understanding ranged from good to excellent. In general, candidates were able to display sound and, in the best cases, accurate and detailed knowledge of the material incorporated into the analyses. In all cases, philosophical vocabulary was used appropriately. Candidates were able to explain and explore the philosophical issue drawn from the stimulus item in a well-developed fashion.

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Criterion D: Analysis (8 marks)

It was in this criterion that candidates experienced difficulties. However, in general, the material used in the development of the analyses was relevant and the examples used in support of the arguments were appropriate. The problem still remained with the skill of analysis. Some candidates were unable to move from a strictly descriptive and informative treatment of the philosophical issue to a critical analysis of it. In addition, not all candidates argued from a consistently helpful position. A final difficulty was the failure to identify and treat counter-positions and counter-arguments to the issues being analysed.

Criterion E: Evaluation (6 marks)

This was the second area in which candidates experienced some difficulties. In the best instances, candidates were able to produce a clear and coherent evaluation of alternative interpretations or points of view with regard to the material incorporated into the analysis. In these cases, justification for key points made was presented and a clear, coherent and focused conclusion was provided. In other cases, candidates were unable to engage in a convincing evaluation of the points they made in their analyses. One noticeable difficulty was the failure in several cases to include a well-developed conclusion to the analysis.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers must be reminded to read carefully and attentively all information found in the current subject guide with regard to the Internal Assessment component of the course.
- Teachers should be certain that candidates receive copies of all relevant information about the Internal Assessment along with copies of the assessment criteria. It is essential that students have this information clearly explained.
- Preparation of the Internal Assessment ought to be spread throughout the course in a timely manner so that candidates have time to develop their work in an optimal manner with sufficient opportunity for guidance and supervision by the teacher.
- Candidates should be encouraged to select short, clear and crisp non-philosophical stimulus items that are, literally, able to stimulate the discovery of a philosophical issue.
- Candidates should focus their attention on a single, interesting and challenging philosophical issue rather than attempting to analyse multiple issues.
- Candidates should be encouraged and inspired to treat the Philosophy Internal Assessment as a unique opportunity for them to 'do philosophy' in the spirit of the IB Philosophy course.
- Candidates must learn the difference between a strictly descriptive and informative treatment of a philosophical issue as opposed to an analytical and evaluative treatment of that issue.
- Candidates should be encouraged to engage personally and in a philosophically informed manner with the issue they are analysing.
- Candidates must learn to identify, explain and justify the connection(s) between the stimulus item and the philosophical issue they will be analysing.

Further comments

The samples submitted this session were in line with the specifications, requirements and objectives for this course component as outlined in the current subject guide. The various levels of achievement found in the samples were able to be assessed without any outstanding difficulties within the parameters

set out by the marks incorporated into the 5 assessment criteria. It is essential that teachers read and reflect upon the information incorporated into this report and that they take advantage of the information and material found in the current Teacher Support Material (TSM). Teachers should also make certain that they include comments explaining the marks they have awarded over the 5 assessment criteria as this information is helpful to examiners.

Higher level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 23	24 - 34	35 - 46	47 - 57	58 - 75

Standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 23	24 - 29	30 - 36	37 - 50

General comments

This was the first November session applying the new markbands and best-fit approach, which encourages positive marking. Candidates are expected to select from a wide range of ideas, arguments and concepts in response to the question they are answering. Candidates displayed, in general, similar levels of performance to previous sessions; that is to say, there was nothing notably different when using markbands over the previous assessment model's assessment criteria.

A general impression is that this cohort presents quite clear differences in performance depending on level and language. Some quite clearly identifiable subgroups were: very good and excellent achievement within the HL English; SL English: a significant amount of answers characterized by reasonably good knowledge and structure; only some excellent responses at HL Spanish with the majority of students achieving marks falling between grades 3 and 5; groups of very good and excellent achievement in SL Spanish on the one hand, on the other a significant group of answers falling between grades 2 and 3. This group demonstrated very weak responses, seemingly due to a simple lack of adequate preparation.

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

Some aspects of the tendencies and approaches to the questions are similar to those seen in previous sessions, and are most evident in the lower levels of achievement:

- Answers which do not consider the actual requests of the question, some simply disregard the question and apply what they have learnt, thus remoulding the aims of the question to suit their memorized response
- Answers which deal solely with the optional theme in a very broad manner, focusing directly on, for example, ethics or philosophy of religion There was a tendency this session to take the question as a "stimulus"
- Responses which simply do not pay any attention to the central instruction given by the command terms "discuss" or "evaluate"
- Answers which show a tendency to transform the question from the discussion of an issue, as stated and required by the question, into purely a request for a presentation of knowledge. These answers present two main issues: they are not focused on the specific question (lacking relevance) and they transform analysis into exposition of knowledge. Knowledge must always develop into analysis as per the requirements of the question and component
- A significant group of candidates addressed questions in Section A as if they had learnt an answer irrespective of the stimulus
- Weaker responses across both sections did not present a clear introduction nor an outline of a direction of approach
- For the optional themes, generally candidates did not always unpack the question, analyse the key concepts, or deliver a sound argument with counter positions to be rebutted
- A significant group of weak and very weak Spanish exams presented a very colloquial style which was academically inappropriate.

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

The markbands employed this session require the following: a) structure and effective organization; b) identification of a philosophical issue/question, explanation of the relation and interrelated elaboration of it; c) knowledge and use of philosophical vocabulary; d) critical analysis, discussion and assessment of alternative interpretations, justification and development of a position. In general, the answers managed quite well (from satisfactory upwards) in a) and c), and to a good extent in the identification part of b).

Within this context, on the whole there seems to be a consolidation of some good characteristics already shown in previous sessions, e. g.: many candidates demonstrated the ability to structure a satisfactory and appropriate response in general terms to a challenging question; an increasing number of candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the function of the introductory paragraph; a significant number of candidates displayed between good and very good knowledge relevant to the core/optional theme to which the question referred. Strong candidates were able, in both sections, to construct a balanced, evaluative approach using a solid base of knowledge. Their responses were well structured and a clear argument was presented and sustained.

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

Section A

Core theme: Being human

Question 1

More candidates chose question 1 over question 2 in section A (HL both languages). Good responses identified significant issues related to human nature and explained and evaluated various theories, e. g. Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. The weaker answers did not follow the rubric and just described parts of the text. In response to both questions, many candidates simply wrote about being human rather than identifying a specific aspect of humanness in the image and then relating this specific issue to "being human."

Question 2

In SL English question 2 was the most popular. In Spanish, mainly at SL but also with a significant number at HL there was a typical answer to section A both questions: descriptions of the stimuli with little if any further elaboration. The good answers analysed positions on the human mind.

Section B

Optional theme 1: Aesthetics

Question 3

There were some answers to this question. The stronger ones analysed the meaning of art and its possible social function. Weaker answers mainly responded the question in general terms.

Question 4

Very few answers here, predominantly weak, describing general issues related to technology.

Optional theme 2: Epistemology

Question 5

Some very good answers which evaluated the critique of an empiricist approach to seeking knowledge. They considered issues at different levels related to the argument that all sense-data can be questioned against issues of categorization of the data received, thus creating the uncertainty. The weak answers only provided common sense descriptions showing no preparation for the optional theme.

Question 6

Few and weak answers here, again generally only providing common sense descriptions showing no preparation for the optional theme.

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Optional theme 3: Ethics

Question 7

This question was one of the most popular choice amongst candidates. Based on adequate knowledge, the majority of answers demonstrated at least a satisfactory level of performance. Some very good to excellent responses demonstrated very good knowledge of Aristotle, Kant, utilitarianism, and the so-called emotivist theory – originally attributed to A. J. Ayer. The weaker answers here also tended to be descriptive.

Question 8

This question was a popular choice too. Many answers demonstrated at least satisfactory knowledge, and part of them demonstrated how to use it productively to justify personal responses to the claim. The better answers explored between others: Mill's position that the happiness of all is also a good and is a basic human aspiration, the hedonic calculus, discussion of consequentialist, teleological and hedonistic positions. The usual examples of applied ethics were abortion and euthanasia.

Optional theme 4: Philosophy and contemporary society

Question 9

The issue of tolerance is a fertile one for philosophy and many of the answers to this question proved this. There were some very good answers at HL; personal, informed, reflective responses, arguing for tolerance, both at individual and social level and showing good knowledge of central positions such as those of Locke and Voltaire.

Question 10

Here there were answers without specific philosophical preparation that just presented general ideas and basic evaluations on technology.

Optional theme 5: Philosophy of religion

Question 11

Very few responses.

Question 12

Very few responses.

Optional theme 6: Philosophy of science

Question 13

Very few responses.

Question 14

Very few responses.

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Optional theme 7: Political philosophy

Question 15

This was a relatively popular choice. The answers showed good knowledge of classical positions in political philosophy, e.g. Locke and Hobbes. The use of this knowledge tended to be general in many cases though. Only the good and very good answers were able to tackle the specific question. Many of them analysed quite soundly: definitions of citizenship; conditions that might legitimize the waging of war by a state against its citizens; and the limits of state power and who enforces the limits.

Question 16

The better answers here evaluated the degree to which a government might take steps to achieve the goal of equal opportunity. Other responses explored the role of just desert and merit in the overall exercise of social justice, sustaining that positive discrimination usually arises when inconsistencies in the enactment of justice arise in respect to groups of individuals in a society. The role of desert, merit, need, utility and basic human rights was also investigated as a base for distributive justice. Some answers sustained that the conservative position of natural justice based on desert might lead to extreme inequalities, whereas others argued that a balance could be set by enacting social justice with the aim of establishing egalitarianism; the state would interfere to create a fairer society. The better answers showed very good knowledge of Rawls and Nozick.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

It is recommended that teachers dissect the markbands as to guide their students to construct answers. In Section A, markbands asked for a candidate to refer to both the stimulus and the theme of "being human". Students need to identify clearly the issue they will investigate, which should be drawn from the stimulus. Equally the issue that is drawn must be justified convincingly with reference to the stimulus. An issue stated as "being human" is not narrow enough to be properly investigated and therefore it is suggested that an aspect of humanness be pursued, thus narrowing the approach. The programme is about "doing philosophy" so a litany of learnt knowledge is not necessarily required. What is asked for is clear evidence of presenting a case and sustaining an argument to support a position and then using bodies of knowledge to support and illustrate the response being put forward. As Section A markbands progress higher, there is an expectation of alternative perspectives being presented and evaluated. This needs to be shown in the responses.

Within Section B there is a question posed which needs to answered. This question is not a stimulus like in Section A. It is a question that needs to be analysed, and the candidate needs to define what they think are the limits and implications of the question. This would be the first step in writing a sound response. Taking the question apart and writing an introduction, and then formulating and delivering a sound argument needs to be practiced. Practice also needs to take place as to how to use knowledge to present differing perspectives of the question.

As said, the course is strongly oriented towards the development of skills synthesized under the expression "doing philosophy", accordingly in their responses candidates should:

- Present a response which is well structured, focused and effectively organized
- Identify the philosophical issue raised by the stimulus material in section A or the question in section B

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- Present relevant, accurate and detailed knowledge
- Explain the issue in a well-developed way
- Use philosophical vocabulary throughout the response
- Critically analyse the issue
- Discuss and assess alternative interpretations or points of view
- Justify all, or nearly all, the main points
- Argue about the issue from a consistently held position.

Higher and standard level paper two

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 13	14 - 16	17 - 20	21 - 25

General comments

This session did not present specific issues, except for some points of discussion emerging from the new model that concerned Paper 2. As always, the performance levels depending on response language tended to be clear, and Spanish language scripts tend to evidence the issues particularly.

Generally speaking, in most cases candidates have interpreted Part B as a reiteration of what has been stated, more descriptively, in Part A; not as real evaluation and higher order skill demonstration, which is what Part B requires. Again, a good formula for explaining this could be that candidates have used Part A as a sort of introduction or abstract for Part B, where the core of the topic is presented in Part A, with Part B being a sort of explanatory development of the elements described and explored in Part A.

As a general comment on this, it seems that teachers and candidates still look somehow unready for the new model with regards to Paper 2. Even the best responses tend to present a limited use of the text, with little use of references or clear connections to the original text (i.e. quotations, references to pages or chapters and the like). Most of the responses focus on the usual habit of many candidates, who tend to consider the knowledge and the description and do not really work on the full demands of the topics - or philosophy in general terms - as the programme intends.

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

The move from criteria A-B-C-D to two criteria with questions that are split into two parts has not been properly interpreted and received by teachers and candidates, and as a consequence, there has been an imbalance between Parts A and B.

Spanish scripts presented weaker responses. There were usual difficulties that such scripts tended to present, such as a lack of a real, critical and/or personal analysis, the lack of direct reference and/or use of texts, the lack of references to other authors/ideas.

The new model has presented a general misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the real demands of questions. The split into two parts has produced in many cases an imbalance between Part A and Part B, with the former which is generally insufficient, short, hasty, somehow intended as an introduction to Part B, which, on the contrary, tends to develop the elements that are superficially presented in Part A. So, Part B tends to be longer, with more development, though in most cases its content is mainly explicative or descriptive, with little or no room for real evaluations, critical and/or personal views, presentation of counter-arguments, reference to other authors/ideas. To put it briefly, candidates are often submitting responses that look like Part A is the abstract and Part B is the response.

Along with the new issues that emerged from the new model and assessment, the traditional issues are still present: 1) 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; 2) 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 old issues and weaknesses as follows:

- A general lack of personal and critical analysis – which is a sort of evergreen problem among the common issues concerning the candidates' performances: 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 a "natural" part that is disseminated along the development of the argument;
- Lacking or very limited use of bibliographic references or clear, direct textual use; candidates rarely seem to know or demonstrate suitably a knowledge of the text; they seldom refer to specific pages of the texts – the reference to sections or chapters is more common instead; generally, there is a very weak use of the sources or a proof that the text is well known, understood, read, possessed. The presence of direct quotations from texts is rare.
- Tendency to populate the script with as many authors or theories as possible, with a limited analysis of them, because an extension of elements usually corresponds to a superficial view of them and the impossibility of an in-depth analysis. Candidates seem to consider the mention of numerous names, which is just mere listing, as a good approach.

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 on 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 to deep analyses, wide development and rich presence of quotes/references/examples. The critical part was very well structured, with sound connections. So were the personal evaluations that these candidates developed.

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

For the Spanish language scripts: scripts present a high number of responses on the "popular" texts (Nietzsche, Plato and Taylor), confirming a trend similar to last year. 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 not limited to a marginal and final part.

As usual, the weakest responses did not offer any satisfactory analysis of the topic, with a small quantity of data, barely describing the argument, with not much reasoning or development and poor language. The best responses, though well structured, generally presented limited development, with little use of text or references, not many connections; moreover, 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 following are suggestions related to the issues encountered this session:

- 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 – which is something crucial for the new model in Paper 2
- 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 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 page of the OCC site
- 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.

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- 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 ought to read carefully the session 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 should recommend that their students write clearly, since scripts can incur reading issues making marking harder
- Teachers should remind their students that the new model has two parts and both parts have to be responded to, separately.

One more 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 doing philosophy.

Higher level paper three

Component grade boundaries

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 22	23 - 25

General comments

Paper 3 provides Higher Level candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate several important skills that distinguish an HL student from his or her SL counterpart. More specifically, and as stated in the current subject guide, Paper 3 "… is an opportunity for HL students to engage in a deeper exploration of the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophy. This allows them to deepen their understanding of philosophy as an activity by providing a space in the course for critical examination of philosophy itself, and its methods." By reflecting on their own experience of "doing philosophy" HL students are required to spend time, throughout the course and in the context of each of the HL course components, developing a view of their personal experience of doing philosophy. Having accomplished this, they are invited to find Paper 3 the challenge of comparing their personal understanding of what philosophy is to that presented by the author of an unseen text extract.

The purpose of this examination is described in the current Subject Guide as the requirement "to write a response to [a] text, comparing and contrasting their experience of philosophical activity with the view(s) of philosophical activity found in the text." Specifically, HL students are challenged to read the text extract and, on the basis of the content of that extract, engage the following skills:

- Develop an organized response which uses appropriate philosophical vocabulary
- Identify the views of philosophical activity presented in the unseen text
- Make references to the text
- Draw on their own understanding and experience of philosophy using examples and illustrations
- Analyse the similarities and differences between their own experience of philosophical activity with those expressed in the unseen text
- Develop a response which displays analysis, a justification of points raised and a conclusion

Paper 3 continues to be a relevant and challenging component of the HL Philosophy course. The information, comments and suggestions incorporated into the Subject Report are all meant to 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 Paper 3.

It is worthwhile summarizing the data supplied by teachers through the limited teacher comments received for this examination session. This document provides teachers with a very valuable opportunity to comment upon several aspects of the Paper 3. Given the significance of this document, it is unfortunate to note that only 6 teachers took advantage of this opportunity. Hopefully, there will be an increase in the number of teachers contributing in future examination sessions.

Of the teachers responding, the consensus indicated that the difficulty of the paper was appropriate and was generally viewed as of a standard similar to that of the previous examination session. In terms of clarity of wording and presentation of the paper, views ranged from 'good' to 'excellent'. Additional comments indicated an overall degree of satisfaction with the examination paper.

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 nature of the exercise as set out in the examination rubric which clearly states: *Compare and contrast the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the text below, with your own experience and understanding of what is involved in doing philosophy*
- Many students appear to have failed to develop throughout the course an appreciation of what their own experience and understanding of what is involved in doing philosophy is. This impacts directly and negatively on their ability to address the requirements of the examination rubric
- A prevalent tendency to treat Paper 3 **solely** as an exercise in presenting a very detailed and fundamentally descriptive summary of the arguments and points raised in the text extract. While this is ONE of the requisites of a successful Paper 3 response, it should not become the only skill demonstrated by a student

- Failure to make specific references to relevant portions of the text itself (key words, short phrases, brief sentences, paraphrases, line numbers, etc.). This difficulty was further worsened by an associated failure to incorporate text references into a 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 critical analysis and evaluation of the issues raised in the text extract
- Failure to incorporate into the response clear, specific and relevant references to the personal experience of philosophy and philosophical activity encountered throughout the whole HL course
- Failure to discuss adequately the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophy as presented in the text.

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

The text extract 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

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

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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

With the introduction of assessment markbands for Paper 3, the determination of an effective and systematic method of addressing the strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of the question needs to be created. One way to do this is to explore them in terms of the formal Paper 3 assessment markband level descriptors at the 21-25 band:

The response is well structured, focused and effectively organized. There is appropriate use of philosophical vocabulary throughout the response.

In general, candidates were successful with regard to the organization and presentation of their responses. In this respect, appropriate philosophical vocabulary, along with terminology drawn from the text extract itself, was used in the development of responses. In most cases, responses were adequately focused and sustained. Weaker candidates experienced difficulties developing coherent responses as a result of failing to plan and organize their responses effectively. Interestingly, the trend to write a plan at the start or end of the booklet was almost non-existent. Several candidates included short plans at the beginning of their responses and this evidently helped in keeping them generally focused on the task at hand. The weakest candidates failed in a serious manner to demonstrate any sense of organisation. These responses offered neither introductory nor concluding paragraphs and only provided a random assembly of short paragraphs discussing some ideas found in the text extract.

There is clear identification of the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the unseen text. Effective references are made to the text.

Candidates generally do not experience difficulties in this area and are able, in varying degrees of clarity, precision and relevance, to identify pertinent issues regarding philosophical activity raised in the text. Difficulties occur in how precise and how relevant the issues identified are to developing a comprehensive treatment of the text extract-However, in the better cases, candidates cite key words, phrases or make reference to line numbers and use these text references effectively in developing their responses. Weaker responses range from those that make few or no references to the text or only make general summative references to the sense of key points set out in the text. The best responses demonstrate how the text reference relates to a candidate's experience of philosophical activity and compares and contrasts the text reference to that experience.

The student draws explicitly on their personal experience of philosophical activity, using well-chosen examples or illustrations to support their points.

This requirement for a successful Paper 3 response presents the greatest difficulties for many candidates. Candidates that manage to make references to their personal experience of philosophical generally do so in two ways:

- Direct references to how a perspective presented in the text extract brings to mind an experience or activity in the philosophy course itself;
- Direct references to their own personal experience of engaging the skills or information learned in the course to an everyday experience outside the classroom situation.

Stronger candidates incorporate these references to the personal experience of philosophical activity in support of their critical treatment of the material drawn from the text extract. Weaker candidates still display hesitation in incorporating references to their personal experience of philosophical activity. This might be explained either by lack of preparation on the part of the teacher for meeting this requirement or by candidates not having taken time throughout the philosophy course to develop their own personal perspective on the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophy and philosophic activity.

There is clear analysis of both similarities and differences between the student's personal experience of philosophical activity and the view(s) of philosophical activity presented.

Candidates need to understand precisely that the HL Extension assessment markbands set out an explicit expectation that they will structure their response using a compare and contrast methodology which situates the view(s) of philosophical activity presented in the text extract against their own personal view of philosophical activity. Of course, candidates who were weak in having developed a view of their personal experience of philosophical activity during the philosophy course were at a definite disadvantage in this area. The strongest candidates did very well in this area and were able to present convincing comparative analyses. Many candidates, however, confused having a view of their personal experience of philosophical activity with reiterating in descriptive fashion links between what they had learned in the course (e.g. Plato's divided line or Descartes's cogito argument) in weak relationship with a statement drawn from the text.

The response contains well-developed critical analysis. All, or nearly all, of the main points are justified. The response argues to a reasoned conclusion.

This strand assesses a candidate's ability to engage critically and analytically with the text and the arguments put forth in 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, their experience of the philosophy course and the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments of the text. 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 strand in terms of the development of an analytical and evaluative assessment of 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. A notable weakness amongst many candidates was the failure to use the text in the strategic development of a convincing and compelling response. Weaker candidates tended to remain quite descriptive, only summarising what was said in the text extract without any critical treatment whatsoever.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Introduce candidates early in the course to the HL Paper 3 specification (rubric and format). Make certain that future candidates understand precisely how this component fits into the HL Philosophy course.
- Carefully read and reflect upon the portions of the current Subject Guide that outline the nature of this course component. Share this material with future candidates and offer a clear and concise explanation of all information.
- 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.
- Make certain that future candidates understand the HL Extension assessment markbands.
- Identify, explain and practice the various skills that will be 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. Demonstrate how this information can be introduced into a Paper 3 response.
- 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.
- Work with TOK teachers to facilitate the identification of links with the other Areas of Knowledge and Ways of Knowing, using both the knowledge and investigative frameworks used in paper 3 (the nature, function, meaning and methodology of philosophy). Teachers should use the insights derived from TOK to encourage and enable candidates to identify and understand the unique features of philosophy as well as how other subjects contribute to and different from philosophy.
- Participate in IB Philosophy workshops which, by default, offer sessions on Paper 3 presentation and preparation.