FILM

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-30	31-43	44-55	56-67	68-79	80-100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-14	15-29	30-41	42-54	55-67	68-80	81-100

Introductory comments on the overall performance of this group of candidates

The fourth administration of examinations in the Film pilot course shows some improvements in candidates' work as well as some disappointing continuations of problems that have been commented on in previous subject reports.

The course is clearly capable of eliciting from candidates a full spectrum of work, some of which meets the very highest standards. Schools and teachers can justifiably share in the pride such high achieving and performing candidates must feel in their work. These candidates clearly demonstrate both the excellence of their own ability, involvement and commitment while also reflecting how they have benefited from excellent professional support.

Unfortunately, inattention to details found within the Film guide or in the Vade Mecum has again been problematic in this set of examinations, causing unnecessary problems for examining with delayed deliveries, incomplete or inaccurate cover sheets, or poorly followed guidelines.

Production portfolio

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-7	8-15	16- 23	24-29	30-34	35-40	41-50

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-7	8-14	15-21	22-28	29-34	35-41	42-50

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

There was a wide variety of student work presented for the Internal Assessment Production Portfolio, with the very best work approaching the levels of professional production. At both Standard and Higher levels, students presented work that clearly demonstrated both their ability in one or more production roles and their creativity. Combined with the written documents, the assessment provided an excellent opportunity to understand a student's approach to the problems of film production, their ability to take on a production role, and their views as expressed in their production. Overall, the preparation for this assessment, and in fact the assessment itself, would seem to provide an excellent opportunity for experiential learning and for self-expression for both Standard level and Higher level students.

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

Standard Level students did seem to have more difficulty with this assessment overall. It could be that this is the result of fewer contact hours, possibly resulting in fewer opportunities to practice production skills in some centres.

At both Standard and Higher Levels, the time spent practicing production skills seems to be a major factor in success with this component. Some centres present work that is very tentative and awkward, and which seems to be the work of students who are not really familiar with cameras, lights, editing equipment, or other tools of production. While availability of time and equipment will vary by centre, students should be encouraged to make several films each year in order to build up the necessary skill sets to be successful in the Production Portfolio.

Also at both levels, students should be reminded of the length of the film required for this assessment (6 to 7 minutes at Higher level, 4 to 5 minutes at Standard level). It is not uncommon to find students complaining in their written commentary that their films were much better before they had to be "cut down to" the required length.

At the very least, this represents bad planning and poor pre-production work on the part of the students involved . . . and sometimes reveals poor communication about the intent of the assessment from the teacher in charge. There are plenty of excellent five and seven minute films in the world, and this assessment requires making a film of that length. This should be clear to the students from the earliest planning stages, as any attempt to "cut down" a film will result in undesirable compromises.

It is advisable that teachers view short films as well as features over the length of the Film course so that students become used to the different requirements of short films from pitch and narrative techniques through to pacing and editing. The teacher should assist them at the pitch stage to find an appropriate subject.

Discussing an "appropriate subject" for a student film is a sensitive area as the assessment is intended to allow range for self-expression and creativity. However the student must be aware of the general content guidelines in the guide under the section entitled "Completed film project."

As well, it should be noted that much of the very best student work adheres to Robert Rodriguez's maxim, "You've got a dog. Make a movie about a dog." In short, when students are making a film about a situation and people they know and understand, the results are usually far superior to films in which students try to copy the latest Hollywood blockbuster without the resources of Hollywood.

However, there is no one rule for all students, and teachers should be sensitive to the fact that some students will be most comfortable and present their own best work when addressing the task in the film language of, for example, "the action movie" or "the special effects movie."

There were many problem scripts this year in which copyright clearance was an issue. Copyright is addressed unambiguously in the new guide, it is essential that teachers read this and adhere to the new policy.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers and students alike must make a very close study of the most recent Film guide to ascertain precisely what the requirements are for this assessment component at SL and HL

- As preparation for this component of the assessment, teachers should devote class time to the viewing, study and analysis of short films made by professionals, to help students understand the conventions of this kind of film

- In submitting candidates' work for assessment, teachers must pay very close attention to the requirements for completing the cover sheets, and should be aware of the importance of their own comments in assisting the moderator

- Candidates need to be carefully guided in selecting the role for which they choose to be assessed in their production, and in constructing their portfolio to make it clear how they have fulfilled this role

- All teachers and candidates must take very careful note of the new requirements in the Film guide covering copyright

- Issues related to creating DVD disks of candidates' work (all regions, proper labelling, menu, chapterization and navigation) need to be addressed

Independent study

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20	21-25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-4	5-8	9-11	12-14	15-17	18-20	21-25

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

A refreshing number of candidates display in their IS work levels of engagement and intellectual curiosity that lead them to explore realms of film and film scholarship that are clearly new and exciting to them. This engagement and excitement is sometimes palpable in the voice of their work.

These IS scripts are often brilliantly structured, with sometimes creative and insightful links between the visuals and voice-over and instructive commentary based on carefully sought-out and selected sources. The scripts describe their visuals with careful detail, sometimes including a thumb-nail visual to accompany a careful and useful description and time code (but not leaving the thumb-nail to speak entirely for itself), and integrate their sources seamlessly into the voice of the script. The best scripts carry the reader along with the structure of the documentary and the logic of the argument. The reader is actually able to visualize the intended documentary.

The best IS work suggests that candidates who internalize the intention of the IS task – to explore "in some depth with a cinematic tradition that is unfamiliar to their own culture" and to discuss it in terms of film theory or film history using cinematic language - arrive at the excellence of their work to some degree out of their own excitement generated by the exploration and discovery of the unfamiliar. These candidates have clearly taken the proper time to make a thorough investigation of their topic, and have understood the way that documentary films create meaning through connecting visual and audio texts into a single cogent exposition.

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

The problem areas in Independent Study (IS) in the May, 2006 examinations are disappointingly little changed from those in earlier sessions. Principal among these difficult areas are:

- The coming to terms with the nature of the IS task as one that requires a topic "exploring an aspect of film theory or film history . . . discussed primarily in cinematic language". Many candidates set themselves at a disadvantage by selecting a topic unconnected to film history or theory, and/or by discussing their topic in narrative, literary or film promotional/marketing language instead of cinematic language.

- The requirement to "engage in some depth with a cinematic tradition that is unfamiliar to their own culture" was too often disregarded by candidates who wrote instead about an aspect of cinema that was clearly a favourite - even a passion - and to restrict their analysis to their own culture.

- The Film guide states that "the prime voice of the documentary must clearly be that of the student, who will also act as the narrator, on-screen host and/or voice-over." Too many candidates again chose not to host their own script, encountering problems with staging contemporary interviews with people who are dead, putting words into the mouths of guests that can not be verified in sources, or creating a script that is in effect a boiler-plate of a set of weakly-connected quotations. In some cases where the candidate did host the script personally, the voice provided was that of the film promoter or marketer, rather than that of a serious film student or scholar.

- Attention to the "formal requirements"

- Too many candidates appear to use various devices to reach the minimum required length: narrow margins, oversized visuals, liberal use of white space within the script columns, 1.5 or 2 x line spacing, oversized font, use of upper case, including the title page, rationale page and/or resources page(s) in the page-count for the script. All of these, whether deliberate or not, limit the amount of space available to the candidate to develop an argument with scope and depth. They are self-imposed handicaps against success in the IS task. Overall, a disappointing number of candidates (mostly at SL) submitted scripts at the minimum page length.

- Sources are often poorly listed. A surprising number of candidates did not list their primary sources at all, and many gave incomplete information, identifying actors, but omitting some or all of: director, country of origin, release date, distributor, format/version used. Far too

many candidates listed only easy-access Web addresses (E.g. IMDB.com) without annotating the page(s) consulted.

- Many candidates used the rationale as a place to repeat the topic at greater length, rather than to justify/locate the topic in a context of film history/theory.

- A surprising number of candidates limited their chances of success through inattention to the required number of films. At SL some candidates chose to examine too many films, often restricting the potential for depth of argument. At HL some candidates submitted work based on only 2 or 3 films instead of 4. Others had the required 4 films but gave only cursory attention to one or more of the chosen titles. Choosing a single title from an unfamiliar culture, and then devoting little space to discussing it was a pattern that was far too frequent.

The distinction between the kinds of knowledge and understanding of film expected of a serious student of film/cinema, and the levels commonly found in people who are enthusiastic - but often uncritical - consumers of film/cinema continues to be a major discriminator between the most and least successful work in IS. The IBO Film course is clearly devoted to developing and assessing the former, while too many IS scripts seem to offer principally the latter. A disappointing number of candidates fall into the trap of repeating anecdotes about celebrities, retelling the story of a film, using unsupported assertion and hyperbole – creating a documentary that is more promotional hype than considered analysis.

A disappointing number of scripts failed to observe what examiners should be able to consider as the minimum courtesies in work of this kind. Many scripts showed evidence of poor or non-existent proof-reading. A number of scripts had clearly not been spell-checked and far too many scripts were lacking page numbers.

Candidates selecting "theme" from the list of topics given in the Film guide, need to be aware that this topic is the one most susceptible to digressing into some other area of discussion that is illustrated by chosen films, rather than exploring how the theme illuminates a connection between the selected films and film history/theory.

Care needs to be taken in using quotations from sources to avoid:

- A situation where a quotation from a very academic source is too dense in meaning for the brief exposure it can receive in a voice-over. In this case it may be better to put the essence of the quotation into the narrator's own (simplified) words.

- A situation where a guest is given words to speak in an interview, which are not attributed to a source. In this case it may be better either to supply the reference or handle the issue in a different way. It is not acceptable to invent words for guests to say in the script. Such "quotations" jeopardize the validity of aspects of scope and depth of argument if they cannot be validated from sources.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Many of the points below are repeated from reports in earlier examinations sessions. Teachers might benefit from reading all the subject reports for Film from 2003 to the present.

- A careful analysis of the requirements for the IS as set out in the most recent Film guide the subject report, or a teacher-prepared summary sheet will help candidates come to terms with the precise nature of the IS task.

- The importance of allowing sufficient time to do full justice to the IS task cannot be over-emphasized.

- Topic selection remains an important area for emphasis. Candidates need to make sure that their topic offers the opportunity to engage in a discussion related to film theory/film history in the light of films from more than one country. At HL candidates need to be aware of the requirement to offer some comparison between and among the four chosen films.

- It may be productive to re-emphasize what is meant by "cinematic terms".

- Re-emphasize that the IS is intended to stress the *treatment* of subjects in film rather than the subjects themselves. Give appropriate cautions about selecting the topic of "theme".

- A class analysis of the difference between film scholarship and film enthusiasm might help candidates avoid some common flaws in IS work .

- Use exemplar pieces of work to show the best practice. (The recently released IBO DVD/CDROM of film support material is one excellent source).

- Try to spend class time analyzing good examples of short documentary film emphasizing particularly structure, scope and depth of argument, and the relationship between visuals and sound in the composition

- Practice the structuring of argumentation around topics and issues, drawing examples for illustration from different sources, (synthesis) rather than addressing each source in turn and separately.

- Focus some instruction on the appropriate selection of source materials (both print and non-print) and on a suitable conventions for listing them as references. (An Internet address alone is not sufficient. Primary sources must be included.) There may be a school-adopted convention such as APA or MLA.

Presentation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-9	10-12	13-16	17-19	20-25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0-3	4-7	8-9	10-12	13-16	17-19	20- 25

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

Fewer candidates are merely giving shot by shot descriptions and more are trying to integrate analysis of the extract in relation to the film as a whole with detailed analysis of specific elements.

It is pleasing to see how many candidates are engaging enthusiastically with the films and are clearly very knowledgeable about the study of film. The best candidates were able to integrate a thorough understanding of the themes, issues and socio-cultural contexts of the films with a close and richly detailed textual analysis of their chosen extract. It should be noted, however, that whilst it is essential

to present an understanding of themes, character and the broader context of the films, this must be worked in conjunction with a close analysis of the chosen extract. It is not sufficient for candidates to restrict themselves to simply commenting on the film as a whole. Candidates should also avoid simple summaries of the narrative.

More candidates are organising their presentations effectively and preparing fully. This is indicated by those candidates who complete their presentation close to the time allowed. Candidates are clearly using well organised notes as *aides memoire* but it should be pointed out that candidates are not allowed to read their presentations almost verbatim from a prepared script.

Candidates are using precise filmic language to effect and there are fewer instances of imprecise terminology.

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

A large number of candidates are still finding it difficult to make the transition from describing their chosen extract to offering detailed textual analysis. Sometimes the descriptions are very detailed but this description and detail constitutes only what they see and hear rather than how meaning is constructed or why specific techniques were used to represent elements such as themes, ideas and character.

Of some concern is the fact that a small but significant number of candidates are not fulfilling all the requirements at HL and SL. There were some candidates who managed to present a detailed analysis of the extract itself and nothing more. Candidates must address the film's genre, its place in a broader socio-cultural context and director's intentions. In addition at HL candidates must also refer to responses from audiences, reviewers, critics and scholars at the time of the film's original release and/or subsequently. These requirements are clearly set out in the Film Programme.

It is absolutely essential that teachers read the programme guide thoroughly and ensure that their candidates fulfil all requirements. Some candidates are being allowed to go substantially over their allocation of time whether at HL or SL. Should a candidate go over their permitted time anything that the candidate then says cannot be credited. Similarly some candidates are being given inappropriate prompts by the supervising teacher. [See Guidance for teachers below.]

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates must be given substantial opportunities to practice textual analysis before embarking upon their examination pieces.

- Candidates must be given practice in timing for their presentations. Too many are either too short or too long. Anything that a candidate says after their allowed time has elapsed cannot be credited.

- Teachers cannot give students guidance as to the socio-cultural context of any of the films of the prescribed list; however students do clearly need guidance to be able to discuss the broader contexts of films. Some candidates seem to think that to list the film's date of production and any awards received is sufficient as a context.

- Teachers must not intervene during the candidate's presentation apart from stating, "You have X minutes left. Do you have anything more to say? Or do you want to elaborate on areas that you have already covered?" Teachers may not refer to specifics even by mentioning by name areas that they think that the candidate has not fully explored. Anything that a candidate says in response to an inappropriate teacher intervention cannot be rewarded.

- Some candidates' presentations were almost inaudible [and in one case completely inaudible.] Teachers must check before sending the recorded presentations to be examined.

- Once recordings have been started they must not be paused, or stopped and restarted. Should a candidate wish to watch the extract through before the presentation, this must be done before recording commences.