

## May 2013 subject reports

### FILM

#### Overall grade boundaries

##### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-13	14-29	30-42	43-54	55-67	68-79	80-100

##### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-13	14-28	29-40	41-53	54-67	68-80	81-100

#### Production portfolio

#### Component grade boundaries

##### Higher level

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

##### Standard level

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

#### The range and suitability of the work submitted

As usual, work varies from films that are almost professional in nature; to work that seems poorly planned and rushed in execution. The best work shows imagination and creativity, as well as really giving voice to the lives and concerns of film candidates through the use of visual language. An admirable level of technical skill is often on view, and even work in the mid-range of the markbands often shows a real attempt to use film in original, and personal, ways.

At both higher level and standard level, the work often seems rushed. It is not unusual to see films completed in a very short amount of time - including day shoots - and seemingly without much experience in the candidates' chosen roles. The greatest single limiting factor in terms

of higher level and standard level is that this important assessment, worth fully 50% of the final grade, has been hurried through in the last weeks at the end of the course.

In terms of suitability, very little inappropriate work was submitted this year in terms of the film guide's notes on content and treatment (page 36).

However, there was a large amount of material that failed to observe the spirit of the copyright statement (page 37). Teachers are reminded that the statement does not, in fact, merely cover copyright, and that the intention is that candidates "will be the creators of, or have a significant role in the creation of any audio or visual material that they use in their work."

This means that royalty-free music or classical music played by candidates is not appropriate. Also, looped music from editing programs and music programs, such as Garage Band, must be significantly altered. It is not in the spirit of the course to simply select a number of loops and edit them into the film. The loops must be altered.

It is important to remember that video sequences from movies, television, video games, and other sources cannot be used, and any material appearing on a television or movie screen in the film should have been made by the production team.

Some candidates find this limits them in what they can do. They are completely correct. The production portfolio film and commentary is an assessment and not an opportunity to make just any film. Even with the limitations, the number of possibilities is actually infinite and stronger candidates discover the best way to present themselves within the boundaries of the assessment. All candidates - not just the sound designer/sound editor - should include some details of music or video production in their portfolio. Candidates are also encouraged to 'think outside the box' when it comes to sound and visuals. Using someone else's work is the path of least resistance, whereas creating their own sound and video is opening the door to limitless creative possibilities.

Finally, at higher level, there was, at times, confusion about the requirement for an individual trailer. Some candidates failed to make a trailer, some candidates produced only one trailer for a group, and in some instances the 'trailer' was merely the opening sequences of the film with little editing. At higher level, the trailer is an important 'court of last appeal', which demonstrates an individual's ability to demonstrate narrative competence and editing ability - at least. It is very important that each higher level candidate create their own individual trailer.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### A Planning and research

This criterion is concerned with the documentation of production processes, from preliminary planning and research, pre-production, production and principal photography, through to post-production.

The biggest problem with criterion A, for both standard level and higher level candidates, is that their commentary is not supported by sample materials (that is, visual and graphic materials like, but not limited to, analyzed script samples, storyboards, location photographs,

on-set photos of lighting and camera set-ups, screen shots from the film or work processes that clarify details, call sheets, set diagrams, and so on). This evidence is meant to be woven into the body of the commentary, *not as an appendix*, in order to clarify the production process and - in Criterion B - the candidate's personal role on the film. Frequently this has not been done, and a candidate's mark can suffer significantly because of this.

At higher level, the criterion contains the following added descriptor: "Planning of production and documentation has all been clearly integrated with the production of the individual film trailer." In the case of higher level candidates, a frequent problem is forgetting to describe the work on the trailer within the body of the commentary.

In the best cases, candidates produce commentaries that skilfully interweave written commentary and evidence, in order to present a clear picture of the production from start to finish.

## B Reflection and evaluation

This criterion is concerned with artistic and logistical analysis of the relevant production processes and the evaluation in the individual candidate's written commentary on the project as a whole, including the roles of the candidate and others (where appropriate).

In particular, at both higher level and standard level, this criterion examines 'the roles of the candidate' as part of a logistic and artistic analysis of the project. The most significant problem for most candidates who do poorly is that they forget to focus on their chosen role of screenwriter, cinematographer, director, editor, or sound editor/sound designer. Often, there is simply not enough focus on the specific area for which the candidate was responsible.

As with criterion A, frequently candidates forget to weave sample materials and evidence into the body of the commentary.

Higher level candidates, as mentioned above, forget to discuss the trailer, which means they have ignored one of the descriptors for criterion B.

Again, in the best cases, candidates show an artistic and practical understanding of their role and the role of others who have worked on their films - presented clearly and engagingly in both written materials and visual evidence.

## C Professional and technical skills

This criterion is concerned with professional and technical skills (including organizational skills) that may be demonstrated during the production processes or in the finished product itself.

As stated in the guide, evidence for criterion C may be found in the film or in the written commentary (in actual practice, it will usually be found in both, but if it is present in either there is enough support for awarding marks in this criterion.)

With a solid film, there is usually enough evidence in the film itself, to award marks for this criterion.

At both higher level and standard level, a poorly made film may nevertheless be awarded some marks under this criterion when a candidate clearly demonstrates how they proceeded in their role. Unfortunately, most poorly made films are also presented with poorly written commentaries, and so any chance of presenting evidence that is not visible in the film itself is lost.

As well, at higher level, many candidates do not spend much time on the trailer, dealing with it almost as an afterthought. However, even if the film is problematic, a well-made trailer can show “professional and technical” skill.

So, criterion C can be very beneficial for a candidate who has had problems working with their group or who has some problems with the film to be presented. Both commentary and trailer can be significant here.

## D Effective use of film language

This criterion is concerned with evidence of the candidate’s effective use of film language, as seen in the finished product.

This criterion is judged wholly by the effectiveness of the candidate’s work on the film. As stated, many candidates present excellent work, some that is nearly professional in nature.

The most problematic area for candidates in terms of this criterion is the length of time taken planning and making their film, and their understanding of their chosen role. When a candidate, at higher level or standard level, has not had experience working in their role, or when the production is planned late in the year, then the final film tends to suffer.

## E Originality and creativity

This criterion is concerned with originality and creativity in the film-making process (referred to as “creative intelligence” in the level descriptors). This may be demonstrated by freshness of approach, by intelligent work that goes either with or against the conventions of the genre, or by problem solving. Another key indicator is the level of audience engagement with the work. This criterion is intended to provide a holistic assessment of each candidate’s contribution to the finished film and of the trailer that they have made as an individual.

While much of the work presented is both original and stimulating, frequently, at both higher level and standard level, a film that scores poorly on this criterion is a reproduction of a mainstream feature. The best work comes from the candidate’s own life and imagination, and is not produced by a candidate mimicking (with limited resources) feature films.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

In terms of classroom work, there are three important things which can help candidates do well on this component.

- Candidates should have a solid working knowledge of the significant tasks and technical skills needed in the role of screenwriter, director, cinematographer, editor, and sound

designer/sound editor. They should also have some practice collecting and presenting evidence of solving artistic and logistic problems in each of those roles.

- Candidates should have watched short films in class so that when they make their own short films they have a solid knowledge of the narrative structure and pacing necessary for a short film.
- Candidates must watch trailers from a variety of eras so that they have a wide number of inspirational sources when they come to the task of making their own trailer.

Ultimately, candidates should come to this important final assessment after having done many practice films, and with much practice doing assignments where they are required to produce evidence of the work on their chosen role. Hopefully, by the time they make their final film, taking set photos, reproducing diagrams, saving storyboards and collecting evidence of the required kind will be second nature for them. Candidates have to practice asking themselves what kind of evidence will be important for their particular role, why they would include it, and how would it help develop their written commentary.

## Further comments

With the increasing number of schools offering film we have seen some problems arise; very basic errors that have arisen at both higher level and standard level such as:

1. Presenting work that was longer or shorter than the time limits listed in the film guide.
2. Presenting work in a role that is not one of those listed in the film guide.
3. Presenting work without an individual trailer or with a group trailer included.

Such errors should not occur since the film guide is quite detailed about all of these assessment conditions. The first, and most important, source of information on all components is the film guide and having a good working knowledge of it is the first stage to getting candidates successfully through the course.

It is important to remember that teachers can share the film guide and the criteria for marking each component with each candidate if they wish; they may be of assistance to the candidates during the preparation of their film.

It is important that the classroom teacher be familiar with the intent of this component and with the restrictions which exist in terms of appropriate work. All too often, for instance, a candidate complains that the six to seven minute time limit was “too short.” The conditions of the assessment are either a 4-5 minute film at standard level, or a 6-7 minute film at higher level. Candidates should understand this when they plan their film.

Occasionally, it seems as if the candidates are simply ‘making a film’ and do not understand that there are limitations that exist in any assessment task. Not understanding the nature of the component might also explain why some candidates present very weak commentary work with their films, since they focus on the creation of the film without considering that their work

in terms of the overall production, and their work in their chosen role, must be supported by the written and visual evidence provided.

Ultimately, there is much excellent work, and often that work comes from a viewpoint that is personal and based in the lives and surroundings of the candidates who have made the film.

In Robert Rodriguez's words, "You've got a dog. Make a movie about a dog."

When candidates engage with characters, places, and issues that are important to them and which they understand, whether they are interpreted through the lens of the many film genres and fictional forms, or more directly as documentary or personal narrative, then the results are often astonishing.

## Independent Study

### Component grade boundaries

#### Higher level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-3	2-4	8-10	11-13	14-17	18-20	21-25

#### Standard level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-3	4-7	8-10	11-13	14-17	18-20	21-25

### The range and suitability of the work submitted

Candidates now appear to be getting familiar with a number of safe and familiar topics: German Expressionism, Horror, Disney v Studio Ghibli, Coming of Age, Depiction of War and so on. Most of these are quite well done. The best candidates have a strong personal engagement and also solid grounding in film theory and/or history and, most importantly, they also framed a clear rationale that set the scope and depth of the argument which was clearly developed from that basis. Below average candidates essentially compiled a few clips together that were of the same genre and hoped that an argument would somehow emerge.

What becomes clear is that the best independent studies derived from candidates who had been immersed in film theory and history throughout the entire two years of the course and that the independent study emerged organically from this knowledge. Where candidates had been taught to the assessment task alone, the work tended to be much narrower in scope and limited in depth.

For standard level, a lot of submissions were comparing original films with their re-makes.

The irony of it is that in the standard level markbands, candidates do not have to make comparisons. So many have hamstrung themselves at the first hurdle. Standard level candidates tend to do more poorly than higher level candidates, particularly if they adhere to the minimum 2 films to be discussed as this naturally limits the scope and depth of the argument.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual areas

Candidates include most aspects of the formal requirements but a large number don't really understand the purpose of each one. For example, a rationale is meant to frame and signpost an argument, not provide a summary. Bad rationales usually ended up as bad studies. An annotated bibliography is not part of the formal requirements as a kind of checklist, but as an opportunity for candidates to evaluate the relevance of their research for the chosen argument. This is part of what an examiner looks for in checking the scope and depth of an argument and far too many candidates just "tick off" these requirements without recognizing they are part of an academic honesty and integrity which should be encouraged by all IB teachers. By the same token, these sources need to be correctly cited and many candidates would pass off quotes from authorities without any footnoting or referencing. Most examiners reported a greater competence with the AV format among candidates. As indicated in the section above, there are still a lot of problems with candidates engaging with a film theory or aspect of history instead of just retelling film narratives or following a thematic approach.

It should also be added that standard level candidates need to research more deeply the question they are examining. For those who take the least line of resistance, a standard level independent study can often resemble two text analyses of two films. The better candidates would focus on the question in a wide ranging examination using a range of films and sources rather than the number of films.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers need to know and communicate to their candidates the exact requirements of the component as specified in the film guide. Far too many candidates have been poorly guided and supervised. Teachers need to be a lot more engaged in monitoring the process and development of candidate work. This doesn't mean constant marking, but even informal conversations would help keep candidates on track.
- Candidates should be given ample practice with "mini" text analysis or independent study projects. After all, candidates are not expected to make a film without being taught technical skills, yet many teachers don't provide enough scaffolding for this most complex task.
- Teachers are recommended to spend at least the first year giving candidates a strong background in film history and theory so that their candidates can make informed choices when coming to this task.
- Standard level candidates in particular need to become more question-focused, rather than be driven by using the minimum number of films. For this reason, straight comparisons between originals and remakes should largely be avoided. In most cases, the study becomes the most superficial of arguments.

## Film presentation

### Higher level

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

### Standard level

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

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

At the outset of the presentations there are still too many candidates, even some of the best, who waste too much time simply listing awards, actors and characters' names as an integral part of analysis or as a substitute for discussing the socio-cultural context. Occasionally this is due to a lack of careful preparation. It was quite common for weaker candidates to attribute critical responses to "some people" or "some critics" without proper referencing. Stronger candidates clearly undertook thoughtful and appropriate research; weaker candidates relied far too heavily upon one or two websites such as IMDB and Wikipedia and then presented additional lists or plot summaries that did not fulfil the requirements of the presentation. Many of the presentations became descriptions of themes and character studies without analyzing how these are explored in filmic terms.

A significant number of the candidates failed to focus their presentation on an interpretation of the chosen extract and found problems with analysing and interpreting meaning. There was a tendency to describe or discuss the whole film. In some cases this was a common fault of all candidates from the same school. The better candidates coped competently with how film creates meaning and discussed this in appropriate film language. However, weaker candidates made general observations about film language, for example shot type, framing, lighting or editing without discussing the intended effects of specific choices made by the director or cinematographer. Some candidates seem to be challenged by the requirement to provide a "detailed, evaluative interpretation" of the extract. Some of the offered analysis tended to be simplistic, for example stating that dark lighting equalled evil, white represented purity, high angles represent power, low angles weakness and so on. Most candidates offered detailed descriptions of camera work and/or editing processes but without any development or explanation of what intended meanings could be. Too many presentations contained traditional literary analysis of characters and themes. While this contributes to the overall understanding of the film it does not show an understanding of how meaning is constructed in filmic terms. Candidates should be encouraged to use film language at all times when discussing film in class.



A number of candidates ignored specific sections entirely, for instance making no references to socio-cultural context or, at higher level, references to “responses from audiences and reviewers, critics or scholars at the time of [the film’s] original release and/or subsequently.”

The timing of the presentations has become more of a problem with too many candidates not using their full time allowed effectively. Many higher level candidates are offering presentations at fewer than ten minutes and at standard level fewer than six.

Some candidates select scenes that do not offer sufficient scope for analysis.

Whilst a significant number of candidates had difficulties the general level of knowledge and understanding is improving and candidates have a genuine sense of engagement with the films chosen. Many seemed reasonably well prepared in the use of basic film language and terminology although few were able to use this knowledge as part of an in-depth analysis. Too often the presentations became a mere listing of shot types and very simple reference to what they might suggest. Some of the better candidates were able to understand and explore theoretical approaches to their analysis in an impressive manner. Many weaker candidates struggled to use even the most rudimentary film language and did not move beyond simple plot description and describing what is seen and heard on screen but without analysis. The better candidates showed good awareness of their film’s place in cinema history and were generally articulate and organised. In places, the actual understanding of how film communicates through the different micro-elements was inconsistent.

Candidates often did well when describing and analysing mise-en-scene and competently addressed cinematography but did less well when analysing editing and/or sound.

## The strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatment of individual areas

In spite of difficulties still shown during this session, the significant strength of many of the candidates was their good understanding of the underlying themes in the films that they had studied. Many had clearly handled their research and preparation well. The principal weakness was candidates ignoring significant sections that they are required to cover such as the socio-cultural context. All too often this was either ignored entirely or given the most perfunctory of analysis. Far too many of the candidates are coming to their recording of their presentation ill-prepared. Some candidates even forgot the name of their chosen film’s director. Many more candidates in this session were finishing their presentation in significantly less time than allowed. The timing of the Presentation commences after the candidate has given the school and candidate numbers and has identified the film that they are going to address. [Please see recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates below.]

Although it is possible to follow the extract through shot-by-shot this is rarely the most efficient or effective method. It is better to identify key elements in the extract and explore how meaning is constructed. Even if they do not simply describe the extract shot-by-shot too many candidates show lack of planning and preparation by jumping from thought to unrelated thought. Occasionally this may be as a result of nerves but more commonly because their

presentation has not been fully prepared. At their best, however, candidates are able to coherently integrate a thorough and perceptive insight into the themes, issues and socio-cultural contexts of their films with a close, detailed analysis of their chosen extract.

Some candidates fail to offer a persuasive rationale for selecting their sequence. Many simply stated that it was “a turning point” and moved on.

The best candidates offered presentations that reflected genuine personal engagement supported by clear knowledge and understanding.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Teachers must not allow candidates to read their presentations. Brief notes are acceptable but teachers should check these before commencing recording. Should it be suspected that a candidate is reading their presentation this will be considered to be a possible case of malpractice.
- The current film guide must be read fully and carefully.
- Candidates should be shown the markbands, the subject reports and the current guide so that they are fully aware of what is required of them.
- It should be made clear to candidates that they must make best use of their time allotted. Ten minutes at standard level and fifteen at higher level.
- Candidates must be given ample opportunities to practice textual analysis before embarking upon their examination piece. Many candidates appear to be undertaking this task for the very first time during the recording to be assessed.
- Candidates should be given opportunities to rehearse recording presentation on films other than those set for the assessment. Such practice will enable candidates to plan and organise their examination pieces effectively and eliminate issues regarding the timing of their presentations.
- Teachers must check the sound levels on the CDs to be sent to the examiner are sufficient to be heard. Some presentations for this session were inaudible. All recording should be able to be played on a domestic CD player. If this is not the case schools must indicate the format that has been used for the recording; Mpeg or Quick Time are not acceptable.
- Once recordings have 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 begins.
- Recordings must be made in a private, quiet place. Make sure, as far as possible that the candidates will not be interrupted by outside noise such as loud tannoy announcements.

- Teachers must not intervene during the candidates' presentations. Teachers may not prompt candidates. Anything said in response to an inappropriate intervention by the teacher might not be rewarded.
- In regard to film selections at a school level, teachers should be encouraged to choose both well-known and lesser-known films from the list. In addition, candidates should be encouraged to choose a variety of different extracts from the chosen film.
- Teachers need to be very sure they review the purpose of the film presentation with candidates. The main focus of the presentation is a close analysis of the selected extract, using this close analysis to discuss aspects of the film as a whole. They should try to cover every cinematic aspect of the sequence.
- Candidates should be given practice with films, other than those listed for the assessment, consistently to try to link the analysis of cinematic features of a film extract to the stated themes and/or director's intent, or even socio-cultural aspects or genre. This gives presentations a clear focus and allows for very specific and unique analysis.
- Candidates, through their specific analysis, should try to say something unique and original. Too many presentations rely on the same internet databases, select the "easy" film to analyse (i.e. the well-known option) and end up producing work that is unoriginal.
- Teachers should dissuade their candidates from offering redundant material in their presentations. Narrative summaries and lists of actors, characters and technicians waste valuable time.

**At the beginning of each candidate's recording it is recommend that the supervising teacher introduce the presentation with the following script:**

***"This is a Higher/Standard Level Film Presentation for [School Name and Number] Candidate [Name and Number]. Her/his presentation is on [name the Film and Director]. The extract that she/he has chosen is [clearly identify the extract that the candidate has chosen]."***

***[Using first name of candidate] you may now begin your presentation."***

**The timing of the Presentation will begin at this point.**

By using this introduction each candidate's presentation will be clearly identified and the candidate her/himself will not waste time as it will be clear when the timing of the presentation will start.