THEATRE

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 11	12 - 22	23 - 36	37 - 50	51 - 62	63 – 75	76 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 9	10 - 18	19 - 29	30 - 42	43 - 56	57 - 69	70 - 100

Independent Project Portfolio

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 6	7 - 13	14 - 19	20 - 26	27 - 32	33 - 39	40 - 50

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 40

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Candidates attempted an increased number of Option B projects, with many exploring more than one theatre practice, which was very encouraging. Again, it is worth noting the focus of Option B project is an exploration of theatre practice/s and that the exploration may lead to a performance but does not have to. The most successful projects at SL were those where the candidate had chosen a clear area of skill development and then conducted research into the area with the intent of practically developing the related skills.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

Candidates must strive to indicate and produce evidence of independence, particularly when working with others also involved in the independent project. The range and quality of choices candidates are making in preparation and during the projects has improved considerably, specifically when choices are consistently relevant not only to the topic or role, but also the type of skill development required.

Criterion B

This criterion still remains the most difficult as too often candidates do not have a clear enough understanding as to the skills associated with a particular role, and therefore have difficulty demonstrating skill development. Candidates must submit clear evidence of skill development; this may take the form of visuals, photos, written text etc. Whatever the form, the evidence must be explicit and clearly related to the chosen area. Development of the skill throughout the portfolio is also a fundamental part of the task.

Criterion C

Reflection is clearly a strong area of the work sampled with more critical accounts of learning and development. A difficulty comes when the candidate limits reflection to one final section in the portfolio. This limits the ability to demonstrate reflection throughout the process and throughout the portfolio; learning and development should take place throughout the project.

Criterion D

The register in terms of format and subject matter was generally of a good standard. Formal requirements were also much better as academic honesty and proper acknowledgement of sources seem to be having a higher status in schools, and the effects were evident. Candidates were generally consistent in properly acknowledging sources. All influences and inspirations must be acknowledged.

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Criterion E (HL only)

Candidates at HL are consistently underpinning the project with theatrical research. In some instances this is still too frequently taken from the course, and in other instances social/cultural research is still the only research applied, however there is again, clear improvement in this area. The strongest candidates showed explicitly how the theoretical underpinning was not only relevant, but necessary to the development of the project. The less successful candidates are still researching multiple practices to underpin the project; in these instances there was a lack of focus and the candidates had difficulty in demonstrating the relevance to the development of the project.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Journal expectations should be outlined early on in the course, with some of the requirements reflecting the assessment criteria for the independent project portfolio. Journals could then provide evidence of independence, perseverance, initiative, skill development, learning/development and application of research. This will directly prepare students for the type of evidence needed in the independent project portfolio.

Practical Performance Proposal

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 15	16 - 19	20 - 25

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 1	2 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 8	9 - 13	14 - 17	18 - 25

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In the final year of this external assessment Theatre component, the presented HL and SL material generally showed understanding of the task process leading to suitable work to assess

against the criteria. The majority of proposals (at both HL and SL) offered a vision – albeit to different depths – of a created performance using appropriate theatre language and conveying understanding of theatre concepts. However, there were still some indications of schools where the entire group were clearly not familiar with the process requirements of the task resulting in poor performance against the marking rubric. Top band work (HL/SL) was exciting and evocative to read, using words and images to convey illuminating play making processes, clear on stage action and effective artistic choices in the use of production elements. Proposals at the lower end of the spectrum tended to be a superficial collection of potential ideas lacking any real development of work that exhibited understanding of a practical, creative process

The M15 stimuli seemed to be effective in evoking imaginative work except that a few schools used the stimuli from the previous year. The prescribed stimuli for a particular year can be found in the Coordinators Notes document of the preceding November issue and only these should be used to inspire the proposal.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Section 1

The better examples of the 'pitch' offered a vision of a performance with clearly communicated on-stage action, a conveyed theatre space with considered scenography and artistic choices in the use of production elements with coherence through a distinct concept. In this sounder HL/SL work, the reader can easily envision an outline of the intended performance. Weaker pitches usually conveyed a narrative outline (sometimes very short) with little indication of how this would be realised on stage or a descriptive overview of the creative process. The stronger HL proposals introduced the essence of their research/theory in the pitch, developed this in Section 2 and refined understanding with practical examples in Section 3.

Section 2

The most consistent HL and SL work approached Section 2 by exploring the stimulus, developing ideas of both action and staging, then honing their artistic choices with clear descriptions and appropriate visuals. The best stimulus explorations consisted of several brainstorms for general and specific ideas, personal reactions (possibly leading to genuinely linked secondary stimuli) and research with selections of appropriate concepts. The best developments showed a pathway of creative thought illuminated by clear choice basis and preferences. Less effective work often barely mentioned the stimulus or sprung an idea from a single, very general brainstorm.

In the better proposals a theatre storyboard (not a film storyboard) conveyed vision of blocking, movement and use of space to convey intended realisation of ideas. Those pieces of work in the middle and lower bands often textually conveyed a narrative without really considering how the action could be realised on stage. Some students proposed vignettes or installations (i.e. non-narrative) and these scored well when storyboards and visuals were used to convey how the on-stage vision would take place.

Weaker proposals often described production elements (Set, costume. Lighting, etc.) in superficial terms without explaining intent or purpose. In these cases, images, more often than

not, were downloaded from the Internet as exemplars and presented as is. However, more importantly, these images were all too often unsourced or attributed suggesting academic negligence and treated accordingly. Proposals, which fell in the middle bands, attributed images but did not develop them as part of a creative process leading to a design. In the strongest work there was coherence of artistic choices, which was closely linked to intent and audience impact.

Section 3 (HL only)

In the stronger HL proposals, Section 3 presented fully sourced information drawn from research (class or personal), with evidence of understanding, reasons for integration of ideas into the performance and examples of 'practical effects' in the proposed performance'. If 'impacts and resonances' were considered, then how the intended 'impact and/or resonance' was to be brought about by 'practical effects' was clearly reflected upon. Weaker HL proposals had a tendency to reiterate choices and concepts from Section 2 with little or no evidence of understanding how research/theory could be applied in performance.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Encourage students to give an overview of the story - but then detail at least some of the action on stage through the use of a visual (not just written) storyboard, and perhaps scripted excerpts.
- Encourage students to show understanding of the stage and performance by explaining the specific nuance/details and intentions of the acting and directing - apart from blocking, how a stage show is crafted from one moment to the next could be seen more often in the PPPs - it is undervalued.
- If students explore the personality/internal character traits, make sure that they also link them to the external presentation – i.e. how does the character stand, move, sound?
- The research included should be pertinent and succinct, and referred to as they build their PPP - it should help guide their choices and help the whole thing stick together. Some research skilfully and frequently applied is much more valuable than lots of research sparingly applied.
- When using visual storyboards, students should make them clear on the page – i.e. enough space, legible etc. Storyboards often have a very important function in communicating the vision so they need to be included in a thoughtful way.
- Downloaded images are great for research when developing production elements - they are not a final form, but part of the process. Students should ensure annotation and attribution of the downloaded images, and then go on to show their own imagination and understanding of technical formats/diagrams by drawing their own versions.
- Warn the students to be very careful that if referring to theatre theorists that choices are logical. Avoid contradictions - putting ideas from more than one theorist is possible but can be messy, incoherent and reductive to the success of the PPP.

Further Comments

- There are still multiple occasions where schools send either illegible hand-written work or unclear/cut off photocopies instead of the originals. This adds an unnecessary layer

of complication to the assessment process.
- There are still multiple occasions of schools sending work in individual plastic cover sheets. Examiners annotate the work to offer feedback on the marking process to teachers. Plastic cover sheets make this service unwieldy and time consuming.
- Many of these comments are repeated from the Subject reports of the last few years. It is imperative that IB Coordinators ensure that Theatre teachers have access to the Subject report to help them enhance their approaches to supporting the students in their preparation for assessments.

Research Investigation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 9	10 - 14	15 - 19	20 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 40

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10 - 12	13 - 16	17 - 19	20 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most candidates understood the basic requirements of the task and engaged with research into theatre practices that were unfamiliar to them. Plays were generally chosen from the practice being researched though often there needed to be more focus on the application of the research to the play.

Candidates generally presented their work in a formal register, providing coherent essays in response to the research question. The success of the Research Investigation is always partly determined by the question the candidate has formulated. Well-formulated, tightly focussed questions tend to produce focussed answers.

At Higher Level, the most successful critiques showed the relevance of the sources and very able to weigh up the authority of the author, while also describing the usefulness of the source to themselves and to other researchers.

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Candidate performance against each criterion

A Research Skills

Candidates often had problems consistently attributing their sources. Attribution was sometimes sporadic especially regarding illustrations. This is clearly still an issue and a challenge for many candidates. All research and information must be attributed. A bibliography alone is not sufficient.

In general, candidates used a range of sources with some candidates finding and using inventive sources. The Internet is providing a rich variety and range of resources but candidates still need to sift through the information for relevant information appropriate to their question.

Some candidates chose to focus their research on previous productions of a play. Candidates should understand that productions staged by practitioners other than the ones directly related to the theatre practice being researched, are interpretations and cannot always be used as reliable evidence.

B Task Relevance

The most challenging area for some candidates seems to be the application of research to the play from the practice. Those who achieved higher marks under this criterion were those candidates who were able to successfully apply the result of their research to the action of the play/piece of theatre selected.

The candidates who chose a theatre tradition with set conventions and a play from the tradition did better than candidates who chose practices without set conventions, in particular Theatre of the Absurd and Theatre of Cruelty. These practices encouraged candidates to adopt a directorial role which focussed them on how they would direct the text. Theatre of the Absurd also lends itself to a literary analysis of text. This is not appropriate for meeting the requirements of the task.

The formulation of an appropriate question is key to this task. The best research investigations had quite a narrow focus – often choosing one aspect applied to one scene of a play rather than attempting to provide an overview to a whole play. This can result in a superficial treatment of the task.

Research Investigations that focussed on training programmes for actors were not successful, as these did not allow for the application of research to a particular play/piece of theatre but rather a more general approach to the theatre practice.

The task is not an 'adaptation' exercise. Some candidates misunderstood and presented research investigations that focussed on adapting a historical play for a contemporary audience.

Candidates should keep a plot summary of the play/piece of theatre to a minimum. A large plot summary of the play is considered irrelevant and unnecessary.

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C Presentation

Register was generally appropriate and candidates generally adopted a formal essay style.

There was some difficulty regarding the selection and presentation of images. Images were not always clear or too small. If a student is referring to detail this needs to be clearly visible. Some black and white illustrations needed to be in colour, especially if colour is referenced in the essay. This is particularly important for research investigations that focus on make-up, set or costumes. The use of images should have a purpose that goes beyond the decorative.

In some instances candidates presented research in the form of notes or as a list. This is not an appropriate register for a formal essay.

Many candidates also relied on sub headings. Though in some instances these helped give shape to a candidate's ideas and research, in many cases they were obtrusive, unnecessary and impeded the flow and coherence of the essay.

In some cases, candidates included a lengthy appendix that simply contained bits and pieces of research, email correspondences, lists, scripts etc. If these are not directly referred to in the essay and do not have a specific purpose, they are considered irrelevant.

D Critique of sources (HL only)

Some candidates continue to pick and choose which sources to critique rather than providing a critique for all sources cited. Critique of sources which do not critique all sources cited are considered to be limited.

This was an area of improvement. Students addressed the reliability of a source as well as its use and its relevance to them. More depth is required in these areas.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

- Thorough and consistent attribution of sources needs to be emphasised by the teacher and attention paid to any drafts seen.
- Exercises on how to formulate a good question are advisable. The question should undergo a drafting process.
- Students need to understand how research can be applied to a play/piece of theatre.
- Clarity on what is meant by application of research to a play or an aspect of a play should also be examined. If the candidate is researching a practice that has stock characters, for example, it is not enough to research on the generalities of those characters, they still need to be placed within the context of the chosen play.
- The use of images should have a purpose that goes beyond the decorative - candidates should be guided as to the relevancy of the material they choose to include in the essay. Images should also be captioned and properly sourced.
- Candidates benefit from doing class exercises that target each of the criteria of the research investigation and from playing the role of the examiner.
- Candidates could benefit from discussing various research questions (from previous sessions for example) and assessing them for their ability to fulfil the requirements of

the task.
- Though titles and sub headings may be useful in early drafts, candidates should be encouraged to reduce them or cut them completely in their final draft as they often impede the flow of the essay and have an impact on the register.
- Candidates should check the practice they have selected has a good range of available sources before they embark on the chosen topic.

Further Comments

It is clear that in some instances teachers are signing the cover sheet verifying the word count and that the work is the candidates without checking these.

Theatre Performance & Production Presentation

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 16	17 - 21	22 - 25	26 - 30	31 - 40

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 22	23 - 30

The range and suitability of the work submitted

It may be just this examiner's experience but I feel this world is contracting not expanding. The range is ever more predictable but not, sadly, much wider. The same old chestnuts and the same rather exhausted assumptions about them. With a predictable backdrop, the unpredictable, the slightly "off piste", the edgy and the provocative presentation is much appreciated. So all you risk takers out there who do think emotional memory is more psychiatry than theatre, I salute your healthy individualism. Range is one thing, we can all enumerate giddy numbers of practitioners, plays, productions and traditions but it is the candidate who can see these things in a different, unique and personal way that is the candidate we pay deepest attention to because that is how they have met the work: with thought and attention.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A

What is it about us that gives us the talent to tell stories but has us struggle to analyse our narrative? Not sure about that, but one thing is sure and that is a theatre life without analysis is a theatre life that is indiscriminate and often difficult to assess. Selection, editing and analysis of experience is actually an artistic function: the body of work requires design so that it can be communicated effectively. This requires sensitivity and the exercise of taste, qualities our young theatre practitioners should appreciate the value of because of the work they have done. Those who have cultivated these qualities can do well under this criterion. Those who simply want to "unload" should keep talking to each other on social media.

Criterion B

Synthesis argues for an analysis that is purposeful and bent on prescribing a pattern of responses. The narrative mode is invariably sequential and often monotonous, one experience follows another with little attempt to distinguish them. The synthesis project demands a relationship and so the recommendation in the rubric for the task is that candidates might select key experiences rather than throwing all into the recipe. Of course once a selection is intelligently made, the candidate needs to think of a dialectical approach and a complimentary one. One theatre practitioner, like Brook for example, might show you how this works in the subject, since his whole artistic life is a series of agreements and disagreements with the subject and artistic approaches to it. Candidates who did well under Criterion B appreciated that theatre is not a finished art form but a composite one under constant dispute and entirely provisional in its outcomes since audiences for it change all the time. Those who struggled had a "deadly" approach to the task, the word "deadly" being used in the sense that Brook intended in "The Open Space".

Criterion C

Reflection. This is a learning disposition that the complete diploma experience is so insistent about that one would expect it to be second nature for our students. Here distinction happens because of what candidates decide to reflect about. The narcissistic tendency to "self-reflection" is of little value but remains a temptation in this subject. Theatre can be an overwhelming experience for anyone; post-adolescence can demand that this experience replaces many things or stands for them. Identification has consequences and without emotional detachment reflection can become just another way of narrating, only this time the subject of the narrative is the candidate and results of this are always disappointing in terms of addressing the criterion. The work is the important focus, not the worker, and those who can objectify in order to understand more comprehensively, as many, thankfully can, will always perform better than those who are immersed in subjectivity and foggy emotionalisms.

Criterion D

This gets better. Candidates have realized that if you are going to apply research it pays to be articulate about what you are doing. Let the teacher and moderator know explicitly about what you have researched and how you have applied it to your own work and to what purpose. A

little used accompaniment to this can be the images which could be utilized to show this research being applied. What better way of making an image productive than to attach it explicitly to a criterion? Candidates who speak generally about theory or practice and expect the examiner or moderator to join the dots on their behalf will have been disappointed by our reluctance to do so.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

These hardly vary year on year but tablets of stone still need to be read:

- Analysis not narrative.
- Numbered images that connect to criteria, especially D.
- Patterns of thought rather than sequences.
- Students should where possible, get out to the theatre but not just do or watch theatre for its own sake, instead connect to what they are doing.
- Encourage the students to make the "I" a dispassionate "I" not a case for psychoanalysis.
- Encourage the students not to take any theory at face value; they should apply it, test it, disagree with it, struggle with it, and compliment it with other work.
- Point out that nobody has seen this work quite like them and that is the biggest advantage they have; they should not allow the standard view to be their view.
- Encourage them to enjoy this experience and convey their enjoyment by responding to the assessment task in an animated way, no guarantees that this can improve their marks because that depends on what they are being animated about, but it won't do them any harm.

Further Comments

Teachers are well advised not to over "prepare" candidates, no moderator wants to listen to exercises in ventriloquism repeated 5 or 6 times. Variety IS the spice of the life of this component, standardized and safe responses will not get any student very far.