

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

Overall grade boundaries

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 15	16 - 22	23 - 28	29 - 36

The range and suitability of the work submitted

For the second consecutive session, the topic which seemed to have been the favourite among candidates was “social networking”: Facebook, Twitter, and other similar network communities were explored with respect especially to their use as educational and/or political tools. Online games and their impact on society continue to be among the favourite topics chosen by ITGS students. Other than those, there were a variety of topics (social media, online art, web 2.0, robotic surgeries, cyber bullying, intellectual property, software, movie, and music piracy, etc.) most of which correctly addressed the area of ITGS.

In a few instances, there were essays submitted as ITGS ones which were clearly outside the scope of ITGS. In general, this affects the success of the candidate – they cannot reach the top levels of the criteria, because the essay will not cover the prescribed areas or use the proper terminology. Why this problem continues to occur year after year is unclear, but it is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the candidate submits a suitable essay for the subject. A possible reason may be because the school does not offer ITGS and the supervisor, when faced with any topic that deals with technology (not necessarily ITGS), is unaware of what the ITGS area is about, and mistakenly registers the essay as an ITGS one.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: research question

Roughly two thirds of the candidates were able to achieve level 1 and only one third achieved level 2, with the remainder being awarded a level 0. A minority of the candidates were able to formulate well defined, narrow research questions. In addition, the research question must be relevant to ITGS. It is also very unlikely that a yes/no research question can receive more than level 1.

Criterion B: introduction

Candidates in general placed the topic into an academic context, but many failed to indicate why the topic is worthy of investigation. The significance and worth of the investigation should not just be the students' opinion. There should be some evidence provided.

Criterion C: investigation

The major issue in this criterion was the lack of either a relevant number of secondary sources or meaningful primary investigation. A major mistake was to extrapolate the results of surveys carried out without a proper methodology and usually with a very small sample. In the best essays, it was possible to observe that the table of contents usually provided a good overview of the development of the paper and how the investigation had been planned.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

Most essays revealed a less than desired knowledge and understanding of IT issues. Many candidates failed to demonstrate knowledge of relevant IT beyond general knowledge. This includes explaining the IT systems involved in the investigation and relevant area(s) of impact.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

While in the high achieving essays, the argument was well developed and very convincing, in low achieving essays, the argument was based on unsubstantiated opinion (opinions, speculations, or statements whose source was not cited). Any argument developed in the essay must be supported by research.

Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills

This in general has been below expectation. Not many candidates were awarded beyond achievement level 2. Analysis in many cases was superficial and/or even incorrect. Candidates must be made aware that analysis and evaluation can emerge within a paper in a variety of ways, such as comparisons between/analysis of/ evaluation of information from secondary sources or between experts in the field of study and/or other instances may be considered where evidence has been provided.

Criterion G: use of language

This criterion goes hand in hand with criterion D. A poor understanding of IT issues is easily accompanied by little or inappropriate usage of IT terminology. Terms must be explained and knowledge must be presented clearly.

Criterion H: conclusion

Most candidates were able to provide conclusions that were coherent with what was presented in their essays. For those that did not, the most common mistake was to introduce extraneous content in the concluding section. Unfortunately, the function of the conclusion is frequently misunderstood. Since the development of the entire paper is focused on developing the RQ, the RQ should actually be "answered" in the conclusion. Unresolved questions should be included where appropriate.

Criterion I: formal presentation

A slight improvement in the formal presentations of most essays was observed. Most were considered good or satisfactory. The major issue with the ones that were poor was the lack of

proper citation and sources missing from the bibliography, or even too many sources listed in the bibliography and not cited (or used) in the body of the text.

Criterion J: abstract

Most candidates fulfilled the requirements for this criterion. Those that did not had probably failed to consult the guide carefully enough - in some cases, the research question stated here was different from the one stated elsewhere and/or candidates failed to provide the conclusion of the essay.

Criterion K: holistic judgment

There was a range of achievement in this criterion, with most candidates demonstrating attributes sought at a fairly modest level. Most candidates got a level 2 in this criterion. Very few were on the extremes (0 and 1 or 4).

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

In future it is essential that the following sources of information be consulted:

- Extended essay guide (first exams 2013)
- Extended essay subject reports from the OCC

Teachers must make use of the OCC ITGS and EE forums to learn from the tips of their more experienced colleagues.