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EXTENDED ESSAY REPORTS

**MAY 2002
EXAMINATION SESSION**

Extended Essay Reports
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English - Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of topics this year proved to be as wide as usual: from Shakespeare to Athol Fugard, Tom Stoppard and Caryl Churchill; from Jane Austen to Amy Tan and Toni Morrison; and from *Beowulf* to Tolkien, C. S. Lewis and J. K. Rowling. The novel, and particularly the contemporary novel, was the most popular genre, but there were successful treatments of contemporary playwrights and good essays on Keats, Shelley, Yeats, T. S. Eliot, and Beat poetry. Candidates who found interesting pairs of texts to compare in relation to a precisely defined topic tended to produce good work: there was an erudite study of the contrasting treatment of grief in *As I Lay Dying* and Russell Banks's *The Sweet Hereafter*, and an excellent essay on the role of food in novels by Amy Tan and Marge Piercy. Where classic texts were chosen, the best essays were again written by candidates who focused on a limited but fruitful topic: there was a sensitive reading of the Marabar Caves episode in *A Passage to India*, which handled the historical and racial issues with tact and understanding; and a good essay on the role and significance of dance in Jane Austen. The choice of topic in the latter case distinguished that essay from run-of-the-mill attempts at discussing 'Jane Austen's Heroines' or 'Character Development in *Emma*', which are mostly too routine to achieve better than a satisfactory mark. The same goes for the ever popular subject of dystopian fiction: comparisons of, say, *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are rarely able to rise above the conventional unless they find a particular, fresh focus for the comparison. In general, and unsurprisingly, candidates who found a topic that engaged them and aroused their enthusiasm produced the best work. Some examiners reported that essays from certain schools were all confined to a small number of texts that had clearly been studied in class; that suggests a degree of direction by supervisors which is counter to the spirit of the extended essay, which is intended to encourage a candidate to develop his or her own individual literary interests.

Some schools and supervisors still seem unaware of the regulation that at least one of the texts discussed must have originally been written in English, and there were several essays exclusively on translated texts, such as *Anna Karenina*, which suffered the penalty of no marks at all for criteria J and K. It is sad to see otherwise promising work marked down in this way: a sophisticated and potentially excellent study of Flaubert and Degas, for instance, had to be penalised for its failure to examine anything but translated texts. Comic books, and film and TV programmes are another problem area in so far as the literary dimension of the topic may be minimal. The comparison of a literary text with a cinematic or TV adaptation is certainly a suitable topic and has led to interesting and accomplished essays, but examiners have noted a tendency for candidates to write about a film or film version with scant reference to any text. This year, too, there were some essays that were so short that they hardly counted as essays at all, let alone extended ones. But in general, although the quality of the essays ranged from the first-rate to the barely literate, most of the work submitted was suitable and some of it was, as in past years, lively, interesting and impressive.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Most candidates made a decent attempt at formulating a research question or thesis, but there were still some that were too general, such as 'F Scott Fitzgerald and the Jazz Age', or imprecise. Topics that lead to simple illustration, like 'The Theme of Loneliness in . . .', are less productive than those that demand

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analysis. A research question is usually helpful in this respect, since those candidates who begin with a thesis or statement tend to set about proving it, rather than testing out its validity and exploring its implications. Candidates should be encouraged to state their research question in the opening paragraphs of the essay, rather than leaving it to be inferred from the title.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Most essays adopted an appropriate approach but some candidates continue to succumb to the temptation of reading texts through the biography of the writer. The biographical approach is almost always inappropriate in an essay of this length, since it relies too much on second hand material and leads to assertions and speculations that cannot be substantiated and distracts attention from the texts themselves. Internet sources make it easy for candidates to introduce swathes of biographical or historical material to pad out their essay, but the effect is always detrimental, substituting generalisation and received opinion for the kind of intelligent personal response to the text that is required.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

As usual this criterion distinguished the abler candidates from the weaker, who never rose above description, paraphrase and plot summary. The best candidates produced a successful analysis on the basis of sensitive close reading.

Criterion D Argument/Evaluation

In general this was satisfactory, though over-reliance on secondary sources meant that some arguments were little more than a series of quotations or opinions from published critics loosely strung together. Candidates could be alerted to the way that their own argument can be sharpened by taking issue with a critic.

Criterion E Conclusion

Most essays attempted a conclusion and set it apart with its own subheading. However, many conclusions did little more than repeat what had been stated in the introduction, rather than offering a new synthesis, and it was only the rare candidate who identified unresolved problems and new questions that had emerged in the course of the argument.

Criterion F Abstract

This still remains a problem and the abstract was often treated as an introduction or a record of research rather than a synopsis of the argument.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Formal presentation was generally good, though many essays, while benefiting from the services of a word-processing programme, still needed a thorough proof-reading to eliminate typographical errors. Candidates might be reminded that the conventional contraction of 'page' is 'p.' not 'pg.'.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Some examiners reported that there seemed to be less adventurous and more routinely competent work this year, but there were still a pleasing number of essays that showed inventiveness, insight and flair.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Knowledge and understanding of the literature studied and, where appropriate, reference to secondary sources

Knowledge of the primary texts was not usually a problem and the best candidates had clearly read and

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reflected thoroughly in coming to their own understanding. And, as has been stated in previous reports, the fullest understanding was one that did not simply address themes and characters but took account of language and structure, of how the texts worked as literature. Essays that contained too much potted biography or historical background did not leave enough space for the candidate to engage closely with the texts and show any real understanding.

Criterion K Personal response justified by literary judgment and /or analysis

The best candidates conveyed their personal response to, and enthusiasm for, their chosen texts in a measured, mature and judicious way. There were some instances of mere enthusing without judgment, but a more common weakness was over-reliance on secondary literature, which drained the essay of any personal quality. Some candidates, too, adopted an idiom so formal and impersonal that it was impossible to discern an individual voice.

Criterion L Use of language appropriate to a literary essay

Most essays were decently written, few were very poor, and a good number fluent, eloquent and stylish.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The most important part of the supervision is helping the candidate define a manageable and productive research question, not too broad in scope but also not too bland and undemanding (one examiner reported an overlong essay that consisted mainly of plot summary, spelling out the obvious fact that two of Jane Austen's heroines undergo emotional development). The best questions are usually those that lead into consideration of how a text works as literature, rather than, for instance, what it tells us about historical or social circumstances. Supervisors should stress that the research should be of a literary nature and not primarily biographical, however much candidates may be tempted in that direction. It is advisable to warn against researching comic books and to make sure that any work on films or TV has a literary, textual dimension. It is better to steer candidates away from texts that they have studied in class as part of the IB diploma programme and to urge them to be adventurous in their reading and to choose a topic that really interests them. Comparisons between texts can often be fruitful, as long as they are not routine pairings like *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: a modern text and one from an earlier period, for example.

Candidates also need advice on how to do research, on taking notes, keeping records of sources, writing footnotes and bibliographies, and in writing an Abstract, after they have completed their essay, which presents a synopsis of their argument. Guidance in the use of secondary sources is also important, and candidates should be urged not to be too reliant on received opinions and to treat Internet sources with caution. With classic texts, the selection of a modern edition with introduction and notes will set a candidate off on the right foot.

Most supervisors are clearly aware of all this and are doing a valuable job, but examiners have repeatedly noted that relatively few of them take the opportunity to comment on the candidates' work. Such comments can be helpful: for instance, if a candidate writes in an unusually mature and sophisticated way, it would be useful for the supervisor to confirm, on the basis of other work etc., that this is indeed the candidate's own style and voice. Bland endorsements of a candidate's effort and application are of little help, but any comments that throw light on the essay and what has been achieved in it are always welcomed by the examiners.

Français - Groupe 1

La variété et la pertinence des sujets choisis par les candidats

- Cette année, on remarque un progrès par rapport à l'année dernière : les sujets sont variés et portent de moins en moins sur des œuvres au programme. (On demande au professeur d'indiquer sur la chemise du mémoire qu'il s'agit d'une œuvre au programme de l'établissement, si tel est le cas.)
- Comme chaque année, les travaux plus personnels sont les plus réussis.
- Les examinateurs rappellent également que les candidats doivent disposer d'un minimum de ressources en langue française.
- Même si la très grande majorité des sujets sont bien ciblés et clairement délimités, il arrive, malheureusement, que certains soient difficiles à traiter. Que penser d'un sujet qui se propose d'étudier l'évolution de la femme dans six œuvres, de Marivaux à Alice Walker, en passant par Flaubert ? Un autre candidat pose la question : « L'humour québécois a-t-il été influencé par sa généalogie latine ? » N'est-ce pas de la présomption ?
- Il arrive aussi que certains sujets, apparemment littéraires, ne soient que prétexte à des exposés psychologiques ou sociologiques.

La performance des candidats selon les critères généraux d'évaluation

- Les exigences formelles (nombre de mots pour le mémoire, pour le précis, la table des matières) sont respectées dans la plupart des cas.
- Certains candidats n'ont pas obtenu une très bonne note pour le critère B : démarche adoptée. Il s'agissait dans certains cas de comparaisons mal menées, sans comparaison véritable ou dont la synthèse n'était pas suffisamment approfondie.
- Il faut rappeler aux élèves que le précis doit indiquer la conclusion du mémoire et qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une introduction au mémoire.
- Il faut également décourager les élèves de remettre une page complète de remerciements divers, inutiles ou fantaisistes (liste de camarades, menus divers fournis par les parents, animaux domestiques...). Il s'agit d'un travail de recherche sérieux !

La performance des candidats selon les critères généraux d'évaluation

- En général, la grande majorité des candidats ont une bonne connaissance des œuvres et les comprennent bien. La plupart des mémoires proposent un jugement personnel basé sur un sens et une analyse littéraires, mais, dans certains cas, l'exposé relève de la psychologie ou de la sociologie. (Si le mémoire porte sur les motifs du tueur pathologique imaginé par Christine Brouillet, il ne faut pas trouver là un prétexte pour consacrer plus de la moitié du travail aux thèses de Freud.)
- On rappelle encore une fois d'éviter des sujets trop généraux, comme, par exemple, « Travail de comparaison littéraire entre deux œuvres », qui nous a été proposé par un candidat.
- Il est toujours bon de définir les mots clés (par exemple, catharsis ou satire) lorsque ceux-ci figurent dans l'énoncé du sujet choisi. La plupart des candidats ont su donner des références précises et bien intégrées à l'analyse.
- Il convient de surveiller le style, de respecter l'art du paragraphe et de mettre en valeur un vocabulaire spécifique à l'analyse littéraire. Encore une fois, la plupart des candidats en sont conscients.
- Si un bon nombre de candidats maîtrisent bien le code linguistique, trop peu écrivent une langue fluide

et concise. Pour mériter 4 au critère L, le texte ne doit pas être truffé de redondances, de lourdeurs ou d'impropriétés.

Les points à soulever

Sans consacrer plus de deux ou trois heures à l'encadrement, les superviseurs sont invités à rappeler quelques règles essentielles à leurs élèves :

- Les sujets doivent être bien délimités.
- Si un candidat choisit un sujet comparatif, il lui faut indiquer l'importance de la synthèse et de la conclusion. Une simple juxtaposition ne suffit pas à un travail de recherche.
- Un mémoire littéraire suppose des capacités d'analyse stylistique et une sensibilité aux problèmes d'écriture.
- Bon nombre d'élèves consultent des sites Internet. Ceux-ci évoluant constamment, il serait bon que les candidats indiquent la date à laquelle ils ont consulté leur site de référence.
- Les commentaires du superviseur sont très utiles, sinon essentiels, pour le correcteur. Nous encourageons donc les professeurs à nous faire part de leurs remarques et à mettre en valeur ce que le candidat a su mener à bien. Il en va de l'intérêt de leur élève.

Merci pour le bon travail accompli en tant que professeurs et superviseurs, et pour des heures de plaisir littéraire que nous avons eu en corrigeant les mémoires de vos élèves !

German - Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range and suitability of the work submitted was very good to excellent with only a few exceptions. Candidates chose from a wide variety of topics which on the whole provided ample opportunity for analysis and discussion.

Candidates' performance against each criterion

The purely formal criteria like abstract and references together with a visually attractive presentation were fulfilled by the overwhelming majority of candidates and were awarded the maximum points. The two main problems were the choice of an appropriate research topic and an approach suitable for the particular task. The choice and definition of the topic and the research question ought to take into consideration the following two points:

- the topic must not be too broad so as to allow the formulation of a precise research question. Topics like "The Romantic Movement in Germany" or "The Life and Works of Hermann Hesse" are a case in point
- the Extended Essay is by definition literary and topics which either border on or are outside the field of literature must be avoided. In a number of cases the literary element was only paid lip service in order to launch into a sociological or political discussion.

This leads to the approach to the question. In some cases the approach tended to be too positivist e.g. a mere listing of facts and data or on the other hand purely biographical. In most cases the candidates were able to carry out competent analyses of the works chosen in order to discuss the research question. Also the arguments were structured in a way that resulted in a logical and plausible conclusion. The holistic impression was in the vast majority of cases very positive with quite a few essays of an excellent standard.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

There are two recommendations for the supervision of future candidates which follow on from these observations:

- the supervisor's help in choosing a suitable topic and formulating an appropriate research question is of paramount importance
- the approach to the research question should also be carefully discussed with the supervisor.

The Extended Essay continues to be a very successful exercise and the best preparation for academic studies. In most schools this has been recognised and the results correspond to work done in the first year at university. The few schools whose candidates did not fare well in this exercise ought to realize the importance of the writing of the Extended Essay for the further education of their pupils.

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Español - Grupo 1

En esta convocatoria de 2002, ha disminuido ligeramente el número de monografías presentadas para Español A1. Como en las convocatorias anteriores, el nivel general ha sido muy bueno o bueno, con muy pocas excepciones.

Hay dos modalidades de monografías en Español A1:

- Categoría 1: estudio de una obra u obras de literatura originalmente escritas en español;
- Categoría 2: estudio comparativo de una obra escrita en español y otra de literatura mundial.

De estas dos modalidades, los alumnos optaron mayoritariamente por la primera categoría.

Como en convocatorias anteriores, la mayoría de los temas fueron muy bien elegidos y, a menudo, fueron originales e incluso creativos. Aunque siempre predominan los estudios temáticos de novelas, de obras de teatro o los estudios comparativos, sigue aumentando el número de los que se refieren a poesía o ensayos, estudios técnicos, estilísticos o los que analizan las características de un género o subgénero en sí y las peculiaridades propias de un autor:

- el pensamiento de... sobre... en sus ensayos
- el encabalgamiento y su valor en la poesía de...
- connotación y simbología en la poesía de...
- la técnica narrativa en...
- los puntos de vista y sus efectos en...
- técnicas de infravaloración de los personajes en...
- comparación de los rasgos del cuento y la novela en...etc.

Lo más significativo es que en su gran mayoría eran temas adecuados, pertinentes para las obras elegidas, susceptibles de ser tratados en una monografía y, sobre todo, abarcables y bien definidos por el candidato, tal como exige el Criterio A de calificación.

Sigue habiendo raras excepciones a este acertado comportamiento general: tratar

- tratar una sola obra no escrita originalmente en español, en lugar de comparar una de literatura en Lengua A1 y otra de literatura universal, como está establecido para la Categoría 2
- tratar temas demasiado generales, como la evolución global de un género, de un movimiento o de un autor con muchas obras, imposible de abarcar en una monografía
- tratar temas poco abarcables en un estudio inmanente, como algunos estudios de influencias o de psicocrítica, que desbordan la capacidad de un alumno y que, en realidad, se debían demasiado a opiniones ajenas de la crítica literaria
- tratar temas que no eran de literatura y muy difícilmente podían incluirse en ella, como algunos estudios pretendidamente sociológicos donde se toma una obra como documento de la realidad y del alma de un pueblo, o el análisis intuitivo de alguna versión cinematográfica de una obra literaria que, evidentemente, no se había leído.

El enfoque metodológico, valorado en el Criterio B, es generalmente muy adecuado: la mayoría estudia cuidadosamente el corpus primario del que extrae suficientes datos pertinentes y, además, consulta obras

histórico-literarias o de teoría crítica que fundamentan su análisis o su valoración y que son citadas honestamente. Generalmente se distinguen muy bien los presupuestos, los datos primarios, la opinión propia y las opiniones de las fuentes secundarias.

La profundidad del *análisis* y la *evaluación* de los materiales, valorados en los Criterios C y D, son dos aspectos decisivos, en los que se aprecia más la diversidad de los alumnos. Hay casos realmente llamativos por el rigor del seguimiento personal de un tema o rasgo, por su interpretación metódica y perspicaz del corpus, o por su modo de encauzar su análisis y sus comentarios hacia la demostración de la tesis del trabajo.

Sin embargo, un número notable de alumnos no saca suficiente partido a lo que saben. Así, entre la gama de actitudes que impiden un buen análisis y una buena evaluación:

- a veces se eligen datos poco significativos para el aspecto que se quiere comprobar, de forma que la argumentación es inconsistente
- hay alumnos que tienen excesivo respeto por las opiniones de los críticos y las aceptan cuando el corpus está demostrando lo contrario, o se quedan en lo que el crítico dice cuando podrían ir mucho más allá según sus propios hallazgos
- un caso aparte en raras ocasiones fueron los que en alguno de sus capítulos resumieron estudios o tomaron información y opiniones de internet sin citarlos honestamente
- algunos confían en que las citas tienen un valor autosuficiente y las yuxtaponen con muy escaso análisis o una breve paráfrasis, de forma que el trabajo es una sucesión de citas sin apenas análisis ni valoración personal.

Se aprecia una mejoría notable en el resumen, de forma que la mayoría de los alumnos cumplió con los requisitos completos del Criterio F; anticipar clara y sucintamente el *tema*, *el alcance del estudio* y *la conclusión general*. Pero aún hay algunos que lo conciben como una exposición de los motivos para elegir el trabajo o de las intenciones o dificultades del alumno, aspectos que son propios de una introducción, pero no del resumen. Lo dicho tiene también relación con los resultados obtenidos en los Criterios específicos J (*Conocimiento y comprensión de la literatura*) y K (*Respuesta personal justificada*). El *conocimiento y la comprensión* de las obras ha sido muy satisfactorio, no sólo por la cantidad de referencias primarias y secundarias a las que se refieren los descriptores (Criterio J), sino por la calidad de la comprensión que los alumnos demuestran.

Se sigue apreciando una mejoría general en el modo de incluir las referencias en las monografías: gran parte de los mejores trabajos transcribió o comentó en el cuerpo de la monografía las citas más significativas y transfirió a pie de página otras citas primarias pertinentes y las referencias a la bibliografía secundaria. Así, los trabajos resultaron bien documentados y, a la vez, dejaron suficiente espacio para que los alumnos desarrollasen sus ideas personales. Esto puede considerarse una mera cuestión de formato, pero tiene ciertas repercusiones en el Criterio J.

La respuesta personal (Criterio K) estuvo casi siempre justificada por los datos y el análisis. Sin embargo, en algún caso se han apreciado casi exclusivamente "*respuestas personales raramente justificadas*" y, en los casos en que se consideró la literatura como mero documento de la realidad histórica, pocas veces se logró una valoración basada en los datos literarios.

Las conclusiones (Criterio E) se derivan con frecuencia claramente de la exposición, pero se espera que se redacten en un capítulo aparte, aunque sean una recolección de los principales puntos expuestos.

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Formato y lenguaje siguen siendo, junto al conocimiento de las obras, dos de los puntos más fuertes de la mayoría de los candidatos.

Hay que agradecer la inteligente colaboración que se aprecia cada vez más en muchos supervisores por su forma de escribir los informes, especialmente en trabajos problemáticos o donde se puede sospechar que hay alguna práctica fraudulenta (ayuda externa, plagio parcial...)

La simple mención de las horas empleadas en discutir los avances con el alumno es sólo un indicio del seguimiento del profesor y puede resultar útil en los casos en que el candidato aparece el último día con una monografía prácticamente hecha. Pero algunos profesores son más explícitos y han expresado brevemente que:

- se sienten poco responsables de la monografía
- no han podido seguir su elaboración ni ver sus borradores
- que ésta sobrepasa la capacidad habitualmente demostrada por el alumno
- que su nivel es superior al grado de instrucción que habitualmente se imparte en el colegio, etc.

Igualmente hay quienes, junto a otros aspectos que consideran pertinentes, comentan que:

- han visto al alumno progresar y trabajar con dedicación
- ellos o los alumnos guardan notas y borradores del trabajo
- el trabajo es congruente con el rendimiento habitual del alumno
- la limitación de fuentes secundarias se debe a la falta de bibliografía en el país donde se hace la monografía, etc.

Son informaciones precisas que muestran que el supervisor se siente implicado en la totalidad del trabajo, no sólo en su orientación sino en su autenticidad y honestidad. Además son muy útiles porque pueden ayudar al examinador o a la Oficina de Exámenes en casos problemáticos.

Esperamos que este repaso criterio por criterio de los puntos fuertes y débiles criterio por criterio ayude a mejorar un trabajo del que todos estamos orgullosos.

Italian - Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Again the majority of the works were based on prose fiction (20th Century mainly), very few on poetry, drama or other topics. A number of essays dealt with authors or works included in the candidate's course.

There have been very few outstanding works, little originality, but the general level has improved, reaching a satisfactory standard.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Research question

On the whole, the research question was clearly stated.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Usually clearly focused, though rarely investigated in depth.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

The analysis is on the whole satisfactory.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Arguments are satisfactorily developed, although only the best essays show a real capacity of personal evaluation.

Criterion E Conclusion

One of the weakest points. At times, the so-called conclusion is indeed part of the main development of the argument.

Criterion F Abstract

Very often, it is a general introduction rather than an Abstract.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Good and considerably improved.

The specific subject criteria are usually satisfactorily met, except in those cases in which the topic does not easily lend itself to literary analysis.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Recommendations are implicit in what has been said in the previous sections. The aspects that need particular care and consideration are the following:

Approach to the research question: should be more imaginative and more personal, less conventional.

Conclusion: ought to be a real conclusion, that sums up the main lines of argument, and not part of the argument itself (see above).

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Teachers' comments: only a few teachers included them. Though not compulsory, they are useful and provide relevant information to the examiner, particularly with regard to criterion H.

Norwegian - Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The topics demonstrated good variety, and all but two candidates had chosen topics suitable for their Extended Essay. The two Extended Essays which were deemed unsuitable, did not fit into the category 'literature' and instead belonged under the headings 'psychology' and 'ethnology'.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Again, as in previous years, the weaker candidates spent too much time and too many words retelling the plot instead of addressing the research question and developing an analytical approach to their topic (Criterion B).

Some candidates also lost marks for Criterion E (Conclusion), F (Abstract) and/or G (Formal Presentation). Especially with regard to Criterion G, all candidates ought to be able to score high marks.

Recommendation for the supervision of future candidates

Almost all candidates seemed to have received excellent supervision and guidance, but all supervisors should make absolutely sure that a literature essay deals with literature and not with history/ psychology/ anthropology/ ethnology etc. See the Extended Essay Guide for detailed instruction and information.

The requirements for marks given for the various criteria should also be studied carefully both by supervisors and all their candidates, so that marks are not lost unnecessarily because of misunderstandings, oversight and carelessness.

Only one supervisor chose to write a comment on the candidate's work on the inside of the cover sheet.

The hours spent with the candidate by the supervisor varied from 1 to 8 – with a mean of 3.5 hours.

May 2002 teachers, supervisors and candidates should all be congratulated on their hard work and good results.

Swedish - Group 1

Candidates must bear in mind that it is not enough to show one's own interest in an author or works if there is criticism published that can be easily used or quoted. However, a compromise of the candidates' own ideas and, as it is put in the manual, "more experienced critics views" should be aimed at. Several candidates obviously find this unworthy of their own knowledge and interest and capsize in the seas of what they judge to be unnecessary formalities and then it is rather late to discover that the assessment follows the rules the candidates should have familiarised themselves with before they started out. One such thing is keeping to the 4000-word limit to make sure their essays are not rejected for being too short or too long. The most important detail is to ensure right from the beginning that the focus of the essay is not too broad so that the candidate is tempted to write very little about a lot of things. Even though several candidates this year were judged to be very good, very few gained full marks.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The quality of the essays submitted varied and in general new schools had difficulties adhering to the regulations which meant that 13 candidates submitted essays that fell a lot short of the 4000-word limit, consequently the essays were not long enough to allow an in depth treatment of the subject. Once candidate handed in an essay of 1450 words.

Writing essays is above all a question of maturity and it would be an oversimplification to claim that the old schools submitted better essays than the new ones. One point though, there is a tendency among essay-writers not to use critics material when it exists. One should try to arrive at a compromise between one's own ideas and more experienced critics views.

Candidate performance against the criteria

In a few cases hypotheses are too broad which candidates should have been warned against when choosing the subject.

Most abstracts follow the instructions. However, many do not mention the scope of the investigation, though this often appears in the introduction. The formal presentation is good. Several essays mention unresolved problems in their conclusions as they should to indicate how far their essay has taken them.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The best improvements would be more use of secondary sources and thus making sure that candidates understand the need for the maximum 4000-word limit.

Arabic - Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Responding to a well-formulated research question, a majority of the essays were based on Arabic literature. The exception resulted from a lack of Arabic source materials. Because some schools concentrate on selected works, their candidates much necessarily restrict their topics.

Consequently, they lose the advantage of the rich heritage of Arabic literature. This approach, however, has not prevented the submission of both appropriate and original work.

Candidates performance against each criterion

Most candidates have demonstrated the ability to form a personal response to literature and critical works. Their responses show competent in persuasive writing as well as proper usage of register. However, an imbalance in favour of descriptive writing over critical analysis can be noted. In addition, the broad nature of some topics prevented effective treatment within the prescribed word limit.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Supervision of suitable techniques for writing essays can be encouraged. Candidates also need to be made aware of the proper style needed for the subject. In addition, essentially all candidates require more concentration on grammar and linguistic matters. It is highly recommended that supervisors, in future, should draw their candidates' attention to the requirements of Arabic phraseology and sentence structure.

English - Group 2

Range and suitability of the work submitted

There was, as usual, a very good range of topics, with a slight bias towards those of a literary nature. However, there seemed to be more culture or language-based essays than on some occasions. Topic focus was on the whole good, with viable areas of research being proposed, and with sufficient definition of parameters. There remains some concern, however, with the appearance of a fairly large number of essays with unsuitable topics, which clearly related to the matter of supervision. *“How does the language of advertising influence the consumer’s behaviour, values and choice or products?”* is potentially interesting but in fact almost the whole essay was confined to theoretical and non-culture-specific issues. *“Journalism in the audio-visual age”* was simply inappropriate and quite a few essays were too broad, too vague or too personal, for example *“An analysis of Latin and British styles of Colonialism on the American continent and the consequent effect on their language and culture.”*

There were no problems in general with the word length, though a few essays were too short to allow sufficient development of the topic.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Research Question

This remains a problem area. Many candidates do not state the research question in the early part of the essay or do not state it sufficiently clearly. Some candidates apparently felt that the title of the essay itself was sufficient in this regard. Many candidates scored 1 or 0 here when it is in fact straightforward to obtain 2 for this criterion with the right supervision.

Criterion B Approach to the Research Question

High scoring here is still not common. If the topic is not sufficiently narrow or defined, the approach will probably be similarly unfocused and thus derives from problems encountered in A. Sometimes insufficient source material, such as reference to one or two Internet sites only, led to a rather one-dimensional approach. Similarly, some candidates based their research on a questionnaire aimed at too small a sample to be able to deduce anything valid. Direct textual references in support of the argument need to be more frequently supplied.

Supervisors sometimes comment on the lack of available materials for the particular topic chosen. However, if supervisors steered candidates in the direction of a topic where support material *can* be found, this problem might be avoided. There were quite a few instances where references were only to Internet sites and this is likely to become ever more frequent, with candidates only having access to ‘potted’ and quite possibly inaccurate accounts of whatever they are trying to investigate. Some essays were written in a very narrative, descriptive way, which did not develop the research question but rather stated a series of facts and figures.

Criterion C Analysis/Interpretation

No real problems are reported in this area, with candidates tending to score mostly in the middle range. The tendency is to have too little support data to allow the analysis to be sufficiently persuasive. The issue of reliance on plot-summary in literature essays can compromise success with this criterion, as with B. Very few scores of 4 were achieved here, which indicates that analysis was simply not sufficiently thorough.

Criterion D Argument/Evaluation

Argumentation is still reported as being rather weak, and of course this partly depends on the degree of clarity and focus in the research question. Some argument, however, is usually developed to some extent, though more thought clearly needs to be given to the issues which are being established and where the argument in general is supposed to lead. Description of content, in literature essays, tends to predominate over a clear reason for why such content is being described. Critical opinion would no doubt be enhanced if more, or at least some, secondary sources were used as a stimulus. Sometimes candidates only offered a primary text in their Bibliography.

Criterion E Conclusion

There are still complaints about the lack of clarity and poor content in the conclusion. The broad trends of the foregoing discussion tend not to be clearly summarised and no overall 'closure' to the argument is provided. Where D is weak, then E will no doubt also be weak, the development of the argument being obscure in both cases. Some conclusions included new and irrelevant material, but there were only a few cases where no real conclusion was provided at all. Although this criterion does allow for a conclusion which is not necessarily in a separate section, supervisors should always encourage candidates to employ a separate heading here. Thought will be clarified and the examiner's response will be a lot more positive. 'Integrated' conclusions tend to be of poor quality.

Criterion F Abstract

Candidates do not seem to be sufficiently aware of the nature of the abstract and the various elements it should contain. Many score 0 because they omit the conclusion, or 1 because the research question is not sufficiently clearly stated. The Abstract often emerges as more of an Introduction to the essay, when, obviously, most of the essential elements will be omitted. This is another area where supervision seems to be significantly lacking, since it should not be difficult to provide a brief summary of research question, scope (what is in the various sections) and conclusion.

Criterion G Formal Presentation

This area still leaves a great deal to be desired. There were a number of essays with no table of contents and no headings throughout. Many candidates who do provide a table of contents seem unaware of basic principles of presentation, as if they had never themselves consulted any sources which might provide models in this respect (an effect of too much reliance on the Internet?). Thus table of contents still have valueless headings such as 'Body' or 'Essay', the heading 'Chapter' is inappropriately used for sections of about two or three pages in length, candidates write 'page' before each page number, they include the full page range of each section and fail to employ a satisfactory layout in general.

Quotations provided within the main text are usually poorly laid out, following no standard pattern, and the whole bibliographical reference is repeated time after time in the footnote to these quotations instead of employing some form of abbreviation. Book titles should be underlined or printed in bold, not surrounded by quotation marks. There is an increasing tendency to throw in unsourced photographs -- such 'decoration' is inappropriate to the extended essay. Illustrative material can be useful but must be properly identified. Bibliographies are often still chaotic, frequently with no alphabetical or chronological ordering, authors' names given in varying orders and websites not dated or authored. When websites are listed, then a clear idea of their contents should also be indicated. A great deal more needs to be done in this area -- once again, where's the supervision?

Criterion H Holistic judgment

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There were no reported problems with applying this criterion, though the frequent lack of supervisors' comments meant that one element of judgment could not be applied. A score of 4 was very infrequently achieved.

Criterion J Knowledge and Understanding of the Language/Culture/Literature

Scoring was generally quite good in this area, showing that candidates demonstrated that they knew for the most part what they were talking about. As a result, a score of 4 was not uncommon. However, there were, as noted earlier, quite a few inappropriate topics, leading to a score of 0 here, and one or two examiners noted the presence of a fair number of 'not convincingly related' examples. These were frequently essays where there appeared to be little or no supervision. Quite a few essays were reported as 'lacking in depth'.

Criterion K Point of View on the Topic

Again low scores here resulted partly from inappropriate or marginal topics. Otherwise, scores tended to be reasonable if the research question was well stated and the candidate was clear about goals.

Criterion L Communication and Style

Performance was right across the range in the present batch, with quite a few at a fairly sophisticated level. Communication was thus generally well achieved, but, as has been noted before, communication can occur even when pretty appalling grammar is employed. Poor command of the language thus has to be marked down without specific recourse to the L criterion. Such things as spelling and punctuation should perhaps be considered under G, but they are not specified there. There were quite a few instances where an inappropriately informal register was employed.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The first plea would be that candidates *get* some supervision. There is a substantial lack in this respect, with candidates apparently not getting help with the appropriate selection of a topic (and framing the research question itself) or with the layout and structure of the whole project. These are fairly straightforward areas to address, but it seems in some cases that the supervisors would be unable to produce an adequate extended essay themselves. They seem to lack criteria for judgment. If candidates have been offered useful help and have ignored it, or have been reluctant to attend meetings with the supervisor, then these facts should be recorded on the EE cover. Supervisors should be encouraged to write some form of comment on the cover, for one reason because it helps with the assessment for Criterion H.

Thus more attention is required to:

- topic selection, particularly attention to inappropriate topics
- encouraging a selection of topic where there is adequate reference material available
- clear expression of the research question at the outset
- abstract writing
- the general protocols of academic documents, particularly bibliographies, using quotations and footnoting
- identifying useful headings and subheadings -- practice in signposting, based on a good table of contents
- making sure that analysis of questionnaires or statistical data is performed correctly and effectively
- the possibility that basic background material such as information about authors or summaries of plots could be relegated to appendices.

Français - Groupe 2

Variété et pertinence du travail présenté

Une centaine de mémoires ont été présentés en français (groupe 2) cette année. De façon générale, le niveau était nettement supérieur à l'année passée et bon nombre de candidats ont mérité une excellente note. Il faut ici souligner le travail des superviseurs qui guident les candidats dans la bonne direction. On a néanmoins reçu quelques travaux très faibles, tant au niveau du contenu que de la présentation.

Il y a eu davantage de sujets traitant de langue, société et culture que de sujets littéraires. En général, les sujets étaient pertinents et bien choisis et montraient une bonne compréhension de la culture française et francophone, notamment de la culture contemporaine. Quelques sujets portant sur la culture auraient gagné à être mieux définis (peut-être en formulant une question de recherche?) pour permettre aux candidats de faire un travail bien ciblé et bien articulé. Un bon point à souligner : un grand nombre d'étudiants ont opté pour des sujets littéraires souvent traités de façon personnelle.

Résultats des candidats pour chaque critère d'évaluation

Il serait souhaitable d'attirer l'attention des candidats sur les points suivants :

Analyse/interprétation

Il s'agit là d'un point faible, notamment chez les candidats qui choisissent des sujets historiques. On dénote parfois une tendance à se noyer dans les descriptions, et à faire peu de place à l'analyse. Il serait important que les professeurs mettent en garde les candidats qui choisissent ce type de sujet et qu'ils les guident vers l'analyse.

D'autres candidats semblent vouloir démontrer qu'ils maîtrisent très bien les méthodes de recherche à l'aide d'une bibliographie et d'un appareil de notes impressionnants, mais tombent parfois dans le piège de la citation à outrance. Le travail donne l'impression de n'être qu'un tissu de citations à travers lequel on cherche en vain une analyse personnelle. Il est essentiel que le mémoire aille au-delà du résumé des sources secondaires et que le candidat fasse preuve d'une capacité de réflexion et d'interprétation.

Conclusion

Celle-ci a trop souvent tendance à répéter le plan du mémoire et ses conclusions partielles. Seul un candidat sur quatre indique une ouverture thématique ou méthodologique.

Précis

Nombre de candidats éprouvent des difficultés à rédiger un précis satisfaisant. Celui-ci est parfois rédigé de manière peu claire et a tendance à faire double emploi avec l'introduction. La conclusion atteinte n'est pas toujours mentionnée. Quelques précis sont rédigés en anglais ou dépassent la limite de 300 mots.

Présentation formelle

Celle-ci est bonne en général. Il est évident que de nombreux candidats ont été bien formés à la méthodologie de la recherche et à la présentation de travaux. On a noté cette année une utilisation intelligente (créative, souvent) d'illustrations. Un rappel, toutefois : le mémoire ne doit en aucun cas dépasser 4000 mots, sinon il obtiendra 0 au critère G. Il est vraiment dommage de pénaliser des mémoires par ailleurs excellents sur le plan de la présentation formelle simplement parce que le candidat n'a pas respecté le nombre maximal de mots.

Cependant, certains travaux donnent l'impression d'avoir été rédigés rapidement et à la dernière minute tant leur présentation est peu soignée : fautes de frappe, pages non numérotées, tableaux/graphiques/illustrations sans légende, citations mal identifiées, etc. On encourage les candidats qui y ont accès à utiliser un ordinateur (et notamment un logiciel de correction) qui pourront faciliter et améliorer grandement le travail de présentation.

Autres points à améliorer :

- La structure du mémoire n'est pas toujours apparente. Il serait souhaitable que les candidats établissent une liste de points à analyser ou donnent un titre aux différentes parties du travail.
- L'annexe est parfois un fourre-tout de documents / illustrations pas toujours pertinents, comme si les candidats y avaient relégué toute l'information qu'ils avaient recueillie au cours de la recherche et qu'ils n'avaient pas utilisée dans le corps du mémoire.
- Quelques (rares) candidats semblent éprouver de sérieuses difficultés à présenter un travail de recherche et ont soumis des mémoires comportant des problèmes de base : absence de conclusion ou de bibliographie, références incomplètes ou présentées de façon incohérente, etc.
- Enfin, les sources bibliographiques contiennent de plus en plus de documents tirés de l'Internet, documents qui ne sont pas toujours complets ou exacts. Il serait souhaitable que les professeurs orientent leurs élèves vers des sources bibliographiques plus variées.

Langue

La qualité de la langue était généralement très bonne. Chez quelques rares candidats le niveau de langue était très faible et faisait entrave à la compréhension.

Recommandations pour la supervision de futurs candidats

On suggère aux candidats de lire attentivement ce rapport de même que le guide avant de s'engager dans leur projet de recherche. Il serait aussi profitable qu'ils y reviennent périodiquement en cours de rédaction.

Il est essentiel que les candidats choisissent bien leur sujet, non seulement en fonction de l'envergure de l'étude et de la documentation disponible, mais aussi en tenant compte de leurs intérêts et de la possibilité d'aborder ce sujet de manière personnelle. D'année en année, les meilleurs travaux sont ceux où l'on retrouve une analyse et un point de vue originaux.

Enfin, pour le précis et pour la présentation formelle, trop de points sont perdus "bêtement" (pages non numérotées, précis trop long, etc.) alors que les descripteurs des critères d'évaluation sont clairement énoncés dans le guide (p. 22 et 23). Il serait profitable (si ce n'est déjà fait) d'élaborer une liste de contrôle qui permettrait aux candidats de vérifier eux-mêmes s'ils ont bien respecté les exigences en cochant les cases appropriées.

German - Group 2

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The 76 essays submitted this year reflected a wide range of interest. In comparison with last year, environmental issues were less in favour and were replaced by political and social issues as well as historical topics. The majority of topics could be easily tackled in the prescribed word limit and candidates really concentrated on the research element of the essay and gave pride of place to the analytical aspect of the task. It was gratifying to see that broadly based topics were in decline, but there were still titles such as: *Die deutsche Lyrik, Jugendsprache, Medien in Deutschland, Deutsch-Deutsche Verhältnisse, Die Zeit der Romantik: Kunst, Musik und Literatur*. Unfortunately, the treatment of the subject of these essays led to a rather uncritical textbook based approach.

Unfortunately, there were two essays written in English which should not have been handed in for German B and a few took foreign language books as a basis for their German essay.

The majority of candidates were linguistically competent, their scripts were written with clarity and flair. It was obvious that almost all candidates thought about the formal instructions and layout and appropriate referencing techniques were applied.

Although all essay titles were suitable, the best performances could be seen with those which were focused topics rather than those that attempted a broad sweep. For example, *Wirken sich Anglizismen, die in der deutschen Pressesprache benutzt werden, positiv oder negativ aus?* is better than *Anglizismen in der deutschen Sprache. Die Entwicklung der Hansestadt Rostock nach dem Fall der Mauer. Ein Vergleich und eine Analyse von der Situation für Familien nach der Wende* is better than *Die Wiedervereinigung*. It is also inappropriate to have a title *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* and an essay containing a synopsis of the composer's life and work only.

The technique to include interviews in the text effectively still seems to be a mystery to some candidates as was seen with one candidate whose essay consisted of the interview with the author followed by a summary of the book.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Research/abstract/conclusion

The abstract and the introduction lay the foundation for a carefully planned research project which states aims, principles, methodology and outcome of the research in a clear and intelligible way. Candidates who achieved high grades were fully aware of the importance of these criteria and used personal initiative and investigation to reach a conclusion which confirmed, refuted or widened the original hypothesis of the research question.

However, there were a few candidates who did not differentiate between the abstract and introduction (one even omitted the introduction), did not make it clear what they were trying to do and quite often did not pay too much attention to the conclusion. The conclusion was not always consistent with the argument presented in the essay.

ANALYSIS/ARGUMENT

The best candidates used specific material to back up their research and developed and displayed a

perceptive insight into the research question.

Some of the weaker essays, however, took quite a long time to get under way whether because of long-winded biographies of the author or because of over detailed historical background or data taken directly from published texts without evaluation or critical review of the assembled material. This quite often took them into a different direction and they produced information completely unrelated to the research question. Consequently the treatment of the research question was limited to a small fraction of the overall text.

FORMAL PRESENTATION

On the whole the presentation of the essays was excellent with headlines, footnotes and page references neatly and clearly displayed.

A few candidates ignored the fact that the essay should present a piece of continuous writing and presented single sheet paragraphs leaving the rest of the page blank.

The bibliography also caused a problem for some candidates. Some of the bibliographies seemed rather cursory and showed no signs of any further reading, others included lengthy book lists which were never quoted in the main part of the essays. Some source material is still read in English and consequently the translations seemed to be too stilted.

LANGUAGE

It was encouraging to see that it was not only native speakers who chose to write an Extended Essay in German. Apart from the customary mistakes of *Groß- und Kleinschreibung* the candidates presented their essays in competent German.

Some candidates, although these are probably native speakers, tended to use too colloquial language at times.

Recommendation for the supervision of future candidates

Candidates should be warned against unfocused subject areas and encouraged to write about a topic they could form a personal opinion on. However, this could be quite difficult for teachers and it might be a daunting task to step in and set the candidate tactfully on the right path, however passionate the candidate's involvement with his/her research question may be.

Candidates should be made aware that it is not sufficient to state the research question in the title or the abstract only, but are advised to repeat it explicitly in the introduction of the essay. They should also be reminded that the conclusion is not just a repeated statement of the preamble.

Illustration and data should be fully incorporated into the main body of the text as well as any conclusion reached from interviews.

It is important that once the choice for an Extended Essay topic has been made and the topic has been agreed with the teacher, candidates should become entirely familiar with the regulations they are supposed to follow so that they are sure of what is required of them.

Candidates should be encouraged to check their final version carefully before handing it in. This could much enhance the quality and final impression of their work.

Español - Grupo 2

Ámbito que cubre el trabajo entregado y medida en que resulta apropiado

Los temas tratados en las monografías de esta sesión fueron de una gran variedad y muchos también muy originales. Más de un tercio de las monografías estuvieron dedicadas a temas literarios. Como en sesiones anteriores hubo varios estudios de las obras de García Lorca, García Márquez, Ana María Matute e Isabel Allende. Pero a éstos se añadieron otros sobre Unamuno, Rómulo Gallegos, Juan Rulfo, Ángeles Mastretta, Ernesto Sábato y Ramon Llull. El tema del realismo mágico atrajo a varios alumnos y, como en anteriores ocasiones, hubo una serie de trabajos basados en personajes literarios femeninos. Algunos de estos temas fueron :

“San Manuel Bueno, Mártir. Una apreciación.”

“El conflicto de Gustavo Morante entre el amor y la obligación en la novela ‘De amor y de sombras’.”

“Análisis de la realidad que no se ve a través de la literatura carcelaria.”

“Estudio del doble papel de la mujer y su búsqueda de identidad en la obra 'Arráncame la vida' de Ángeles Mastretta.”

Entre los trabajos consagrados a temas históricos, sociológicos o culturales hubo también gran variedad:

“La infancia abandonada de Venezuela: un futuro incierto.”

“La inmigración de los cubanos a Florida.”

“La condición general de los indígenas en Ecuador y el cambio de las comunidades de San Pablo y de Cruz del Arenal con la introducción de un colegio y la intervención de una organización no gubernamental (ONG).”

“ La protesta artística contra Franco.”

“Eva Perón y su disyuntiva entre su pareja y su pueblo.”

Las monografías dedicadas a temas lingüísticos fueron una minoría, pero muchas de ellas resultaron excelentes. Algunos temas fueron :

“¿Cómo y por qué varía la utilización del inglés en el léxico de jóvenes de distintas clases sociales en Buenos Aires? Una comparación entre un colegio privado y un colegio de estado.”

“El español en Estados Unidos. Factores que determinan su actual importancia.”

“Buscando una explicación lógica de 'ser' y 'estar'.”

Algunos temas resultaron manifiestamente inadecuados: estudiar, por ejemplo, no sólo la historia, sino la cultura y las características lingüísticas de dos países es algo que sobrepasa con creces el ámbito de la

monografía, así como el intento de estudiar la obra completa de un autor sumamente importante y además su influencia en la literatura en español. Estos son ejemplos del tipo de tema que conviene evitar y que se podría describir como de 'artículo de enciclopedia'. Lo que se persigue con la monografía es una labor de investigación, aunque sea modesta, y no una mera exposición de información al alcance de todos. Desde este punto de vista, un estudio de un tema en una obra o grupo de obras es preferible al decir algo de todas las obras de un escritor; el estudio de algo o alguien que tuvo influencia en un poeta puede resultar apropiado y no el de todas las influencias en su obra. Lo mismo ocurre con la vida de un personaje célebre. El resumir su biografía no es una labor de investigación. El examinar un aspecto de su vida y su importancia en cierto campo puede resultar adecuado. La monografía no es una mera exposición. Es un análisis y esto se ha de tener en cuenta al elegir el tema.

Rendimiento alcanzado por los estudiantes en cada uno de los criterios

Criterio A Formulación del problema de investigación

La gran mayoría de los alumnos no tuvo problemas al formular lo que se proponía estudiar. A veces ocurrió que el título era demasiado general y no reflejaba los aspectos concretos del trabajo. Más graves, aunque en número reducido, fueron los casos en que, como se mencionó antes, el tema resultaba demasiado amplio y su formulación no era suficientemente detallada o concreta. En estos casos, el estudiante se limitó a generalidades o a meras descripciones sin rumbo aparente. También se dio el caso del alumno que vacilaba en su definición del tema, mencionando un aspecto en el título y otros en el resumen y en la introducción.

Criterio B Enfoque del problema de investigación

En la mayoría de los trabajos el enfoque resultó adecuado. Cuando no fue así el fallo se debió a veces, a una falta de documentación que reducía al alumno a generalizar o a hacer afirmaciones sin base aparente. En otros casos, se elaboró el contexto en vez del tema que se pretendía estudiar. Un error relativamente común es el incluir una biografía del autor aunque no venga a cuento. Estos alumnos dedicaron demasiadas páginas a asuntos que nada tenían que ver con sus temas: fondos históricos, biografías de autores o recopilaciones de datos poco pertinentes.

Criterio C & D Análisis/interpretación / Argumento/evaluación

El valor de la investigación está determinado en gran medida por el nivel alcanzado según estos criterios, y éste tiene mucho que ver con la claridad con que se haya concebido el tema. Aspectos esenciales son la aportación de datos relevantes junto con las notas al respecto, y una organización coherente de las ideas que permita seguir los argumentos expuestos. Fueron muchos los alumnos con la máxima puntuación en estos criterios pero otros encontraron dificultades. Algunos errores que conviene evitar son:

- caer en repeticiones constantes
- depender excesivamente de las fuentes: algunas monografías son poco más que una serie de citas sin apenas aportación personal del alumno y a veces sin documentar
- perderse en digresiones
- dedicar espacio a información poco relevante, como la citada más arriba.

Criterio E Conclusión

No suele presentar problemas tan frecuentemente como en el pasado. Pero todavía se dan casos de alumnos que no escriben una conclusión o que dan como conclusión un apartado que simplemente continúa el desarrollo del tema, incluso aportando, en algunos casos, nuevos datos. Esto pone de relieve una vez más la importancia de partir de un enfoque claro y concreto del tema puesto que

entonces es más fácil discernir a qué conclusiones se puede llegar.

Criterio F Resumen

Lo dicho anteriormente es particularmente importante para el resumen. Un concepto claro de la envergadura del estudio permite resumir el proceso e incluir las conclusiones a las que se ha llegado. Algunos alumnos omiten estas últimas en el resumen o consagran gran parte de él a explicar su motivación para la elección del tema, lo cual, aunque interesante, no forma parte del trabajo en sí. El escribir el resumen puede ayudar al alumno haciéndole consciente de hasta qué punto ha logrado coherencia en su trabajo.

Criterio G Presentación formal

Es interesante observar que relativamente pocos alumnos obtienen la puntuación máxima según este criterio. Tal vez se deba a que al final de su trabajo le queda poco tiempo al alumno para revisar la presentación. Aunque casi todos los estudiantes incluyen un índice, bibliografía y notas apropiadas, se dan con frecuencia trabajos atiborrados de erratas y faltas de ortografía o descuidos como páginas desordenadas o repetidas. A veces se incluye un anexo que no aporta gran cosa al tema. Otras veces, por el contrario, faltan textos, estadísticas, fotografías o reproducciones de cuadros que habrían sido muy útiles. Como regla general, si la monografía se basa en el estudio de poemas es necesario incluirlos como parte del texto o en el anexo. Igualmente si se trata de arte son imprescindibles fotos o reproducciones.

Criterio H Valoración global

La valoración global tiene en cuenta el cumplimiento de todos los requisitos evaluados según los criterios generales y los de la asignatura. Pero también valora la aportación personal del alumno, su intuición y su inventiva. Estas cualidades se dejan ver de manera más manifiesta cuando el alumno trata un tema que le motiva. Por eso el interés personal del alumno es muy importante a la hora de elegir un tema. Pero no está de más el repetir que, puesto que se trata de una investigación, el rigor del análisis y la coherencia de la argumentación son esenciales.

Criterios de la asignatura

Criterio J Conocimiento y comprensión de la lengua/cultura/literatura estudiada

Casi siempre la puntuación alcanzada fue buena o muy buena. Fue baja ocasionalmente cuando el tema era demasiado amplio. En temas literarios se dió el caso de que el alumno conocía poco el contexto social y histórico de las obras y esto le llevó a interpretaciones superficiales o incluso erróneas.

Criterio K Opinión sobre un tema estudiado

En general los alumnos tienen opiniones claras sobre su tema. Para algunos el problema se presenta a la hora de sustentarlas con suficientes datos. Cuando el tema es demasiado amplio algunos estudiantes se limitan a escribir un trabajo descriptivo, sin poder profundizar más.

Criterio L Comunicación y uso de un registro y estilo adecuados

Para obtener una puntuación alta según este criterio no es imprescindible un dominio impecable del lenguaje. Aunque el dominio de la lengua variaba mucho entre los alumnos, para la mayoría su capacidad de comunicación estuvo a la altura de la tarea. Sin embargo hubo bastantes casos en que las deficiencias de carácter lingüístico afectaron seriamente la comunicación. La lectura resultaba dificultosa y era evidente que el alumno no podía expresar todo lo que hubiera deseado decir. En estos casos es tarea del profesor el aconsejar al alumno para que no emprenda un trabajo que excede su capacidad.

Recomendaciones y consejos para los estudiantes futuros

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Además de las recomendaciones expresadas más arriba, es conveniente insistir en algunas de las cosas que se han de tener en cuenta como:

- el interés personal del alumno en su tema
- el concretar el tema para que sea posible tratarlo dentro de los límites de la monografía y se pueda elegir un enfoque adecuado
- el asegurarse de que el tema conlleva un trabajo analítico y no sólo expositivo
- el organizar claramente los datos y las ideas. Si el tema se presta, el hacer apartados o capítulos contribuye a comunicar claramente los argumentos
- revisar cuidadosamente la presentación y asegurarse de que incluye u índice, un resumen, una conclusión y notas si son necesarias
- incluir todo lo que pueda hacer la argumentación más clara o más convincente: estadísticas, fotografías, texto de encuestas o entrevistas, etc.

Pero lo primero que debe juzgar el profesor es si el alumno en cuestión tiene la capacidad lingüística o la madurez intelectual para tratar este tema. Por eso, desde un principio, el papel del supervisor es fundamental.

History

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Examiners reported that there were again a substantial number of superb essays, for which the candidates – and their supervisors – merit warm congratulations. On the other hand, there continue to be too many essays based on topics that are too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit (e.g., *The origins of man in North America*, *The role of women in Iran from the 1860s to the 1980s*, *The history of baseball*). There also seems to be a misapprehension in some centres that, if the essay has the word ‘history’ in the title, it is *de facto* a suitable subject for a history essay. *A history of horses* was one example, *A history of the surfboard* another. While recognising that the guidelines state, “Candidates should aim to choose a topic that is both interesting and challenging to them”, many examiners’ reports indicated a need for supervisors to be more rigorous in their advice to candidates in order to deter them from choosing inappropriate topics and titles.

Popular investigations in this session included why the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Truman’s decision to use atomic bombs, the assassination of JFK, the trial of Hiss, and the trial of the Rosenbergs. There were also more topics that reflected the local country’s history, some of which benefited considerably from the availability of local sources including personal interviews. Less welcome was the increase in over-elaborate titles.

Another trend that was particularly noticeable was the use of Internet sources as the main, and sometimes the only basis of investigations. Like any new development, the Internet is creating new problems. If candidates intend to rely wholly on Internet sources at least some attempt should be made to ascertain the academic or other credentials of the providers. Guidelines produced by schools and supervisors can help candidates to make sound use of Internet sources. One senior examiner reported, “I spent at least 40 hours tracking down sources that did not exist or were copied virtually word for word.” IBO is pursuing a series of initiatives to counter plagiarism, but the best check against plagiarism is probably careful monitoring of the progress of the essay by the supervisor.

Candidates’ performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

The better essays seemed to be based on precise questions/issues, ones where there was scope for historical discussion, and for which source material could be found. Candidates and supervisors should ensure that the research question is appropriate, and clearly and precisely stated in the early part of the essay as well as the abstract. In a great many essays this was done, but in others it was either missing, implied or poorly worded. Sadly, there were also a considerable number of essays in which the topic was researched in detail but the research question or precise purpose of the investigation was not made clear.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

The standard in this area seemed better than in previous years. Most candidates achieved level 2. More would have achieved level 3 by pursuing an analytical approach. Relatively few candidates attempted to make thorough use of differing interpretations relevant to their research question, and ideally more candidates would have made some use of primary sources and scholarly journals.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Fact finding and description too often predominated over analysis and interpretation. The main reason for not achieving a higher level on criterion C was a tendency towards descriptive narrative rather than analytical writing. In particular, candidates need to be more critical of their source materials. Sources, data and evidence need to be analysed critically, not simply described, if an essay is to attain level 4 on this criterion.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

This is an area where most candidates could improve. Only the best essays successfully argued a case and provided an evaluation where this was appropriate. A study of the descriptors for each of the four achievement levels for this criterion can aid candidates' awareness of what is required to reach levels 3 and 4 here.

Criterion E Conclusion

Only four of the 50 essays I marked used the conclusion to raise unresolved issues or new questions, though history essays tend to lend themselves to this. Nearly all the essays contained a conclusion, but relatively few provided more than a summary of their argument or narrative. For some essays it would help to label the conclusion as a separate section, even though the guide states that it may "not necessarily be in the form of a separate section". It would also be worth stressing to candidates that for achievement level 2 to be confidently attained, "unresolved questions and new questions that have emerged from the research" should be indicated.

Criterion F Abstract

Almost all the essays had an abstract; but some did not include all the required elements. Many candidates lost marks by not including all three required components or not stating them clearly. Some candidates mistakenly provided a précis of their essay rather than an abstract. Others seemed unsure what is meant by "scope of the investigation", something that supervisors could help to clarify. Practice in writing abstracts in class should help too.

Criterion G Formal presentation

The general standard was mostly good to very good, but marks were lost through carelessness in a number of cases – i.e. no contents list or page numbers. There appeared to be a further improvement in compiling bibliographies; more were in alphabetical order. On the other hand, some candidates continue to throw away marks through their failure to include a table of contents and page numbers. Two recurring faults in referencing this year were not indicating the page number for each citation, and not providing sufficient information in citations when more than one book by the same author was included in the bibliography. The use of, and referencing of, Internet sources needs constant vigilance. There was evidence of some extensive copying of material from web sites. Candidates should be aware that plagiarism is defined by the IBO as the submission for assessment of the unacknowledged work, thoughts or ideas of another person as the candidate's own (The Extended Essay, IBO, 1998, p. 3). Many essays were single-spaced and in a size 10 font or smaller making them difficult to read. It would be helpful if the font size was larger than this – and if all essays included the word count.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

This is a category where a comment or two from the supervising teacher would really help. As a practising teacher, I find it baffling that so few teachers offer any comments. Some essays showed little effort, but many demonstrated a high level of initiative and depth of understanding. Relatively few supervisors provide comments on the process candidates have undertaken. Supervisors are strongly advised to make such comments on the cover form as these can assist examiners' decision making, not least regarding personal engagement and initiative in overcoming obstacles encountered in the research. If the supervisor gives no comment, it may be very difficult to judge and reward such matters, and yet this criterion is worth over 10% of the total marks.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Historical sources

There is still a strong tendency to accept source material uncritically. This applies especially to material accessed from the Internet, and to interviews. Criterion J is intended to encourage candidates to think about the value and limitations of the source material they use, rather than simply accepting sources at face value. A disappointingly large number of essays continue to lack any explicit evaluation of sources used in the investigation, but there were indications of some encouraging developments. Source evaluation can be done in a variety of ways, including analysis in footnotes and annotated bibliographies. The best approach was where candidates integrated their evaluation successfully into their essays, a high-level skill and achievement.

Criterion K Historical knowledge and understanding

Generally candidates showed a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding. Most candidates achieved level 2 or 3, showing considerable knowledge and understanding in support of their argument. Many of the weaker essays, however, would have benefited from the inclusion of an explanation of the historical context of the chosen topic/issue.

Criterion L Selection and application of historical information/evidence

In most cases the argument was supported by relevant information/evidence. Most essays merited at least level 2 here. Fuller use of evidence and citation in support of the argument would lead to more candidates attaining level 3. Descriptive accounts generally scored less well than analytical discussions on this and several other criteria.

Criterion M Critical analysis and historical judgment

This is always a good discriminator between candidates, as it proved again this year. The best essays demonstrated excellent critical analysis and historical judgment. However, some candidates need to understand that a history essay needs detailed critical analysis of evidence, not vague generalisations. There were also signs that some candidates think a good essay should prove their point of view and not include any information that conflicts with it. Ideally, candidates should make a critical analysis of evidence both for and against different interpretations, and report their findings fully and accurately.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The main recommendations that emerged from examiners' reports were:

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- Emphasise to candidates that extended essays in history are most successfully undertaken by those who are familiar with historical discipline and techniques (i.e. aware of important conventions in historical writing, including the inappropriateness of first person narrative and emotional and unsubstantiated generalisations).
- Reinforce the importance of careful source selection for the research and providing evidence in the essay that at least the main sources used have been critically examined (by including comments on provenance, reliability, value and limitations, and position within the historical debate).
- Reinforce candidates' knowledge of a consistent method of referencing and their skill in applying it to produce accurate and concise citations, plus a list of all sources used in proper bibliographical order.
- Remind candidates of the importance of following 'good practice' in Internet usage.

There were also many comments about the importance of the supervisors' role and the huge discrepancies in hours of supervision, of which the following are representative.

"There is little new to be said on the subject of extended essay work in history. What does need re-emphasis is the vital role to be played by the supervisor."

"It was noteworthy – for a newcomer – to see the differences in time spent by supervisors, from under 30 minutes to 30 hours or more."

"Far too many candidates seem not to have received any supervision at all. In one centre, the most any candidate had received was 90 minutes supervision, and in another (large) centre, over 50% had received none or next to none."

Given these and other comments, it seems appropriate to re-emphasise that:

- Schools should ensure that each candidate is supervised and that account is taken of the time needed to supervise each candidate effectively.
- Supervisors and candidates need to be fully aware of the extended essay's requirements as set out in *The Extended Essay* (IBO, 1998).
- Candidates need to be aware that the extended essay is defined as an in-depth study that provides them with an opportunity to engage in independent research. They need to know what constitutes a balanced range of sources to use, how to compile a bibliography and footnotes/references, and that an extended essay is a formal essay so the text should reflect an academic approach/tone.
- The best check against plagiarism is careful monitoring of the progress of the essay. (If the supervisor sees only a final draft then the provenance of the work is suspect, especially where referencing is absent, inaccurate or incomplete.)

Geography

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of essays were based on suitable topics though the quality varied widely. Topic choices were, overall, more imaginative than in the past. A large number were based on local investigations, often fieldwork, making them entirely suitable to the subject.

An increasing number were, however, based entirely on secondary information. Human geography topics tended to dominate as they have done in past years. Some inappropriate essays still crept through and in these cases, it was often apparent that intelligent candidates had been misguided by their supervisor. The overall standard of essays is pleasing and some essays would do credit to university undergraduate research.

Candidates' performance against general assessment criteria

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Successful essays had well constructed and realistic research questions, while the mediocre essays did not. Each and every word of the research question should be carefully considered. Essays that examine topics such as the central place of supermarkets within a town clearly expose loose thinking by both the candidate and the supervisor at a preliminary stage and the research question cannot be carried through effectively.

Far too often the research question was stated as a hypothesis which really needed no investigation as it was so obvious. For example, there is no need to test whether the "available recreational facilities directly affect the use of individual parks" - as it is clear that they would.

There are still essays being submitted where the research question is not stated at all and the question must arise as to whether the criteria have been read by the candidate or the supervisor.

Criterion B Approach to research question

Generally the approach to the research question was appropriate, with candidates showing evidence of clearly defined objectives. This was more often the case when the research question itself was clear and focused. Some difficulty seems to have been experienced in separating the demands of fieldwork from those of the extended essay. In fact, several 'essays' were little more than extended fieldwork reports, broken into sections with lengthy descriptions of how the data was collected and pages of detailed and repetitive calculations. Whereas it could be argued that a fieldwork exercise is concerned with the technique of data collection and analysis, these skills are not of primary importance in an extended essay. What is needed is evidence of the skill of presenting a logical and coherent exposition of an argument, an idea or a concept. Data is used simply to support the argument and should not form the bulk of the essay. Another weakness that was frequently evident was the inclusion of a discussion of a model for the sake of it, when it was only marginally, if at all, appropriate. Those candidates who chose to rely heavily on secondary information or who misused the questionnaire approach tended to produce mediocre essays. Maintaining a geographical focus is essential and the study for example, of a disease without a spatial element is not a valid approach.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

It was often the case with weaker candidates that what they accepted as good data was that which supported their hypothesis. Many candidates go to great pains to prove their hypothesis is correct rather than adopting a critical and objective approach that can lead to a good discussion. Rejected hypotheses remain rare and there is a reluctance to modify old ones or formulate new ones. The depth of analysis relates closely to the depth and quality of the data collected and to the techniques used. Essays that scored poorly often attempted to analyse inadequate data or simply presented repetitive graphs that looked very pretty but tested little.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

This element in the best essays was excellent, with candidates adopting an open minded approach and showing an impressive level of intellectual sophistication and understanding, fully deserving of the largest number of marks for this criterion. The weaker essays, sadly, were characterised by unsupported, rambling, superficial and descriptive discourses, often only marginally relevant to the topic. This weakness was compounded by a great deal of repetitiveness, with the same point made over and over again at different points in the essay. Subjective or emotional discourses were commonplace in weaker essays and it is essential that supervisors steer candidates away from topics that can lead to these.

More able candidates were able to be objective about their work and often saw the fact that their results did not match their initial ideas as an opportunity for argument and evaluation, rather than a setback

Criterion E Conclusion

While all the essays included a conclusion, it was often just another summary of the content of the investigation and could equally have served as an abstract. It was a delight to read a good conclusion, with the author pulling all the threads together, reporting unresolved questions, reworking hypotheses and proposing further lines of investigation to answer new questions that had emerged.

Criterion F Abstract

Fewer candidates lost marks for this criterion - more were of the correct length and provided a clear synopsis of the essay. The only evident weakness was a tendency to include material that was irrelevant, such as musings on the nature of the topic investigated. Some candidates still treat it as an introduction to the topic and most commonly omit the scope of the essay and its findings.

Criterion G Formal presentation

It is now rare to find a poorly presented essay in terms of its overall appearance. While the immediate impression gained was of an excellent level of presentation with all the essays word processed, closer examination showed that many candidates were not quite as skilled with the computer as they believed. Map work, in particular, suffered - it was frequently fuzzy (the downloaded bitmap graphics unable to provide the clarity of detail required), inappropriate (because the right map could not be found on the Internet), and lacking essentials such as scale. The very few hand drawn maps were disappointingly casually presented. Then there were the essays at the other extreme, where the purpose of the whole exercise seemed to be regarded as an opportunity to display computing skills, with form being more important than content. There is also a reluctance to produce good hand drawn maps and include them with word processed text. There is nothing wrong with this, in fact it is to be strongly encouraged. Maps drawn by the candidate on the computer are rarely as clear or as detailed. Although many candidates now use downloaded photographs, very few use the computer to enhance them with appropriate labels or annotation, in fact good photographs, properly used remain a rarity when they can often give an essay a real sense of place.

Candidates need to make sure that any material that is downloaded or scanned is carefully referenced.

Incidences of intentional plagiarism are rare, but markers are becoming more exacting with regard to the unattributed inclusion of graphical material from the Internet.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Only essays that were very short, or entirely based on secondary data and descriptive in nature failed to score at least one point in this category. The overall impression was satisfactory and this remains disappointing in a subject area that lends itself to personal initiative and flair. Too many candidates were simply going through the motions of personal research, and personal engagement was lacking. Supervisors who do not add a personal comment on the essay at all are often doing their candidates a disservice in this criterion.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Relevance to geography; language and terminology

There were very few essays submitted where the content may have been only marginal to geography. This says as much about the all inclusiveness of the subject as about the ingenuity of some of the candidates in choosing their topics. It seems to be the case that some supervisors are not clearly aware of the lack of relevance of some of the topics submitted.

Criterion K Appropriate sources of geographical information

As in the past, the strongest essays using a wide variety of sources, always being relevant to the research topic and often showing considerable ingenuity in obtaining it, while the weaker candidates rarely moved beyond a reference to a standard geography text or information gleaned from a single interview. There were some very thin bibliographies in evidence. More and more candidates seem to be relying wholly on the Internet rather than on a range of varied sources. A major problem remains in that so few candidates question the value or reliability of the data they have collected.

Criterion L Understanding and application of relevant geographical issues

For most of the candidates this criterion provided no difficulty - the essays showed that they had a clear understanding of the relevant concepts and issues. However, there were a small handful of candidates who felt that somehow or other a 'geographical concept' or a 'geographical theory' had to be included whether relevant or not. Urban models seem to be the most inappropriately used of all and it remains questionable as to why a candidate would want to use a model developed in the USA over half a century ago as the basis for comparison with an emerging township in an African primate city. In the best essays, the understanding of these concepts and theories emerged as a natural part of the development of the argument and not as an 'add-on' or an unrealistic comparison.

Criterion M Methods of analysis, interpretation and evaluation

The majority of essays adopted an analytical approach, using graphical and statistical techniques to quantify trends and identify relationships. If there is a criticism to be made in this area, it is the lack of ingenuity in choosing which analytical technique to use. Many candidates seemed content with simple graphing (because this can be easily done with a spreadsheet program?) rather than using more advanced methods of statistical analysis. Very few candidates evaluated the appropriateness of the methods they used. Sampling techniques were poorly understood in general and are much under used in geographical essays.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

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- It is not necessary for an extended essay to have to rely totally on primary data. This is a requirement for fieldwork only. Secondary data is completely acceptable, but note should be taken that analysis of this data has to be done by the candidate.
- Candidates should not hide away maps and other vital information in the appendices.
- Essays should not have each page encased in a plastic envelope.
- Candidates should be encouraged to consider using a variety of analytical techniques, both statistical and graphical, to help in the analysis of their data. Far too often only one type of graph is employed and often it is not the most appropriate type.
- Candidates should be encouraged to include more hand drawn maps and diagrams.
- Candidates should be encouraged not to rely entirely upon Internet resources.
- Candidates should be encouraged to evaluate their data in terms of its appropriateness and reliability.
- Supervisors should be encouraged to add a personal comment with regard to the involvement of the candidate and the personal initiative shown.
- Supervisors should spend a considerable time making sure that the candidate has a well formulated research question with (if relevant) a well designed hypothesis providing at least a good platform for personal research.

Economics

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As always, there was a wide range of topics addressed. Well-supervised candidates who obviously followed the assessment criteria closely inevitably did well. It was rather alarming to see that there were a large number of candidates whose essays suggested that they had never even seen the criteria.

Schools/supervisors seriously penalise their candidates by not emphasising the vital importance of close attention to the assessment criteria. Better essays applied a specific economic theory to a case study (e.g. *Determining the price at which revenue maximisation is achieved for brownies during break time in my school*).

Macroeconomic topics with a focus on the candidates' home countries continue to be the least well-handled topics. They tend to be far too broad, descriptive and often contain inadequate evidence. (e.g. *Can X once again recover from economic downfall and become one of the world's economic leaders once again?*).

There is still a tendency for candidates to select research questions that are much too wide and this causes them to significantly limit the marks available to them (e.g. *An Inquiry into the Nature of Monopolies and Monopolistic Competition*).

Candidate performance against each criterion.

General Criteria

Criterion A Research question

As extended essay reports always say, the choice of a suitable research question is the key to a successful extended essay and too often, an unsuitable question is the main reason why candidates do not do particularly well. In the very common cases where the candidates do not even actually ask a question, the result is inevitably a descriptive, narrative piece of writing with little analysis. The guidelines clearly state that a question must be asked (or a thesis formulated) yet there were a significant number of cases where this was not done.

A number of candidates continue to seem to be unaware of the fact that it is necessary to state the research question on the title page of the essay and/or in the early part of the essay. They should be advised to do both and this is a key way to gain points on this criteria. It has been recommended in the past that they put the question in bold print in the introduction and that the title be stated as a question on the title page. As a teaching point, insisting that candidates do this is a fine way to ensure that they have identified a specific question.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Where the research question was clear and precisely-stated, the candidates were largely successful in collecting the appropriate information and addressing the correct issues. A question too broad in nature inevitably led to a descriptive approach with much irrelevant material.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

In most cases, some analysis was carried out and in several it was at a competent level. Where candidates provided a rather superficial analysis (therefore, analysis was carried out but 'not always thoroughly'), they usually scored two on this criterion. This criterion was better handled by those who carried out

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independent research. Descriptive, narrative essays straying into other social sciences limited candidates' ability to score well here. Many candidates were limited to two marks by virtue of selecting an inappropriate research question.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

This tends to be the weakest area. A very large number of candidates tended to provide a largely subjective evaluation of their material, without sufficient substantiation of the material. There was often a tendency to present the data and consider that it was self-explanatory, rather than stating how, exactly, the data could be applied to help answer the research question. Some candidates formed arguments based on economic theory without sufficient relevant data. Again, this criterion was better-handled by those who carried out independent research and who consistently questioned the validity of the data which they generated. As in 'C' above, candidates who selected an unsuitable question, or had no question at all, fared badly on this criterion as they were unable to establish a meaningful argument.

Criterion E Conclusion

Most candidates were able to provide some sort of conclusion which was consistent with the body of the essay. In weaker essays it was unclear as to where the conclusion began and all too often, new information was introduced that should have been presented in the main body of the essay. A good conclusion needs to be succinct, based on the work carried out in the body of the essay and, very importantly, needs to take note of any unanswered questions and any new questions which have arisen. It should be straightforward to do well on this criterion.

Criterion F Abstract

It should be straightforward to do well on this criterion as well. However, it is frustrating to observe the large number of candidates who failed to take note of the requirements here. In order to get the full two marks, they simply need to state clearly the research question, explain the scope of the investigation and state the conclusions reached, within a 300-word limit.

Criterion G Formal Presentation

There is evidence of very high levels of computer proficiency, and the majority of essays are very well presented. Almost all candidates provided a contents page, pages were usually numbered, bibliographies were usually included and there was some awareness that some information must be either 'footnoted' or 'end noted'. However, much more attention needs to be given to this question of end notes/footnotes as I found, as I have in the past, that there are vast amounts of simply unreferenced material. There seems to be a perception that only quotations or straight definitions need to be noted.

Many candidates tacked on unexplained appendices, or put graphs at the end of the essay rather than integrating them with the text.

To score well on this criterion, supervisors and candidates should carefully consult the general descriptor and use it as a check list.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

To a large extent, examiners rely on comments from supervisors to help them to determine a score here. Sadly, there were still a vast number of essays submitted with no comment from supervisors.

Subject Specific Criteria

Although it should be obvious, essays based on a topic which is not an economics concept scored very

badly on the following criteria. A suitable topic, framed as a sensible question, is likely to do well here.

Criterion J Appropriate economic information

Where candidates attempted to gather primary information to test an economic theory, they scored very highly. Weaker essays tended to rely almost entirely on secondary information and the weakest clearly made little to no use of economic resources

Criterion K Using the language of economics

There is still a tendency for candidates to use far too little economic terminology and, where they do use it, to fail to define the terms accurately. It should be very easy to provide exact definitions. Sadly, candidates tend to virtually throw away available marks by not providing definitions.

Criterion L Understanding the relevant economic concepts

In most cases, candidates were able to identify the key concepts related to their topic. In some cases, some rather obvious connections were not drawn, which should have been made in order to fully answer the research question.

Criterion M Use of relevant economic theory

The best-performing candidates identified and explained the relevant theory and linked it successfully to the data which they collected. In the middle range, candidates identified the appropriate theory but were unsuccessful in weaving it into the body of their text. Such candidates devoted too much of the essay to a descriptive exposition of a particular body of standard economic theory and tended to stray too far from their own specific question.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Much more attention needs to be paid to the General Guidelines/Assessment Criteria. For each criterion, the requirements are very clear. Candidates might be encouraged to mark their own essays in light of the criteria after a first draft, in order to remedy areas where there is an apparent weakness. Simply writing a standard essay or research report is not sufficient. It is absolutely essential that all candidates and supervisors are familiar with the assessment criteria.

Give very careful guidance to candidates on their choice of research question. Whilst it is difficult to do badly on a good question, a poor question will inevitably lead to a poor result - even for a highly able candidate! Ideally, the topic/question should allow for a 'testing' of a basic economic principle, to see if the theory works in the 'real-world' as predicted by a model.

Keep it fairly simple. I would even go as far as to say don't let the candidate attempt to test a theory not covered in the IB economics syllabus as they almost inevitably end up doing something too problematic. This should also prevent candidates from writing about a non-economic topic.

Encourage candidates to try to include and use diagrams wherever possible. Sometimes graphs would be included, but not adequately explained or integrated into the body of the text. When diagrams are used the labels on the axes should reflect the specific real-world variables being used, rather than the generic textbook labels.

As always, try to get the candidates to tackle a question in which they have a genuine interest. This leads to much more innovative and thorough pieces of work.

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Stress the importance of avoiding filling up the pages with standard textbook theories

Encourage candidates to refer back to the research question at regular intervals, as they proceed through their essay, in order to avoid going away from the topic. Suggest to them that they frequently ask themselves the question, “Am I answering the actual research question that I stated in the early part of the essay ?”

It is vital that you stress to your candidates that it has become easier to detect plagiarism using an Internet search engine (e.g. Google). All material used from outside sources **MUST** be footnoted or end-noted, even if a direct quotation has not been used.

Philosophy

Range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of the work met extended essays requirements. In fact, many proved to be a pleasure to read by the brilliance of the discussion.

Submitted essays can be placed into different levels, from excellent performance, over satisfactory, to clearly less than satisfactory or even very poor. Almost all essays submitted in English are to be included into the excellent level. The Spanish sample is divided into the three levels. Positive characteristics are mainly to be found in the higher levels, while negative only in the lower ones. In general, the excellent level showed a complete accomplishment of expected objectives for extended essays in philosophy.

In the lower performance levels the main observed problems were:

(a) Topics that are too broad to allow any sensible discussion in an exercise of this length: a candidate chose to compare religion and scientific beliefs. Predictably, one read a series of common places, descriptions and generalities. If the candidate had been advised to narrow the topic and compare one aspect or examine one specific problem, the essay would have likely been interesting.

b) candidates who wrote comparative essays often produced some good responses, as did those who took a particular social issue and placed its understanding within a philosophical framework. The main fault noted with this category was the lack of a reasoned justification given for their judgments. A good summary was followed by a series of assertions and opinions which constituted the candidate's analysis of the arguments.

(c) Some totally inappropriate approaches. A candidate described his task: "In the case of the philosophers, Socrates, Aristotle etc. I decided to access the Internet, were I could find lots of biographies of the respective philosophers."

Candidates performance against each criteria

Candidates who started by proposing a valid essay question usually managed to do a decent job of discussing their topic. Those who fail at the start ended up more often than not by not offering an argument, but simply exposing in a descriptive narration a series of theories. This difficulty with engaging candidates in doing philosophy is not new. We have encountered it in previous years. However, we have found comfort in the fact that a number of candidates admirably acquitted themselves of the task. According to the English sample, following comments mainly apply to the higher levels of achievement.

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

There were very good results in this criteria. Well focused and succinct questions produced very good essays. Questions that were the focus of investigation were open to sustained philosophical analysis. They were also philosophically relevant and in some cases sophisticated.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Approaches were very adequate. The collection of relevant material was good. There were some very good bibliographies.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Generally fair results. Well reasoned and justifiable interpretations were given, and links to other concepts were made. In most cases relevant information was provided.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Arguments were well developed, sustained and convincing. In general, they properly addressed the research question. Evaluations were appropriate and well substantiated.

Criterion E Conclusion

Very satisfactory results here. All candidates made an attempt at a conclusion based on their arguments. However, some candidates merely restated the aims and summaries of their essays without identifying areas for further investigation or making some overall evaluative statements.

Criterion F Abstract

Fair results overall. Almost all candidates were fully aware of the function of an abstract.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Most candidates presented their essays well. Overall, most were quite presentable and well referenced. A significant group of them were excellent in this respect.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

In most cases the candidates demonstrated personal engagement. Some also showed a high degree of initiative too. A significant number of essays presented the expected qualities such as depth of understanding, insight and inventiveness.

Subject assessment criteria

Performance on the subject assessment criteria was slightly weaker than performance on the general assessment criteria.

Criterion J Basic philosophical issues arising out of the research question and philosophical insight

Very good results in this criteria. Most essays identified relevant philosophical issues and referred to the issues with correct terminology. Many candidates displayed adequate philosophical engagement with the issues that arose from their topics.

Criterion K Themes, basic concepts and arguments

Most candidates gave a good account of the concepts and arguments. Some were very sophisticated. A significant number of candidates showed a detailed critical and philosophical analysis of themes, and some of them in-depth and extensive treatment. Only few candidates anticipated rebuttal anticipating counter-arguments.

Criterion L Personal engagement with the issue/s and awareness of the implications of personal view/s

There was a high degree of personal engagement in nearly all essays. In many cases that was matched by a critical awareness of the implications of personal views. Candidates tended to have personal views on the issues at hand and often took a personal stand, in many cases this was supported by effective rational arguments.

Criterion M Language and style

The general standard was fairly high. Overall, the essays were very readable. Some essays displayed a sophisticated terminology and a refined use of it.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

The majority of the work submitted met extended essays requirements. Nonetheless, it could be useful to keep in mind following recommendations, pointed out by examiners for this and previous sessions:

- The main recommendation is to continue to stress that a philosophical question is explicitly required by the supervisor prior to writing the essay. Without a relevant and fertile question, philosophical essays of any merit are difficult to produce. Arguments are easier to form and evaluations are clearer within a framework of a correctly formulated question. This does assume that the supervisor is aware of the differences between philosophical and other types of questions, and this is not always possible. Many candidates suffered because of this inability to draw distinctions between various types of questions. Candidates should be clear on what constitutes a philosophical approach to a topic; it goes beyond description and requires analysis and evaluation of arguments.
- Admittedly, the supervisor does not decide the research question, but one would expect that a closer knowledge of the criteria would suggest that the supervisor would recognise an extended essay that falls outside of philosophy and warns the candidate.
- Whilst not wanting to stifle candidate initiative and enthusiasm, some assessors recommend that candidates who have no prior experience in philosophy be advised not to attempt writing an extended essay in this subject. The essays where this was mentioned tended to have topics either too broad or not philosophically relevant. Practise and familiarity with philosophical thought, language and questions is invaluable. Of course, the final decision should be left with the candidate.
- Directly addressed to supervisors, some assessors suggested:
 - a) Insist on the importance of narrowing down the focus of the investigation as much as possible and state it in a concise and sharply defined question or hypothesis. This will avoid a number of faults in the approach to the essay.
 - b) Give strict guidelines for the format of the abstract and explain its function. Make a clear distinction between the abstract and the introduction.
 - c) Draw attention to the disadvantages of a descriptive approach to the topic. Emphasise the importance of personal critical thinking.
 - d) In all cases the general and subject guidelines should be read carefully by the candidates and taken into account when producing the final work. Supervisors should, as a matter of course, give candidates the marking criteria relevant to their discipline.

Finally, we would like to felicitate candidates for the excellent work, that most of them displayed this session.

Psychology

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As in previous examination sessions, some centres submitted extended essays that clearly addressed the assessment criteria and had obviously provided candidates with a worthwhile learning experience. Unfortunately, these were relatively few in number for the May 2002 examination session, and many of the following examiner comments are necessarily those expressed in previous reports.

A wide range of extended essay titles was submitted, with a number focusing on eating disorders, abnormal behaviours or criminal behaviours, topics which can be made relevant to the subject specific criteria although with difficulty, given the word limit. Candidates are reminded yet again that such topics are inappropriate for an assignment of this nature, particularly when involvement in their selected topic is personal. In such cases, the objectivity required of an academic essay is usually missing, with consequent detrimental results.

In choosing a topic candidates may feel attracted to such issues as deviance, drug-taking, dietary disorders, psychiatric illness and paranormal phenomena. It must be emphasised that topics such as these pose challenging problems to the methods and enquiries of experienced psychologists. Candidates should avoid producing a superficial or personal account of these kinds of issues.

Those essays attracting high marks had in common a well-focused and clearly operationalised research question with appropriate and insightful elaboration of the topic. Thorough analysis and evaluation, an awareness of possible bias and limitations of theories and research, and the effective use of psychological material to substantiate assertions characterised such work.

The majority of examiners commented on the varying quality of extended essays, identifying the lack of a suitable research question as a major problem in poorer work. Topics which were vague and too broad tended to lack focus and structure, making achievement of assessment criteria problematic. The research question reflects candidate awareness of the main purpose of the extended essay, and when posed as an issue for debate leads to the required structure, analysis and evaluation. Too often candidates merely produced a one-sided overview of material taken from sources supporting a research statement, omitting the analysis and evaluation necessary to arrive at an informed conclusion.

Despite advice in the guidelines against the submission of extended essays based on empirical/experimental work, a number of candidates presented material more appropriate for internal assessment. Such work largely failed to meet the requirements of the assessment criteria thus clearly disadvantaging candidates.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

As stated in the general guidelines, the general assessment criteria focus on 'the way in which information is handled, the level of analysis and the quality of argument' produced in an essay. Those meriting high marks demonstrated a thorough grasp of the material under consideration, frequently applying the level of analysis and evaluation seen in undergraduate research, and offering a well-constructed argument culminating in a clearly substantiated conclusion. Such work was a joy to read.

Essays attracting fewer marks tended to be those omitting or paying little attention to the analysis and evaluation assessed in criteria C and D, often the result of a weak research question, (A) and consequent inappropriate approach, (B). Where the research question was not problem focused, candidates produced a narrative essay, many having difficulty in going beyond a basic account of relevant information and failing to achieve the effective analysis and evaluation which leads to an informed conclusion. In addition, important opportunities to evaluate relevant material in terms of ethical, cultural, methodological and gender issues were often neglected.

Criterion G, formal presentation, was adequately addressed on the whole. However, many candidates appeared to have difficulty in correct citation format and Reference section compilation. Of concern is the growing misuse of paraphrasing, apparent in the contrast between the style of a candidate in the abstract and the rather authoritative style adopted in the body of an essay. Paraphrased material must have author references if it is not to be viewed as plagiarism, for which clear penalties will be incurred.

Subject Assessment Criteria

Criteria J, K, L and M are concerned with candidate treatment of the chosen topic within the context of the discipline of psychology.

Criterion J Relevance to the discipline of psychology

Too often issues were not made explicit or clearly addressed. Many essays identified issues central to psychology but their lack of development meant only [1 mark] could be awarded. Unfortunately, many candidates selected topics of current interest where relevant substantial psychological literature is not readily available.

Criterion K Use of technical terms and methods

This criterion clearly distinguished those candidates who had studied psychology from those who had not done so. Competent use of psychological terms and methods was seen in some essays yet too many demonstrated inappropriate use, suggesting only a rudimentary grasp of psychological concepts and methods. For example, candidates are still inappropriately using the term 'prove', and confusing experimental and non-experimental research methods, with consequent misunderstanding of the differences between correlational and experimental findings.

Criterion L Use of psychological resources

The best work made effective use of primary resources from scientific journals and magazines. Many candidates cited studies from secondary sources, an acceptable but not ideal practice often resulting in a lack of detailed information and consequent reduction in opportunity for analysis and evaluation. In many cases candidates had not accurately and thoroughly cited references within the body of the essay, with all the associated plagiarism implications. A detailed references page is preferable to a general bibliography. Over reliance on use of Internet sources, often inadequately referenced, was commented on by many examiners. As in use of material from texts and journal articles, the reader should be able to identify the source of information. Too often it appears candidates failed to question the authenticity of Internet sourced information.

Criterion M Incorporation of theoretical concepts

Often candidates were able to identify theoretical concepts or findings but few were able to develop them in their essays, or to evaluate them, acknowledging the limitations of the research.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

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As recommended in previous reports, candidates need to be fully aware of both the general and the subject specific criteria at the outset of the project. Guidance in topic selection, in literature research, and in essay planning and writing are all required if candidates are to produce work that will meet the assessment criteria requirements. Candidates should be familiar with the Extended Essay Guide, and may also benefit from being able to briefly discuss the contents of this report with their supervisor. Clearly, this level of involvement cannot be accomplished in less than the 2 or 3 hours supervision recommended in the Extended Essay Guide.

Choice of topic is obviously of paramount importance, with a sharply focused research question required, one that examines a suitable topic (see Section A of this report). Supervisors are responsible for discouraging both empirically based work and that of exploring an inappropriate topic, however superficially attractive it may seem to the candidate.

Future candidates are strongly advised to avoid topics for which published research is scant and difficult to obtain. A preliminary literature search is advised, at the planning stage, with supervisors encouraging critical use of Internet resources. Sound psychological theory/research findings should underpin an extended essay in the discipline of psychology.

Finally, where candidate topic choice emerges from material covered during course presentation, more focused and appropriate essays are generally written. This is because the research question is likely to be generated from within a clearly understood theoretical framework, and candidate enthusiasm for the topic should sustain the interest level required for successful completion of a project of this nature.

Social and Cultural Anthropology

Range and suitability of the work submitted

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, this report begins with the same remark as all reports submitted in recent years. While examiners read many fine extended essays in this session, a disproportionate number of essays were written with little or no attention paid to the methods, goals, and theoretical apparatus of Social and Cultural Anthropology. Numerous candidates continue to embark on writing extended essays in the subject without having any idea of what Anthropology is, and without guidance from knowledgeable supervisors. Once again, all examiners agree unanimously that supervisors should steer candidates away from submitting extended essays in the subject unless the candidates, and the supervisors themselves, have formal training in the subject, or at least more than a passing acquaintance with the subject. Candidate and supervisors who are unsure of what this might entail should immediately consult the IBO Social and Cultural Anthropology Guide (2000), which provides an outline of the underlying principles and concepts of the discipline.

A related problem is a tendency seen in some essays to take on very large problems that inevitably lead to sweeping claims and assertions and to a disregard for local context and for the close attention to detailed case-study materials central to any anthropological approach. While it is apparent that many candidates often undertake substantial research for their essays, the lack of specific anthropological knowledge and understanding prevents them from focusing their presentation and analysis more effectively, thereby undermining the overall level of achievement.

As in previous sessions, both the range of topics and the degree of suitability varied widely. At the high end figure extended essays focused on highly appropriate topics supported by a sophisticated and thorough acquaintance with the relevant anthropological literature, demonstrating that candidates at this level are capable of producing work of stunning quality, sometimes of publishable calibre.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Research question

Even though most candidates present a potentially acceptable research question, few essays receive full credit here for one reason or the other. For instance, some pose value-laden questions (“*Is the use of performance-enhancing drugs a moral act?*”) or raise irresolvable qualitative issues (“*Can love last a lifetime?*”) or tackle questions that are simply too vast and unfocused (“*Changes in adolescent culture during the Vietnam War*”). Others might produce a focused question that appears in the title of the Extended Essay and/or in the abstract, but not in the essay itself. Still others present a topical area to describe, rather than a researchable question.

Criterion B Approaches

Candidates with little understanding of Social and Cultural Anthropology are at a disadvantage here. Candidates tend to examine topics in very general terms, and in some cases to rely extensively on statistical or anecdotal materials rather than focus on detailed case studies that they carefully examine in context. Even when candidates appear to have carried out appropriate field research of their own, they are often unable to link their own work with the arguments they had chosen to espouse, a fundamental methodological problem.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

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Some shortcomings here reflect the problem mentioned under criterion B above. Many essays are primarily descriptive, with little analysis, or feature “imported” analyses without clear relevance to the particular research question. Extended essays that score well on this criterion invariably also score well on criteria A, B and D.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Where essays are well-researched and clearly organised, argument and evaluation are more satisfactory and effectively substantiated, with less of a tendency to the kinds of vague claims and general assertions that characterise other presentations. In some cases there is little evidence of any argument at all. The effectiveness of the argument and/or evaluation is highly dependent on the success in defining a research question.

Criterion E Conclusion

Most essays provide some kind of a conclusion, but many fail to incorporate an effective summary of the main points of the essay, and only the best essays include any consideration of future research possibilities.

Criterion F Abstract

Abstracts are often not well-focused in terms of presenting the aims, processes and conclusions of the research undertaken. A good many candidates introduce materials and/or opinions that are not appropriate or that should be included in the body of the essay. Some candidates seem to see the abstract as a preamble explaining the reasons for their interest in the topic of the essay.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Candidates generally score well on this criterion. Almost all essays are word-processed, and include the abstract, table of contents and bibliography, although tables of contents in poorer essays can be bare-bone. Candidates at some schools may need to be reminded of the importance of sticking to the 4,000 words limit.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Some essays demonstrate initiative, strong personal engagement and considerable insight, as well as thorough and sustained research and thought. Some seem to have provided at least the opportunity for some learning on an issue of concern to the candidates. Others remain routine at best, and appear to have been done with rather little concern or effort. This criterion continues to be useful in rewarding candidates who have created interesting and worthwhile research problems, but who lack the background and/or resources to do their ideas full justice. Unfortunately, some essays score zero or one point because candidates chose inappropriate or banal topics, demonstrate little or no anthropological insight, or submit texts that are fatally marred by subjective judgements.

Criterion J & K Evidence of anthropological reading & Concepts and theory

Essays submitted by candidates with little background in the subject fare expectedly badly here. Too many essays make scant use of anthropological readings, or none at all. Several essays begin by addressing anthropology, citing general sources in superficial ways, and then make little or no further use of anthropological concepts. Often this consists in providing a simplistic definition of culture that is never again referred to in the essay. Candidates make increasing use of the Internet for their research. This trend is both understandable and commendable, although it does raise problems, broached in Section C below.

Criterion L Methodology

This criterion is perhaps the least well served, along with Criterion K. Candidates very consistently reflect poor critical perspectives on the concepts and theory that they utilise, as well as on their own data and analyses.

Criterion M Underlying patterns and causes

Despite a general lack of anthropological knowledge or evidence of relevant anthropological reading, some candidates are at least able to identify larger patterns in terms of their research materials, though few dealt effectively with causes.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The central recommendation for a successful extended essay in Social and Cultural Anthropology must be that supervisors ensure that their candidates are familiar with the subject specific criteria and undertake appropriate reading in anthropology, to be able to frame their approach, research and analysis at the very least in general anthropological terms. In the same way that candidates with no background in physics would not endeavour to write an extended essay in physics, candidates with no background in anthropology must not attempt to submit an extended essay in Social and Cultural Anthropology. The basic tenets of the subject can be acquired in no less time and with no less effort than the basic tenets of any subject, and certainly not in the time allotted to the writing of an extended essay. It is the duty of supervisors' to steer candidates away from submitting their extended essays as a Social and Cultural Anthropology essay unless both the candidate and the supervisor are well-versed in the subject. This is true even if the topic of the essay appears to fall within the purview of anthropology as popularly understood.

Candidates might benefit from some explicit training in the opportunities and dangers that the Internet offers. The opportunities consist in the wealth of anthropological bibliographic databases that are available on the Internet, such as the Anthropological Index of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Anthropological Literature of Harvard University, as well as more specialised sources such as Bibliografía Mesoamericana. A number of journals in the disciplines are now also available on-line, including such prominent journals as *Current Anthropology* and the *Annual Review of Anthropology* (volumes five years and older). Some essays bear on topics about which important articles and books have been written in the recent past, but the candidates appear to have been unable to locate these works, which would have improved their research.

The dangers of the Internet are not particular to Social and Cultural Anthropology: a great deal of information available on the Internet is highly suspect, and less-than-discriminating users are often unable to pick up on the subtle signs of relative legitimacy and authority embedded in Internet sites. Supervisors and school may consider training their candidates formally in how to recognise trustworthy information on the Internet and distinguish it from highly partisan, amateurish or simply erroneous material. Such material can of course lend itself to potentially useful analysis, but this task presumes that one approaches the Internet ethnographically.

Supervisors are encouraged to continue making sure that candidates understand the purpose and scope of an abstract, are familiar with the presentation and organisational requirements, and to clarify and focus both the research question itself and the presentation and organisation of their materials.

Business and Management

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Over the years the standard of extended essays has slowly improved. The presentation of most essays is now extremely professional. The work submitted this year was generally acceptable and appropriate. The traditional subjects were dealt with essentially the same as last year. It covered a wide variety of topics with 'softer' subjects like marketing and organization predominating over 'harder' ones such as finance.

There is, however, one major problem, the research question. Some research questions were generic with insufficient focus or clarity and some were too simple. The essay is marked against clear criteria which are available to candidates and supervisors before the essay is written. Many marks were lost due to the failure to properly address these criteria.

A research question which is historical rather than dealing with a current issue will immediately lose marks against several criteria. In most cases, the research focus could be adapted to provide a future focus. For example, a question which looks at the success of a marketing approach could be altered to ask how the lessons of the past could be used to plan or improve future activities. This would allow more marks to be awarded against the decision-making criteria.

The fact that all candidates in some centers have similar research descriptive titles suggests that the supervisors themselves may not be paying sufficient attention to the marking criteria.

Some extended essays this year were extremely bulky as a result of the appendices. Appendices should not be used to provide new or additional information, but should be there to reinforce information that is used in the main text. Appendices should be referred to and explained in the main text.

Candidates often concentrated on theory rather than applying it to the actual case studies and some found it easy to be dragged off on a tangent. This may especially be the case if they are not studying Business and Management.

There were, however, some excellent analyses. There was a general improvement in articulation of question, analysis, holistic judgment and conclusions. There were some problems with ability to argue, evaluate and formulate problems. The lack of referencing and an over-reliance on non-academic Internet sources was also a cause for concern.

Candidates performance against each criterion

General Assessment Criteria

Criterion A The Research Question

Research questions which were in the past tense were common and led to many descriptive essays with little argument or critical awareness. Often the title seemed to confirm the topic rather than challenge or evaluate.

Criterion B Approach

Well focused research questions usually led to appropriate research procedures and techniques.

Criterion C Analysis & Interpretation

Candidates performed competently against this criterion. Thorough primary and secondary research was evident in the majority of essays. Some business concepts were not applied to particular cases. The relationship between PEST and SWOT was rarely commented upon.

Criterion D Argument & Evaluation

Candidates generally performed well against this criterion. It was influenced by the research question so evaluation was easier and more effective if candidates looked into the future by reviewing past performance. Little consideration was given to the effects of organizational change.

Criterion E Conclusion

This section was generally well presented with most candidates providing detailed and relevant conclusions.

Criterion F Abstract

The abstract proved problematic for many candidates. It occasionally lacked the essential prerequisites of research, scope and conclusion which are so clear. The word count, which is also clear, was often exceeded. It was common for candidates to provide a general focus rather than to state the exact research question as is required.

Criterion G Formal Presentation

This area has shown significant improvement over the years but there are still problems with referencing in the bibliography and with footnotes. Some essays exceeded 4000 words; again this can be easily avoided.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Theoretical aspects of organizational activity in relation to an actual case study, or studies

Most candidates were good at identifying relevant business theory. Some of the discussion was excellent.

Criterion K Formulation of the problem/s to be studied in a decision-making framework

If the research question encouraged a descriptive or historical approach, then few marks were earned for this criteria. Candidates need to be clearer about the decision making environment and its interaction with the question

Criterion L Effects of change on organizational activities

Many marks were missed here. Few candidates made the decision to refer to change in an overt manner. It is clear that some centres advise their candidates to have a subsection looking specifically at change issues.

Criterion M Selection and application of appropriate analytical tools and/or statistical techniques

A few centres did not address this criterion at all. It is more difficult to earn reward for statistical analysis in essays on motivation, but the questionnaire provides a relevant vehicle for this.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

- Supervisors should provide a greater degree of supervision.
- Supervisors should warn candidates about poor research questions.

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- Candidates should be encouraged to identify research questions looking into the future rather than reporting or analyzing past operations.
- Candidates should be discouraged from research questions on appraisal of multi-million dollar projects.
- Candidates could focus on smaller organizations and on a current problem, not a resolved one.
- Candidates should base their efforts on an organization that will provide information.
- Candidates should pay attention to referencing, critical thinking and writing skills.
- Supervisors should make candidates thoroughly aware of criteria
- Supervisors should insist that candidates mark their own work against the marking criteria.
- Candidates should check spelling and factual errors.
- Candidates should avoid using long bullet pointed lists.
- Candidates should use word counts at all times.

History of the Islamic World

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of topics chosen was very wide. Over half of the essays were written on topics suitable for the *History of the Islamic World* guidelines. The historical period for such essays varied considerably, ranging from the beginning of Islam until the Taliban.

Unfortunately, there were still essays which, despite my comments in earlier years, focussed on religio-legal topics which degenerate into polemic and piety and which do not lend themselves to proper historical examination and analysis. Inappropriate subjects included *Human rights in Islam* and *Does Islam oppress women?*. Candidates and teachers should be more aware that such topics are not historical ones.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Most candidates made it clear early on in the essay what the research question was. Some, however, needed to signpost it more explicitly.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

This was generally appropriate, although sometimes candidates lacked critical skills.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Some essays did not rise above the level of mere description or narrative. Other displayed competent analytical skills. The sources were not always mentioned.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

This aspect of the essays was sometimes problematic, partly because of the inappropriate choice of essay topic and because such a topic produced highly subjective statements, unsupported by evidence.

Criterion E Conclusion

Some essays had no conclusion at all. Others did not really produce conclusions which were consistent with the points made in the main body of the essay. The conclusion should not be a mere repetition of the introduction.

Criterion F Abstract

Nearly all the essays had an abstract but they were not always clearly expressed, reflecting the scope of the investigation and conclusion.

Criterion G Formal presentation

The students generally did very well in presenting their work in an appropriate way. Some of them had gone to great trouble to produce essays which looked really good. Some essays lacked adequate footnotes. I was, however, shocked that the student who wrote an essay on *Islamic architecture in India* did not include a single drawing or picture of the buildings under

discussion.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

A good number of the candidates scored quite well here, usually because of their obvious interest and enthusiasm. But their work was not of the highest calibre.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Historical sources

Too few candidates understood the need to view the sources critically and to be aware of their inherent bias. They were generally uncritical.

Criterion H Historical knowledge and understanding

The level of historical knowledge and understanding was quite good generally; with some candidates it was excellent.

Criterion L Selection and application of historical information/evidence

A good number of the candidates had difficulty understanding the need to provide illustrative examples to substantiate the general points they made. Generalisations are not sufficient in themselves.

Criterion M Critical analysis and historical judgment

Some candidates performed very well in this respect but others still did not seem to understand the need to analyse and evaluate. Of course, those who had chosen ideological topics had problems here.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

- Choose a small topic, as suggested in the HIW handbook.
- Show the candidates the value of using primary sources, especially for appropriate quotations to enliven the essay.
- Avoid topics that are clearly religious and do not lend themselves to a historical approach.
- Make sure that the students all have abstracts and conclusions in their essays.

This year there was an encouraging number of extended essays in HIW. I hope that trend will continue.

Information Technology in a Global Society

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The ITGS extended essays included the widest range of topics which have ever been submitted. Specific topics for the extended essay were selected from areas such as smart houses, music distribution and MP3, exposition of children to the Internet, Internet security, artificial intelligence, intelligent transportation systems, DNA fingerprinting, and terrorism. The most successful extended essays were characterised by the following:

- a well stated and specific research question in the introduction to the extended essay including an overview or the scope of the entire extended essay
- the research question is one in which the candidate has a genuine interest evidence of extensive primary research (at least 15 bibliographic sources cited from a variety of primary and secondary sources)
- evidence of personal involvement and interest of the candidate in the topic which also included various methods for primary research and investigation
- the general criteria and especially the ITGS subject specific criteria (social and ethical issues) were addressed well and were used as the general framework for the development of the paper
- excellent presentation style and desktop published layout was used
- all diagrams and other visual evidence was carefully documented and referred to within the body of the text
- the processes used in collecting primary data were completely described in the extended essay and the relevant evidence was included in the abstract (for example, responses from questionnaires, raw data from surveys, transcripts of interviews and other supportive material)
- the abstract was a synopsis (compressed version) of the entire extended essay into 300 words.

However, there were always a few extended essay which are submitted which were not appropriate to ITGS. Research areas which fall into this pitfall tend to focus on only the technological aspects of a topic (i.e. programming languages, Pentium processors, fibre optic cables) or fall clearly in another subject area (i.e. extended essays which were better suited to Computer Science, Geography, Biology and Economics). However, in all cases these papers are marked as ITGS extended essays. These candidates should have received better guidance in which subject area to submit their extended essay.

ITGS extended essays were critically scrutinised for plagiarism. Instances where any possible evidence of plagiarism occurred was brought to the attention of IBCA office for appropriate action. Candidates need to be made aware that plagiarism is regarded as a serious offence by the IBO. Close supervision of the research process used by candidates and making candidates aware of what constitutes plagiarism helps to eliminate this problem.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General Assessment Criteria

Criterion A Research Question

One of the most critical elements contributing to the success of an extended essay was the identification of a specific research question which was narrow enough in scope to be addressed within the 4000 word limit. For example, “*What issues are involved in implementing a security system at ...International School*”

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was a more specific research question than “*What issues must be considered before implementing a security system in a school*”, and provided more interesting scope for both primary and secondary research. In the introduction, the research question was clearly stated and explained and the approach to the question was outlined as well. This kept the candidate focused throughout the research and development process.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Most candidates used an appropriate approach to their research question. Candidates should be guided to complete their secondary research before engaging in any primary research. This was not always the case. Supervisors must ensure that candidates understand that the best extended essays are supported by extensive research.

Candidates who clearly identify ethical and social issues as separate chapters in their extended essay tend to focus better on the ITGS subject specific criteria. Candidates must use one of the generally accepted formats for footnotes and bibliographic entries. Generally, candidates have difficulty in citing sources such as web pages or interviews.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Only a few candidates conducted primary research well. Surveys and questionnaires were often used to collect data, but the questions were often poorly constructed to yield little supportive information. Many candidates seemed to think that restating the results in charts and words was the equivalent to analysis. A compilation of the raw data and the questionnaire should be included in the appendix. However, the methodology for collecting information (who? what? when? where? why?) along with the analysis must be included within the extended essay,

Interviews are generally not done well. Candidates often do not indicate who was interviewed, what their qualification is relative to the research question or provide adequate analysis. Better extended essays provide a complete transcript of the interview questions and answers in the appendix.

Some candidates used personal computer work and investigations to support their research. These tend to be well explained and documented and demonstrate a high personal involvement by the candidate.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Most extended essays developed an argument addressing the research question, but lacked substantiation. Consequently, the evaluations tended to be subjective. As expected, the extended essays which were supported by extensive research and cited specific examples for support contained better substantiated arguments. Any primary data collection processes or investigation must be interpreted in detail and conclusions supported with documentation within the extended essay.

Criterion E Conclusion

Most candidates attempted to provide a conclusion although this was not always clearly related to the arguments developed in the extended essay. As the last section of the extended essay, the conclusion should be one of the strongest sections of the paper. Unfortunately, this seems to be the place where the candidates have simply run out of time or energy. Some candidates simply repeated selected statements from the body without trying to draw these together and a few appeared to unaware of the need for a conclusion.

Criterion F Abstract

The Abstract is intended to be a factual synopsis (a compressed version) in 300 words of the entire extended essay to include the research question, scope of the research and conclusion. New concepts are at

times mistakenly introduced in the Abstract which were not stated in the body of the extended essay. Some candidates do not know What is required in an abstract?

Criterion G Formal presentation

The formal presentation of the extended essays was generally good: word processed, spell-checked, appropriately laid out with contents page, page numbering, subheadings and appendices. Serious organisational problems occurred in papers which did not have chapters or subheadings or page numbers. A common cause of lost of presentation marks was a poor contents page. It is unacceptable that some extended essays were not spell-checked. Extended essays which exceeded 4000 words received zero marks for this criterion.

An accepted and consistent method for citing bibliographic and footnote entries must be used throughout the paper. This was particularly noticeable in citing Internet sites which requires the inclusion of titles, author and date as well as the URL. Often candidates used graphs and images to support their arguments, but neglected to cite the use of this information in the body of the paper or to properly acknowledge the source.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Most candidates demonstrated an interest in their topic. However, there was a wide range of performance on this criteria. Some candidates presented extended essays with a minimal level of research which seemed to be completed at the last moment. Other extended essays were conscientiously developed with an impressive bibliography and evidence of primary research which supported the research question well.

Subject Assessment Criteria

Criterion J Information technology issues requiring ethical consideration

Ethical considerations were in general considered in detail particularly as many of the topics were based on highly publicised ethical issues. The candidates who adhered to the marking criteria and made a separate chapter focused on this aspect of the topic usually performed well on this criterion. However, there were a surprising number of candidates who achieved zero marks on this criterion.

Criterion K Social significance of the research question regarding individuals and/or society as a whole, using appropriate IT terminology

Many satisfactory contributions were made, but some candidates tended to gloss over and imply issues rather than address them fully. Candidates who performed well on this criterion identified and explained the social issues in a separate chapter so that they received the appropriate focus. These papers also thoroughly explained the issues.

Criterion L Solutions to problems arising from the research question

This was the weakest aspect of the ITGS extended essays. Very few candidates identified issues in criteria J and K or were able to offer feasible solutions. Some candidates offered trivial solutions or others which lacked credibility. It is only possible to compare solutions in detail if the solutions address the same problem.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The key to an effective extended essay is the development of a well structured and sharply focused research

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question right from the beginning of the research process. Candidates benefit from being encouraged to spend time early in the process developing a research question which reflects both personal interest and the focus of ITGS. It would be advisable for the research question to be refined after an initial reading of literature in order to focus it more sharply.

Candidates should write a draft outline in advance indicating how the topic will be developed and use the general criteria and the ITGS subject assessment criteria as a guideline for the outline. Teachers may also wish to discuss with candidates *Analyzing Social Implications and Ethical Decision Making* which were included in the Teacher Support Material for the Portfolio and the Project (IBO).

All candidates must receive a copy of the Extended Essay Guide with the general assessment criteria and the ITGS subject specific criteria right from the beginning when they are formulating the research question. The supervising teacher needs to discuss with the candidate what is expected in each of the assessment criteria and teach secondary research techniques. Both the candidate and the supervisor must be familiar with the ITGS syllabus and the nature of the course with respect to social and ethical considerations and developing solutions for social problems which are related to the research question.

After the candidate has researched the topic from secondary literature, the supervisor should meet with the candidate to investigate possible ways primary research could be undertaken to support the arguments. Primary research and first hand investigations assist candidates in placing their findings into a real context. If candidates use surveys or interviews, their questions must be carefully constructed. Within the paper, the systematic methodologies used to collect primary data must be described. All graphs, diagrams, and tables used in the extended essay must be explained and the source documented.

The supervisor should meet regularly with the candidate to discuss their progress and provide appropriate guidance. The number of supervisory hours usually varies between 3-5 hours throughout the development of the paper. Key stages where the supervisor may wish to meet with the candidate are:

- formulation of the research question and deadlines
- following the examination of available secondary literature, to discuss relevant information and revise the research question for further research
- after the secondary research is completed, to discuss findings and the outline of the paper
- to discuss possible primary research or investigations which will give support to arguments in the extended essay
- to review the primary research results and look over the final outline of the paper
- to provide feedback from the first draft of the extended essay

Teachers may wish to use the ITGS discussion forum (<http://online.ibo.org>) to seek advice on guiding candidates. There are some threads which are focused specifically on the extended essay. Any IB teacher can also begin a new thread or discussion. There is also a separate category in the discussion forum for extended essays from any subject.

Biology

The extended essay in biology is an opportunity for candidates to apply independent research skills and methodology appropriate to the subject. The subject matter must be biological, must lend itself to investigation through biological research methods, must be at a theoretical level which is suitable for pre-university candidates and must allow the candidate sufficient room to demonstrate personal initiative and engagement. This report is intended not only to provide feedback on the May 2002 session but also to act as a guide for the supervision of future candidates. As such it is primarily addressed to supervisors, in an effort to highlight those areas where candidates are in need of specific guidance and supervision.

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Essays were submitted in a wide variety of topics including biochemistry, biotechnology, ecology, microbiology, plant physiology, exercise physiology, genetics and a wide variety of human diseases. A smaller number of essays were submitted on topics such as evolution, animal behaviour, drugs, nutrition and agriculture.

A small but significant number of inappropriate essays were submitted, including topics related to ethical, social and religious aspects of biological issues, political and economic aspects of environmental policy and diagnosis and treatment of disorders and diseases. Apart from the fact that these essays rarely address the biological criteria, they are problematic for two other reasons. Firstly, the candidates writing in these areas often display intense personal commitment verging on emotional involvement in the topic. The result is often a subjective treatment with little or no critical analysis and no attempt to substantiate findings. Secondly, it is clear that many of the candidates either do not seek or do not receive proper supervision. In many cases the supervision time reported on the essay cover ranges from zero to one hour.

The number of poorly researched literature-based essays continues to increase. More and more candidates rely exclusively on web-based sources both for data and for substantiation of their ideas. In addition, a growing number of candidates submit essays that contain illustrative material (graphs and diagrams) of a poor quality.

There can be no doubt that the choice of topic is crucial to the overall success of the essay and that candidates need guidance in selecting an appropriate topic. Together with the school supervisor, they should engage in a process of identifying, discussing, assessing and narrowing down a suitable area for research. Interest and motivation are important but not sufficient criteria for the suitability of a research topic.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research Question

The best essays have a clearly defined, well focused research question. In these cases the candidate uses the research question to establish an hypothesis or small number of hypotheses which are then investigated. Data are presented in a way that addresses this question and the candidate establishes a strong argument, by regularly referring back to the original question. Many weak essays are submitted where there is no clearly defined research question or where the question is stated only once (in the title for example) but is

not referred to again in the body of the essay. Candidates need guidance in order to avoid research questions that are essentially trivial, in the sense that the outcome is obvious from the outset or is a well established, or easily verifiable, fact or principle.

Criterion B Approach to the Research Question

Most candidates are able to select a broadly suitable research approach. Weaknesses occur in the case of experimentally based essays when the candidate fails to establish suitable experimental controls or fails to elaborate on all of the relevant variables. A weakness in the approach to library-based essays is often the heavy or even exclusive reliance on one type of source (web-based sources or newspaper articles). Few candidates attempt to explain or justify the research approach. In some cases it is evident that the candidate has not been involved in the choice of research approach but has been provided with a narrow topic within a bigger research project with its own well established approach.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Many candidates are unselective about the data which they include in the main body of the essay. Weak candidates simply report all of the raw data and leave it up to the reader to decide which data are important. Candidates should use simple, clear graphs and should be guided away from the more sophisticated and often cumbersome options available on graphing software. In selecting the best way to present their data, candidates should consider how the data can be arranged to address the research question in the most effect way.

Candidates should be encouraged to use statistical analysis where appropriate. Most candidates need guidance about this and also about selecting the most suitable type of analysis to carry out. Candidates should explain and justify their use of a particular statistical approach.

In many cases library-based essays fail to address this criterion, either because the data or information accessed by the candidate are too sophisticated, or because the approach is strongly subjective.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

In order to build up an effective argument, the candidate must refer back regularly to the research question. The candidate must make it clear how the data and information being presented in the essay are helping to answer the question. Few candidates take a systematic approach to building up an argument. For library-based essays, a clearly established and well substantiated argument is crucial for the overall success of the essay. While the typical lab report format used for most experimentally based essays helps to underpin an argument (method, data, discussion, interpretation) this is not sufficient in itself. Candidates must make the argument explicit by constantly referring back to the data or information.

Criterion E Conclusion

A well-written conclusion will link well with the research question and will restate findings that have been already established in the discussion. Few candidates attempt to point out new questions or unresolved questions. This is particularly difficult for candidates working as part of a research team on a sophisticated topic.

Criterion F Abstract

Few essays are accompanied by a well-written abstract that meets the three technical requirements. In most cases one of the requirements is missing or is not clearly stated. Most candidates have difficulty pointing out the scope of the research (what they did, how they did it). The weakest essays have an abstract which is simply the first paragraph of the introduction restated, often referring to things such as the reasons (personal) for the choice of topic. Candidates need clear guidance about the need to meet the three technical requirements of an abstract.

Criterion G Formal presentation

While this criterion is generally met to a good standard, few essays are excellent in this regard. Problems include lack of an explicit structure (body, conclusion, bibliography is not sufficient). Some candidates present a detailed table of contents but this is not clearly reflected in the structure of the essay. In some cases, the abstract is unselective and is used as a repository for information which could not be included within the word limit. In some cases a large volume of raw data is presented and there is no attempt to be selective in highlighting or emphasising the important material. As mentioned above candidates are in need of guidance as regards selecting and applying appropriate graphing techniques. They must be guided towards using simple, clear and effective diagrams and graphs.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Supervisors are strongly encouraged to provide a comment on the cover sheet as this may be helpful to the examiner in establishing a fair and realistic overall impression of the candidate's work. In particular a well-written comment can help to establish the level of inventiveness and flair displayed by the candidate.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Biological study of living organisms

Most essays are biological in nature, at least as far as the subject matter is concerned. Some suitably biological topics are not successful because the treatment given is not biological or because the research approach does not use biological methods. Particularly problematic are essays on human diseases (especially if the candidate or member of the candidate's family is affected). Other examples include behavioural studies which diverge into psychology or environmental studies which focus on social or political issues.

Criterion K Use of methods and sources appropriate to biology

Web-based sources must be verified as being reliable. The candidate must write about this in the essay in order to provide evidence of the appropriateness of the source. When the work is carried out at a research institution or university, it is often difficult if not impossible for the candidate to provide evidence of a personal approach in the choice and application of research methods and sources used.

Criterion L Analysis of the limitations surrounding the research

This criterion continues to present candidates with difficulties. Few candidates attempt a critical analysis of their own work. In order to meet the criterion the critical evaluation should make up a substantial part of the discussion. Candidates need guidance on this point, as many seem to be reluctant to critically scrutinise and evaluate their own work.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

1. The clear evidence from this session is that the amount of time that many supervisors spend with the candidate is insufficient (often less than one hour) for whatever reasons. Candidates need guidance on several aspects of the writing and research process (see above) and this can only be achieved on an ongoing basis.
2. The criteria for assessment need to be discussed and explained to the candidates. That this does not happen to a sufficient extent is evidenced by the failure of many candidates to meet the requirements of the more technical criteria (abstract, conclusion, formal presentation).

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3. The choice of topic is a crucial step in the extended essay research and writing process. Candidates clearly need guidance here in order to ensure that the essay is well founded in biological theory and does not stray into other disciplines.
4. Despite repeated encouragement to do so, many supervisors do not comment on the essay. The benefits of providing a supervisor's comment for the candidate are numerous. A thoughtful comment will help the examiner to see the overall context in which the research was conducted and will help to provide evidence of the level of personal involvement and other holistic characteristics which are difficult to discern from the text of the essay.
5. Candidates need guidance on establishing, refining and using the research question. This is crucial for the success of the extended essay. Essays with a well focused and carefully formulated research question invariably meet the other criteria to a higher standard than essays that are based on a vague or poorly defined question.
6. Many candidates will benefit from guidance as to how to construct an effective argument, using the research question and using the information and data presented in the essay.
7. Candidates need guidance and encouragement on how to provide a critical evaluation of their own work. This is the weakest aspect of most extended essays in biology.
8. Candidates should be discouraged from submitting work which has been conducted as part of a research team at a university or research institute for the extended essay unless they can provide evidence of a sufficient level of input into the research approach and selection of methodology and sources. This type of work should always be accompanied by a report from the external supervisor.

Chemistry

There were 538 extended essays in Chemistry submitted for the May 2002 session, an increase of 17% over the previous year. Of these 492 were written in English, 1 in French and 45 in Spanish.

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Once again a wide range of essays were seen, both in terms of subject matter and quality. The vast majority related well to different aspects of chemistry although there were still a few essays submitted which contained little, if any, relevance to chemistry. There seemed to be more essays this year which contained no practical work on the part of the candidate. As in the past, these generally tended to score lower marks. There was a very wide range of acknowledged hours spent in supervision, and many of those supervisors who did state a large number of hours made it clear that this did not include laboratory supervision. It was disappointing to find that, especially with the more problematic essays, supervisors who had spent so many hours in discussion with the candidates did not write anything in the space provided for the supervisor's report. In many cases, a comment from the supervisor might have helped the candidate.

There were some essays in which the topics were unsuitable due to their very advanced nature and lack of connection with the IB chemistry programme. Perhaps the worst example of this was from one candidate who wrote an essay on the characterisation of cytochrome P4502D6 in paediatric liver samples. This candidate even stated on the front of the essay that the work was the joint effort of the candidate and a researcher in a university hospital department. All essays must be the candidate's own work. When the work is carried out in an external laboratory then a comment from the school supervisor is essential so that the examiner can know how much of the work is the personal work of the candidate.

As in previous years many of the essays involved some sort of analytical work, many of them with an environmental slant. Some essays were too trivial. For example one considered the factors which inhibit the corrosion of iron but did not go beyond what is mentioned in an elementary textbook. Another looked at the effects of antacids in the stomach. This candidate covered the technique of titration extremely well but the essay essentially concerned the titration of just one antacid with standard sodium hydroxide solution and made no real reference as to what antacids contain or how they work.

Some interesting and successful titles included;

- An investigation of the effects of varying the type of oil used on saponification and the properties of the soaps produced.
- The effect on the concentration of hydrogen peroxide on the rate of decolourisation of hair dyes.
- A study of the iodine content of Bay shrimps using UV spectrophotometry.
- An investigation into the effects of concentration and sun protection factor of sunscreen on its effectiveness.
- An investigation into the concentration of ammonium and nitrate ions in the water of Lake Victoria responsible for the rapid growth of the water hyacinth.

Less successful titles included;

- Fuel cell applications: past, present and future.
- Working with increased immunity and reverse transcriptase inhibitors to prevent the docking of HIV

with CCR5 receptor.

- An investigation into forensics (this essay contained absolutely no chemistry).
- The factors that make individuals susceptible to hypertension, and an investigation of the biochemical formulas of the various anti-hypertensive medications.

The best essays were almost invariably from those candidates who used relatively unsophisticated equipment and who were able to arrive at their results using two or more different methods thus demonstrating much personal initiative. Increasingly more candidates are relying almost solely on the Internet for their source material. As was stated last year candidates must learn to distinguish between authoritative scientific articles and material that has not been properly researched or validated.

Candidates performance against each assessment criterion

Candidates still lose marks unnecessarily by not paying enough attention to the criteria. It is helpful for supervisors to assist their candidates by getting them to draw up a flow chart of how the essay should proceed. Candidates need to bear in mind that the examiner only sees the final written essay and right from the outset candidates need to focus their efforts towards fully addressing each criteria. All candidates should be encouraged to complete a checklist of all the salient points before submitting the final copy of their essay. Candidates can draw up their own checklist or find one ready made in a published study guide for IB Diploma programme chemistry.

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Although most candidates do now state the research question there are still many candidates who do not have a sufficiently focused question that is capable of being addressed in the 40 hour time period. Supervisors and candidates are encouraged to read the advice given on this in the IB guide to Extended Essays.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Relatively few candidates scored the maximum marks for this criterion. To be successful candidates need to be able to place their research topic into context and include all the relevant background information including the rationale for choosing the topic.

Criterion C & D Analysis/interpretation and argument/evaluation

These two criteria often distinguish the excellent essay from the more mediocre. All too often data analysis is accepted without any critical evaluation. There is often sloppy use of significant figures. It is absurd to accept times in seconds and masses to six significant figures particularly where times are based on personal judgment or manual operation. When averaging results more significant figures should not be given than those used in the individual measurements. Candidates should be encouraged to question the uncertainty inherent in their method and to question the validity of all assumptions made.

Criterion E Conclusion

This should be one of the easier criteria for candidates to gain good marks. All that is required is that they state a conclusion clearly that is relevant to the research question and is consistent with the argument already presented in the essay. In chemistry it is usually appropriate to also indicate unresolved and new questions that have emerged from the research. Most candidates are able to present a reasonable conclusion to their work.

Criterion F Abstract

Many candidates are still unable to write a clear and concise abstract. Too often they do not describe the scope of the investigation fully or do not state the conclusion precisely.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Almost all the essays submitted looked superficially good as they were word-processed competently. However candidates also need to pay attention to drawing and labeling diagrams and graphs correctly and to the proper use of annotated footnotes etc. in order to gain maximum marks for presentation.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

In order to gain high marks candidates must clearly show a high degree of personal input and imagination. Too often, particularly in work that was done in an external university or industrial laboratory it was hard for the examiner to know which were the candidate's own ideas and which came from an external source.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Chemical principles

Candidates need to demonstrate in their essay that they understand fully the chemical principles upon which their work is based. Theory which is covered in the teaching programme does not need to be repeated in detail but where, for example, a candidate is using a visible spectrometer to determine a particular concentration then a knowledge and understanding of the Beer-Lambert law together with its limitations should be demonstrated clearly. Where many similar calculations are involved then at least one example should be worked through fully but then it is perfectly acceptable and constitutes good practice to set the rest out in table form. Balanced chemical equations and structural formulas should be given wherever possible to support the text.

Criterion K Methods/sources appropriate to chemistry

Most of the methods selected were relevant to the investigation. To gain full marks it is essential that candidates clearly demonstrate a personal approach. This can be in the initial construction of the method or apparatus or more usually in the way in which it is modified to overcome particular problems. This is usually much easier to achieve with the less sophisticated and less expensive equipment to be found in a school laboratory. Indeed some of the most inventive work used everyday materials readily available in supermarkets. Candidates and supervisors should ensure that all materials and methods have undergone risk assessments for safety.

Criterion L Reasoning surrounding the research and limitations

Results should be thoroughly analyzed regarding the quality of the scientific method(s) employed and compared with secondary sources.

Good candidates tackled this criterion well - perhaps as a result of the training they have received in the internally assessed component of the chemistry course.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Much of the advice given here has already been given in previous chief examiner's reports on extended essays and indeed supervisors are encouraged to read past reports and implement their recommendations.

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- Try to ensure that the candidate is supervised throughout the whole process not just at the beginning and or end. It is helpful to draw up a flow diagram which both the candidate and the supervisor can work from. This can assist in identifying where the candidate is in the process and if a block occurs can help the supervisor to suggest possible ways around a particular problem.
- Ensure that early on the essay has a sharply focused research question. This research question must lend itself to a chemical approach and the supervisor should be confident that it is capable of providing the candidate with sufficient material upon which to write the essay.
- Strongly encourage the candidate to undertake some individual practical work. Furthermore encourage them to utilise the school laboratory (in its widest sense). If candidates do carry out work in an external laboratory then ensure that the work is genuinely all their own. Encourage candidates to show clearly and emphasize their personal input when writing the essay.
- Ensure that the proposed investigation is safe and meets all local and national regulations.
- Early on in the process provide all candidates with copies of the General and Subject Specific criteria. Ensure that candidates complete a checklist covering all the points for each criterion before submitting the final version of their essay.
- Ensure that candidates know how to distinguish between reliable and dubious information obtained from the Internet.
- Supervisors are strongly encouraged to write a report when completing the cover sheet of the essay.

Physics

It should be borne in mind that, whereas this report highlights general problems and weaknesses that candidates exhibited, a good number of candidates showed great skill and flair in their essays.

Range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of topics including essays featuring sports, difficult subjects in which to make accurate measurements in school laboratories. Nevertheless several attempts to analyse the physics of running and stride lengths were impressive.

Some of the well-focused theoretical essays were outstanding and enabled candidates to show their thorough comprehension of difficult ideas. However there were unsuitable themes like “*Study of black holes*” or “*Was the big bang performed with creation of life in mind?*” where no trace of physics was found. Some topics e.g. warp drives or other aspects of Star Trek were more of the domain of science fiction than physics.

There were some interesting and imaginative topics, well researched, investigated, argued and discussed. The highest scoring essays had clearly expressed and well delimited research questions. Some essays were practical investigations carried out with the most basic equipment but with imagination, creativity and flair. A good number of essays were laboratory investigations. Others were studies of processes or systems outside the laboratory which embodied comprehensive investigative and research skills. There were a number of inappropriate essays which were all descriptive pieces lacking any real analyses and without any explicit research question.

Laboratory essays were the most popular and generally scored higher marks than survey or data based essays. In respect to the latter, candidates found it difficult to assess the quality of the sources that they used.

Some essays were far too broad in scope and not sufficiently focused. Laboratory essays sometimes did not address a research problem. Instead the candidate would reproduce a standard relationship. Some other essays chose far too simplistic an investigation and were little more than a *standard* piece of laboratory work. This is not in the spirit of the extended essay.

Candidates using computers with interface equipment often seemed to be under the wrong impression that this technique in itself was sufficient to address all the criteria adequately. Some candidates also seemed to be under the impression that computer simulation was the same as computer data collection.

There was also a growth of the use of computer simulation in which the candidate had little or no control of the program or its variables.

Some interesting topics were chosen that were well within the scope of the physics theory that candidates had studied. Others attempted topics that were beyond the level of understanding expected of the candidates. Such topics, for example, based on relativity theory, were very theoretical and in some cases tended to be superficial or speculative.

Higher scoring candidates generally chose a topic where the theory was fairly familiar to them and where they could do some experimental work. Candidates should be advised that they do need to show personal

input to the work. A general survey, based on two or three texts, or the development of a subject was unlikely to score highly.

A number of essays that dealt mostly with print resources were average or mostly poor because some candidates could not carefully choose or critically analyse resources, and synthesise their own content from them (and hence put their personal “stamp” on their essay). Secondary research essays were often thin summaries of the readings, and nothing more. Beyond that, the worst essays attempted to sketch out a topic that is far too broad or technically sophisticated within the confines of the essay. Such essays were almost instantly doomed to failure.

Essays with no practical element were often just literature reviews with little of interest and no demands being made of the reader or writer. A sequential historical review of an area of physics did not give candidates the opportunity to achieve a good assessment let alone an excellent one.

The better essays gave candidates opportunities for *personal* involvement through practical work or the development of a theory. Experiments designed and executed by a candidate at school or at home seemed to have more personal engagement than those done in professional laboratories under the guidance of a research team. Such experiences must be valuable for the candidate, but some essays, written with suspected assistance, tended to be highly technical and did not satisfy all the assessment requirements.

A good number of essay topics chosen were generally interesting, well focused and quite manageable in both word limit and the level of understanding of the candidates. Some of the particular weaknesses were:

- Some topics seemed to have been decided on by the availability of a few secondary sources. The essay then relied detrimentally on a limited number of sources.
- Some topics were too broad. Candidates were unable to define a clearly focused hypothesis and tended to discuss concepts and develop arguments that were not relevant.
- Some topics were not directly relevant to physics, but rather to an interest of the candidate. Even though the candidate was personally involved in the topic, it became difficult for the candidate to develop a cohesive essay that scored well in the physics assessment criteria. A few candidates focused on topics related directly to information technology.
- Some topics were too difficult to be dealt with, e.g. Higg’s particle...

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Most candidates introduced the research question but many lost one mark because of a lack of clarity or because the topic was too broad. Some topics referred to the efficiency of a process without defining the term.

Too often candidates leaped straight into an introduction without actually stating the research question or, if they did, they did not get round to stating it *early* on in the essay. Sometimes they had difficulty in stating the research question for the simple reason that there wasn’t one! It is not good policy to rely on the title of the essay as a statement of the research question as often the title is just not focused enough.

Candidates should also make sure, if they are choosing a laboratory essay, that the experimental work will yield a significant amount of quantitative data that lends itself to analysis. For example, using a

sophisticated piece of equipment to identify the harmonic frequencies present in a metal plate when hit with a hammer is not an in-depth investigation. The conclusion must be directly connected to the research question.

A number of essays were not relevant to *physics* or had very little to do with it. Such essays achieved a mediocre level of success even though the content was intrinsically valid.

Some candidates seemed to think that a valid and sufficient reason surrounding the research was their own personal love of the topic.

Criterion B Approach to research question

If candidates have chosen an inappropriate topic or one that was too broad then it was very difficult for them to adopt a sharply focused approach.

There was a tendency in the weaker essays for candidates to pad out the essay with irrelevancies. For example, there was no need for the candidate, if carrying out an investigation into some aspect of wave behaviour, to give a detailed account of wave behaviour even to the extent of defining wavelength, frequency etc.

As in past years, many candidates opted for researching the effect of air resistance in various aerodynamic situations, particularly in respect of investigating the factors affecting lift of a wing. Designing realistic procedures in a school laboratory to investigate such phenomena can be fraught with difficulty. Some candidates spent too much time constructing equipment and reporting each step involved in the construction.

In most cases, candidates used suitable physics. Some candidates however tended to recite secondary sources, becoming informants rather than becoming involved in the development of the essay.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

A good number of candidates presented arguments which were clearly developed and expressed in relation to their research questions. Interpretations were generally good but sometimes limited in scope and validation.

In some cases, there was a tendency not to use sources etc. as a means of analysis/interpretation or as development of an argument. Instead, the sources were used as for straightforward reporting and there was little that could be seen as the candidate's individual work. This in an area that was generally weak, particularly in respect of the survey type of essay where candidates tended to just summarise information from different sources.

In laboratory based essays, candidates often relied heavily on computer plotted graphs without really knowing how to interpret them. All too often the essential (0, 0) data point was omitted or the presence of systematic error was not recognised. The line of "best fit" was often drawn by the computer and the computer generated equation was then quoted by the candidate as some sort of gospel truth. The recession factors and correlation factors were also quoted, the meaning of which the majority of candidates did not understand. Scatter plots are rarely used and often X-Y plots are used with lines that look like donkey's back legs.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

This criterion was not consistent amongst candidates. This criterion tended to separate candidates according to their level of understanding and knowledge and hence their ability to relate this to their

research question.

Survey essays usually scored badly here. In many instances the evaluation of the techniques used to tackle the research question were limited and superficial. Research questions that were inappropriate or too broad could not score well on this criterion.

Criterion E Conclusion

Theoretical studies were generally weak as regards arriving at a conclusion. In many instances, this was because the whole of the study was based on reporting facts and there was no intention to give a conclusion. Where experimental work was involved, candidates attempted to use their finding to substantiate previous theoretical discussion. With few exceptions, the major failure was to consider *successfully* the reliability of the results.

Some candidates did not even bother with a conclusion. Others gave only the bare minimum. A number of candidates clearly stated a conclusion that indicated one of two *sensible* questions to be tackled. Essays with a broad research question did not address this criterion well.

Criterion F Abstract

Many candidates threw away marks here by missing out the *conclusion* or by just not clearly stating the research question or scope of the essay or by exceeding 300 words.

A simple report on the development of a subject was difficult to present as a research question that had a conclusion. Generally, abstracts were often clearly stated and complete.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Generally good. The few exceptions appeared to be amongst those who had not consulted at reasonable length with their supervisors.

However, too often candidates threw away marks by omitting page numbers and/or failing to put information in the appropriate place in the essay. If the candidate for example is discussing a particular graph, then the graph should appear in the body of the text, not in the appendix. Although most candidates listed sources in the bibliography, it was rare to find the sources actually referred to *in the text of the essay*. A number of "Table of Contents" were extremely short or carried useless vague terms like: "Theory - Experiment - Data - Conclusion. The "Table of Contents" should carry precise references related to the specific essay. In some cases, there was an abuse of appendix which is technically *not* part of the essay "per se". The bibliography should appear before the appendix and the abstract should be presented on a separate page before the essay itself.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Candidates who carried out a routine investigation or just summarised information gleaned from various texts could not score well with this criterion. Many essays do not have supervisor comments and this means that it was more difficult for the examiner to assess the personal input of the candidate.

There was no doubt that most candidates did make a considerable effort to produce the essay. Inventiveness and flair were seen when carrying out experimental work. Theoretical studies tended to report facts as presented in literature and hence lacked this inventiveness.

Subject assessment criteria

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Criterion J Principles of physics

Candidates should be encouraged to use good and exact scientific language when expressing their ideas. Weaker essays included such words as “powerful” when what was being referred to was the magnitude of a force. In general, knowledge was acceptable. However, the study of a topic beyond the level of understanding expected in the theory examinations should be discouraged, since it is here that, frequently, weaknesses became apparent.

Generally, depending on the research question, candidates considered their topics in light of the IB physics courses. Some exceptions included candidates going into explanations of complex situations at a level beyond the understanding of the IB physics course. Many candidates explored concepts beyond the course and took advantage of resources available external to the school. However, it was expected that candidates would *not* make mistakes applying fundamental laws and principles e.g. Newton’s laws of motion, the law of conservation of momentum...

Some survey essays just did not contain any physics. There was a tendency in the weaker essays to give totally *qualitative* accounts of physical phenomena.

Some candidates got themselves into deep water by tackling too difficult a topic and proposed a completely incorrect model with totally flawed analysis. This did not help with criterion C either.

Candidates who embarked on a topic that was clearly too difficult for them, often just copy vast tracts from advanced texts or the Internet, hoping that the complicated equations quoted would impress the examiner.

Criterion K Use of methods or sources appropriate to physics

In most cases, the techniques were relevant to the research question, and a few candidates displayed originality of approach in their applications. The choice of the research question helped determine candidates’ ability to perform well on this criterion. In survey essays, the weaker candidates relied too heavily on just copying material from the Internet.

In some cases, when candidates worked outside the school (e.g. at a university), it was difficult to assess the level of originality or the evidence of a personal approach.

Criterion L Reasoning surrounding the research and its limitations

Generally candidates did not perform as well in this criterion. Not all candidates attempted to provide error analysis of collected data, not all verified how these errors were arrived at *and* what the effects would be. Few considered the quality of the sources or questions relating to overall limitations of physics in providing explanations of their topics.

There was a tendency to accept evidence in literature and experimental results without question. Candidates did need to be made aware of the need to provide support for their statements and to be aware of the quality of the information provided by them.

In many of the laboratory essays, the error analysis was completely flawed or non-existent. Often candidates measured a value, compared it with a data book value and gave the percentage difference between the two as the error in their experiment. The use of significant digits improved in quality but some candidates did not respect them even though they were involved in the manipulation of uncertainties and calculation of errors.

In survey essays, little or no attempt was made to assess the quality of the sources used.

Recommendation for the supervision of future candidates

The role of the supervisor is *important* and *essential*. Most candidates need help and guidance. Supervisors should ensure that candidates choose research questions that are clearly focused and realistic in their scope. A careful choice, in light of the candidates' interests and available resources, could greatly aid the performance of the candidate. The topic should be a vehicle to show the candidate's ability and knowledge of physics (not dreary data collection). It should be achievable in a reasonable time-scale.

Supervisors should ensure that they monitor the progress of candidates, looking and offering advice during drafting, and the development of the essay, rather than trying to "save the situation" at the end after candidates have gone astray. This would help to *authenticate* the work as the candidate's own as well as resulting in a better final result.

Supervisors could give advice to improve ability to thoughtfully analyse errors and the limitations of the research and to consider a variety of sources when reaching conclusions.

Candidates could benefit from reading some good reports from scientific journals (including abstracts) or examples of good extended essays.

External research projects usually conducted in professional laboratories should be commented on by supervisors. An examiner cannot, from the final essay, determine to what extent the measurements made or conclusions drawn were from the candidate or others working in the laboratory. It is good practice to ask that "external supervisors" of such work to write a report for the school supervisor who attaches it to the essay or quotes from it.

As a general guide, supervisors should make sure that candidates:

- read the assessment criteria carefully and are made aware of where omissions will lead to the unnecessary loss of marks e.g. the research question, abstract and conclusion
- do not attempt a research question that is beyond them in terms of the depth of understanding of the physics required or is too broad in scope
- choose a research question which is truly a question and not just a repetition of standard techniques
- design realistic techniques unless they are fully aware of how to utilise this facility properly
- realise that using a computer and interface for measurement is a means of collecting data and not an end in itself
- do not attempt a survey essay or data based essay unless they are really sure of their ground and have some idea of which sources to use and are able to assess the quality of the sources
- realise that a personal input is required, rather than a report based on a limited number of texts
- do not copy chunks of material off web sites or from textbooks.

Environmental Systems

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of topics identified by candidates, although “global warming” showed a notable surge in popularity, perhaps in response to the recent orientation taken by President Bush. Again this year, there were many examples of candidates rising very impressively to the challenges of the extended essay and producing some outstanding pieces of academic research. Overall, however, there is still a disturbing proportion of candidates selecting a broad topic and simply presenting a descriptive account derived directly from a few secondary resources. Such essays are generally devoid of any independent analysis or argument on the part of the candidate. Indeed, the whole experience of primary research, which the extended essay is designed to provide, is often greatly diluted or lost altogether. As reported in previous years, the greatest challenge to candidates still remains the identification of a suitable research question or hypotheses with which to approach the subject matter. One cannot emphasise this factor too much. The quality of the overall essay stands or falls on the quality of this starting point. A significant percentage of the essays failed to reach a good standard because the initial question did not allow for meeting the requirements of the remaining criteria.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

The great majority of candidates generally stated the research question or hypothesis in an early part of the essay. A few, however, are still failing to do this. In these cases questions are sometimes implied but not categorically stated, or they only emerge well after the opening paragraphs of the essay. The main cause for loss of credit on this criterion was through questions being too broad for effective treatment.

Criterion B Approach

The quality of approach was variable and, as usual, was generally better in those essays not dependent on secondary sources. Candidates researching literature often explored too limited a biography and/or depended heavily upon popularised, journalistic sources with little scientific or academic credibility. Some practical investigations were too limited in the scope of their data collection, but generally these approaches were more carefully chosen and appropriate.

Criterion C Analysis/Interpretation

Most candidates did reasonably well, but only a few gained maximum credit for this criterion. Candidates whose essays were based on secondary sources most frequently failed because their essay contained little or no further analysis than was available in the source texts. There was a disappointing lack of rigorous quantitative analysis. Graphical representations of data were infrequent.

Criterion D Argument/Evaluation

Where the initial question was appropriate and actually demanded an argument, rather than simply a description, candidates frequently performed well against this criterion. A significant number failed to give due weight or attention to counter-arguments, leaving their evaluation rather subjective and insubstantial.

Criterion E Conclusion

The quality of conclusions were almost directly dependent on the quality of the research question – if the

latter was not clear or focused then, naturally, nor was the former. Many candidates would have benefited from highlighting a specific section of their essay to address the conclusion.

Criterion F Abstract

The great majority of candidates included a reasonable abstract, although some did not clearly demonstrate inclusion of the three required components. Only a minority rashly lost credit through completely omitting one of these components or exceeding the word limit.

Criterion G Formal presentation

For the most part, candidates showed an impressive mastery of the formal requirements for presenting a research paper of this sort. There were two outstanding areas of weakness, however, in a significant number of essays. Firstly, some candidates seem to have the impression that the extended essay should be an uninterrupted length of prose. Subheadings, sections, diagrams etc., beneficial, and sometimes essential, to the essay, are avoided to the detriment of the overall quality. The contents page for such essays often lists simply: abstract, body of text and bibliography – which must leave the candidate wondering why a contents page is required in the first place. The second major source of lost credit for this criterion was the quality of diagrams and illustrations downloaded from the Internet, which were often poor and unacknowledged.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

A full range of scores were obtained for this criterion. A rewarding few showed remarkable personal initiative and engagement in their research. Those that had just assembled information from a limited range of secondary sources, with little or no personal commentary or analysis, gained no credit.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Understanding the environment...

Virtually all essays addressed an environmental issue, although a few concentrated on too fine a perspective (e.g. technological, human health etc.) so that the essay included no recognition of the holistic and interactive nature of the environment. Many essays failed to make any overt use of systems concepts even when these were clearly appropriate, which was disappointing.

Criterion K Valid scientific techniques...

Again, those candidates carrying out primary, experimental research tended to score better. There were some excellent and imaginative experimental and fieldwork investigations carried out. Occasionally such research was flawed by inappropriate techniques, lack of controls or more commonly, by insufficient data collection. Of the candidates depending on secondary sources, some identified exciting and genuinely scientific sources, while others utilised sources that were very dubious, and clearly had little scientific foundation.

Criterion L Appreciation of causal links...

The majority of essays included some reflective component evaluating the limitations of the research, but a great deal of these were rather cursory in their approach and would have gained further credit with more rigour.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

- Above all, a great deal of guidance should be given in the formulation of the research question or hypothesis under investigation.

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- Guide candidates to a research question that lends itself to fresh and independent analysis by the candidates themselves...and would not simply involve recording the analyses of others.
- Guide candidates to a research question that is sufficiently narrow and sharp for the candidate to draw personal and reasonable conclusions based on *their own* limited experimentation, or research of literature.
- Guide candidates to a research question that can be addressed from scientifically valid and reliable resources available to the candidate...and will not depend simply on popularised, journalistic opinion gained from the literature and Internet.
- Some candidates would benefit from far more training in the formal presentation of the essay; particularly in the use of sections and subheadings and appropriate inclusion of illustrations.
- Some candidates would benefit from including in their approach, or altering their approach to, the gathering of primary rather than secondary data (since the analysis and evaluation of secondary data proved very challenging for the weaker candidates in particular, and rarely shows any personal input).
- Many candidates would benefit from far more rigorous quantitative analysis and graphical representation of data.

Design Technology

General assessment criteria

Range and suitability of the work submitted

The quality and standard of the essays read was generally very good. I felt there was a significant improvement on previous years. In 2002 a greater number of candidates selected more appropriate and realistic topics on which to base their research. As usual, the range of topics undertaken was wide and varied with most candidates successfully selecting a topic that could be explored within the constraints of time and length. Where the research question was clearly understood, sharp and well defined the candidate was more likely to complete a successful essay. The least successful centered on an historical account in which the candidate had set out to write as much as they could on a particular technological development. These often lacked original ideas and detailed analysis of the information presented.

The best essays focused on scientific concepts and theories. Most success was achieved when candidates demonstrated an understanding of these and could relate them to the technological developments.

As in previous years some of the most successful essays resulted from a close personal interest in a topic. Candidates were able to demonstrate very detailed understanding and a wide breadth of knowledge. Many essays develop from projects undertaken in other areas of a candidate's curriculum e.g. science competitions, work experience, extended technology projects. In these instances the candidate often has a very detailed understanding of the chosen topic. Often the work may be completed to a very high standard, demonstrating detailed understanding along with a variety of "hands on" practical experiences. Care must be taken to ensure that these studies meet the needs of an extended essay in Design Technology.

Many of the less successful essays focused on an historical or sequential account of a technological development. Though this may be relevant to introduce a topic with a sequence of historical events this should not provide the bulk of the work.

Candidates performance against each criterion

Most candidates performed well against the general criteria.

Criteria A Research Question

As mentioned above it was felt that a greater number of candidates chose topics which could be clearly expressed and specified. Though the research question was not always clearly stated or obvious. This is an area that requires close input from the supervisor at the commencement of the study.

Criteria B and C Approach to the research question and analysis/interpretation

An increasing number of candidates had a direct involvement with the topic of their study. They were able to obtain greater insight through a wide range of personal experiences including, factory visits, interviews, case studies, practical experimentation and modeling. As in previous years the least successful essays centered on information obtained then summarized from a few Internet sources.

Criteria D Arguments/evaluation

A majority of candidates were able to develop an argument. Most success was achieved where candidates had clearly defined the research question.

Criteria E Conclusion

Most essays included a conclusion though some were not clearly presented. The most successful candidates not only summarized their main findings and arguments, but were able to discuss unresolved questions, future developments and possible applications.

Criteria F Abstract

A number of abstracts did not clearly state the conclusions reached in the study.

Criteria G Formal presentation

All essays seen were word processed and clearly presented. There was a pleasing increase in the use of graphical information through drawings, sketches, graphs, photographs, tables and charts. This trend should be encouraged. Though it should be remembered that it is important that the illustrative material is relevant. It should help to develop a point or show the solution to a problem. A number of essays included printouts of pictures from Internet sites. These acted as decoration but were not specifically relevant to the issue being discussed. The best essays were carefully structured with a clear contents page given.

Criteria H Holistic judgment

Once again the most successful candidates were those who displayed elements of creativity, inventiveness, practical problem solving and presented original ideas.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Comments from supervisors are very useful. It is clear that many of the best essays have been guided by quality supervision from the outset of the study. The choice of question is crucial as many candidates are restricted in the number of marks they can obtain by poor choice at the start of their work.

Try to avoid topics of a purely historical nature or presenting a sequence of technological events. For example, an essay focussing on the development and implementation of a product should investigate design stages, use of materials, problems encountered, alternative design ideas and present some original ideas for future developments.

Subject Specific Criteria

Range and suitability of work submitted

Care must be taken to ensure that a topic is fully suitable for an extended essay in design technology. The subject specific criteria need to be read closely at the outset of the exercise. There is always a danger that supervisors and candidates not familiar with the Design Technology misunderstand the nature of the subject.

Candidates performance against each of the criterion

There was clearly a significant improvement in the marks achieved for the subject specific criteria. Candidates were addressing the criteria more closely. A clear understanding and appreciation of the design cycle is critical when writing an extended essay in design technology. Candidates and supervisors unfamiliar with the design cycle should refer closely to the IB Design Technology subject guide.

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Criteria J Understanding the design process and application of scientific and technological knowledge within a particular design context

Candidates need to be reminded that they are presenting a science essay. The candidates need to display an understanding of the importance of the role of scientific and technological concepts in their essay. They then need to apply this understanding to the design and development of their chosen topic.

Criteria K Impact of the chosen design concept on the individual user or consumer

Candidates need to ensure they promote a research question that allows them to address the impact of their design concept on consumers and users.

Criteria L Impact of the chosen design concept on society and the environment

Many candidates mentioned their chosen design concept's impact on society and the environment. Far fewer were able to comprehensively detail the impact of their design concept on society and the environment.

Criteria M Values in design technology

This remains the least successfully addressed criteria. Candidates need to be fully aware of the four subject specific criterion at the outset of their study. Many candidates failed to consider any design technology values associated with their essays.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Great care needs to be taken when a candidate not studying IB design technology undertakes a design technology extended essay. In this situation both supervisor and candidate are encouraged to refer to the IB Design Technology Subject Guide and the Design Technology section of The Guide to Extended Essays.

Mathematics

As Principal Examiner for extended Essays in Mathematics I read over seventy essays. This report is based on my own observations and those of the examiners, and there are several points that arise in many, and sometimes all, of the individual reports.

There is a very wide range of topics chosen by candidates for their essays, including some that are perennial favourites, some that are less frequent, and of course some that are new. There is also a wide range in the quality of the essays. At one end there were some truly excellent essays, a pleasure to read and to mark, while at the other end there were essays that were easy to mark, but for entirely different reasons. Some essays were very poor. Let me say first though that the standards of presentation, throughout the quality range, is generally of a high level. The word processing, the diagrams, colour printing and pictures reveal the amount of effort that candidates, for the most part, are prepared to put into their essay. The resulting enjoyment to the authors that comes from these efforts is frequently apparent to the examiner.

Why are a substantial minority of essays not seen as being satisfactory? This year, as in previous years, there are several reasons. Some are simply inappropriate. This can be because they are too ambitious, or because they are trivial, or because there is a complete lack of focus. Where there is a focus it is often not on mathematics, as for instance in many essays of a historical nature. Mathematical content, at the level expected of diploma candidates, is a crucial part in the judgment of an essay. The essay supervisor has an important role to play here, by directing the candidate towards an appropriate topic and by then helping the candidate to get involved in mathematics. Sadly it appears that this does not always happen and sometimes it is doubtful even that both people have read the subject criteria of assessment. (This criticism has to be made, despite the author of this report being well aware of the demands on teachers and the probable imbalance of essay supervision among the teaching staff.)

The hardest part of an essay is formulating the research question. Assessment Criterion A has the words, *clearly and precisely stated*, *sharply focused* and *effective treatment*. The third requirement is much easier to achieve if candidates are successful in the first two. Then, good marks on criteria B, C, D and E are much easier to collect. The abstract, marked against criterion F, is the first port of call for an examiner reading the essay and it should be given very careful consideration. The last general criteria, holistic judgment, allows examiners to reward candidates for such qualities as insight, flair and initiative. When the essay is well formulated and focused these qualities are easier to display and reward, as indeed they were in the better essays.

As hinted above, when marking the essays under the subject specific criteria, the examiners frequently feel that they are assessing the performance of the supervisor as well as the candidate. Candidates score poorly on these criteria when there is little mathematics, only elementary mathematics, irrelevant mathematics and mathematical errors. These aspects of an essay should be picked up by the supervisor and not allowed to be present when the essay is submitted. Once again many supervisors make no comment at all on the essay cover, other than the time spent with the candidate, and in many cases this is a very short time. What are examiners to make of the absence of supervisor comments/views? Of course the majority of essays score well on the assessment of the mathematical content, both the candidate and the supervisor doing a good job, making it disappointing that others fail in this respect.

When writing reports such as this there is a tendency to dwell on the negatives and the poor essays. The list of recommendations that follows, collected from the examiners, may appear to continue this tendency

and for that reason I end the main text of the report with a very positive conclusion. In general, reading and marking extended essays in mathematics is a very enjoyable experience, providing rewards of an intellectual and entertaining type that the marking of examinations cannot do. I encourage candidates, and teachers, to get involved in the writing of these essays for very similar reasons. I will explore the possibility of making available, on an annual basis and as a resource to schools, a list of mathematics essay titles that have been chosen. A final comment, from the examiner who marked those essays that were written in Spanish. As was the case last year, but not in years previous to it, these essays were good and above average.

Suggestions and recommendations from examiners.

1. Candidates

- (i) Listen to and seriously consider the advice given to you by your supervisor.
- (ii) Ensure that there is a clear statement of the research question. This will not only be rewarded when the essay is marked, it will help you to remain focused and for the essay to be well structured.
- (iii) Avoid merely giving descriptions of episodes in the history of mathematics, especially rewrites of passages from popular texts, that do not allow you to demonstrate an understanding of the mathematics.
- (iv) Make your conclusions explicit and remember the importance of the abstract.
- (v) Avoid “padding”, a real irritant to examiners.
- (vi) Last but not least, do some mathematics when working on your essay.

2. Supervisors

- (i) Provide guidance on the appropriateness of titles that the candidates may choose.
- (ii) Encourage candidates in the use of resources but ensure that they are clear on the requirements to recognise and state their sources.
- (iii) Provide sufficient time for support and liaison, especially in the early stages of the essay’s writing.
- (iv) Explain carefully to the candidate the purpose of the abstract. (Look at assessment criteria F)

Visual Arts

Range and suitability of work submitted

Essays dealt with questions and topics ranging from traditional European “fine arts,” to popular forms of visual culture (comics, fashion design, graffiti, etc.) and, unfortunately I think, to a lesser extent with the art and architecture of indigenous and non-western societies. Most of the essays were dependent on books and library-based research and in many cases were, as some examiners commented, “pedestrian,” “tedious and routine.” Essays dealing with popular visual culture, although welcome, were sometimes problematic, as these subjects require maturity, and access to literature in cultural studies, which is often lacking in secondary schools. The most successful essays in all areas were well focused and often involved local topics and questions, visits to the site of the study, original visual analysis, and interviews with people directly involved with the area of study. In contrast to those essays entirely researched in the library, with no primary sources consulted, these original, probing, opinionated and fresh essays exhibited a high level of personal engagement. As one examiner reported: “Perhaps the most frequent misunderstanding of the requirements occurs with the numerous “studies of an artist” [usually Western], in which largely biographical material is thinly disguised by brief reference to “influences” in order to prop up a [somewhat] superficial research question.” Where visual material is being used, it is increasingly being used to support an argument, but, in a subject named “*Visual Arts*” examiners were amazed to see some essays submitted that lacked any visual material or visual analysis!

Candidates performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

In most essays the research question has become more visible, although sometimes, despite being mentioned in the abstract or title, the question gets lost in the body of the essay. In some cases the scope of the question is too broad. It is always a good idea to frame the title of the essay in the form of a question. Inevitably, those essays that do not foreground the question seem to end up as purely descriptive essays, with little discursive analysis. Within a large field (e.g. “surrealism,” “graffiti,” or “Islamic architecture,”) candidates should seek a more limited focused research question - some questions were too broad and not capable of analysis within 4,000 words. There are still a large number of essays submitted with trivial research questions - to which the answers are already well documented. The key to a successful essay is narrowing down the question. As one examiner commented, big questions such as “What is art?” “are addressed in books and take people like Arthur Danto their entire careers to (try to) answer.” Although few essays exceeded the 4,000 word count, a number of candidates submitted quite short essays and did not take advantage of the number of words available to develop their argument.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Candidates and their supervisors need to be aware that historical or biographical narrative approaches are probably not going to answer the research question. More critical commentary is needed. Candidates need to become more familiar with critical approaches through which they might compare and contrast the views of different critics and writers. As one examiner stated “The approach used varied from deep involvement in the issues being investigated, by ferreting out primary sources and comparing personal findings with secondary sources, to routine summaries of purely secondary sources in the library, without questioning these authorities.” By focusing on a particular issue or aspect, an essay on a well-known artist or designer

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can still be successful. Many candidates still need help to narrow the focus of their research.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Many candidates confuse description and analysis. Candidates need to support their own interpretations through reference to visual evidence, expert opinion, etc. Weaker candidates tended to simply *describe*, rather than *discuss* events.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Argument and evaluation need to be clearly referenced. To whose voice does the text belong? In general, despite having a research question clearly stated “upfront,” too many of the essays lacked an argument. There were many “chronologies,” but fewer well-argued “histories.” At all times candidates should be encouraged to answer a *question*, not simply choose a *topic*.

Criterion E Conclusion

Some essays lacked a conclusion. The best conclusions pulled any disparate threads into a clear summary, addressed the research question(s) identified at the beginning of the essay, and acknowledged any unresolved and problematic aspects.

Criterion F Abstract

The abstract should be distinct from the introduction to the essay. In some cases the abstract served only as an elaboration of the research question without giving the reader much sense of the argument and “findings” of the essay. The abstract will receive more points if the *question*, *scope* and *conclusion* are all clearly stated. Quite a few candidates did not do this. Very few candidates included a required word count with their abstract, specifying that they had written no more than 300 words.

Criterion G Formal presentation

As might be expected in the visual arts, formal presentation is usually quite well done, *with one major exception*. The majority of candidates still do not identify the sources of their visuals (i.e. where they found them). Sometimes candidates are far too reliant on only one print or Internet source for their visuals. A few candidates still submit essays without any table of contents, bibliography, or page numbers. And few candidates still need to be encouraged to proof read and edit their work more rigorously. All essays should include word counts.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

The essays that scored highly on this general criterion were well focused and often involved local topics and questions, included considerable original visual analysis, made use of interviews and/or personal observation, and exhibited overall a high level of original and personal engagement.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Personal point of view based on thorough knowledge of the visual arts aspects of the chosen topic

Although most essays revealed a personal point of view, candidates need to realise that their points of view need to be convincingly supported by written and visual evidence.

Criterion K Use of appropriate sources

As a major source the Internet has gained popularity. Books and journals are also extensively used. The point is to use a *range* of sources, and to choose a research question that can be answered with available

sources. One candidate attempted to write an essay on Leonardo da Vinci using only one book as a reference!

Criterion L Historical/socio-cultural context of the argument/evaluation

Except in the very best essays, historical/social/cultural context is sometimes treated rather superficially. Candidates need to ask more “why” questions and to situate their work within a specific socio-cultural milieu.

Recommendations for supervision of future candidates

Examiners would like to see more evidence of supervisors functioning as mentors and of candidates consulting with their supervisors. For example, early on, supervisors should review each of the required assessment criteria with candidates. Other than documenting an hour or two that they spent with a candidate, many supervisors wrote nothing on the inside cover of the essays. As one examiner commented “They seemed primarily concerned that candidates gave in work to meet deadlines.” A few supervisors and IB coordinator's also need reminding that Visual Arts essays should address questions and issues in the visual arts - not primarily literature, dance, or music.

Supervisors could provide guidance in the following areas:

- choice of questions that are meaningful and perhaps local
- approaches to text referencing. (In some schools this was impeccable, while in others candidates appeared to have received little guidance)
- choosing a variety of primary and secondary sources, including: print, visual, Internet, and direct experience
- the need to refer to visual evidence and the need to identify the published sources from which this is derived
- developing appropriate research methods
- the need for the research question/s to be clearly identified at the beginning of the essay, not lost sight of in the middle, and returned to in the conclusion
- organising their material, suggesting use of subheadings, etc.

Music

Range and suitability of the work submitted

This year there was definite broadening of topics, but the specific aspect of the subject was often either too general or ill-defined, or its treatment was not sufficiently 'musically-orientated' for a music essay.

The approach to certain essays was often inappropriate to the research question; candidates gave elementary narratives on composers, performers and general musical themes - too many failed to address analysis, argument and evaluation.

Many candidates chose topics which were totally 'book orientated'. For this type of essay, topics must be chosen which will encourage candidates to go out into the field - experiencing contact with music, musicians which is so important. Supervisors should be advised to encourage this approach, rather than the secondary sources of books, no matter how excellent.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research Question

In most cases this was very good, the question had been stated in the early part of the essay.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Approach in certain essays was at times inappropriate to the research question; candidates gave elementary narratives on composers etc.

Criterion C Analysis/evaluation

Analysis and argument continues to improve.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Generally this was completed well. There is, however, still too much biography; too much description rather than analysis and candidates must be encouraged to demonstrate an ability to view things both objectively and critically. Supervisors take note and advise.

Criterion E Conclusion

Generally most essay has acceptable conclusions.

Criterion F Abstract

Abstracts on the whole were very good.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Most candidates presented their work very well in neat format with bibliographies etc. Most were presented according to a recognised format. However, a few lacked illustrative extracts and talked about pieces they expected the examiner to know. Fewer candidates chose to attach CDs or cassettes to their essays.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Many candidates scored points for 'personal engagement' - a very good sign, but few achieved marks for

‘depth of insight’ and ‘understanding’ and very few for flair.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J & K Choice of music and method of study / Use of appropriate primary and secondary resources

Some candidates did not choose to use any music in their essays, whilst those who did mostly used scores as opposed to contact with performers/concerts, other field work etc. Some excellent highly textual (score based) analyses did not require contact with the performer. Quite a few candidates relied almost solely on secondary resources, yet there were some inventive essays that used a wide range of primary resources as well. Very often, when a personal point of view was expressed, it was not substantiated by evidence from source material.

Criterion L Description and analysis of the technical aspects of music in terms of melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, tone colour, and lyrics or text as appropriate

Most candidates to a large degree managed to use appropriate examples to illustrate their answer.

Criterion M Historical, social and cultural context

Most candidates managed to place the music in some form of context, though some were rather overdone at the expense of more detailed investigation of the topic in hand. Some were rather along the lines of a potted biography, which whilst it has its uses is not necessarily the context that is needed for the question in hand.

It is good to report that there were fewer on ‘Jazz’ generally this year, and those there were showed greater actual knowledge of their subject and were less stereotypical in their views on its origins and the issue of race.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Every year the IB extended essays appear to be improving in quality and broadening in range; much commendation is to go to all involved in the process. However, the most important thing with the extended essay is to get the research question right. Certain supervisors would be wise to read again very carefully the advice given in the extended essay handbook before allowing candidates to begin their research.

Supervisors should take pains to make sure that the candidates understand that it must be about music, should quote music, analyse music, put that music in its social and historical context, and compare that music to other music before it, contemporary with it, and where appropriate after it.

Classical Greek and Latin

Most of the work was well done, some extremely well done. This report naturally concentrates on those areas where improvement could be made, but it should not be interpreted as generally complaining. The examiners recognise the enormous labour that has been spent on the work and the difficulties many will have encountered in organising time and in finding appropriate resources.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was an astonishing range in the work submitted, though many understandably stuck to what they knew best which was, very often, Virgil's Aeneid. The choice of topic is probably the single most important factor in determining its success or failure. Some of those who chose more obscure topics found out too late that they were not equipped to deal with them, some of those who chose familiar topics found it difficult not to bore and be bored by a very unoriginal trudge through overworked questions. To succeed, candidates needed a question that they were interested in and which was within the resources of their experience and their access to the essential evidence. Candidates who chose well defined precise questions often fared better than those who attempted broader topics. Ultimately, however, the choice must be the candidate's; candidates who are passionately committed to what they are doing will always fare better provided that they do not choose a topic for which they do not have the resources.

Candidates' performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Most candidates stated their intentions clearly.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Generally well approached, but some candidates had little understanding of how to approach the topic that they had chosen. The commonest fault in essays on literature was to rely heavily on the judgements of modern scholars without ever exposing those judgements to the evidence provided by the text.

Criterion C & D Analysis/interpretation Argument/evaluation

These two criteria tended to be closely related to one another and, ultimately, to Criterion B. Poorer candidates substituted a rehearsal of what their text said for any analysis, interpretation, argument or evaluation. Good candidates revealed a passionate desire to persuade the reader of some proposition.

Criterion E Conclusion

Only the weakest candidates performed poorly here.

Criterion F Abstract

A good abstract almost always accompanied a good essay. Poor candidates wrote poor abstracts because they had very little understanding of what their conclusion was.

Criterion G Formal presentation

The commonest problem here was exceeding the word limit of 4,000 words. Please note that the Abstract and bibliography are excluded from the word count but material in footnotes is not. Otherwise, even poor

candidates could often produce an acceptable presentation.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Candidates should, before finally presenting their work, read it through quickly but thoughtfully, asking themselves whether the essay, taken as a whole, succeeds in persuading a sympathetic reader of the interest, importance and validity of its conclusions, and, if not, what steps could be taken to retrieve the situation. In the nature of things, marks in this category tend to match those in the other categories.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Knowledge and personal appreciation of the texts /sources studied.

Good candidates in this category used secondary material to provoke their own analysis of the text to support, modify or rebut what they had found in the secondary literature. Weaker candidates wrote in a way that failed to display their own personal familiarity with the text.

Criterion K Balance between exposition and analysis

Exposition and analysis should be almost inextricably bound together; too often the exposition was good but the analysis (the “So what?” question) left undone.

Criterion L Historical and/or cultural context of the argument/evaluation

Most candidates fared well here.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

One really important issue emerged which was candidates’ understanding of the purpose of footnoting. Too many seemed to think that it was a magical process to protect them from allegations of plagiarism. They should understand that if they are alluding to a well known fact, e.g. ‘Julius Caesar was born in 100 B.C.’, there is no need to acknowledge their source. If, on the other hand, they are reporting an opinion or an obscure fact, they should report their source in such a way that a reader can readily find it. A reader might, for instance, be incredulous that the scholar cited, someone well known, could possibly have said that. A reader might half remember the quotation and believe that it has been quoted misleadingly out of context. For these and for a host of other reasons, the reader might wish to go back to the original; much frustration will ensue if it has been made difficult or impossible to do so. In an international context it would be inappropriate to specify any particular style of referencing; all that is required is internal consistency and the reader’s ability to find the source easily.

Otherwise, I would only repeat what is said above that choice of topic is very important, that it is better to be too narrowly focused than not focused at all and that, above all, it should be a topic that will sustain the passionate interest of the candidate throughout.

Computer Science

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general the range and suitability of the work submitted has improved. The technical aspects addressed by the essays were also impressive and indicated some depth in understanding a computer system.

As usual an interesting range of topics were tackled. Encryption, security issues, networking and artificial intelligence were all popular.

Good titles included 'Construction of a parallel processing cluster using Apple imacs', 'Cryptography a comparison of DES and RSA cryptosystems', 'Image metamorphosis by field morphing method with Bezier curve feature specification', 'An analysis of file sizes, compression techniques with bitmap and vector graphics', 'A comparison of digital image compression techniques using fractal and wavelet algorithms' and 'A comparison of RISC and CISC computer architecture'. There were still some inappropriate information technology essays this year.

Candidate performance against each criterion

There is still a tendency for candidates to tackle broad topics and hence to have a research question that is too broad in the context of an extended essay. A well focused question makes all the difference to an essay.

The majority of the essays appropriately researched the topics, described or outlined the issues and made some general evaluations of the research question. A few candidates went beyond this and included the development of tests regarding a comparison of network models (i.e. comparing speed and accuracy), programs demonstrating a level of simulated intelligence and examples of specific security codes used to improve a network. These adding levels of actually applying the theory and demonstrating some development of the theory were examples of higher order research essays.

Too many candidates were not in fact researching a question rather collecting information on a topic. These essays were essentially descriptive with some evidence of analysis and extension of ideas.

All candidates addressed their topic but many addressed only a single aspect of their question so they were in the position of confirming not researching.

Inappropriate approaches were evident in essays that did not narrow their research to a manageable topic.

In most of the essays the use of the Internet and bibliographies were the primary source of information. Very few candidates made use of interviews, questionnaires or surveys. A lot of essays did not clearly address all the issues raised. Often more examples were needed to support the analysis and evidence was needed to back up some of the claims made.

Abstracts still need to be improved to include all the aspects required. The majority of presentations were good to excellent. Good graphics, diagrams, tables etc. were included and sources were clearly identified.

Conclusions should contain questions to unresolved problems. A good conclusion is one that poses a question that gives rise to other research projects, other essays. These new essays will broaden the scope;

allow a deeper insight into the research problem. The questions that rose in the conclusion are the starting point for other extended essays.

The subject specific criteria is where most candidates lost marks. Obviously the inappropriate information technology essays scored badly here. A lot of candidates lacked critical insight in analysis of the role of the computer system, the input, process and output. Much more could have been said about computer architecture. Often coding and experiments were carried out but not included in the appendix, as they should be.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Candidates should be encouraged to select titles and topics that would allow them to focus on a pertinent research question. If the objectives are clearly stated, the development of the essay should be a straightforward issue.

It is important that the candidate has a clearly focused research question both on paper and in their head before they embark on collecting information. This way it is less likely that they will produce irrelevant material.

There were some cases where the teacher recorded that they spent little or no time with the candidate. This is unwise as a good extended essay is difficult for candidates to produce at this age and they do need guidance to prevent potentially good candidates producing mediocre essays.

Supervisors are strongly advised to spend time with their candidates and to write comments in the space provided on the cover sheet to help examiners in their evaluation.

Theatre Arts

Range and suitability of the work submitted

There was the customary range of topics, and approaches to them, ranging as usual from the bland to the extraordinary - it's always remarkable how enthused some candidates can become about esoteric topics, as well as those who approach what seem like stale ideas with the freshness of a first encounter. Sadly, the converse is true - though there are probably fewer than before, there are still those who are simply summarising secondary sources, or even worse, those who seem to be trying to offload lightly recycled work - these are very obvious, and very badly received !

At the same time, there is no predicting what will make a topic, per se, successful or not. A good variety of 'World Theatre' topics has emerged, sometimes drawing to great effect on the local theatre scene, and making good use therefore of primary sources. Essays have also tended to have narrower topics - this can very helpful to strong and weak candidates.

Hopefully this report will be read by all supervisors who are supervising an Extended Essay in Theatre Arts for the first time, as well as old-timers, so it probably worth bluntly restating, again, some old truths:

'Film', 'Media Studies', 'Performing Arts' of some kind are not Theatre. 'Dance' has to be very carefully considered to make it fit the criteria. If a play is studied, it needs to be as a script (theatrical) not a text (literary). The history of a theatre / tradition may not be a theatrical topic. And essays can only be marked by the given criteria - very careful attention must be paid to the subject specific criteria in the choice of topic.

Candidates' performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research Question

This component of the essay is key, since it underpins the whole essay and is explicitly linked to multiple criteria. Supervisors should ensure that research questions are at least serviceable - if in doubt, at the very least ensure they are in the form of an answerable question - this will focus the weaker candidates, and can sometimes help stronger ones. Research questions need not be questions as such, but it's a very good starting point.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Criterion B is obviously predicated on A (which underlines the importance of the previous criterion). Candidates with good research questions were usually poised to gain at least two points against this criterion. Some thought needs to be given to ensure that the approach is appropriate to the research question; it would be worth considering how well each of several different approaches might work, instead of automatically selecting one by default.

Criterion C Analysis / Interpretation

Some candidates failed sufficiently to develop an analysis or interpretation; in such cases, candidates often defaulted to reproducing the research. Candidates and supervisors are reminded that competency is rewarded with 3 of 4 marks when it comes to this criterion. Interpretation matters - again, candidates might consider different interpretations instead of just choosing the one which supported their initial hypothesis -

or prejudice.

Criterion D Argument / Evaluation

Many essays had some success at least with this criterion, which assesses the presence of good arguments and substantiated evaluation. Once again, a poor or missing research questions takes its toll in this criterion. Candidates need reminding that a mass of collected information is only about a third of the work of an essay.

Criterion E Conclusion

Essays that included good research questions usually scored well on this criterion. Candidates and supervisors are reminded that extended essays require conclusions of some kind. The conclusion is also required in F. Unfortunately, many essays had conclusions which were rhetorical, expressions of enthusiasm about the topic, rather than the goal or destination of the essay. Note this is also an opportunity for candidates to recognise the limitations of their work, or suggest where else they could go after this.

Criterion F Abstract

Distressingly, and pointlessly, many essays failed to satisfy the criteria. Note that two marks of two simply require three straightforward components, clearly stated: the research question, the scope, and the conclusion. It is not an exercise in summary, but a way to point the reader's attention at the important aspects, aims, and accomplishments of the research.

Criterion G Formal Presentation

It is reasonably easy to score 2 or 3 marks for this criterion, and there is a lot of guidance in the general criteria. The better candidates make good use of illustration with clear labelling and explanations. Bibliographies are usually fairly well done. Citation/attribution is important. Appendices are not simply a place to deposit all the spare information the candidates have collected and cannot bear to throw away.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Theatre essays are often written by real enthusiasts, and are a great pleasure to read. The rubric makes clear what ingredients are taken into account: 'personal engagement' is often very much in evidence, 'context' sometimes less so.

Subject specific criteria

Criterion J Personal point of view, based on thorough knowledge of the theatrical aspects of the topic

In many cases, candidates did not sufficiently grapple with 'theatrical aspects'. The most common mistake involved writing about plays, but treating such scripts as works of literature, and leaving aside any conception of theatre or 'theatrical aspects'. The best essays were grounded in theatre, and developed a personal response to the subject.

Criterion K Effects of the research findings on the practice of the theatre form investigated

This has been a problem for many - it explicitly requires candidates to relate their research to the practice of a theatre form - and many research questions simply did not lend themselves to that. Other candidates had accumulated a great deal of theoretical argument, without saying how it might affect what one does in theatre.

Criterion L Historical / Socio-cultural context of the argument / evaluation

The extended essay requires 'historical/socio-cultural context'; candidates who ignored the criterion were

not able to score well. Good research coupled with 'critical and systematic analysis' lead to good results for this criterion. Again, some research questions simply do not lend themselves to high scores here - how does one really put an investigation of sound equipment, or lighting, into historical context without a rather strained effort?

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Candidates and supervisors really need to have the criteria to hand throughout the process, and keep referring to them.

Probably the bulk of the supervisor's time with the candidate is near the start of the process, choosing the research question. After that, there needs to be contact to encourage, support, point towards resources - and to keep referring to the criteria.

Any research question should be tested against the criteria in terms of whether it can gain marks - particularly the subject specific criteria. Nobody wants to see formulaic essays emerging, but equally no-one wants to see candidates undertaking major projects with energy and enthusiasm, and scoring poorly. There are many many ways to be successful within the constraints of the task.

Supervisors could expect to spend 2 - 4 hours with a candidate, depending on whether the school they are in is systematically teaching research skills or not. If there is a nominal 40 hours to be spent on the process by the candidate, it is probably unrealistic for the supervisors to be recording 20 or more hours of contact time with their candidates.

Supervisors are strongly encouraged to fill out the comment section on page two of the Extended Essay cover booklet; supervisors are reminded that criteria H, holistic judgment, provides the marker with license to take such observations into account. Nothing is ever lost by making comments here; much can be gained.

World Religions

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The vast majority of extended essays submitted under world religions during this session were fully suitable for this subject area and component. Except for a small minority of essays which adopted either a historical or a sociological (and, at times, a political) approach, all the topics chosen dealt with aspects of religion and religions. There was an extremely wide range of topics chosen, above and beyond what was the case in past sessions, and increasingly the topics are very sharply focused and well supported by documentary evidence. All these are excellent features of what was a quite good sample of extended essays which show general improvement over past sessions.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General Criteria

Many candidates scored average to high marks on all the General Criteria, with some differences being noted between schools, candidates and –especially- criteria. To this latter effect it is to be noted that the best overall performances were provided on the criteria of research question, analysis and interpretation, argument and evaluation, formal presentation and holistic judgment. Conversely, as outlined below, the criteria that produced the weakest results were those bearing on approach, conclusion and abstract.

Criterion A Research question

As stated above, the research question is increasingly focused and well chosen. The vast majority of research questions were clearly and precisely stated either in the title or in the early part of the essay. There were no truly unacceptable topics, that is those that either fall outside the realm of world religions, or else are too broad to be handled within the word limit. In the former sense, just a few topics were borderline, that is placing religion within other general contexts such as history, folklore or world politics. In the latter sense there were very few excessively vast topics such as general comparisons between major religions or the attempt at treating a major doctrinal or basic aspect of any particular religion. As opposed to past sessions, popular topics such as the role of women in Islam, the figure of Christ or pagan beliefs were much less prevalent. Conversely, there was greater interest in more focused areas such as stigmata, Scientology, Latter-day Saints and any practical aspect of religion that has a bearing on the beliefs and behaviour of humans in present-day society.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

As stated above, the approach to the research question was not always adequate, although most essays adopted an acceptable and indeed a highly adequate approach. That is to say that most essays appropriately addressed the specific research question, and usually the development of the topic, including the collection of relevant sources (overwhelmingly secondary sources, abundantly used and well cited), was more than adequate. A minority of candidates adopted an inappropriate approach, usually by basing their essays on personal beliefs and experiences, rather than on scientific evidence as brought out by the careful study of information or cogent arguments and interpretations.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Competent analysis was carried out in most essays, and a few candidates showed great skill and thorough understanding of their chosen topic. As compared with past sessions, materials, sources and other types of evidence were usually abundant, well integrated within the essay, systematically examined and very well

quoted. As stated above, most supporting material came in the form of secondary sources; there were very few instances of primary research. Also, as a deviance from past sessions, there were very few illustrations, but this is not necessarily a negative aspect as the tendency in the past was to include different types of representations that were not always relevant to the essay topic.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

This was another strong area, although understandingly candidates of this age usually lack the maturity to develop truly cogent and original arguments and the general tendency was to accept the ideas put forth in the sources used at face value. A few candidates did however rise above the mundane and develop, organise and express very convincing arguments and produce fully substantiated evidence leading to good conclusions.

Criterion E Conclusion

As in past sessions, this was a weak area, with three major flaws being quite prevalent among the extended essays. First, a large number of essays did not include the conclusion as a separate section at the end of the essay, with a clearly enunciated title. It is true that it is not strictly necessary to set the conclusion apart as a separate section according to the guidelines, but it is usually or almost always convenient to do so. Second, most conclusions were excessively short and went no further than to merely summarise the preceding information or to make some sort of general remark to the effect that the analysis of the essay upheld the initial approach and ideas. Third, it was difficult at times to ascertain if there was really a conclusion; that is to say that many essays simply came to an end with no concluding remarks whatsoever.

Criterion F Abstract

As stated above, this was another weak area. This is incomprehensible because there are very clear guidelines regarding this criterion, yet many candidates failed to provide the three aspects that are necessary to score full marks -nature of the research question, scope of the investigation and conclusions reached- usually the latter two aspects. It is true that all the essays did in fact include an abstract, but many were simply general summaries of the main topic, usually to the effect of why this was an important research area. As well, many candidates took advantage of the abstract to make strong personal statements regarding the chosen topic; this is not acceptable. Also, abstracts tended to be very short, going little further than merely stating the research question and the reason why it was chosen.

Criterion G Formal presentation

The formal presentation of almost all the essays was good to excellent. Candidates for the most part fully comply with the formal requirements regarding layout, table of contents, references, bibliography, appendices, etc. Very strong areas were the quoting of authors and sources, and the general neatness and well organised nature of the essays.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Many candidates scored well on this criterion. It is clear that from the point of view of personal engagement there was a great deal of enthusiasm and input, although fortunately this led to good analytical studies and not to excessively personal and often biased (non-scientific) narrations. Initiative was also very present in many essays, coupled with good understanding. Insight and flair may have been more lacking, but this is understandable with candidates of this age. Indeed, as a summary of all the above statements, the vast majority of essays were very good, well written and most enjoyable to read.

Subject Specific Assessment Criteria

Most candidates scored well also on the subject-specific criteria. Areas of improvement as compared to

past sessions are the balance between the descriptive/narrative material and analytical material, and awareness and understanding of the world religions topic. The other two criteria –objective treatment and sensitivity- fell among the same lines as in past sessions, with the vast majority of candidates faring well, and only a small minority falling quite short of the required standard, as outlined below.

Criterion J Descriptive/narrative and analytical material

As stated above, there was usually a fairly thorough analysis of the descriptive/narrative material. Especially, as compared to past sessions, there was a greater abundance of such material used, and by and large the candidates made good use by incorporating it in an adequate manner and making some sort of evaluation, although not always in great depth.

Criterion K Objective treatment of the topic

Most candidates achieved an adequate to high degree of objectivity in the treatment of their chosen topic, including those bearing on delicate areas of world religions. A significant number of candidates, however, were not fully objective and a few bordered on sectarianism and based their essays on slanted views and opinions, not upheld nor substantiated by research or scientific evidence.

Criterion L Awareness and understanding of the topic

As stated above, awareness and understanding of the topic were adequate, and in a significant number of cases, thorough and extensive. There was usually a –logical- direct correlation between the depth of awareness and understanding, and the amount and good use of sources selected. The more shallow essays were almost always based on a few sources, or none at all, or else on materials of a general nature drawn from magazines, the Internet or even television programmes.

Criterion M Sensitivity in the treatment of the topic

In line with what is stated regarding the criterion on objectivity, most candidates showed a high degree of sensitivity in the treatment of the topic, and only a minority of candidates showed infrequent signs of sensitivity. It is not a coincidence that these are the same candidates who based their essays from a stance that also showed a lack of objectivity.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Supervisors are to be congratulated for the many improvements noted regarding the World Religions Extended Essay component during this session. This is a clear reflection on their own good work as brought out by the generally very good results provided by their candidates.

From the point of view of the essays, within a highly acceptable framework, there are certain areas still in need of improvement. Apart from the comments made in the preceding sections, a list of suggestions is made in past reports; supervisors would do well to refer to those for further guidance. Still relevant to the present session, supervisors are encouraged to:

- not allow candidates to submit work that has not been supervised sufficiently and to not limit their supervision of essays to just a short interview
- be stricter by not allowing only marginal or borderline, or excessively broad, World Religion research topics or approaches
- advice candidates to be respectful, precise and gender sensitive in their general language
- have candidates avoid an approach that is too confessional or apologetic to the point of lacking objectivity

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- Advise candidates to question their own findings and attempt or indicate further areas of exploration
- ensure that the field of World Religion is properly addressed, especially with regard to focus, content, sources, methods and conclusions
- teach and transmit the basic canons and skills of scholarly and academic research to the candidates.

As a closing remark, it is to be noted that supervisors are invited to write in more comments on their candidates' work, as in this session many supervisors failed to comply with this suggestion. Comments are always welcome and useful when assessing the worth of an essay, in particular the holistic criteria.

All in all, however, a very strong performance was put forth and there is a great deal of satisfaction drawn from reading and marking very interesting and sometimes outstanding and original essays in a subject area that is improving from year to year on many aspects, for which both supervisors and candidates alike are to be congratulated.

Politics

Range and suitability of the work submitted

I had begun to think that earlier problems concerning the appropriateness for Politics of some essay topics were being overcome. Not so, it seems. I saw a number of essays sent on to me by examiners that were inappropriate. This is particularly galling when the essay is a good one, or in one case an excellent one. However the range of generic skills that are required in a politics essay are clearly set out and essays have to be marked accordingly. Some candidates were over ambitious and others, for a variety of reasons no doubt, were only minimally tutored so that their topic grew out of hand and the standard of analysis suffered as a consequence. There was a time when the majority of essays were based upon an analysis of local issues and conducted through fieldwork. This kind of sourcing can be very advantageous for those with a soundly focused topic and keen analytical skills. I came across only one of these.

It has to be said though that the examiners and I found a number of topics that were by their nature peripheral to politics and some that though amenable to political analysis used no political concepts that would be a base for such analysis.

Candidate performance against each criteria

Some candidates simply do not understand the importance of the research question. Essays should be framed in the form of a clear question or hypothesis. Each of the examiners had examples of essays which did not pose a question and some which did not pose a researchable question. It is true that a good supervisor will offer corrective advice at a very early stage but clearly this isn't always happening. The suitability of the research question seems critical to the framing of the abstract and to forming a genuine conclusion that completes and contextualises the discussion. If the research question was weak or even nonexistent then it becomes difficult or even impossible properly to address it.

A number of candidates produced mainly descriptive, often historically descriptive essays that did not embody a very wide range of skills. Others however asked searching questions and approached them rigorously. I have been impressed by the small but increasing number of theory-based essays, several of which employed the whole range of skills to very good effect. It has to be said, however, that relatively few candidates produced balanced analyses testing alternative explanations to their own. Balance, that is to say, was not easy to come by.

The criterion of holistic judgment allows markers to reward properly those essays that go well beyond sound, even comprehensive description. In my experience examiners make good use of this criterion.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Looking at the material from the examiners, together with my own marking experience leads me to conclude that each of us tends to find that the subject specific criteria in the assessment are usually the weakest element in that assessment. Probably many of the supervisors are not Politics specialists. I have said previously that I would not necessarily expect *political science* criteria of analysis to be used but that should be an understanding of political concepts, culture and institutions to inform the discussion. I should conclude by saying that my colleagues and I believe that greater attention should be paid by supervisors and candidates, at the beginning of their research, so that candidates concentrate on what is specifically

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political (in the broad sense) about their research topic. Some examiners would want to go further in their criticism of lack of input from supervisors and I am clear in my own mind that the time spent with candidates, as recorded on the inside front page, is significantly less than was the general case some years ago. I am persuaded, though, that a minority of candidates insisted on going their own way and eschewed advice. Nevertheless, the discrepancy of hours spent (or at least recorded as having been spent) with candidates is a usually a key indicator of the strength of the essay.

As always, however, each of us saw essays that were truly impressive in every respect and many that represented achievements of which candidates and their teachers could be proud. On the other hand I saw two examples of plagiarism, one of which was the worst I have ever seen. The increasing use of the Internet makes plagiarism a real worry. Moreover, it concerns me that candidates sometimes consult web sites at the expense of books and this kind of sourcing tends to reinforce the tendency not to contextualise and argue a case in more general terms.

Peace and Conflict Studies

Range and suitability of the work submitted

This session 182 candidates from 85 schools submitted extended essays in this subject, an increase of 56 on last year's entry. Many of the candidates' problems arise from the fact that Peace and Conflict Studies is a School Based Subject which most of them have not studied. It is essential that schools which are entering candidates for extended essays in the subject should obtain a copy of the syllabus from IBCA and that supervisors should make sure that candidates check that their chosen topic is relevant to the syllabus. They should also check that the topic will allow them to satisfy the various Subject Assessment Criteria set out in the subject guidelines for Peace and Conflict Studies in the IB's Guide to The Extended Essay. Once again a significant number of topics failed to do this and, in these cases, scores against the subject assessment criteria were low.

The chosen topics covered every area of the syllabus. Most were suitable in the sense that they fell within the scope of the syllabus. Some, however, were too broad to qualify as 'an in-depth study of a limited topic', given the imposed limit of 4000 words. The Arab – Israeli Conflict remains a perennial choice. Each year essays on this topic range from those with an impossibly wide approach, to those which have been suitably limited and focus on a particular aspect of this complex subject. In the first category was an essay on "The origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict" which began with Abraham and ended with a superficial survey of the causes of the wars since 1948. In the second category was a study of the Palestinians refugee problem: "Can the Israelis and the Palestinians reach a compromise on the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland?". Examples of suitable and focused topics on other subject areas were: "A study of employment opportunities of second generation immigrant Turks in Berlin". "Non violence in the International context and its chance of bringing about a peaceful end to the Sino-Tibetan conflict." Finally, examples of two topics which were unsuitable for Peace and Conflict Studies: "Did the liberation and changing role of women between 1900 and 1920 have an effect on the evolution of their underwear?"; and "Woodstock as a reflection of the 1960s". Other topics could have been made more suitable and appropriate with guidance and advice but showed inadequate understanding of both subject and general assessment criteria and of aspects of research essay presentation requirements.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General Criteria

Criteria A Research Question

Candidates must realise that it is not enough to state the research question on the title page and / or in the Abstract. To score the 2 marks available against Criterion A, the research question must also be stated, clearly and precisely, in the early part of the essay. A significant number of candidates fail to do this.

Criteria B Approach

This must be 'appropriate to the research question'. Provided this has been clearly stated (see A) the approach is usually appropriate.

Criteria C Analysis

Most candidates recognise the need to avoid a simple narrative approach. An element of narrative will be required in any topic; but the ideal is to achieve a sound balance between descriptive and analytical elements and only a few show sufficient analytical skill to earn the full 4 marks available here. Read the

‘achievement level’ descriptions carefully.

Criteria D Argument

This is another criterion where the marks awarded depend on the argument’s relevance ‘to the research question’. Where this has not been stated clearly, candidates are unlikely to achieve the highest levels.

Criteria E Conclusion

Most essays include a conclusion of sorts. Many do not achieve level 2, however, because the research question has not been clearly stated or because they fail to summarise their argument in a way which confirms the conclusion they support.

Criteria F Abstract

A high proportion of the candidates are awarded ‘0’ here because one of the following is missing: the research question; the scope of the investigation; the conclusion reached.’ A few candidates were awarded ‘0’ because the abstract exceeded 300 words in length.

Criteria G Formal Presentation

Many candidates obviously take great pride in presenting their essays as professionally as possible. Again, however, there are too many cases of marks being lost for avoidable reasons such as: the details needed for items listed in the bibliography are not always complete; a table of contents is omitted; the pages are not numbered; references are not always given fully and consistently according to an accepted format; the word limit of 4000 is exceeded. One candidate who recorded his word count as ‘3999’ actually wrote in excess of 5500 words. Another candidate included 56 pages of Appendices and informed the examiner that reading 35 of these was ‘essential to a full understanding of the argument’. Candidates should be warned that ‘examiners are not required to read the appendices’, and that ‘care should, therefore, be taken to include all information of direct relevance to the analysis and argument in the main part of the essay.’ (See page 13 of the IB guide ‘The Extended Essay’.)

Criteria H Holistic Judgement

An encouraging number of candidates were awarded higher achievement level marks for demonstrating a selection of the qualities listed in the introduction to this criterion. These qualities include ‘personal involvement, initiative, depth of understanding, insight, inventiveness and flair.’ Clearly the work of some candidates has matured considerably as a result of the discipline of the research approach and the organisation of a large amount of information that they have collected and investigated.

Subject assessment criteria

Criteria J The topic within a wide understanding of peace and conflict

Most candidates provided an adequate context, but in many cases, more could have been done to relate the study to a particular aspect of peace, conflict / violence, social justice etc., identifying why the issue / topic was important.

Criteria K Knowledge and understanding of theories about the causes of peace and conflict

This is undoubtedly the main weakness of the majority of essays submitted in this subject. Few candidates attained the highest level of achievement against this criterion and many did not gain a single point. Many books and studies have been written on such theories but few candidates included in their bibliographies any sources of this kind appropriate to their chosen topics.

Criteria L Awareness and understanding of the different roles, interpretations and actions of the

conflicting parties; and criteria M Solutions to conflict situations

In the case of these two criteria much depends on the topic chosen by the candidate and the opportunities that this gives them to identify the conflicting parties and their roles (Criterion L); and possible solutions to the conflict situation under investigation. Clearly candidates should have such considerations in mind before they finally decide on the topic of their extended essay.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The guidance and advice given to candidates by their supervisors is crucial in the writing of extended essays. It is essential that supervisors should read carefully the section on Supervision in the IB Guide: The Extended Essay (pages 5 and 6) where their responsibilities for guiding and advising candidates are set out clearly. Supervisors should ensure that candidates have access to a copy of the Syllabus to Peace and Conflict Studies and to the IB's guide 'The Extended Essay'. They must ensure that the candidate is thoroughly conversant with all the pertinent information in the guide. They *must* provide advice and guidance in the following areas:

- defining a suitable topic
- formulating a precise research question
- gaining access to appropriate resources
- being familiar with techniques for gathering and analysing information and evidence
- identifying and using an accepted method for acknowledging sources
- writing an abstract.

It would also help candidates to avoid unnecessary loss of marks if supervisors drew their attention to the main reasons why marks are regularly forfeited. These include failure to:

- include a table of contents
- number the pages
- state the research question precisely in the early part of the essay
- include in the abstract each of the following: the research question; the scope of the investigation and the conclusion
- provide all the details required for the sources listed in the bibliography (author; title, publisher, date and place of publication)
- acknowledge sources by use of a standard, accepted system
- keep within the word limit for the abstract (300 words) and/or the essay as a whole (4000 words).

In particular supervisors should offer guidance and advice about the formulation of a clearly started Research Question.