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EXTENDED ESSAY AND TOK REPORTS

May 2003

Examination Session

Extended Essay and TOK Reports

May 2003
examination session

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**Diploma Points Matrix &
Extended Essay Grade Boundaries**

The diploma points matrix

		Theory of Knowledge					Not Submitted
		Excellent A	Good B	Satisfactory C	Mediocre D	Elementary E	
Extended Essay	Excellent A	3	3	2	2	1	N
	Good B	3	2	1	1	0	N
	Satisfactory C	2	1	1	0	0	N
	Mediocre D	2	1	0	0	0	N
	Elementary E	1	0	0	0	Failing condition	N
	Not submitted	N	N	N	N	N	N

TOK points

Points awarded for the externally assessed component, Part 1, The Essay on a Prescribed Title (40 points) and for the internally assessed component, Part 2, The Presentation (20 points), are combined to give a total out of 60. The grade boundaries are then applied, to determine the band (A to E) to which the candidate's performance in TOK belongs.

The band descriptors are:

- A** Work of an **excellent** standard
- B** Work of a **good** standard
- C** Work of a **satisfactory** standard
- D** Work of a **mediocre** standard
- E** Work of an **elementary** standard.

The band descriptor is used both to determine the contribution of TOK to the overall Diploma score and to provide the basis of reporting to schools on each candidate's TOK performance.

TOK and the Extended Essay

The performance of a candidate in both Diploma requirements, Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay, is determined according to the quality of the work, based on the application of the IB assessment criteria. It is described by one of the band descriptors A–E. Using the **two** performance levels and the Diploma Points Matrix, a maximum of **three** Diploma points can be awarded for a candidate's combined performance.

A candidate who, for example, writes a **satisfactory** Extended Essay and whose performance in Theory of Knowledge is judged to be **good** will be awarded 1 point, while a candidate who writes a **mediocre** Extended Essay and whose performance in Theory of Knowledge is judged to be **excellent** will be awarded 2 points.

A candidate who fails to submit a TOK essay, or who fails to make a presentation, will be awarded N for TOK, will score no points, and will not be awarded a Diploma.

Performance in both Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay of an **elementary** standard is a failing condition for the award of the Diploma.

Extended essay grade boundaries

E (Elementary)	0-8
D (Mediocre)	9-16
C (Satisfactory)	17-24
B (Good)	25-29
A (Excellent)	30-36

Theory of Knowledge

Grade Band	Essay	Presentation	Total
Elementary [E]	0-13	0-8	0-21
Mediocre [D]	14-19	9-12	22-31
Satisfactory [C]	20-24	13-15	32-39
Good [B]	25-30	16-18	40-48
Excellent [A]	31-40	19-20	49-60

Special thanks are extended to all assistant examiners, team leaders and deputy chief assessors involved in both these sessions for their good, hard work. Also for taking the time to write what in many cases were detailed reports including personal judgements and suggestions for improving important aspects of TOK learning and assessment. Their reports form the basis of what follows.

This May session the candidature was up 14% from last year, with a total of 21,962 candidates involved; 20340 essays were in English; 402 in French and 1220 in Spanish. The November 2002 session saw a 1% increase from the previous year, with 1367 essays written in English, 1 in French and 1028 in Spanish (total candidature 2396).

The component grade boundaries set last May were revisited by a team led by the Chief Assessor during the June 2003 Grade Award meeting. The outcome is a small adjustment to the component boundaries from grade C upwards. The lower boundaries of A and B are now slightly more generous for the essays, and slightly less generous for the presentations. The changes acknowledge what has been felt by many to be the case, namely that it is inherently more difficult to produce excellent or good work when six criteria have to be satisfied (as opposed to three, in the previous scheme). The changes also produce a more intuitively satisfying distribution of grades for the presentation component. The overall grade boundaries remain the same as in May and November 2002.

Administrative and clerical procedures

Schools' adherence to administrative and clerical procedures seems to be improving. Most materials from schools arrived by the stipulated deadline, most TK/CS forms were stapled to the essays and completely and correctly filled in, and candidates and teachers signed most of these.

In a minority of schools, however, these basic procedures were not adhered to. Packets reaching their destination late, in a few cases as much as weeks after the deadline, caused significant problems. Schools are reminded that late arrivals are a problem not only for the particular examiner concerned, but also can complicate the work of an entire examining team.

Schools are also reminded that teachers have been given the responsibility of signing TK/CS forms, as a measure to ensure that candidates' work is their own. Teachers are requested to take this task most seriously in order to prevent and correct cases of plagiarism in the first instance, and to promote candidates' personal reflection on knowledge issues. From this latter point of view, a few assessors reported their disappointment at finding that dozens of candidates in a school had written versions of "the same essay", most obviously an aberration from the very spirit of Theory of Knowledge and a practise that should be avoided under all circumstances.

General comments regarding the quality of work

Many assessors commended the extraordinary work presented by some candidates and some schools. These essays were "truly outstanding and a pleasure to read" and demonstrated great sensitivity towards problems of knowledge and a sophisticated, rigorous and critical treatment of them. It is noteworthy that in comparison to 2002, far fewer assessors reported finding a "mechanical mode of thinking and expression" in the essay.

Nonetheless, some of the problems identified in last year's report continue to be present in the work of many candidates. Stated most generally these are:

Absence of personal voice: it is crucial for teachers to stimulate the idea of TOK as, in the words of one assessor, "a personal intellectual journey." In this context, some assessors mentioned the abuse of the growing number of TOK textbooks and of quotes found on the internet (for example on truth, belief, certainty) as substitutes for thinking.

Critical analysis: attention still needs to be given to developing arguments in greater depth, envisaging and responding to counter-arguments, probing assumptions.

Absence of detailed understanding of different Areas of Knowledge: to quote one assessor, "these are often perfunctorily covered, and comparisons tend to be shallow and vague with many unquestioned assumptions".

If teachers can help candidates surmount some of these still common difficulties, it would be reasonable to expect TOK results to improve. It is with this purpose in mind that difficulties, rather than strengths, receive most attention in what follows.

Quality of work by criterion

(Teachers who are unacquainted with the May 2002 Subject Report might benefit from reading comments there regarding the quality of work by criterion.)

A: Knowledge Issues

The majority of essays explored problems of knowledge, although many candidates could do this more explicitly and self-consciously. It is not uncommon for candidates to be given fewer marks than some might expect, owing to their essay having dealt with what is no doubt a problem of knowledge but one that is not specifically related and relevant to the prescribed title that has been chosen.

B: Quality of analysis

According to one assessor, "candidates have no difficulty providing claims and taking positions, but oftentimes do not analyse reasons or arguments in favour of them". The identification and evaluation of counter-claims would seem to be the most difficult element of this descriptor for candidates to tackle successfully.

Perhaps the quality of analysis could be improved if teachers stressed to candidates, through classroom modelling and comments on their written work for example, that the statements and ideas they propose must always be justified by evidence and reasons. Ideally the evaluation of claims and counter-claims concerns not only those the candidate argues against but also, and with equal force, those he or she most ardently defends.

C: Breadth and links

Many assessors this session complained that an artificial approach to this criterion had been taken by candidates who only made mention in a list-like fashion of Ways of Knowing and/or Areas of Knowledge. In contrast, higher quality essays do not simply list the elements of the TOK diagram but instead define, explore and compare Ways of Knowing and Areas of Knowledge in a purposive manner.

Teachers would do well to encourage their candidates to select the Ways of Knowing and Areas of Knowledge that are relevant to the prescribed title they have chosen to pursue, and to develop a sustained comparison between and amongst these.

D: Structure, clarity and logical coherence

Candidates are often strong on organization, many laying out a clear thesis and anticipated organization of the essay in the first paragraph. However, in defining initial terms, weaker candidates continue to rely on dictionary definitions, despite the many philosophical limitations to this approach (amply commented on in previous reports and in Forum over the years). In addition, teachers should help candidates understand that the definition of concepts and the drawing of conceptual distinctions is not a formal aspect of a TOK essay to be undertaken in the introduction and then cheerfully ignored thereafter: conceptual clarity is an integral part of what constitutes sound analysis itself and ideally is evident in the body of the essay as well.

E: Examples

It is pleasing to be able to report that there were very few complaints this year from assessors involving the use of examples involving stereotyping and gross cultural misrepresentation. Whether this improvement stems from the nature of this year's prescribed titles or whether the TOK community has become more conscious in this respect is perhaps too early to say, though one does hope this positive trend continues.

While adults and candidates might not agree on what constitutes a hackneyed example, more than a few assessors wished to see rather fewer appearances of figures like Galileo, Hitler and Stalin, at least in the clichéd guise they too frequently take. The quality of examples continues to be assisted when, according to one assessor, "examples are actual, personal and documented, for example when a candidate describes her expertise on the oboe, what happened when interviewing victims of Hiroshima, or when a candidate uses quotations from their own reading". In contrast "essays went up in flames when examples did not move beyond Hitler, hypothetical cases and hot stoves" in the words of another, disillusioned assessor.

F: Factual accuracy and reliability

Schools seem to be slowly improving their responsiveness to the requirements of criterion F. More and more schools' candidates are providing bibliographies. Improved attention should be given to the use of a standard, consistent format. In particular, additional care should be given to connect material within the text of the paper with the sources identified in the bibliography.

Some candidates seem to believe that it is acceptable to quote someone without citing the source, as long as they have put the quotation in inverted commas. Teachers should make clear to their candidates that this is unacceptable practice.

Analysis by Prescribed Title

Title 1: *Should a knower's personal point of view be considered an asset in the pursuit of knowledge, or an obstacle to be overcome?*

Assessors commented on the many thoughtful essays that were generated by this title. Stronger candidates were aware of and able to make distinctions between point of view or reasoned position, subjectivity and bias. Weaker candidates tended to use the three categories as synonyms for one another. Stronger candidates were aware of and explored the fact that the word "knowledge" is not a monolithic term, whereas weaker candidates used the term as a unified category.

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The principal difficulty lay in the interpretation of “personal point of view” as equivalent to opinion or the general attitude of liking or disliking, often resulting in the simplistic, fairly shallow judgement that point of view is always an obstacle.

Title 2: *“What I tell you three times is true.” (Lewis Carroll) Might this formula - or a more sophisticated version of it - actually determine what we believe to be true?*

More sophisticated answers dealt with how repetition could lead to confidence or doubt, depending on the circumstances, and with the relative strength of authority as a way of knowing. Assessors noted some confusion regarding intellectual authority and governmental authority. Weaker essays frequently took the quote literally, even to the extent of questioning whether three (rather than two) times is correct! Failure to distinguish between “is true” in the quote and “believed to be true” of the question issued in some fairly convoluted conclusions. Many essays linked the quote to the idea of advertisement or to the media, but some better ones underlined the importance of culture and social setting in shaping individuals’ ideas of reality and consequently what people believe to be true.

Some answers, particularly but not exclusively in Spanish, focussed only on induction and provided what was considered by some assessors to be a traditional philosophical exercise rather than a TOK approach to the question.

Title 3: *How can you or your society decide ethically which knowledge should or should not be pursued?*

A large number of weaker essays focussed on how ethical decisions are made generally, or else described at great length different ethical theories. The how of the question was completely neglected in many of these cases. Weaker essays tended to ignore the “knowledge” part of the question or to treat ethical issues such as cloning and 9/11, without really addressing any problem of knowledge inherent in them.

Title 4: *“We are more likely to be mistaken in our generalizations than in our particular observations.” Do you agree?*

Many assessors considered this title generally well answered. Weaker essays sometimes assumed rather than providing arguments to the effect that observations are “good” and generalisations are “bad”. Surprisingly, a large number of candidates did not link these two concepts either to perception or to reason as Ways of Knowing.

Title 5: *“What distinguishes Areas of Knowledge from one another is not how ideas are generated, but how they are evaluated.” Do you agree?*

Very few candidates chose this title. It would be interesting to know why not.

Title 6: *Evaluate the ways in which emotion might enhance and/or undermine reasoning as a Way of Knowing.*

According to one assessor, “reasoning was often undefined” and sometimes seemed to be equated to “no more than behaving calmly”. In other words the essay became one in which immediate reactions to an event were compared to more sober ones. Yet the nature of sober reasoning in TOK terms and how it might be compared to inductive or deductive logic was not approached.

Title 7: *Is it a simple matter to distinguish a scientific argument from a pseudo-scientific argument?*

Assessors read some excellent answers to this question, and many of these took care to deal in depth with specific examples of pseudo-scientific argument. Nonetheless, according to assessors, a surprising number of candidates neglected the obvious point that pseudo-scientific arguments claim or

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pretend to scientific credibility. Some answers, particularly but not exclusively written in Spanish, assumed without due argument that human or social science is by definition pseudo-scientific.

Title 8: *“God may have separated the heavens from the earth. He did not separate astronomy from marine biology.” (Jonathan Levy) To what extent are the classifications separating Areas of Knowledge justified?*

Very few candidates chose this title. It would be interesting to know why not.

Title 9: *“In science one tries to tell people, in such a way as to be understood by everyone, something that no one ever knew before. But in poetry, it’s the exact opposite.” (P A M Dirac) Do both the approaches suggested in the quotation enjoy equal success in expanding human knowledge?*

Many assessors remarked that this was perhaps the title that produced some of the most brilliant analyses. However, when treated weakly, the title was skewed to a general survey of the arts versus the sciences or focussed on the value of poetry in a general sense and missed the opportunity to use particular poems to explore the senses in which this medium has unique powers. A few assessors mentioned that the ambiguity in the question did not seem to pose a problem to any but the weakest of candidates.

Title 10: *Which sources of knowledge - books, web sites, the media, personal experience, authorities or some other - do you consider most trustworthy, and why?*

Without a doubt this was the most popular title selected by candidates and perhaps the one that was least successful in promoting good TOK thinking. Very frequently candidates just reviewed the sources in the question and made general comments about their lack of reliability without establishing at all what trustworthy knowledge might be or how we might recognize it. As one assessor remarked, these essays “often could have been written without having pursued the TOK course at all”.

English – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The work ranged as widely as in recent years, from Chaucer, Shakespeare and Cervantes to Amy Tan, Toni Morrison and Rohinton Mistry. Twentieth-century fiction proved, as usual, the most popular field: Tolkien remained a favourite author and, although not all of the essays on *The Lord of the Rings* rose above the routine, there was one analysis of its language which was outstanding. The more adventurous candidates came up with original comparisons, such as *The Joy Luck Club* and Lan Cao's *Monkey Bridge*, and tackled challenging texts like *As I Lay Dying* and *The Crying of Lot 49* with considerable success. Well-chosen and illuminating comparisons between novels produced some of the best work: there were excellent essays on language in *A Clockwork Orange* and Perec's *A Vowel*; on the grotesque in *Nicholas Nickleby* and Roald Dahl's *Mathilda*; and on novels by Victor Hugo and George Eliot. There was an artful comparison of *Jane Eyre* and *Falling Leaf*, a memoir about growing up in China in the 1930s; but another excellent essay on *Jane Eyre*, which focused on the use of setting, showed what can be achieved by a sensitive close reading of a classic text in relation to a precisely defined research question. The same was true of a fine essay on 'Bad fathering in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion*'. There were far fewer essays on poetry and drama but here, too, the best students could shine: there was, for instance, an excellent study of the ghost in *Hamlet*. Shakespeare was often approached in relation to film versions of the plays and, although this is quite legitimate and can produce interesting work, candidates interested in cinema need to be steered away from writing essays that discuss films without any reference to a literary text.

Some schools and supervisors still seem unaware of the requirement that at least one of the texts discussed must have originally been written in English, and there were otherwise good essays on, for example, Kafka or magical realism in South American novels, that had to be penalized with a score of 0 for criteria J and K. There were one or two schools that served their candidates badly by guiding them all towards tackling similar questions from a narrow range of texts, often ones that had clearly been studied in class. It is also difficult to produce good essays on well-worn topics such as a comparison of *Brave New World* and *Ninety Eighty-Four*, even though dystopian fiction clearly engages the imagination of many students. In general, however, most examiners were pleased and impressed by the range of research questions attempted this year.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Most candidates were able to define their research question adequately, although there were still some topics that were framed in far too general terms. Significantly, these were invariably *not* formulated as questions: for instance 'Violence in Shakespeare's Tragedies', or 'Jane Austen and Romance'. Candidates who presented their topic as a statement or thesis rather than as a question were more liable to lose their focus, often simply asserting their thesis without analysing its implications and then reiterating it in their conclusion. Research questions that were actual questions seemed to encourage a more interrogative and analytical treatment of the texts. The best essays did not simply state the research question in the title but also made it part of the introduction.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

The approach adopted was usually sensible and appropriate, but weaker candidates often made the mistake of padding out their introduction with a potted biography of their chosen author(s). This adds nothing to the argument or to the illumination of the text and should be avoided. Another weakness of approach was an over-reliance on secondary sources, which were used as a substitute for the candidate's own reading of the primary text rather than as a source of new perspectives.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

The most common weakness here was a descriptive and expository treatment of a text rather than a sensitive and perceptive literary analysis: i.e. too much character description and plot summary instead of an examination of how the text works. The discussion of poetry suffered particularly in this respect, often amounting to little more than a paraphrase of the ideas presented in a poem.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

The better candidates had a clear line of argument, though sometimes the effort at clarity led to a certain repetitiveness. A common weakness lay in the inadequate use of supporting evidence from the primary text: ideas would be asserted but not properly backed up and substantiated by quotation and analysis. Only the best candidates were able to use close reading effectively to support an argument. Over-reliance on secondary sources was another weakness, leading to arguments that were little more than a collage of ideas and opinions derived from published criticism.

Criterion E Conclusion

Most essays presented a conclusion, often marked out by a sub-heading, and the best were thoughtful and aware of unresolved questions. However, some conclusions merely stated the obvious, or confined themselves to a couple of casual sentences, or simply repeated points made in the introduction rather than producing a new synthesis.

Criterion F Abstract

There was some improvement in the writing of the Abstract though there were still candidates who treated it as a kind of introduction or who failed to define the three required elements clearly enough. Weak Abstracts sometimes consisted simply of cut and paste sections from the introduction and conclusion.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Formal presentation was generally good and often excellent. The main weakness was the setting out of references for quotations, which was often sloppy and inconsistent. Candidates should note that the standard contraction of 'page' is p. not pg. Bibliographies sometimes failed to mention all the works referred to in the essay and often failed to give the original date of publication for classic texts. Some candidates overdid the use of sub-headings, which, if too numerous, have the effect of fragmenting the argument.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Very few candidates achieved 4 for this criterion, which is where outstandingly engaged and original work is rewarded and the routine essay on Jane Austen's heroines or dystopian fiction receives a low mark.

Subject assessment criteria

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

Most candidates showed a sufficient knowledge of the texts as far as plot and characters were concerned, but had a weaker grasp of historical context (far too many considered Jane Austen a Victorian novelist, for instance). Thus sometimes understanding did not go beyond the superficial, although the best students had clearly read carefully and reflected deeply in arriving at an understanding that took proper account of the formal properties and historical moment of the primary text.

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

Essays that relied too heavily on secondary sources and substituted received opinion for personal response were penalized under this criterion. Some candidates appeared ashamed to show their personal responses, which were concealed behind a formal and impersonal academic style that drained the life from the essay. At the other extreme there were occasional examples of empty enthusing

without any intellectual substance; but many candidates were able to steer a middle course and present their personal reading of a text in a measured and persuasive way.

Criterion L Use of language appropriate to a literary essay

A wide range of writing was displayed in this year's essays, from the barely literate to the polished and assured; but most essays were competently written, and some were fluent and eloquent and a pleasure to read. Two common and opposite weaknesses were, on the one hand, a prolix and convoluted style that strove to be academic and only succeeded in being opaque; and on the other, a casual colloquial register that was inappropriate for literary criticism.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

This year for the first time examiners received some essays that contained the supervisor's detailed marginal comments and, in some cases, the supervisor's marks entered in the columns on the back of the cover-sheet. Although it was good to see the care these supervisors had taken over their students' essays, the final draft of the essay should, of course, be submitted as a clean copy and the reverse of the cover-sheet left clear for the examiners' assessment. Supervisors' comments are most welcome but should be entered in the space provided on the inside front cover.

It is important that supervisors read the *Extended Essay Guide* carefully, and this will prevent their students embarking on inappropriate topics and falling foul of the stipulation that at least one of their chosen texts must have originally been written in English. It would also be helpful to show the candidates the assessment criteria so that they understand what is required for a good essay. Guidance on the use of Internet sources would also be invaluable, since students tend to assume that the information they find there is authoritative rather than of dubious quality and questionable value. Students should also be steered away from relying too heavily and uncritically on orthodox secondary sources and encouraged to concentrate on the primary texts and to consider how they work as literature (rather than, for instance, what they tell us about social conditions or historical circumstances).

The most important aspect of supervision is, as has been stated in previous reports, helping the candidate define a manageable and productive research question, one that leads into a close examination of a text or texts and not away from the text into biography or towards large and questionable generalizations about, for example, the Victorian Age, the Jazz Age, or the role of women in society. Most supervisors, of course, are performing this task very well and are to be congratulated on the often excellent results that have been achieved.

Français - Groupe 1

La variété et la pertinence des sujets choisis par les candidates

Les candidats ont, dans l'ensemble, fait preuve d'initiative et de personnalité dans le choix de leur sujet. Plusieurs d'entre eux ont choisi leur sujet dans l'environnement littéraire contemporain ou ont osé sortir des sentiers battus. Dans les deux cas, les examinateurs ont souligné l'excellence du travail et la pertinence d'approche des sujets. On peut noter, par exemple, un travail remarquable consacré au roman de Monique Proulx, *Homme invisible à la fenêtre*.

Cependant, on remarque aussi la présence des sujets trop vastes ou difficiles à cerner dans un mémoire de 4000 mots, comme, par exemple, *L'absurde dans la littérature française*, ou tout simplement des textes qui ne sont pas littéraires.

La performance des candidats face aux Critères d'évaluation générale et propre à la matière.

- En général, les critères généraux sont respectés, mais certains semblent moins réussis. C'est le cas du critère C concernant l'analyse/interprétation: quelques candidats se contentent de répéter ou de paraphraser les textes étudiés sans proposer une analyse rigoureuse. Nous avons, d'autre part, été surpris par la quantité de candidates qui ignorent les règles élémentaires de l'utilisation de la présentation des citations. Quant aux critères relatifs au traitement du sujet, nous avons noté chez les candidats plus faibles une difficulté à poser un jugement personnel. Enfin, même si les meilleurs candidats écrivent une langue concise, précise voire élégante, il nous faut signaler les trop fréquentes fautes de tous ordres qui encombrant de nombreux textes soumis. Le mémoire étant rédigé sans les contraintes d'un examen, il devrait être relu et corrigé avec minutie.
- Il est regrettable que quelques candidats ne respectent pas les exigences formelles (nombre de mots dépassant largement la limite établie, précis trop long, ne correspondant pas aux critères voire manquant, absence de table des matières, pages non numérotées, etc.).

Recommandations pour les superviseurs des futurs candidates

Nous recommandons que la lecture attentive du *Guide du mémoire* soit un préalable absolu. De cette façon, les candidats éviteront les méprises que nous avons signalées. D'autre part, nous invitons les superviseurs à exiger des candidats une période de relecture et de correction.

German – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of work submitted was very wide and included literature of all genres and several centuries. In the majority of cases the topic and the material used were suitable.

Candidates performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

This is one of the most problematical areas of the EE and one where the candidate has to rely on the advice of the supervisor. Many questions are just too vaguely phrased and/or far too broad in scope to be treated effectively. To give just two examples: 'Goethe-Benn: zwei Jahrhunderte, zwei Lebensanschauungen' is clearly not manageable within the limit of an EE, and a title like 'Genie und Wahnsinn in literarischen Texten erklären und ausführen' makes sense neither grammatically nor in any other way.

Criterion B Approach

The approach was generally appropriate to the research question although in many cases a biographical approach did not yield the desired results. The comparison between biographical events in Hesse's life and the development of Siddharta may be tempting for the candidate but should not be encouraged by the supervisor. In a similar way 'specialist' approaches used by non-specialists e.g. a psychoanalytical or sociological method should not be employed without the necessary theoretical foundation which the ordinary candidate will not possess.

Criterion C Analysis/Interpretation

Candidates did as a rule show analytical skills and were able to interpret the texts chosen in a lucid and convincing manner. Passages from the texts in question were referred to in order to support the argument and in many cases relevant secondary literature was consulted and documented. Some of the analyses showed great depth of understanding and insight.

Criterion D Argument/Evaluation

This is another problematical area. There is a deplorable tendency to treat a topic in a series of unrelated paragraphs presenting descriptions of characters, elements of plots etc. without any continuous narrative as demanded by an essay. In addition there is a great deal of summarizing of content and biographical material. While this may be useful in cases of remote literature (from which the candidates should be discouraged anyway in order to enable the marker access to the texts) it usually takes up whole chunks of the argument which could be filled more profitably. The lack of a continuous argument will then inevitably lead to an unsatisfactory link between research question and conclusion. The whole essay will become unfocussed and disjointed.

Criterion E Conclusion

Some sort of conclusion was attempted in the majority of cases. Where there was a precise research question and a cogent argumentation this link was usually very successful. Consistency of argument is therefore essential.

Criterion F Abstract

Even in the cases where the other formal criteria were below par the Abstract usually reflected the content.

Criterion G Formal presentation

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In the majority of cases the formal presentation was at least good. In only a few cases candidates neglected the requirements for the formal presentation whether deliberately or as a result of absence of advice depends on the individual situation. In a remarkable number of instances the formal presentation was of university level for which the EE ought to prepare.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

Again many candidates reached at least level 3 on account of their originality, personal engagement and flair. The examiner was pleased to be able to award quite a few verdicts of 'outstanding'.

Subject assessment criteria

There were several instances where the candidates based their essays on texts which were originally not written in the language of the essay and had therefore to be awarded 0 for criteria J and K.

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

In the majority of cases it was pleasing to see that the candidates had developed a close personal response to authors and works and were writing with a genuine feeling for the literature concerned. Both argument and conclusion usually justified the personal response in a convincing manner.

Criterion L Use of language appropriate to a literary essay

The language also tended to achieve level 3 or 4. It was in most cases both fluent and precise and appropriate to the discussion of literary texts. There were fewer grave spelling mistakes than in previous years which might well be due to the use of spell check.

Recommendation for the supervision of future candidates

- Make sure that the research question is precise and designed to cover a range which within the limit of the Extended Essay is manageable
- Discuss the candidate's approach to the research with a view to, where appropriate, steering the candidate away from speculative biographical or autobiographical investigations. The same applies to 'non-specialist' approaches as mentioned under B.
- Instruct the candidate in the technique of conducting a coherent and cogent argument, rather than a series of unconnected paragraphs leaving it to the Examiner to establish his own conclusions.
- Make sure the candidate is familiar with the basic technical requirements of the essay, e.g. bibliography, correct references etc.

General comments

There were a number of cases where the supervisor had recorded a bare minimum of contact sessions, in some cases zero or half an hour. This should be explained in the space reserved for teacher's comment otherwise the examiner is left to draw his own conclusion of whether this is due to a failure to supervise or a failure to consult.

Español – Grupo 1

Ambito del trabajo y rendimiento general

Los resultados de las monografías son, como ya es tradicional, buenos o muy buenos. Se tiene la impresión de que en esta convocatoria hubo un número ligeramente menor de monografías extraordinarias, en el sentido de trabajos muy brillantes y metodológicamente ejemplares o casi perfectos en que los examinadores descubren un destello de genialidad y piensan: *chapeau!* A cambio, son muchos menos los trabajos rutinarios o que demuestran no haber comprendido qué se espera de una monografía.

Es difícil aventurar una hipótesis explicativa para un grupo tan diverso como el del BI, en el que hay una amplia dispersión de calificaciones, y no parece aceptable hablar de “cosechas” en enseñanza. Pero en ésta, los casos extremos en uno y otro sentido han disminuido y parece consolidarse una calidad media buena, equilibrada y ampliamente satisfactoria. Realmente podemos estar orgullosos.

Rendimiento y comentarios sobre los criterios

En talleres o en la misma monografía, algunos profesores y candidatos sugieren que éste es uno de los trabajos que genera más compromiso personal e ilusión, pero también uno de los componentes del Programa que les produce más dudas y hasta tensiones .

Tres son los aspectos que más parecen preocupar en esta iniciación a la investigación personal:

- La elección del tema
- La bibliografía
- La conclusión.

1. La mayoría de los **temas** han sido pertinentes para la obra estudiada, relevantes, apropiados y de interés.

Sólo han desentonado:

- Algunos trabajos de nuevo sobre obras como *Momo*, *El señor de los anillos* o *Harry Potter*, no sólo porque no cumplen el requisito de la Categoría 1 de monografías (*estudio de una obra u obras de literatura originalmente escrita en castellano*) ni de la Categoría 2 (*estudio comparativo de una obra escrita en español y otra de literatura mundial.*), sino por lo que refleja esta elección. Nadie discute la importancia de estas obras como hecho literario o cultural, pero no es el tipo de literatura con la que el programa del BI pretende familiarizar a los candidatos. Por otra parte, el desarrollo de estas monografías consistió casi siempre en una descripción o narración entusiasta, pero de escaso valor como análisis.
- La persistencia de algunas presentaciones generales de un autor (*La vida y obra de...*), algún trabajo de *influencias* (*La influencia de García Márquez en Isabel Allende...*) y ciertos estudios historicistas, que muchas veces se limitaron a compendiar resúmenes de fuentes secundarias.
- Algún tema nada original por demasiado obvio y trillado (del tipo: *El reflejo del mundo social en la Celestina*, *El honor en el teatro de Lope*, *El realismo mágico en la obra de García Márquez*, *Los laberintos en Borges...*). En su tratamiento es difícil apreciar la labor personal del candidato, quien termina por dejarse seducir por la abundante bibliografía leída y repetir ideas establecidas sobre ellos.

En estos temas o enfoques mencionados como problemáticos hubo, naturalmente, raras excepciones. Hay candidatos que

- acotan bien el tema de investigación y los límites de su objetivo,

- definen bien los presupuestos teóricos o metodológicos de su análisis,
- rastrean con cuidado los indicios en las obras, demostrando estudio y comprensión de los textos,
- muestran habilidad para extraer conclusiones en términos sensatos (comprobar una teoría, aventurar una hipótesis interpretativa o explicativa, mostrar una relación, matizar razonadamente una opinión establecida, etc.).

Pero los buenos resultados son la excepción: en principio, debe disuadirse a los alumnos de afrontarlos por inadecuados respecto a las normas o por colaborar a que se pierdan.

Hasta ahora hemos evitado la palabra “*creativo*” y hemos escrito “*original*” con cierto miedo justamente por ser los términos un tanto subjetivos que parecen preocupar a supervisores y candidatos. Parece más razonable plantearse la elección del tema en términos como “*relevante*” para la obra estudiada, “*adecuado*” para los intereses o capacidad del candidato y “*viable*” metodológicamente en un estudio inmanente de la extensión permitida.

A veces un candidato se empeña en un autor por el que siente pasión o en un tema trascendente, frecuentemente filosófico o social, que le produce inquietud intelectual. Ambos sentimientos son muy positivos y un buen punto de partida. Pero lo significativo académicamente es la calidad del producto final. Por eso, corresponde al supervisor valorar previamente la viabilidad del tema y sus posibilidades de concretarse en un trabajo coherente y metodológicamente válido.

Afortunadamente en esta convocatoria la gran mayoría de los temas y enfoques fueron 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.

2. La **bibliografía** parece una preocupación común a supervisores y alumnos, especialmente cuando éstos trabajan en países de habla no hispana con dificultades para acceder a fuentes secundarias o cuando el autor estudiado es poco conocido o la obra estudiada es muy reciente.

Los criterios de calificación mencionan expresamente las “*referencias adecuadas a fuentes secundarias*” (Criterio Específico J, 3, 4 y 5 puntos). Pero en algunos trabajos muy específicos y en algunas circunstancias no debe interpretarse como un requisito esencial hasta el punto de que tenga que preocupar. Debe leerse el descriptor entero (“*si es adecuado... cuando es adecuado...*”) y confiar en la capacidad del examinador de aplicar razonablemente los criterios a cada caso.

Por otra parte, la preocupación expresada se refiere a bibliografía específica y juicios sobre el autor, la obra o el tema estudiados. Tiene más interés la referencia a algún estudio sólido que fundamente a metodología a seguir o proporcione un buen marco crítico para los conceptos que manejará el candidato.

Una vez más se desaconseja la referencia a manuales escolares, enciclopedias generales y trabajos de divulgación con una calidad dudosa difundidos en Internet. Y se insiste en la necesidad de citar honestamente toda idea tomada directa o indirectamente de otro, tal como firman los candidatos en la portada de la monografía.

3. En cuanto a las **conclusiones**, no es obligatorio que haya un apartado o capítulo titulado “*conclusión*”, pero la mayoría de los candidatos lo ha mantenido con buenos resultados.

Si se observan los *Criterios de calificación*, la Conclusión en sí sólo ofrece tres posibilidades de valoración (de cero a 2), pero la trascendencia de que el candidato sepa adónde se encamina y qué quiere concluir (o aclarar, ilustrar, mostrar, demostrar, matizar ...) tiene un efecto notable sobre el desarrollo de toda la monografía.

Son muchos los trabajos que han seleccionado los datos e ideas con un claro sentido de la finalidad, de forma que tener claro el fin de su trabajo benefició notablemente la Interpretación y la eficacia de su Argumentación, núcleos de la calidad de la monografía que son valorados con cuatro puntos en los Criterios C y, sobre todo, el Criterio D:

Argumentación: “Se ha presentado un razonamiento que es pertinente... está bien desarrollado y organizado, es convincente y está expresado con claridad....”

Conviene recordar también que el criterio para valorar la validez de una conclusión es que ésta sea “*coherente con el razonamiento o explicación*” seguidos (Criterio E).

Por lo mismo, una vez más debe prevenirse contra las conclusiones imprecisas, demasiado subjetivas, pretenciosas o que repiten ideas aprendidas. Parece más adecuado intentar unas conclusiones modestas, pero fundamentadas en el análisis realizado, que intentar generalizaciones poco justificadas y sin suficiente base en el análisis previo.

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

Como es tradicional, se ha apreciado de forma brillante no sólo el trabajo y entusiasmo de los candidatos, sino el esfuerzo de la mayoría de los profesores en proporcionarles una preparación instrumental a veces extraordinaria. Unos y otros pueden estar orgullosos.

Italian – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Again, the majority of the work was based on prose fiction (20th Century mainly). All essays had an appropriate literary content. Although outstanding essays have been very few, the general level was satisfactory.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Research question

Generally, the research question was clearly stated, though not always appropriate, and in a few cases rather far-fetched.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Usually clearly focused, but often developed in a conventional and mainly descriptive way (this means that the essay is often a description of some aspects of the works analysed, rather than real research).

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

The analysis is generally accurate but only rarely original and imaginative.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Arguments are satisfactorily developed, although a real capacity of personal evaluation is rare.

Criterion E Conclusion

The conclusion is rarely effective.

Criterion F Abstract

Still not satisfactory, at times missing, at times a general introduction rather than an abstract.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Good.

The specific subject criteria are usually satisfactorily met. This year there have been no cases in which the topic was not appropriate 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:

Variety: candidates should be encouraged to consider a wider range of genres and of types of works.

Approach to the research question: should be more imaginative and personal, more in the style of a real investigation.

Abstract: candidates should clearly and correctly understand the nature and function of the abstract.

Teachers' comments: only a few teachers included them. Though not compulsory, they are useful and can pass on relevant information to the examiner.

Russian – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The overall level of the papers submitted this year was somewhat better than last year. The majority of the essays dealt with interesting topics and works of literature, they were well laid out and the candidates showed a genuine knowledge of and love for literature. Most of the essays met the requirements, however there were some that were somewhat out of line in more ways than one.

The main problem was most probably again the choice of topics - in some cases they were somewhat too general or vague (as "Women's happiness in works by..." or even "The works of...") The choice of works of literature was not always very successful either. Analysis and proper conclusion that would lead to further research were also a problem for some.

It must also be noted here that there was a certain consistency to the overall quality of the essays – either the paper was good and a candidate got high grades in all (or most) criteria, or the essay was rather weak, which also found its reflection in all the criteria.

Candidates' performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

A vast majority of the candidates managed to choose their topic successfully, making their own work easier in terms of analysis and focus. However, as mentioned above, this was a problem for some candidates. In some cases (about 25%) the questions were too broad ("F. Dostoyevsky. Crime & Punishment"), some were even hard to place subject-wise ("The influence of historical developments on the writings of..."), others did not contain in themselves a research question as such - they were merely a statement of fact ("Chekhov – man and writer, misunderstood in his own time"). Some candidates (another 25%) were more successful in their choice of topic - they raised a question and, consequently, attempted to answer it (topics like "Motifs of Lermontov style in Akhmatova's writing"). And of course there were those (almost half of the total number this year) whose choice of topic was up to the standards (e. g. "Comparative analysis of the poetry of Russian and French poets (based on...)", "Creative means and devices used by and to create the images of their characters", etc.)

Criterion B Approach

A badly chosen research question makes it almost impossible to use a correct approach - the candidate is off target right from the start. However, if the topic is a mere statement of fact, a listing of the instances when such features and/or facts become evident seems to be the only approach, therefore it may be viewed as appropriate. However we were happy to find that there were those (30-40%) who adopted the correct approach to their study, stating (to a greater or lesser extent) the question, the basic idea they have in mind, studying it point by point and finally arriving at a well-grounded conclusion that fully answers the initial question.

Criterion C Analysis / interpretation

A criterion where few managed to get top grades (4). Again, a lot here depended on how good the research question was - for how can you analyse something like "Depiction of trees in poetry" or "The tragic fate of the main character of..." As long as the question contained the words "the effect of" it gave room for analysis. Whether that analysis was competently carried out is another matter, something that really shows the analytical skills of a candidate. Another approach to analysis that may be considered somewhat strange is when the candidate starts by stating the research question, then provides what they term as "Working thesis (or theory)", and then starts proving the point. Theoretically there is nothing wrong with such an approach. However, it seems that the candidate sometimes finds it difficult to work "backwards" as it were, giving the actual conclusion of his

research right at the very beginning. What do they write in the conclusion then? Some are put off. However most of those who took this approach managed quite well.

However there were cases when despite a good choice of topic and question, candidates failed to conduct a proper in-depth analysis and reach an conclusion that would truly be worth the effort.

Criterion D Argument / evaluation

On the whole few candidates received top grades (4) here, but this does not mean this is a major problem. Most (some 50%) received 3 points for this criterion, which is not bad at all.

This is another criterion that greatly depends on the choice of research question. If the question is too broad, or too simplistic, in most cases it cannot lend itself to adequate evaluation. However there were papers whose titles seemed somewhat dubious, but which contained a convincing argument and a personal evaluation of the issue based on the facts available. However, in most cases it was the evaluation that seemed to be especially difficult for the candidates. The problem may lie in cultural differences - Russian students are taught to write in a rather "academic" manner, relying more on the opinion of critics and experts, thus arriving at a certain conclusion. They even prefer to use such phrases as "It is considered" or "It seems that..." rather than "In my opinion". This is a problem that goes back many years and at this point lies with the teachers rather than the students. However we are happy to state that this year, this problem was not so evident. Neither was another one – an excess of personal reaction and very little analysis.

Criterion E Conclusion

Surprisingly few essays contained proper conclusions – some (about 10%) had none at all. In some cases this takes us back to the research question, while in others it is evidence of a wrong approach or lack of adequate analysis, or lack of understanding on the part of some candidates of the purpose of their essay.

Criterion F Abstract

Writing an abstract is not an easy job - it has to state the research question very clearly, describe the material under study, the approach used and the results obtained. In many cases one or more of these was missing. Many candidates copy phrases from the body of the essay to form the abstract. There may be nothing wrong with that, if all the relevant information is provided and the sentences are properly linked and make sense when taken out of their context. On the whole, if the essay is well written, the abstract is usually good. However, here too there were cases when abstracts were not presented at all (some 12%).

Criterion G Formal presentation

This is a very straightforward requirement that does not need any special skills – just care and attention. However even here some candidates managed to fail to provide a list of the literature used, or references to the works being quoted. Most of the works, though, were quite neat and clean.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

A criterion that many examiners find hard to apply. What do we do when a candidate has conducted in-depth research of an interesting issue and has arrived at interesting conclusions, but all this was presented in a very 'dry' academic manner, without much 'flair'? Or what if it was all 'flair' but not too much research and analysis? This is not easy to judge, but on the whole this year rather few candidates demonstrated genuine interest in what they were writing about *and* presented interesting findings. This criterion should probably be viewed as a combination of all the previous ones.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidate

It would be worthwhile if supervisors provided more assistance to candidates in the choice of question. Does it really contain a question, a problem that can be solved within 4 000 words? After the supervisors read the questions chosen by their students, do they feel interested in what can be

found here, or intrigued, or do they feel like saying: "So what? What are you trying to prove?" This will take up a greater part of the total time of supervision, but success here will almost guarantee success in the other criteria.

Another issue is the choice of authors. Sometimes authors who wrote and lived in Soviet times in one of the former Soviet republics may not be a very good choice – there is no way an examiner would know whether the work in question was written originally in Russian (the candidate's A1 language) or in the language spoken in this or that former republic (Ukraine, Kazakhstan, etc.) and therefore does not qualify. The supervisor should then carefully guide the candidate to a different work of literature, which was undoubtedly and clearly written in Russian.

After the question is chosen the supervisor has to make sure the candidate has chosen the right approach and is unlikely to stray (and monitor this throughout the work on the essay). Supervisors also have to make it very clear to the candidates what has to be mentioned in the abstract. Personal evaluation is something that is not very typical in Russian schools, but this is where the difference between the national approach and that of the IB lies, and it has to be overcome. Teachers have to promote the expression of individual opinions from their students, a personal response to what they are writing about. And not only in the form "this is something I feel very strongly about" or "... is my very favourite poet and the greatest in the world". Personal evaluation has to be expressed more subtly, it has to be based on and illustrated by the actual works of literature. And of course formal presentation and the presence of an abstract is something the supervisor can easily check and return the submitted final papers if any of the requirements under these criteria are not met. This may sound like a lot of work but, if handled properly, will not take more than 4-5 hours of total supervision time.

Subject assessment criteria

Most candidates managed to meet these criteria rather successfully – at least this did not seem to be as much of a challenge as the general Assessment Criteria. But overall the results were not as good as last year.

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

In most cases, especially when the research question implied the careful analysis of a work(s) of literature, the candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the literature. References to the works themselves were sometimes insufficient. Most candidates made references to secondary sources, as is traditional in the Russian system of learning – studying criticism is in most cases an integral part of literary studies.

However sometimes candidates demonstrated excellent knowledge, but very superficial understanding of literature – which influenced their marks in the other criteria, for if little understanding is shown there can hardly be any analysis involved.

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

This posed a problem for a vast majority of the candidates.

One of the challenges was actually giving a personal response, though some tended to go 'overboard' here and the entire essay would consist mainly of praise and expressions of awe and platitudes. It is very important here to find the 'golden mean' and show that you do have your own opinion on the issue, and that it is justified by the research you have conducted.

Another problem here may be the lack of analysis: some candidates tended to retell the contents of the works studied, explaining or paraphrasing the theme and idea. This may in some way be treated as justification of their personal response, but it cannot be termed "analysis".

Criterion L Use of language

In this kind of writing, where the candidates had plenty of time to work on their language, the papers were written with a good degree of coherence and fluency – which is a happy development, for in some past years this did tend to be a problem.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

It is very important to explain to the candidates that they should not merely show good knowledge of the works studied from the point of view of theme, ideas, plot and story, but be able to analyze them to answer the research question and to display their personal response to the works and to the issue raised. The supervisor should also, as mentioned above, be very careful when assisting the student in the choice of topic and question; these should be literary, should pose a question and should easily lend themselves to literary analysis.

Danish – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

No problems.

Candidates' performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Most of the students have put forward some very precise research questions which have made it possible to write an essay with a clear point of view and most of the candidates have chosen subjects worth writing about and therefore avoided comparing subjects that cannot be compared.

I would like to point out that the extended essays are about literature. Some essays deal with subjects like religion instead of literature. On the other hand I have read many good essays with a clear focus. My campaign during the last years against essays comparing incomparable elements seems to have been successful.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

It is a problem to collect and use relevant information. Too often there are only one or two references to very central books listed in the essay although it is obvious that these central books have been the basic inspiration for the EE.

On the other hand some students seem to think that one reference to one essential book is sufficient, and then they just write the EE without using either the reference or the book in the other parts of the essay.

Other students have a very fine bibliography but they only use some of the titles in the essay. It is a bad habit to list a lot of books without using them. I still think that it would be a great help if the candidates provide printout of articles taken from the Internet as an appendix to the essays because Internet addresses often disappear after some months and then it is impossible to check the pieces of information.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

All students are familiar with the works they are writing about. The ability to interpret is therefore essential. The best essays are the essays that show the ability to interpret and to connect the interpretation with e.g. the era and or theories. Some of the works show no ability to connect the literature read with relevant material and therefore the analysis in these works is not as good as it could be.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

All students try to stick to their research question although not all research questions are good questions. Perhaps the supervisor should be more active in this early part of the process.

Criterion E Conclusion

Only a very few have forgotten the conclusion. But only a very few have made a conclusion that points out what unsolved questions remain for further investigations.

Criterion F Abstract

The abstract tends to focus on the essential parts of the essay. But some candidates often just give a summary of the books dealt with in the essay. The abstract would be much better, if the candidates

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were more aware about their own work and the central arguments in it. Too many abstracts are rather mechanical. In fact the abstract could be built on the following questions: What have I done? How have I done it? Why have I done it?

Criterion G Formal presentation

The general standard of the essays is good.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

No problem.

Subject assessment criteria

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

The candidates know what they have read and they know how to deal with it. The problem is that some of them have chosen subjects that are not dealt with in a novel or a short story but in non-fiction as mentioned under criterion A.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidate

See criterion B.

Norwegian – Group 1

The range and suitability of the works submitted

The topics chosen by the candidates demonstrated a good variety and all the candidates had chosen suitable literary works for their Extended Essays. None of the candidates had chosen to write their essay on a comparison of one work written in Norwegian and one work originally written in another language.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Research question

Typically, the weaker candidates spend far too much time retelling the plot instead of addressing the research question and developing an analytic approach to the chosen topic.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

As many candidates spend far too much time retelling the plot instead of addressing the research question, these candidates scored low marks on the approach to the research question.

Criterion E Conclusion

Surprisingly many candidates scored a low mark or no mark at all on this criterion. Common faults: little or no attempt to provide a conclusion.

Criterion F Abstract

Again, many candidates scored a low mark or no mark at all. Common faults: missing out the scope of the investigation and/or the conclusion reached.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Common faults: missing headings, references missing, references not set out consistently and according to a standard format. Some candidates had chosen to make footnotes out of quotations that clearly belonged to the essay, in order to try to remain within the word limit of 4000 words.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The impression is that almost all the candidates had received good and adequate assistance and supervision. However, teachers are strongly recommended to give a copy of the assessment criteria to their students and make them acquainted with these criteria. It ought to be easy for the candidates to avoid a low score – or none at all – on the general assessment criteria.

We have spotted a tendency this session to exaggerate the use of quotations. In one instance, more than 50% of the content was quotations from the work studied.

Swedish - Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

One sometimes wonders why our candidates, well, some of them, decide to select a literary topic for their extended essay. A traditionally good essay-writer might decide on something or somebody to write about that has taken his or her fancy and is sure that his interest will give life to the presentation of his selection. Thus he hopes for an easy job I believe. But, the idea of the good EE is therefore for the candidate to produce an essay where the interest of the candidate writer is combined with the skill and work of using secondary sources. It is then not an acceptable defence if the candidate claims there are no such earlier critics to quote. If that is so, the supervisor should try and help the candidate find another subject, and do it before the prospective essayist feels badly treated when and if he is made to sacrifice his brain-child confronted by the teacher who tells him that he is supposed to do research.

Those to whom the Swedish language comes naturally, and there are many students we can place in that category, have produced essays that are this year better than the last few years. There is a tendency towards writing an essay that is original quite understandably to show that one can do something of one's own and find pleasure doing it. The subject is, more often than earlier years, literature for young people. Favourites are Astrid Lindgren, often Ronja Rövardotter or Bröderna Lejonhjärta, Guillot (Ondskan), Gardell (En komikers uppväxt). But there are also quite a number of Tunström (Juloriatoriet) and not only from Finland, Södergran.

Candidates performance against criteria

There are still those that omit stating the research question in the beginning or who approach it in an inappropriate way. Developing the research question it is important to substantiate the argument and not make do with a summary of the story, as is often the case. Thorough knowledge of the literature studied makes it possible for the candidate to build his or her argument in answering the research question. It is important for the candidate to show that the personal interest that is almost always there, is based on his/her literary judgement in reading the work.

Linguistic features are often left out when discussing the quality of an essay. But sadly many of us examiners cannot help ourselves from reacting strongly when confronted with simple language mistakes. Some schools that are comparative newcomers presented shorter than 3200+ word essays this year and that seems too short to "extend" an essay.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The more tailor-made the candidate can make the topic in discussions with the supervisor the more authentic we can hope is the resulting essay. Let the candidate make sure his choice means there is some material he can quote from or make objections to. Even though the candidates belong to the group of students that are good linguists (as they normally are if they choose a language subject for their extended essay) make sure they know the simple differences between English and Swedish when they meet with them.

Finally I agree with those who feel that if there are unresolved facts left standing at the end of the candidate's research essay they should be clearly stated. That gives yet another touch of "vraisemblance" to the text.

Dutch – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range of topics this year proved to be restricted to the literature of the 20th century, merely focusing on the modern novel. Twelve extended essays were submitted, with the following topics:

- *Mulisch, The Assault,*
- *Van Lieshout, Brothers,*
- *the influence of the sixties in two novels of Remco Campert,*
- *characterization of women in three novels of Maarten 't Hart,*
- *impossible love in two novels written by Tessa de Loo and Joost Zwagerman,*
- *cultural backgrounds in two novels written by Adriaan van Dis and Marion Bloem,*
- *murder in three novels written by Renate Dorrestein,*
- *guilt in The Name of the Father written by Nelleke Noordervliet,*
- *the influence of Judaism in two novels written by Leon de Winter,*
- *faithfulness and unfaithfulness in two novels written by Joost Zwagerman,*
- *the image of the Germans in two novels*
- *the cold war and its impact on the Dutch songs written in the sixties and seventies.*

In general the quality of the extended essays was less than in previous years. Most of the extended essays were of mediocre or satisfactory quality. One essay was according to the general and subject specific criteria of very poor quality and one was of nearly excellent quality.

Candidates who focused on a topic that aroused their enthusiasm produced better work. The extended essay is defined as "an in-depth study of a limited topic within the subject". Candidates are expected to do independent research before writing the document. Two candidates discussed only one novel without defining a very clear research topic. In such a case there is no evidence of an "in-depth study".

Candidate performance against each criteria

Most candidates succeeded in their attempt at formulating a clear research question but there were also some that were too general, such as: "Cultural conflicts in two novels..." and "The influence of the fifties on the novels of..." Only more specific topics create an opportunity for a sound analysis. A relevant choice of research question, carefully made in consultation with the teacher, is the start of a successful enterprise

In some of the extended essays there was a lack of balance between descriptive material and analysis. Most candidates choose the biographical approach. They discussed the main character of novels as if they were identical to the author's biography. Most extended essays do not discuss, or discuss very superficially, literary aspects of the works studied.

It is pointless to write an extended essay in a very elaborated register, with well-known general statements without any personal involvement. In the extended essay there has to be a sort of 'compromise' between the views of experienced critics and the introduction of personal elements.

Most candidates studied secondary literature. There are quotations from these works, but sometimes the quotes are not correct or supported by footnotes. Some candidates mention secondary sources without any reference to these works.

The abstract of the extended essay has to be a synopsis of the argumentation and conclusion of the essay. But in most cases, candidates treated the abstract as an introduction.

Many conclusions in extended essays are more or less a repetition of what is already stated in the introduction. An extended essay of good quality consists of a careful analysis of source material followed by personal views.

The comments of supervisors were sometimes very superficial, especially in cases of mediocre or weak performance. Not all the teachers completed the cover sheet giving information about the guidance given to students.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Special attention should be given by teachers to the following aspects:

- The most important part of the supervision by the teacher is helping the candidate to define a concrete, productive and manageable research question, not too broad in scope. Discuss with students several options before they make their definite choice of topic. See to it that they make a **limited choice of aspects to be investigated**.
- Teachers should stress upon the fact that the research should be of a **literary** nature and not primarily biographical.
- It is also important to give guidance in the use of secondary sources, in taking notes, keeping records of sources, writing footnotes, using quotations.
- It is also important to receive more detailed comments from supervisors. If the essay is written for example in an unusual sophisticated way it would be useful for the corrector to know that this is indeed the candidate's own style, equal to other written work of the same candidate.
- Formal aspects. During their guidance, teachers have to inform students about the formal aspects of the extended essay (word length, quotations, numbering of paragraphs and pages) as stated in the General Guidelines.

Arabic – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

It has been observed that concentration on certain subjects has ruled the choice of some topics. But the majority of candidates have been successful in formulating a precise research question. Originality and suitability of works submitted have been well observed. Candidates have also been successful in their presentation of information and data needed for good analysis. Most essays have been based on Arabic literature although, as it seems, some candidates in non-Arabic speaking countries have restricted themselves to a limited literary list perhaps for the lack of a wider range of Arabic works. However, this has not prevented the submission of some appropriate and original essays.

Candidate performance against each criterion

The majority of candidates have been able to express a personal response to literature, treat the description of material in an independent manner and engage in a critical and literary view. Although there were, occasionally, a few lapses between critical analysis and descriptive material, most candidates have competently presented their essays in a persuasive manner. Performance against each criterion has been satisfactory although some essays showed no attempt to include a comprehensive conclusion. Despite the fact that the overall performance has been satisfactory, some essays were rather too broad in scope to be effectively treated within the word limit.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Teachers are strongly recommended to draw their candidates' attention to the clarity and formal style appropriate to the subject. Concentration on the syntactical and linguistic aspects is strongly needed. Supervisors are also very much reminded to make their candidates practice the correct form of Arabic phraseology, grammar and sentence construction. Candidates' special attention should also, in future, be drawn to the following grammatical aspects:

- Nominative, accusative and genitive cases.
- The application of the dual form in a correct manner.
- The proper construction of verbal and nominal sentences.

Chinese – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As in the previous years, the topics chosen were in general suitable in the nature and scope for discussion in this form, and varied which reflected the different interests of the candidates. They, however, could be divided into three groups, which focused on the works' literary features, the political or social questions addressed in them and character study. The second group was adopted by most of the candidates.

Due to the thorough and proper supervision provided in most of the schools, the candidates normally followed closely the official regulations in their writing of the extended essay and displayed enthusiasm and personal engagement. Their handling of their respective issues was in general mature and solid. Yet, the standard was diverse and the marks scored were widely ranged, with a few essays being awarded the highest marks possible and some others judged poorly.

As in the past, the selection of topics proved to be crucial in determining the final outcome of the essays. Some candidates' weak performance was largely related to the broad and general issues that they chose to investigate. While their research topics might be regarded as legitimate, their rather wide scope had inevitably prevented the candidates from producing a sharply focused and convincing examination. The overall quality of these essays was also affected because of the narrative, insufficient and, in some cases, shallow discussion. A few essays even included several aspects of the works concerned, and such wide coverage made them the mere assortment of sources and a series of loosely connected points without a focus. Since the number of candidates who lost marks due to this problem, occupy a third of the total allocation this session, it seems very important for candidates and schools to consider with care the nature of this exercise. As it is fully described in the General Guidelines, the writing of an extended essay is "an in-depth study of a limited topic within a subject", therefore any broad topic, which has to be explored within the word limit, will be unlikely to lead to a successful extended essay. Two more candidates selected an angle which was apparently inappropriate; one was not literary in nature and the other was the candidate's personal reflections on the work in a very general sense.

Character analysis was taken by quite a number of the candidates as the topic. In this group, while the stronger candidates chose a unique and inspiring angle to explore in depth the character chosen and his/her symbolic meaning in the cultural context, the weaker ones merely retold the characteristics of the certain character as it is portrayed in the book. Those less successful pieces normally focused on the interactions between the character and the social environment. Their approach was mainly narrative and, in some cases, even chronological. As a result, the overall quality of their arguments was hardly beyond satisfactory. Similarly, the topic of the authors' ideas/themes as revealed in their literary works also offered some candidates the opportunity to show their pace. Their success was again commonly attributed to the sharp and manageable focus chosen which allowed them to display their personal insight into the element in which the author showed particular excellence in his/her work and its impact on the reader. The others, in contrast, mainly pieced together well established arguments and ideas about the certain authors. As a result, they used the essay writing as the avenue to present others' criticism which they gathered from various sources. Their personal understanding was either absent or not smoothly integrated into the authority's views. This general and even banal approach did not lead candidates to produce a good or even excellent piece of work.

During the marking process, it became apparent to the examiner that some schools failed to follow the regulations. One school, for instance, failed to provide the supervisor's report for their candidates' essays as required. The other irregularities that occurred in some essays will be explained in detail in the following section of the report.

Candidate performance against each criterion

In their essays, the majority of the candidates gave an evenly balanced performance on both groups of the assessment criteria. The scores awarded were rather widespread, with a range of 10-24 on General Assessment Criteria, and 4-12 on Subject Assessment Criteria.

General assessment criteria

As stated above, most of the candidates displayed a good understanding and complied with IB's general rules concerning the writing of the extended essay. This has assisted them to receive good marks on some of the areas in this category.

As it was indicated in the previous section that in order to produce an Extended essay with a high quality, candidates must choose an appropriate and/or stimulating topic for this exercise to display their inventiveness and execute it in the appropriate manner. This session, the strong candidates not only selected a topic which showed a great deal of thought in terms of its uniqueness, potential and applicability, but also presented it in accordance with the rules. In contrast, the weak ones failed to do so and achieved a rather limited success. They either chose a very broad research issue that would not allow them to carry out an in-depth investigation, or their method of treating it was not effective, which was mainly narrative and the paraphrasing of the work. One essay was awarded a 0 due to the inappropriateness of the topic selected.

In terms of the investigation, coherence of the arguments and exhibition of the personal appreciation proved to be two important elements which differentiated the very good or excellent essays from the satisfactory ones. On the basis of the relevant and sufficient material for their research, the majority of the candidates gave a detailed, competent analysis which was totally related to the issues under discussion. Yet in some cases, their arguments lacked variety and coherence and therefore persuasiveness. And since these candidates seemed to solely display/list their knowledge of the texts, the critical element or evaluation was absent. Such a feature was particularly apparent in those essays that focused on a general topic or on character analysis. Mainly due to this reason, they normally failed to score a high mark for their insight, inventiveness and flair, which determined their final achievement level under Criterion H, Holistic Judgement.

The presentation of the essays was the area in which most candidates achieved a relatively good mark. They generally met the official requests regarding the word limit, provision of references/bibliography and other elements. Their essays were constructed in accordance with the convention of formal writing and composed of the introduction, main body and conclusion, each section labelled with a clear heading. The conclusions were normally drawn on the basis of the previous discussions and contained some relevant points. Yet, as in the past, the candidates generally seemed to be afraid of indicating in the conclusions the problems that they failed to resolve, as well as some new research issues which emerged from the studies and might have some significance for future research. There were several candidates from the different schools who did not successfully obtain a good mark for Formal Presentation, as the compulsory elements were either missing or not provided according to the standard format. A few essays were given a 0 for Criterion E, and/or F and G. This was due to the fact that either the conclusion or the Abstract were not provided, or the word limit was considerably exceeded (some did not give the word count). There were also quite a number of candidates, most of whom were from one school, who replaced the title of the Abstract with various names and failed to include all the elements, such as the topic and the reasons for their choice, investigation scope and especially the conclusion in it.

Subject assessment criteria

The candidates as a whole demonstrated a good knowledge of the texts under investigation and provided a thorough as well as relevant literary analysis in an appropriate language. As a result, half of them were awarded a very good score on subject assessment criteria.

As in previous years, however, the common weakness of the essays was the inclusion of secondary sources in their analyses. While many of the candidates failed to introduce some established critics where relevant, some of those, who made use of such sources in their essays, did not give a clear indication where the citing occurred. It therefore seemed to the examiner that the candidates in general still failed to gain advantage by learning how to apply and integrate the well-accepted theories or ideas in the field into the body of their personal arguments. Frequently it was confusing for the examiner to tell whether the point was made by the candidate or by an expert in the field. The achievement level of those who selected a rather broad topic was again relatively low. As indicated above, such a topic did not help them to provide sufficient references to the work(s) concerned, and their arguments could hardly go beyond a general discussion.

Another point that deserves some consideration is the element of personal engagement. While many candidates appeared to be satisfied with employing their knowledge of the texts and the expert's opinions, few of them demonstrated their critical quality that would allow them to display their independent thinking, personal engagement as well as inventiveness. Those who carried out the character studies with a narrative account or paraphrase of the texts achieved a limited success.

The register chosen in most of the essays was appropriate, clear and fluent. Yet, typos and other errors still occurred here and there in some essays. The overall development of their arguments was affected.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

In the light of the discussion given above, the following suggestions may be made with regard to the future supervision of the writing of Extended essays.

Schools should pay close attention to each of the general rules of the Extended essay, so candidates will observe and follow them accordingly. They should provide an abstract for their works that includes all the important elements, such as the conclusion, which is very likely to be missed out by candidates. As the normal structure of an essay, the research question should also be stated clearly at the beginning of the essay, and the conclusion should be given in the end, in which any new issue should be indicated. References and the bibliography must be listed consistently, following a standard fashion. The length of the essay would also be within the legal length set up by IB.

Candidates should be reminded that the topic chosen for their essays should allow them to involve the literary discussion of the work(s) and be limited in scope. A mere analysis of the social or political aspects as addressed in the work(s), or a general as well as narrative approach, will not lead them to produce a very good essay.

Candidates should also be encouraged to make reference to secondary sources in their essays and give a clear indication of their origins wherever appropriate. While introducing these authors' opinions, they should also be encouraged to provide their personal criticism or judgment about them.

Care should also be given to the use of language, in order to reduce typing errors and other grammatical lapses to their minimal level.

Modern Greek – Group 1

The general impression is satisfactory, while a small number of essays were really impressive in every aspect. Quite a few essays were original, stimulating and well written. In a few cases the examiner's impression was that the essay was not very carefully or adequately supervised. It could also be advantageous to the candidates if the supervisors helped them more with the choice of bibliography. Perhaps supervisors could suggest bibliographical sources that are more suitable for the student's particular needs or urge them to exclude literature that can be misleading, not particularly helpful, or even too difficult to handle.

It has already been pointed out in the past that more attention should be paid to the use and presentation of footnotes and references. The "technical" side of an essay's presentation is important and could win valuable marks. Also, it is very important that students carefully acknowledge their sources, both words and ideas of another person. In cases of suspected malpractice the teachers should *not* sign the declaration on the cover sheet.

Authenticity of Extended Essays

This is a topic that deserves serious attention from schools, coordinators and teachers alike. There is growing concern about the authenticity of Extended Essays. Teachers and coordinators should make it clear to candidates that signing a written declaration as to the authenticity of their work is a matter *not to be treated lightly*. As a principle teachers must ensure that Extended Essays are the candidate's own work and countersign the candidate's declaration. Teachers should be able to identify whether the work is authentic, which is why they are expected to sign the declaration to this effect. The matter should be treated with the utmost seriousness and in case of doubt the work of the candidate should be submitted to scrutiny. One would expect schools to take disciplinary measures in case of proven malpractice. The marking of Extended Essays is time-consuming, and quite often it takes many days. "Detective work" on an essay's sources is way beyond the examiners' line of duty. Securing the authenticity of Extended Essays is a matter of ethics and principle for the schools themselves.

Conclusions

Pointing out the weak or negative aspects is not intended to give a negative tone to the report, but to ensure that even better results are secured in the future. The general picture is positive and shows signs of improvement.

In recognition for their hard work teachers and students should be warmly thanked and congratulated, while credit is also due to the schools and coordinators for their contribution.

Japanese – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most candidates have chosen their topics well. It is good that there are more diverse works being considered: Manga, historical novel, song lyrics etc. However, if candidates deal with such texts it is essential that they subject them to literary analysis

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

There were a few topics that were at the limit of literature: Manga, song lyrics etc. There were also extended essays with a rather social topic.

A few extended essays did not indicate the topic and the content of the essays was consequently vague.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

In general, this was well done. Some candidates have a tendency to use Internet websites, more than before. Sometimes these websites are not appropriate for the extended essays. Candidates should read literary critics in order to support their own ideas but a few have not done so.

Criterion C Analysis / interpretation

This varied a lot according to the candidate. Some did a thorough analysis while others only did a superficial analysis. Systematic and logical analyses were rather rare.

Criterion D Argument / evaluation

Most of the candidates did well here, though some lacked reasoning. Candidates gave ideas without supporting them. The candidates who constructed their development well are those who took time to reflect on their topic.

Criterion E Conclusion

Normally it is well done. However some extended essays gave a conclusion without giving justification. Candidates have not discussed their topic enough in the development of their essays.

Criterion F Abstract

There is a problem here. A lot of candidates did not give one or two of the compulsory elements: the research question, the scope of the investigation and the conclusion. Consequently they received 0. It is a great pity. Supervisors should give good advice on this matter.

Criterion G Formal presentation

In general most of the candidates did well, apart from a few exceptions where candidates did not give references to the quotations.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

Some candidates who unnecessarily lost points because of the other criteria were able to score well here because of the evident intelligence of their essays.

Subject assessment criteria

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

Most of the candidates have studied the texts they dealt with thoroughly, nevertheless there were some candidates who did not understand the texts. Looking for secondary sources is not an easy task for everyone.

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

Only a few candidates could present their unique and convincing ideas. Sometimes they presented very interesting ideas without giving justification.

Criterion L Use of language appropriate to a literary essay

Most candidates used a language suitable to the extended essays. There were two exceptions: some Ab initio candidates wrote their essays in Japanese! They are brave but it was impossible to obtain a good mark.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Supervisors should discuss the choice of the topics with the candidates.

Supervisors should advise candidates to include the three elements necessary to the abstract.

Some candidates wrote their extended essays from left to right whereas, for the literary essay, it should be from top to bottom in Japanese. Supervisors should keep this important rule in mind.

Candidates should use special “genko- yoshi” paper and it is better to hand write the essay.

Korean – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The works were above average level, and those works were suitable for the language A1 extended essay level.

Candidate performance against each criterion

The candidates' understanding and knowledge about the subject were very good, but application and organization of the essay were lacking for the general assessment criterion. Also, their language ability was very good generally for the subject criterion, but the use of language or words needed to be improved more.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

It is important to have knowledge about the subject and works you use for supporting ideas, but it is more important to know how to apply the works to your topic. Also, you need to study how to organize the formal essay.

Malay – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, all the work submitted achieved the expected level of proficiency. The quality of work is quite commendable.

Candidates' performance against each criterion

Generally, performance for two criteria needs to be looked into. First, the research question - quite a number of candidates tend to present somewhat ambiguous research questions. This in turn trapped them into not having a cogent argument. Second would be the conclusion. Many candidates did not conclude based on their research question. In most cases the conclusion is a bit of a tangent from what they propose to argue.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidate

I would strongly suggest that teachers caution their students against using Anglicised Malay. Students should practice using 'real' and original Malay. One example is using terms like 'konklusi' rather than 'rumusan' or 'penutup', and many more of such manner.

I would like to reiterate on my comments above. It is very unbecoming for candidates of Standard Malay to use malayanized English which were converted by applying 'si' to the equivalent of 'tion'. This trendy use is ruining the beauty of the Malay language.

Polish – Group 1

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Having read and marked 43 Polish A1 extended essays from May 2003 examination session I am convinced that both range and suitability of the work submitted should be highly valued. The diversity of analysed literary texts was huge and in almost all cases there were some clues to be sure that candidates have used their skills and proved their self-dependence.

Candidate performance against each criterion

The performance against criteria A and B I value as very good. While the research question was stated in a more or less clear way in all essays, the approach to it was appropriate in the great majority of them. The value referring to the next two criteria could be described as good to very good, especially since the argument was not complete in some essays – probably as the result of self-limiting the essay to the proper number of words. The performance against the next two ‘technical’ criteria is again very good as none of the candidates has forgotten about the abstract. The lowest mark, from satisfactory to adequate, is for the criterion G for the reasons stated below. It is important to notice, however, that only a few essays exceeded 4000 words. Finally, the average mark for the last general assessment criterion should be good in my opinion – it is related mainly with the level of personal engagement of candidates.

The assessment criterion J reaches a note of good to very good, as candidates made numerous relevant references to some sources which were properly chosen. Quite a high percentage of them come from the Internet directly. This may influence marks for both G and H criteria. The personal response, apart from a few very individual cases, was very good again, while the use of language still remains at a level not higher than good. Lapses are quite frequent while almost all the terms, except the case stated below, are used in a proper way.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

In the May 2003 examination session candidates generally seemed to be well-prepared for writing an extended essay. However there are some matters that could be described in a more detailed way, thinking of next year's exams. While the selection of analysed works was proper in all cases and the problem of too broad scope occurred sporadically, numerous candidates have failed when working on formal and/or linguistic shape of their essays. As always in cases of texts being prepared at home, there were only a small number of spelling errors, anyway it does not refer, unfortunately, to the problem of using some text marks as full stops and – especially – commas. There are many detailed and logical rules of using commas in Polish clauses but they do not seem to be known to candidates even in an adequate range. Numerous cases of wrong, illogical use of commas could be pointed out in work from almost any school. The conclusion is to organize three-four hours of practical lessons devoted to using commas exclusively.

Another important problem is how to present the essay in the most effective way. Many candidates are not aware of the weight of proper graphical segmentation of the text. Use of paragraphs seems to be accidental too frequently, so my suggestion for teachers is to explain the connection between the meaning of a text and its structure.

The formal presentation of an essay could be marked much higher if only more candidates knew how to use quotations, how to set out a bibliography and – finally – how and when to put footnotes, which were missing in many essays. The importance and configuration of footnotes for such a written work should be stressed by teachers and deserves to become a subject of at least one lesson.

Among detailed questions which are worthy of even more keen treatment during the teaching process, in the future there is one particular main and extraordinary important problem – the specificity of

blank verses. It turns out to be extremely important for almost all the candidates who were interested in modern poetry. Perhaps it will be helpful to mention, even when different literary periods are being presented, that the specificity of blank verses is not a lack of rhymes only – meanwhile it is the most basic feature of typical modern poems. Another important and constant condition for a poem belonging to this versification system is the phenomenon of internal regularity, confirmed by the constant number of syllables (no exceptions!), a constant pause after a particular syllable in each line (średniówka) and also (usually) by the same distribution of accented syllables in paralleled lines. So to conclude: any blank verse (unrhymed, but containing an identical number of syllables in each line) is a regular poem (frequently divided into stanzas), while modern poems are usually irregular (different number of syllables in each line, also no rhymes), and their structurally separated parts should rather be called 'skupienia' than 'stanzas' or 'verses' – in order not to suggest any regularity. Describing any of these given poems as 'blank verses' should be considered as a very serious misunderstanding and must cause lower marks. This problem is even more valid when commenting on the performance of Paper 1 scripts.

Generally, most candidates have proved their high rank of skills and knowledge writing extended essays this year.

Portugais - Groupe 1

Variété et pertinence du travail présenté

Les travaux se sont basés sur des sujets pertinents, voire intéressants pour la plupart, mais le niveau de réussite s'est révélé modeste.

La performance des candidats pour chaque critère d'évaluation

Critères généraux

Critère A

Il n'y a qu'un quart des candidats ayant formulé avec clarté et précision le thème central du mémoire. Étant donné que quelques élèves ne l'expriment même pas séparément, sous le titre « introduction » et que l'examineur a trouvé des difficultés à le déceler au cours de la rédaction du corps de l'essai ou sous-entendu dans le précis ou la conclusion, à ces candidats aussi bien qu'à d'autres qui ne l'ont pas précisé, le niveau 1 a été le seul à être octroyé.

Critère B

On constate, dans l'ensemble, un nombre très limité de cas ayant réussi à mettre au point une démarche tout à fait convenable au développement du sujet de la recherche. Un tiers ne dépasse pas, à ce sujet, le niveau 1, car ils se sont basés sur une perspective limitée et ils n'arrivent pas à faire une utilisation sérieuse d'informations secondaires évoquées.

Critère C

Peu de candidats ont produit une analyse qu'on puisse considérer bonne et témoignant d'une claire compétence dans la compréhension du sujet. De toute façon, les candidats ont presque tous étalé une certaine aptitude aux études littéraires. Les défauts et les insuffisances responsables pour leur modeste performance se répètent par rapport aux années précédentes : usage incorrect de sources secondaires d'information, manque de signalisation des transcriptions textuelles ou omission du nom de l'auteur respectif. Dans quelques cas, on trouve même raison pour soupçonner l'innocence de cette façon d'agir, quand un élève incorpore à son texte des segments visiblement calqués de textes d'auteurs, sans faire référence à la source. (Même quand on n'arrive pas à identifier ces auteurs, on constate facilement que le niveau de raisonnement, la maturité et le bagage culturel mis en évidence par ces segments se détachent de l'ensemble du mémoire ...)

Critère D

La plupart des candidats n'ont pas surpassé une allusion limitée, superficielle, concernant le sujet de la recherche. Il n'y a qu'un petit pourcentage qui ait présenté un raisonnement compétent et une évaluation « appropriée et étayée par les faits ».

Critère E

La conclusion : voilà un des plus grands handicaps pour ces candidats ! Ils répètent, presque tous, le précis ou l'introduction, littéralement. Elle présente rarement un rapport logique avec le raisonnement produit dans le mémoire.

Critère F

Pour ce qui est du précis, les candidats ont tous respecté la limite de mots établie et ont cherché à produire un résumé adéquat. Mais seule la moitié y est parvenue de façon satisfaisante.

Critère G

Pour ce qui est de la présentation formelle, elle peut être considérée acceptable et adéquate pour la plupart. Cependant, on doit signaler des défaillances – manque de clarté dans la structuration globale de l'exposé, manque de table de matières ou de liste de sections, aussi bien que de bibliographie et d'annexes.

Critère H

La plupart des candidats se situent aux niveaux 1 et 2, considérant qu'ils se sont révélés assez limités par rapport aux qualités énoncées dans ce critère. Cependant, il y en a d'autres qui se sont révélés assez doués à ce même égard. Il faut signaler la présence d'un mémoire qui ne respecte aucun des préceptes consignés dans le règlement (ce qui d'ailleurs, a été consigné dans le rapport du superviseur), et, dans ce qui a été produit, on trouve des difficultés à déceler des traces de qualités, telles que compréhension, engagement personnel, initiative...

Critères spécifiques

Critère J

On constate que la plupart des candidats ont fait preuve d'une bonne compréhension de la littérature étudiée, produisant des références pertinentes aux sources secondaires. Cependant, il y a parfois peu de références aux œuvres littéraires ou bien celles-ci ne sont pas suffisamment exploitées pour justifier les points de vue présentés.

Critère K

Il n'y a qu'un nombre réduit de candidats qu'on peut considérer très bons en ce qui concerne le jugement personnel basé sur un sens ou une analyse littéraire. La plupart des autres se sont révélés incapables de surpasser des limitations à formuler un jugement ayant des marques nettement personnelles et corroborées par des lectures. Leurs analyses sont peu consistantes ou ne sont que des paraphrases ou des résumés.

Critère L

La moitié des candidats ont présenté une rédaction très acceptable du point de vue de la cohérence, de la précision linguistique et, dans certains cas, même de l'aisance. Il n'y a que quelques fautes de ponctuation et d'accord grammatical à ajouter à la tendance à produire un style gonflé et inadéquat au contenu qui les aient empêché d'atteindre le niveau 4 (attribué à un seul candidat). Quant aux autres, ils se sont situés à des niveaux plus bas, à cause de la prédominance des fautes signalées auparavant, à côté d'un emploi incorrect, ou absence même, de virgules ou de prépositions, absence d'articulateurs du discours et incorrecte structuration des phrases.

Recommandations pour la supervision de futurs candidats

On suggère que les élèves continuent à s'exercer au travail de recherche personnelle, d'analyse littéraire et de communication des idées de manière logique et cohérente.

Il faut suppléer aux aspects moins réussis signalés ci-dessus, notamment :

les candidats doivent indiquer avec clarté quel est le sujet de la recherche dans la section respective – « l'introduction » ;

ils doivent remplacer les paraphrases et les résumés des textes étudiés, parfois aussi les transcriptions d'informations de manuels, par des analyses au service du sujet de la recherche ;

les sources consultées doivent être clairement indiquées, dans la bibliographie et dans le texte – Attention aux citations !

ces citations doivent être aussi correctement intégrées dans le texte – parfois, elles ne se révèlent pas pertinentes ;

on suggère aux superviseurs de rédiger leur commentaire en tenant compte des critères d'évaluation (Ces commentaires sont souvent absents ou se révèlent exagérés par rapport au travail présenté).

Turkish – Group 1

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Topics chosen by the candidates were mainly on Turkish literature however they demonstrated creativity and interdisciplinary in approach. One common problem between the schools was the difficulty some candidates had in formulating the research question and limiting its scope.

Candidates' performance against each criterion

Criterion A Research question

Some candidates were unable to formulate and express the research question correctly, and as a result, their essays were not focused and well planned.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

The candidates, who had not formulated the research question clearly, had difficulty in choosing the right approach.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

In the majority of cases there was considerable attempt at analysis / interpretation.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Candidates who did not limit the scope of their research, and who were not able to formulate the research question, had difficulty forming arguments.

Criterion E Conclusion

Usually some conclusion was attempted by the majority of candidates but it was not always consistent with the argument. Some of the candidates gave the impression that they were not sure what 'conclusion' meant in an essay.

Criterion F Abstract

Most candidates had difficulty in writing abstracts. It was apparent that they were not clear about the function of an abstract and what it should contain.

Criterion G Formal Presentation

Formal presentation was generally good, although many candidates had difficulty in writing bibliographies and in giving references in correct format.

Criterion H Holistic Judgement

Candidates put a lot of work into their Extended Essays. They were engaged in their topics, and most essays had creative elements.

Subject assessment criteria

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

Majority of the candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the literature studied, and also referred to secondary sources.

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

Most of the candidates showed sound personal response to the literature studied and were able to justify it by literary judgement/analysis.

Criterion L Use of language appropriate to a literary essay

Candidates' use of language was generally precise, coherent and fluent, concise and clear. The vocabulary and register were generally appropriate for the purpose.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

It is crucial that the candidates know how to formulate a good research question and express it clearly.

Encouraging the candidates to write extended outlines before they begin to write their essays could be a good way of helping them to focus on the research question. It is important that the candidates understand the function of an abstract and what it contains. 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion' are important. Candidates do not seem to be confident in either. During supervision, candidates should be encouraged not to use vast generalisations in their introductions.

English – Group 2

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The topics chosen were again generally varied and sometimes quite imaginative. There seems to have been a slight reduction in the number of literary topics on this occasion, resulting in a better balance with general cultural and language-based topics, although two examiners did report that a majority of candidates went for the literary option. Otherwise there was the repeated criticism that some candidates embarked upon topics which were simply too broad-ranging. More supervision is clearly needed to ensure a good close focus. There were, as in the past, a number of inappropriate topics, often general cultural issues which had little or nothing specifically to do with an English-speaking environment, although it would seem that the number of such essays continues to reduce with time, presumably indicating a more efficient supervision process. It would still seem appropriate, however, to remind supervisors of the principal parameters of subject selection. It was the case on a number of occasions that simply mentioning the US or the UK frequently throughout the essay would make the topic relevant – thus, ‘The effect of advertisements in the UK on the growth of eating disorders among young women’. Such a topic might well have little or no specific reference to the language of English advertisements and the discussion might essentially be relevant to the problem in any country of the world. There remains the issue of candidates relying increasingly heavily on Internet material, in particular depending on data that were offered by websites that might well be biased or inaccurate in one way or another. Supervision might again be the issue here, and certainly supervisors should be aware that internet material has perhaps to be handled with greater care than more established written sources.

It might be noted that there is a considerable increase in topics that might be characterized as relating to current popular culture or issues with which the candidate is personally involved, various recent trends in music being particularly favoured. This, of course, is perfectly acceptable although such topics tend to be developed with considerable enthusiasm and with very little attention to overall academic quality.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

There was still a slight tendency towards general, unfocused and ambiguous research questions, as indicated above, and there remains a hard core of candidates who do not state the research question in the early part of the essay, possibly believing that the title of the essay itself is sufficient. Poor or absent statement of research question is often linked to a poor abstract -- see below -- and it does seem that supervision needs to be improved in this relatively straightforward area.

Criterion B Approach to research question

Appropriateness of approach was generally considered adequate, although there were instances where candidates employed insufficient resources, often being narrowly based on very few texts. Supervisors often point out that sufficient resources are simply not available at the place of writing, but sometimes it would seem better to steer candidates towards a topic which *could* be better documented rather than allowing totally free choice. There was some complaint from examiners that literary topics often give rise to an approach offering rather too much plot summary or character description and insufficient analysis and interpretation. It is sometimes the case that literature-based topics do not include sufficient direct quotation from the text to support the candidate's views effectively. On the other hand, it is the case that quotation is sometimes used simply for the sake of it, rather than appropriately to elucidate points.

Essays that did not provide a sufficiently focused research question tended to lack clear direction in the approach. If statistical data are used to support the argument, then these should be recent and

interpreted correctly. A number of candidates devised questionnaires and conducted face-to-face interviews, which is potentially a useful strategy, but sometimes the conclusions drawn are simply based on too small a sample to be of any real value.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

The general impression was that analysis/interpretation was adequate rather than impressive. Questionnaire material might lack appropriate analysis when graphic representation of data is easy with current software. Incomplete or superficial analyses were seen to be the result of choosing topics that were too broad. One examiner noted that some essays simply provided great amounts of information, often derived entirely from Internet sources, apparently unaware that volume of material is no substitute for analysis.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Performance under this criterion varies from excellent to very poor. There does seem to be some difficulty in balancing the amount of detail offered with the development of a coherent argument. All too often the point being developed is lost, which usually relates to an unclear statement of purpose at the outset. Examiners comment on the 'emotional' and 'personalized' nature of the argument, often unsupported by references, which relates to a point already made above. On the other hand, there remain quite a few instances of candidates who clearly rely very heavily on secondary sources and yet who do not reference these sources sufficiently or indeed at all.

Criterion E Conclusion

Clear and concise conclusions were at a premium. Only the very best entries really related the conclusion to what had gone before, and even candidates who were sound in other respects sometimes failed to achieve full marks here. Supervisors clearly need to spend time on discussion of how to produce an effective conclusion, including, where appropriate, unresolved issues. It was observed that issues arising and unresolved questions were not often dealt with in conclusions. It is not uncommon to see conclusions that simply repeat material from the main text or introduce new material that was no part of the main discussion. There were still cases where conclusions were simply not clearly marked with a heading, and although there is no absolute requirement to create a separate section for this purpose, the best essays tended to do this.

Criterion F Abstract

The abstract still seems to present an area of difficulty because very often one or more of the required elements are not present or very vaguely indicated. Scope, the description of what is covered and in what order, is particularly poorly described. The most common criticism is that abstracts often have the tendency to contain little more than general introductory material, sometimes even describing the reasons why the particular topic was selected (probably not even appropriate in the main body of the text), rather than giving a clear account of what the candidate has attempted to do. There were still candidates who did not include an abstract, and this remains hard to understand if any supervision at all takes place. As in certain other areas, the abstract is one area where adequate supervision should lead to full marks, providing of course that the supervisor understands the nature of the abstract, which in some instances does not appear to be the case. This is probably true where candidates label this section 'Summary' or something of the sort.

Criterion G Formal presentation

This, as usual, was of generally adequate quality but there were very few instances of excellence in this area and quite a large number of instances where candidates scored 0 here. The style of labelling sections 'Introduction', 'Body' and 'Conclusion' persists and such essays of course have no useful sub-headings at all. Quite frequently headings *are* provided on the Contents page but these headings give no clear indication of what material is to be covered or, indeed, they are not actually present in the main text. The presentation of quotations needs a great deal of improvement. Often there is no clear differentiation between quotation and text, quotation marks are used carelessly and longer quotations are not indented. Improvement can also be made to referencing at the bottom of pages, when it is

unnecessary to provide full bibliographical listings on each and every occasion. The bibliographies themselves often list titles in no order and there is an increasing trend for the bibliography to consist of a long list of websites. The content of these websites is typically not indicated, and dates of consultation are usually missing. Appendix material is frequently not captioned, is sometimes redundant and reference to it from the main text does not occur at the appropriate places. Proof reading seems often not to have taken place and in terms of general legibility there is a plea for the adoption of double spacing.

With the increase in the use of sophisticated software in the production of the EE's, there has arisen an almost irresistible desire to 'illustrate' the text, often entirely gratuitously. Pictures of various sorts appear all over the place. Useful and fully attributed illustrative material is, of course, to be welcomed.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Confusion about this assessment area generally seems to have been resolved by the supplement to the Extended Essay guide. Marks awarded here tended to gather around 2, which is to be expected, and very few candidates achieved 4. Supervisor comments, which can be taken into account under this criterion, are reported as often being absent entirely or wildly optimistic. One examiner made the following comment about Criterion H – 'My own interpretation of candidates' initiative, insight, and so on, is highly subjective, and I feel this criterion needs serious rethinking.'

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Knowledge and understanding of the language/culture/literature studied

While there were examples of appropriate and sometimes sophisticated choices of topic, there were also quite a few examples of inappropriate or marginally appropriate topics, as already indicated. Generally speaking, good knowledge was displayed, whether or not the topic was particularly appropriate. Literary essays tended to be based on a sound and broad knowledge of the texts involved, while with the culture-based topics, levels of understanding were reported as being somewhat lower.

Criterion K Point of view on the topic studied

The prevailing opinion was that most candidates developed coherent points of view, though some literary topics tended to be purely descriptive with little attempt at establishing an 'angle'. Achievement on this criterion seems to depend very much upon the degree to which the research question has been clearly established.

Criterion L Communication and use of an appropriate register and style

There was generally little problem with communication, though examiners continue to report on excessive use of colloquialism. In fact, the matter of register seems to be an increasing problem with the introduction of very 'personal' topics, as indicated above. The use of the first person is generally inappropriate in the Extended Essay and quite a few candidates included all kinds of personal anecdotes as part of the development of their argument. This is just another aspect of how the EE all too often does not present a very sound academic quality.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated

Generally the candidates had a good understanding both of their subject of research and of what was required of them in the production of the essay, though both content and presentation do need further attention. Specific shortcomings have been mentioned in sections B and C above.

The strengths and weaknesses of candidates

As on previous occasions, the principal strength of the candidates lay in the variety, interest and imaginative treatment of some of the topics chosen, and the clear degree of commitment which they had to their research area. Some candidates showed considerable ability to integrate material from a

variety of sources and develop a coherent argument. Quite a number of essays were really well written, showing an extremely sophisticated form of expression.

There were some essays that were poorly presented, and in some instances no conclusion was provided. These matters can clearly be resolved at the supervision stage and, as I have observed already, it is important that supervisors acquaint themselves with all the requirements of the extended essay. Thus, too, the provision of a clear table of contents and headings throughout the essay, as well as a properly organized bibliography, are essentially matters of supervision. It seems that more attention also needs to be paid to the contents of both the abstract and the conclusion to the essay. The logical coherence of the candidates' argument and the quality of linguistic performance also left a great deal to be desired in some instances.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Several examiners were unhappy about the quality of supervision, noting particularly an apparent unawareness of unsuitable topics, poor guidance about framing the research question, lack of focus within the abstract and apparent disregard of the presentational aspects of the essay, notably proper use of headings and sub-headings and suitable organization of the bibliography. It is difficult to know how to improve this aspect of the extended essay other than to remind supervisors of the kind of things which are expected from candidates, which is of course done by means of the book of extended essay guidelines. Supervisors can only be encouraged to read this document with care and perhaps steer candidates towards simply observing how presentation issues are handled in published texts.

There is also increasing concern about the reliance of candidates on Internet sources which may or may not be reliable. It seems that in many cases candidates no longer use printed sources at all, which might partly account for the fact that they have apparently never seen a well-presented table of contents or bibliography.

Français – Groupe 2

Variété et pertinence du travail présenté

Cent cinquante-cinq mémoires ont été présentés en français (groupe 2) cette année, ce qui représente une légère augmentation par rapport à l'année dernière. De façon générale, le niveau était toutefois nettement inférieur à celui de l'année passée et assez peu de candidats ont reçu une excellente note.

Les sujets de catégorie 2 (Culture et société), qu'il s'agisse d'histoire ou de culture contemporaine, ont recueilli la faveur d'un grand nombre de candidats. Malheureusement, ces sujets étaient trop souvent traités de manière trop descriptive, sans faire place à l'analyse.

Les candidats qui ont choisi des sujets littéraires ont le plus souvent privilégié la littérature du XX^{ème} siècle, surtout la littérature française, mais aussi parfois celle d'autres pays francophones. Les mémoires de cette catégorie étaient en général plus pertinents et plus intéressants.

Il y a eu assez peu de mémoires de catégorie 1 (Langue). Dans cette catégorie, la question des anglicismes, le français québécois et la langue parlée par les jeunes demeurent les sujets de prédilection des candidats.

Résultat des candidats pour chaque critère d'évaluation

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

Sujet de la recherche (critère A)

Un bon choix de sujet est bien évidemment essentiel à la réussite du mémoire. Or, il semble que de nombreux candidats n'aient pas été bien guidés à cette étape du processus de recherche et de rédaction.

Il semble nécessaire de rappeler que selon les règles actuelles, il ne suffit pas que le mémoire soit rédigé en français pour qu'il puisse être présenté comme mémoire de français (groupe 2). Il est impératif que le travail traite d'un sujet ayant rapport avec la langue française ou avec la culture/littérature d'un pays francophone. Les sujets traitant de questions de société (la drogue, l'avortement, la peine de mort, etc.) ne sont acceptables que dans la mesure où le problème est inscrit dans une perspective culturelle spécifique à un pays francophone (l'abolition de la peine de mort en France, par exemple.) On a eu cette année plusieurs cas de bons ou de très bons mémoires qui ont dû être pénalisés parce que le sujet de recherche n'était pas approprié. Il serait souhaitable que les candidats et les superviseurs lisent attentivement les pages 32 à 35 du guide afin de s'assurer que le choix du sujet est conforme aux exigences.

Les candidats ont tendance à choisir des sujets beaucoup trop vastes pour être traités de manière satisfaisante dans le cadre d'un mémoire de 4000 mots. Ce mauvais choix les pénalise à plusieurs niveaux, car le traitement du sujet reste souvent superficiel et, par le fait même, la conclusion à laquelle ils arrivent demeure peu convaincante.

Traitement du sujet (critères B, C, D)

Il s'agit du point faible d'un grand nombre de mémoires, qui se bornent souvent à décrire (pour les sujets traitant de la culture) ou à narrer (pour les sujets historiques ou littéraires) : on a ainsi l'impression de lire un article d'encyclopédie (ou plus probablement le résumé d'informations trouvées sur un site Internet...) Cette approche n'est pas souhaitable : pour obtenir une bonne note, un candidat doit absolument démontrer des capacités d'analyse et de raisonnement et offrir un point de vue personnel.

La formulation d'une question de recherche aide parfois le candidat à mieux cerner son sujet. Toutefois, il arrive que cette question soit mal formulée ou encore, qu'elle reste sans réponse. Par

exemple, un mémoire qui pose la question « Quelles sont les conséquences du tourisme de masse sur la région X? » doit être axé sur les effets positifs ou négatifs du tourisme sur cette région et non pas simplement énumérer les raisons pour lesquelles les touristes y affluent. Cela peut paraître évident, mais le problème se pose chez bon nombre de candidats.

Précis (critère F)

Le précis est un exercice relativement simple pour lequel des directives claires sont émises dans le guide. Cependant, peu de candidats obtiennent le maximum de points pour ce critère, car le précis n'énonce pas clairement le sujet de recherche, ou ne mentionne ni la démarche suivie ni la conclusion atteinte.

Présentation formelle (critère G)

La présentation formelle est généralement assez bonne, mais il semble que certains candidats n'aient pas du tout suivi de formation quant aux techniques de recherche et aux méthodes conventionnelles de présentation des références. Il est important que les candidats comprennent bien comment utiliser et citer les sources consultées : on a malheureusement retrouvé cette année un certain nombre de cas où, que ce soit par maladresse ou de façon intentionnelle, des idées empruntées à autrui ont été présentées en tant que travail personnel. Il appartient au superviseur de s'assurer que le travail présenté est bien le fruit des efforts du candidat.

Un autre point contre lequel il faudrait mettre les candidats en garde est l'utilisation abusive d'Internet. S'il est vrai que les bibliothèques locales ne possèdent pas toujours les ressources nécessaires, il convient tout de même d'encourager les candidats à varier autant que possible leurs sources et à examiner d'un oeil critique l'information disponible sur le web.

Recommandations pour la supervision de futurs candidats

Bien que le mémoire soit un travail de recherche mené de manière indépendante par les candidats, le rôle du superviseur est essentiel et ne doit pas être pris à la légère. Il ne peut se résumer à une rencontre préliminaire ou encore à une correction en fin de parcours. Tout au long du processus, il est important que les candidats reçoivent de bons conseils quant au choix et au traitement du sujet, aux techniques de recherche appropriées et à la présentation du travail.

On encourage également les candidats et les superviseurs à lire attentivement le guide sur les mémoires avant d'entreprendre des recherches et à s'y rapporter régulièrement en cours de rédaction.

German – Group 2

General impression

Seventy-two extended essays were submitted this year, reflecting, as usual, a wide range of interest. The overall level of this year's essays reflected competence and ambition, with a good few candidates writing focused and relevant pieces of research, often backed up by in-depth analysis.

Guidance from supervisors was usually good (exceptions and recommendations see below), however, there was great variation in the amount of time that supervisors claimed to have spent with each candidate (from 1.5 hours to 40 hours); moreover, not all supervisors provided comments as to the nature and involvement of their support. As not all candidates seemed to understand the significance/importance of the criteria, one might appeal to supervisors to spend a little more time going over the criteria and helping the candidates to produce a clear, acceptable essay – paying special attention to the abstract (see below).

Range and suitability of the work submitted

As mentioned above, this year's candidates dealt with a wide range of topics; fewer candidates tried and tested old diehards (*Wiedervereinigung*, *Rechtsextremismus*), and very few candidates submitted essays that were not relevant (e.g. *Tattoo*, *Globalisierung* – these did not allow the candidate to prove sufficient insight into the culture/language or literature of the language studied), however, a few more could have been narrowed down a little more (USA – *Deutsch als Amtssprache*, *Umwelt*). A growing preference for non-literary topics was to be observed. The subjects ranged from resistance groups against Hitler, discussion of films/TV programmes, to the analysis of issues regarding the integration of foreigners, and to fashion.

In general it can be said that the majority of candidates chose well narrowed-down topics, and focused on specific research questions, such as the rise and decline of a German company (case study), certain specific aspects of the *Wiedervereinigung* (once in conjunction with its literary reflections). There was an interesting rendering of an old favourite - "1968".

A fair number of essays dealt with literary topics (*Brecht and the Verfremdungseffekt*, aspects of *Der Vorleser*). The literary topics were focused and contained clearly defined research questions (e.g. 'Frauenrollen' in two of *Dürrenmatt's* works, *Geschwisterbeziehungen in Grimm's Märchen*, *Lale Andersen and 'Willie' in 'Lili Marlen'*, *Die Beziehung der männlichen Hauptfigur zu den Frauen in KAFKAS 'Prozess'*).

One or two candidates chose linguistic topics (*Schweizerdeutsch; die Probleme beim Uebersetzen* – using a literary example). These were of varying quality and insight. One problem seemed to be that the candidates concerned were not able to separate personal involvement from factual information.

A number of essays exceeded the prescribed word length, and some abstracts did not state the research area and/or ran over the given 300-word limit (see below).

A number of candidates fell down on presentation and referencing (see below).

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

As mentioned above, most candidates thought about their topics before starting to write their Extended Essays and in many cases consulted their supervisors. This resulted in a good few essays with clearly defined research questions, which were adequately presented and also dealt with efficiently in the main body of the essay. Many candidates also included a motivation statement, which gave a nice personal note to the essay without lowering the tone.

Isolated problems remained concerning both the formulation and the presentation of the research question. The title of the essay itself is not sufficient as a research question, the research question needs to be stated clearly and explained in the introduction. Moreover, it is vital that candidates actually ‘answer’/refer to their research question in the essay.

The following essay-title may serve as an excellent example: *Inwiefern haben Jugendliche Widerstand gegen Hitler und sein Regime geleistet, und wie hat sich deren Geist bis heute ausgewirkt?* (This essay sensibly confines the argument to the discussion of the resistance of one particular group [young people] and broadens it to encompass the inspiration which has been felt in order to sustain and encourage the fight against injustice up to the present day). Please refer to the above comments regarding literary topics.

Criterion B Approach

A clearly defined, concise research question points the way to a clearly defined investigation of the topic area, reinforced by a suitable methodology for the substantiation of the issues in question. It also serves as the foundation for the abstract as an illuminating synopsis for the reader.

Many candidates used an acceptable variety of sources (books, internet, leaflets, questionnaires, interviews...) but several candidates relied solely on the Internet (often foreign language sites), which is not acceptable. Likewise, the use of secondary literature that is entirely in/related to a foreign language is not advisable (e.g. English language books translated by the candidate).

There were some unusual, and often successful, interesting approaches to the topics chosen; one particularly nice example was the analysis of young people’s attitudes in East and West Germany, based on literary sources – although this essay was not always concise it provided interesting material, and an unusual viewpoint.

Criterion C Analysis

Most candidates were well capable of analysing and extrapolating but the support material was not always clearly referenced (see below) and often inappropriate.

It is obvious that some candidates – those who generally achieved the highest grades – have been very well coached and made fully aware of the criteria as set out by the IBO.

A number of students have concentrated excessively on just one aspect of their chosen research topic (e.g. Michael’s ‘Abwehrmassnahmen’ are dealt with rather verbosely in an essay about the main characters in *Der Vorleser*).

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Most candidates scored much lower in this criterion than one would have expected, showing that not all candidates are able to draw conclusions and to go beyond the obvious. A lot of candidates also simply presented facts without reflection, which resulted in lower marks in criteria C and D.

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It must be said that the argumentation was much better (more concise and relevant, more focused and factually correct) when it came to literary or general cultural topics, compared to linguistic/language-based ones.

Criterion E Conclusion

Though not all conclusions were clear and to the point, this year's sample was an improvement on last year's, as most candidates actually attempted a conclusion. Those who did usually followed the guidelines and related their conclusion to the research question.

Criterion F Abstract

As mentioned above, the most common problem regarding the abstract was excessive length, often by as much as 20%.

Furthermore, many candidates did not state the research question or their conclusions in the abstract.

As in previous years there were still a number of candidates who included the abstract in their essay, sometimes using it as an introduction, which is not at all the purpose an abstract should serve.

Having said this, there were a large number of excellent (clear, concise, coherent) abstracts, which were a pleasure to read.

Criterion G Formal Presentation

I must say that I was very impressed with the overall standard of presentation. Most essays were clear, well set out and logically presented.

I encountered problems concerning the use of paragraphs and chapters. Some candidates took the idea of an "essay" literally and wrote a long piece of work without any sub-divisions or chapters, as one would in a Paper Two, for example.

On a number of occasions the abstract and the bibliography were included in the essay, which I would not recommend.

One or two candidates were a little clumsy when it came to choosing fonts and layout; creating very busy and thus often unclear work.

Not all candidates stated the total number of words; as virtually all extended essays are word-processed it does not take much effort to print the number of words as counted by the PC.

The greatest problem remains the use of references and quotes. In fact, there seems to be a certain decline in standard compared to previous years. Many candidates were unable to reference quotes that were not verbatim or make a clear distinction between direct and indirect quoting. Most pictures did not carry any sources, and referencing was not done in a consistent manner (e.g. page numbers were given for some, but not all, quotes; dates missed off newspapers; switching from one system of referencing to another...). Quotes in another language (cf. English) that are not explained or translated in a footnote are unacceptable. The standard varied considerably, but on the whole it can be said that very few essays were flawless.

Criterion H Holistic Judgment

Refer to comments made re. Criteria A – G

Subject-specific assessment criteria

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

The majority of candidates demonstrated good to thorough understanding of the topic studied as well as the wider field of language/culture related to the topic. However, there were some essays with serious flaws in this area, e.g. the ‘target culture’ had nothing to do with German or the topic was so badly chosen that the candidate could not prove his/her knowledge within the specified criterion. (See criteria A, B, G above)

Criterion K Point of View on the Topic

Most candidates demonstrated that they are capable of structuring an essay in such a way that their point of view is clearly stated and backed-up by arguments and examples.

Criterion L Communication and Style

The difference between A2 and B language candidates is obvious, with the near native speakers obviously able to manipulate the language a lot more effectively and communicating with much greater ease and panache. But most candidates demonstrated that they are able to communicate successfully using formal language in an organized manner.

Some grammatical difficulties might have been picked up and eradicated through more thorough teaching, spell-checking or closer supervision.

Moreover, some candidates do not reference all sources correctly and adequately which results in style-breaks as the style of a text-book or other source is most likely to be rather more ‘adult’ than an 18-year-old second-language student’s.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Most of the recommendations follow from what has been said above:

- It is vital that candidates receive adequate supervision and that the supervisors state this clearly in the space provided. (It would be very helpful to the examiner to know how much formal training a candidate had received – writing skills, quoting rules etc. not necessarily language-specific.)
- Great care should be taken that topics are within the guidelines (see the Extended Essay guide) and sufficiently narrowed down.
- Spell-check and grammar-check are useful tools.
- The number of words should be clearly stated – for the abstract as well as the essay itself.
- Title, contents page, chapters with appropriate headings, literature list and references should be evident in every essay.
- Abstracts should be set apart from the main body of the essay and clearly identified as such.

Español – Grupo 2

Ámbito que cubren los trabajos entregados y medida en que resultan apropiados

Los trabajos de esta sesión trataron de una extensa variedad de temas tanto lingüísticos como culturales y literarios. Entre los trabajos lingüísticos hubo algunos que se centraron en comparaciones entre la lengua de España y la de algún país latinoamericano, otros analizaron el vocabulario específico de un país, la penetración del inglés en países de habla española, el fenómeno del *español* y el lenguaje del periodismo. Entre los temas culturales aparecieron el flamenco y los toros con una frecuencia mayor que en otras ocasiones, así como temas más habituales relacionados con la supervivencia de pueblos indígenas o de sus lenguas, la devoción a la Virgen de Guadalupe y la influencia de los medios de comunicación en la cultura. Algunos trabajos fueron dedicados a obras pictóricas directamente relacionadas con aspectos sociales y políticos como el muralismo y el movimiento chicano, el 'Guernica' de Picasso y la Guerra Civil o 'Los Desastres de la Guerra' de Goya. Entre las monografías de carácter literario aparecieron temas muy frecuentes como 'la mujer en el teatro de García Lorca', comparaciones entre autores o entre diversas obras que tratan el mismo tema, y el realismo mágico. Entre los autores estudiados figuraban autores populares para este tipo de trabajo como García Lorca, Ana María Matute, Jorge Luis Borges, Juan Rulfo, García Márquez, Isabel Allende y Miguel de Unamuno. Pero hubo asimismo monografías dedicadas a José Hernández, Ángel Ganivet, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Jorge Isaac y José Mármol.

Rendimiento alcanzado en cada uno de los criterios

Criterios generales

Criterio A Formulación del problema de investigación

Aunque la mayoría de los candidatos se mostraron capaces de elegir un tema de investigación bien definido, hubo con cierta frecuencia trabajos sobre temas poco adecuados, demasiado vagos o demasiado amplios. Ejemplos de temas problemáticos por su amplitud son aquellos que pretenden estudiar toda la obra de un autor o todo un movimiento o fenómeno literario como pueden ser el romanticismo y el realismo mágico. Otros problemas surgen de conceptos literarios mal entendidos por el alumno o mal aplicados, como el mismo 'realismo mágico' o las diferentes acepciones de 'barroco'. Temas poco adecuados son los de exclusiva naturaleza histórica que corresponden a la asignatura de Historia y no al Grupo B. Otro tipo de elección errónea de un tema consiste en seleccionar aquellos que son puramente expositivos, como puede ser la descripción de un país o región ampliamente conocido y descrito en cualquier enciclopedia. Lo mismo ocurre con la biografía de un autor de sobra conocido. En el ámbito histórico o social el pretender estudiar dentro del límite de una monografía toda la historia de un país, o toda su pintura es imposible y suele llevar a la producción de trabajos superficiales ya veces poco coherentes. No se puede olvidar que, aunque de proporciones modestas, se requiere que el alumno haga un trabajo de investigación distinto de lo que se puede hallar con sólo abrir un diccionario. La investigación requiere una argumentación y las conclusiones a las que se ha llegado.

Es importante también cuidar la formulación del tema. Ésta debe encontrarse si no en el título, en el resumen y en la introducción aunque es preferible que el título la refleje con exactitud

Criterio B Enfoque del problema de investigación

Hubo un número relativamente alto de monografías que no alcanzaron la nota máxima en este criterio. Los problemas de enfoque suelen reflejar un concepto poco claro del tema: por ejemplo, proclamar que el tema es 'cómo se refleja cierto problema social en una obra literaria' y consagrar la mayor parte de la exposición a un estudio histórico de dicho problema -cosa de por sí imposible de lograr en un trabajo de este calibre -, implica no tratar ni el tema literario ni el tema social. Otro ejemplo de enfoque erróneo consiste en afirmar que se va a estudiar el lenguaje periodístico y limitarse a incluir copias de artículos y noticias. Un ejemplo del error contrario consiste en intentar un estudio sobre la

obra de uno o más pintores, limitándose a exponer una teoría crítica sin relacionarla con obras concretas y sin incluir reproducciones de cuadros. El enfoque debe ser elegido como el más adecuado para justificar lo que el candidato pretende probar.

Criterio C Análisis/interpretación y Criterio D Argumento/evaluación

Los logros según estos criterios suelen ir estrechamente unidos a la claridad con que se concibe el tema. Muchas monografías fueron excelentes desde el punto de vista de estos dos criterios, pero aquéllas cuyo tema no estaba bien definido o era demasiado amplio o poco adecuado, no alcanzaron la puntuación máxima puesto que dichos errores en la elección del tema llevan al alumno en general a ser excesivamente superficial o poco coherente.

Criterio E Conclusión

La mayoría de los candidatos expuso sus conclusiones de forma clara y persuasiva. Sin embargo se dieron con frecuencia trabajos cuya conclusión no estaba claramente elaborada o se refería sólo a aspectos parciales. En algún caso se omitió por completo la conclusión.

Criterio F Resumen

Muchos candidatos escribieron un resumen adecuado incluyendo el tema, el enfoque y la conclusión a la que habían llegado. Sin embargo también hubo cierta cantidad de resúmenes que no obtuvieron la máxima puntuación, con frecuencia porque no se mencionaba la conclusión, con menos frecuencia porque el resumen reflejaba la ambigüedad en la concepción del tema. En algunas ocasiones se omitió el resumen.

Criterio G Presentación formal

La gran mayoría de los trabajos estaban bien o muy bien presentados en cuanto a pulcritud, y requisitos tales como el índice, la bibliografía, las notas y los apéndices cuando eran indispensables. Se puede apreciar una gran mejora en este aspecto de la monografía en las últimas sesiones. Hubo algunos trabajos que omitieron el índice o incluso el resumen, pero no fueron muchos. Un aspecto más descuidado fue el de errores tipográficos y acentos.

Criterio H Valoración global

Un buen número de monografías fueron excelentes por su originalidad y sus argumentos claros ya veces incluso elocuentes. En estas monografías se podía apreciar el interés personal del alumno. En número mayor hubo trabajos sólidos, de exposición clara, con acertado uso de las fuentes, razonamientos coherentes y conclusiones persuasivas. Sin embargo, se dieron en esta sesión con inesperada frecuencia las monografías que alcanzaron una puntuación global más modesta debido sobre todo a los problemas antes mencionados sobre la concepción y tratamiento del tema.

Criterios de la asignatura

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

En la gran mayoría de los trabajos los conocimientos lingüísticos y culturales fueron suficientes para el desarrollo del tema. En algunas de las monografías de carácter literario se pudieron apreciar las limitaciones en los conocimientos o en la comprensión de los conceptos utilizados.

Criterio K Opinión sobre el tema estudiado

Un número muy elevado de candidatos alcanzó puntuaciones buenas o muy buenas según este criterio. Más floja fue la puntuación de aquellos candidatos que no lograron desarrollar una opinión coherente, en general debido a que a veces se sentían superados por el tema o un enfoque poco adecuado no les permitía ser completamente convincentes.

Criterio L Comunicación y uso de un registro y estilo adecuado

Prácticamente todos los candidatos lograron escribir de forma comprensible y en la mayoría de los casos el lenguaje estaba a la altura de la tarea. La falta de claridad en la expresión se debió en unos pocos casos al escaso dominio de la lengua, y en algunos otros al hecho de que el alumno intentaba manejar conceptos o teorías que no estaban claros en su mente y que, por lo tanto, no podía exponer con claridad.

Recomendaciones para la supervisión de futuros candidatos

Como se ha dicho antes es evidente que un número muy elevado de candidatos recibe una orientación efectiva por parte de sus profesores. No obstante, cabe insistir en algunos aspectos:

- el tema elegido ha de prestarse a una investigación por parte del alumno, por lo tanto no puede ser amplio y vago sino concreto y limitado
- el tema y el enfoque elegido deben permitir que el estudiante desarrolle un punto de vista y lo justifique. Es útil, una vez empezado el trabajo, que el alumno intente resumir muy brevemente, el tema, sus argumentos y las conclusiones a las que se supone que va a llegar. Aunque susceptible de modificaciones según avanza el trabajo, este breve resumen ayuda a que el alumno siempre tenga presente el hilo de su investigación y también a que le sea más fácil luego redactar el resumen definitivo.
- es aconsejable utilizar fuentes en español, siempre que sea posible
- no es apropiado elegir como tema de la monografía de Español B un autor u obra en otra lengua, aunque se pueden hacer las referencias necesarias a ellos.
- cuando sea pertinente, hay que insistir para que el candidato utilice el registro apropiado y evite coloquialismos.
- no es apropiado escribir los títulos de las diferentes partes de la monografía en inglés u otra lengua. Es fácil usar palabras como 'índice', 'resumen' y 'bibliografía'.
- por último, no hay razón de que un trabajo esmerado en otros aspectos, esté lleno de errores tipográficos o falto de acentos. Es necesario que el alumno se tome tiempo suficiente para releer lo que ha escrito.

Danish – Group 2

The overall impression of the extended essays is that they are on a high level, and live up to the standards as for formula, content and range. The subjects are very interesting, they are very much alike: on culture, politics, social life and tradition. The students seem very engaged in their subjects. What strikes me is the homogeneity of this year's extended essays: they are more or less on the same level, within the same fields and written with the same enthusiasm. Another striking thing is the influence of the Internet on the students' work.

General assessment criteria

As for the research question, approach to the research question and the abstract, the students all seem competent in dealing with these – they follow the book. The criteria analysis and arguments seem to be the weakest, it is as if they do not have the tools to analyse, they often describe, make a summary or report instead of an analysis, and instead of arguing for their analysis, they postulate and imply. As it is a general tendency, one should not focus too much on it in the evaluation – I have tried not to be too critical here. They almost all know how to make good conclusions, and the formal presentation is overall on a high level. I would like to comment on two things here: many of the students do not know how to make proper bibliographies, and none of the students knew how to make proper punctuation, I have not punished them for these lacks, as they seem to be general.

As for the assessment criteria, I am very impressed. The students knowledge of the language and culture is at a very high level, the same goes for their ability to communicate and use the language. Again, I must emphasis my impression of homogeneity. Some of this might be due to the use of the computer and the Internet, but still you get the impression of competent students who can work independently and use the tools they have.

As for recommendations, I would first of all say good work, stick to the high level, but also I would like to recommend working more on analysis and arguments. Today's students grew up with the computer and the internet, so much more important is it to teach them to be more critical to these media, it is as if they consider the internet a more reliable source than books, as if they just accept the information they get here without questioning it at all. A last comment, knowledge of punctuation seems to be non-existent.

Swedish – Group 2

Of the ten extended essays that I had to mark, a majority had chosen subjects based on literature study, while a few had taken language-related subjects for their essays.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As for literature based subjects it is positive to find that in general the research questions (RQ) are well specified, which makes it possible for the student to focus on his/her theme and try to keep to the point.

The students have generally done well with their literature linked essays. But there is a risk that the RQ becomes too narrow and does not give enough openings to work on. When formulating the RQ both supervisor and student must have this balance in mind.

The language based subjects have also been well treated, although students may meet difficulties when it comes to finding relevant material.

Candidate performance against each criterion

As for the general assessment criteria A-H one finds that B – approach to the research question, C – analysis/interpretation and D – argument/evaluation present the greatest difficulties for the candidates.

One would assume that the approach, at least in general terms, is discussed with the supervisor; if not there is a considerable risk that the approach will be inappropriate.

As for analysis/interpretation what one expects is an attempt to accomplish this – one cannot expect more than that, and the result is usually on the same level as the main body of the essay.

The same can be said about the demand for argument/evaluation. What one looks for is an attempt to develop an argument and evaluate the results.

What conclusion the candidate has reached is sometimes difficult to find, or is not clearly stated.

Use of register and style naturally reflects the general language standard of the candidate. With a suitable subject, some guidance and good material for research candidates may reach a higher level than they normally perform on, but this is rare.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

I think all the above points should be stressed in the process of extended essay writing. What is essential is that the supervisor is active and can transfer to the student a feeling of urgency and research spirit in his/her extended essay work.

Dutch – Group 2

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Essays came from five schools; all of which were in the Netherlands. About half of the candidates appear to be native speakers of Dutch, and their overall understanding of the culture / language studied was, therefore, on the whole very good.

Most essays centred on the general subject of contemporary society, with topics like soft drugs, euthanasia or immigration into Dutch society.

I suspected two of the essays to contain plagiarised material; these were sent to IBCA. One of these candidates was indeed found to have plagiarised; the other, however, was returned to me for marking. Most candidates had chosen suitable topics, but it must be said that it is quite hard to provide an interesting angle to essays on the more widely discussed topics of euthanasia or soft drugs. One candidate wrote about him/herself which did not provide him/her with the possibility of systematic research. Some candidates had written essays on interesting, challenging topics, though.

Candidates' performance against each criterion

Like last year, the lowest scores were given on criteria A (research question) and E (conclusion). Candidates scored on the whole better on the subject assessment criteria than on the general assessment criteria.

The research question is a criterion which can easily provide the candidate with a high score, yet I found that too many candidates did either not define their research question sufficiently; or formulated split research questions; or had indeed not provided a research question at all.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Candidates will perform better if the research question is narrowed down to a greater extent, and if the candidates do not try to cover too much ground. More should be done to achieve coherence between and within paragraphs or sections, and more attention should be paid to writing a successful conclusion. Candidates should also be more aware of the importance of consistent referencing: footnotes and bibliographies were often found to be quite poor and ill constructed. Special attention ought to be paid on how to reference websites.

Portuguese - Group 2

Range and suitability of the work submitted

The majority of works presented pertinent topics. Some were quite original. A few of them could not explore appropriately their choices or did not focus on the culture of the language concerned.

This year theme choices were almost equally divided between literary and socio-cultural topics. Many socio-cultural topics were based on historical and/or political background and at times these tended to overpower the essay. It would have been advisable to keep this to a minimum otherwise the essay becomes unbalanced. The topics of literary type showed some variety of focused area. Some candidates showed a great deal of resourcefulness and skill in handling their topics in terms of breadth and approach.

The essays were from good to excellent, developing well-chosen topics, demonstrating the interest from the candidates in the subject and the pleasure of producing a careful text.

Candidate performance against each criterion

All essays presented the research question and the investigation procedures, as well as the conclusions and abstract. Most of the candidates were aware of the need to state clearly and unequivocally a research question to give the reader an early impression of their sense of focus. Some, however, managed to hide it in a form other than a question.

Some candidates successfully explained their motivation behind the chosen topic. The general impression was that analysis/interpretation was adequate. The methodology matched the type of essays developed, and no serious flaws were noticed in adequately matching approach to topic and research questions.

The majority of candidates used relevant source material for their analysis as a means of proper textual demonstration. The Internet use, in general, was appropriate. In some cases there was too much reliance on newspapers and recent publications in magazines. Anyway, it would be advisable to enrich the bibliography with other reference sources material.

Analysis/interpretation is an area where there is a need for improvement. Several candidates had lists of references in their bibliographies, but these were not referenced in the body of the essay. It was difficult to tell which were the candidates' ideas from those of authors they consulted. While the analysis often lent itself to the topic and the research question, there was a lack of coherent integration of the literature review in many essays. There was a general absence of critical evaluation of ideas belonging to other authors. This made these essays less thorough and less effective than they could have been.

As a consequence of this difficulty to distinguish between some candidates' ideas and those of others, it was hard to determine which of the arguments were their own. While properly giving credits to others for their ideas, the candidates need to show themselves and their own thoughts in their work.

The candidates made visible attempts at giving concluding remarks to their essays.

On the whole the presentation was very pleasing. Many candidates selected relevant material to illustrate and these candidates demonstrated a stronger understanding of their chosen topic. The candidates were aware of the fact that references, bibliography and illustration play an essential part in their research project.

Subject assessment criteria

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It was evident that care and attention were given to the details of grammar, spelling and correct syntax, choice of words and in some cases fairly sophisticated usage. It also seems that candidates have reached a good level of maturity of thought about the African, Portuguese and Brazilian literature and culture represented by their topics.

Most works demonstrated a strong interest in the Portuguese speaking areas and a good knowledge about the social context, history, and language.

One or two essays were not very carefully proofread and as a result contained basic mistakes of grammar and syntax.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The high quality level of the essays presented is due to the excellent guidance and support that these candidates received from their teachers. In light of this examination session observations, the following areas should receive more attention:

- Effective supervision is needed to ensure a good close focus and to avoid the choice of inappropriate topics.
- If there are not sufficient resources available at the place of writing, and consequently only Internet will document the essay, it would seem better to steer candidates towards a topic that could be better documented.
- Other people's ideas should be precisely and well documented through the use of footnotes or endnotes that include carefully stated bibliographic references.
- Candidates need guidance on proofreading their own work before they submit it for critical review by the teacher.

Classical Greek and Latin

Once again, most of the work was well done, some extremely well done. While there is some further improvement from last year, this report naturally concentrates on those areas where improvement could still be made, but it should not be interpreted as generally complaining. The examiners recognize the enormous labour that has been spent on the work and the difficulties many will have encountered in organizing time and in finding appropriate resources. Much of this report repeats *verbatim* what was reported last year since many of the comments are still relevant.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was an astonishing range in the work submitted, and a decline in work on Virgil and other central figures. 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 over-worked 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 Analysis/interpretation & criterion D 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

Last year, the commonest problem here was exceeding the word limit of 4,000 words; this problem seems largely to have been solved. Please note that the Abstract and bibliography are excluded from the word count but material in footnotes is not.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

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, and 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) was 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

Understanding of the purpose of footnoting remains a serious problem. 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 what the candidate attributes to him or her. 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. This problem persists from last year with little obvious improvement.

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

History

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Among the wide range of essays submitted was the usual extensive crop of stalwart topics, including aspects of the Russian Revolution, the Treaty of Versailles and its impact on Germany after 1919, Stalinist Russia, the treatment of Jews during the Second World War, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. A larger-than-ever number of candidates wrote about aspects of Mao's life and contribution, particularly during the Long March and the Cultural Revolution. Examiners also reported a trend towards topics that dealt with current political, social or economic problems with only a limited historical context. Curiously, the supervisors' comments were generally very complimentary. Essays from new centres included a refreshing series of innovative studies as well as topics linked to the IB history curriculum. Some candidates elected to write about a grandparent or another relative's experiences. This was not always well handled. Use of material gathered in personal interviews needs to be balanced by secondary sources that corroborate or present an alternative to the primary source interviewee.

There was a further substantial increase in the total number of history essays submitted, and also in those that could have benefited considerably from more attention to the *raison d'être* of the extended essay, choice of topic and framing of the research question. Too many essays underachieve simply because they should have been submitted in another subject, or because the topic does not prove to be one that provides the candidate with an opportunity to engage in "a study in depth of a limited topic" (*The Extended Essay*, IBO, 1998, p. 7). The framing of the research question is also immensely influential. Ideally the question will encourage use of the qualities emphasized in the higher achievement levels of the assessment criteria.

Every session there are a considerable number of essays that are highly regarded by supervisors (on the evidence of predicted grades, comments on the cover sheet, enquiries-upon-results, etc.) but which sadly do not achieve the grade expected. From an examiner's perspective, many candidates lose marks for reasons that could so easily be avoided. Long-standing problems include insufficient evidence and citation in support of argument, bibliographies and/or footnotes that are incomplete, and essays lacking an abstract and/or table of contents. Two reasons that were more prominent than hitherto were referencing without page numbers and extensive use of the first person ('I believe', 'I think', 'I feel', etc.), which is not appropriate in a formal essay. A surprising number of essays would score 5, even 8 marks more with careful attention to such basic points.

Candidates' performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Though some candidates chose not to take their supervisor's advice, helping them shape their research question in a suitable way is the key to a successful essay.

There were, as always, essays with broad titles (e.g., 'the history of Palestine'; 'Mao's contribution to the CCP from the revolution until his death'; etc.), and research questions too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit. Ideally more candidates would show that they understand the difference between a title and a question, and articulate their research question clearly and precisely in both the abstract and introduction.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

The approach was generally appropriate (achievement level 2), but relatively few candidates explore scholarly journals or use varying interpretations.

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Some candidates chose topics for which resources were limited. However, there were relatively few examples of unsuitable approaches. A high proportion of candidates who made precise statements of the research question attained levels 2 or 3.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

There were fewer totally descriptive essays than in previous years. Most candidates made a serious attempt at analysis where appropriate, though some candidates titled their essay “An analysis of ...” and then proceeded to present a report with little or no argument. To attain level 4 on this criterion, sources and evidence need to be analysed critically.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Most essays contained an argument that addressed the research question. A discernible argument, the response to the research question, should be present in every essay. Generally, the argument presented satisfied at least level 2 requirements. However, there was often insufficient supporting evidence and/or evaluation to attain the top levels.

Criterion E Conclusion

Conclusions were usually consistent with the argument but lacking effective closure. The principal weakness was failure to see and register unanswered questions. Some conclusions were brief or simply a summary of the essay. The best raised new questions and perspectives, and brought closure with a good final statement related to the central issue.

Criterion F Abstract

Some candidates don't seem to understand that the abstract and introduction play different roles in an extended essay. Usually the abstract stated, clearly or otherwise, the research question, scope of the study and an indication of the conclusion. However, there remain some essays in which the abstract was essentially a summary of the findings, without making clear what the question had been or what work had been conducted.

Criterion G Formal presentation

The standard seemed to range more widely than ever. Modern technology can assist presentation in various ways and has led to some essays looking exceptionally good. On the other hand, not even the technology can conceal some weaknesses. “Abstract, Essay, Bibliography” do not constitute a contents page. Titles were often awkward and verbose. Bibliographies were not always in proper alphabetical order and many candidates failed to separate primary from secondary sources. Footnotes/ references without page numbers suggest careless research - possibly plagiarism if they are consistently lacking.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Supervisors who do not comment on their candidates' essay do them a disservice. The best essays, including some that arose from families' experiences such as those of Armenian Jews and Japanese internees, demonstrated several of the qualities listed under this criterion. Many essays seemed to demonstrate initiative, personal engagement and sense of achievement, though insight and depth of understanding were less in evidence. In approximately 50% of cases supervisors did not provide any comments to inform the examiner about matters not clearly evident from the essay.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Historical sources

Many candidates tend to accept sources unquestioningly, not least Internet ones.

As usual, this was the weakest area in most candidates' essays and there still does not seem to be widespread understanding of what is required to fulfill this criterion. There was little direct recognition of different interpretations and/or commentary on historical sources, whether in the body of the essay, information in footnotes or annotated bibliographies.

Criterion K Historical knowledge and understanding

Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge and adequate levels of understanding. Good knowledge of their chosen topic was shown by the majority of candidates, an outcome of careful research that enabled them to score well on this criterion.

Criterion L Selection and application of historical information/evidence

Many candidates were able to support their comments and argument with detailed, pertinent evidence; but this is an area with room for further improvement. Thorough research, good selection and application of evidence, and detailed citation in support of their argument enabled some candidates to substantiate their argument fully. In contrast, some candidates relied on one key work and had not necessarily tapped into the deepest vein of historical writing in their subject area. For example, some candidates writing on Mussolini had not accessed Dennis Mack Smith's work.

Criterion M Critical analysis and historical judgment

These qualities distinguish the very able from the rest. The best essays demonstrated clear evidence of independent thought, evaluation and balanced historical judgment. The achievement of the highest scoring candidates in this category was exceptional; their work was a pleasure to read. Many others seemed to see their task only as presenting evidence that supported their line of argument. They argued strongly but without introducing and rebutting alternative perspectives. Weaker essays showed candidates presenting generalizations uncritically and accepting what they had read without thinking it through.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

An appropriate topic and a good research question are essential to a successful essay. The topic needs to be narrow. A single event rather than a period of decades should be explored. When sufficient relevant material is not easily accessible, a change of topic should be made. Firm guidance should also be given on developing a research question and sub-questions. Candidates should be encouraged to frame the "research question" as a question or hypothesis, rather than in terms of, for instance, "an account of ...", which is likely to lead to a purely descriptive/chronological response.

Every session also brings plentiful evidence of the inability of many candidates to correctly and completely document their sources of information. There are still a large number of candidates who rely on only one or two key sources for the bulk of their essay material. Some candidates continue to reference whole paragraphs rather than specific information, quotations or statistics. Clearly, this is an area where supervisors need to give their candidates significant amounts of guidance. Proper referencing is essential to any good research paper but is especially important given the nature of the historical discipline.

Greater attention also needs to be paid to the recognition of differing historical interpretations. History is, in many respects, an on-going debate about the significance of different events, people, etc. and this "debate" needs to be recognized.

With many universities and colleges placing new emphasis on essay tests as part of their entrance selection, it seems an appropriate time to urge that the practice of using the research question also as the title should be discouraged; it is not an accepted practice in scholarly writing.

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Generally, candidates appear to be paying attention to the assessment criteria but work still needs to be done on showing candidates what constitutes a proper historical essay. Active, knowledgeable supervision by qualified history teachers is the only way to ensure this.

Geography

The range and suitability of the work submitted

A wide and interesting range of topics was submitted and, overall, the quality was impressive. The majority of essays investigated topics that were local to the candidate and therefore encouraged in-depth analysis, often supported by some excellent fieldwork or good primary data collection. The best essays also involved research into areas that were of particular interest to the candidates. Once again, a few essays were either borderline or inappropriate in terms of their interpretation of geography, or just too broad in scope.

Candidates' performance against general assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Almost all candidates presented essays that had a clearly defined research question, which was stated at the start and provided the focus for the investigation. In some cases however the research question was mentioned only in the abstract or in the title. It is important that the research question along with the aims of the essay are stated very clearly at the beginning. Sometimes the research question was presented as a hypothesis that was so obvious a statement that it really needed no investigation. The best research questions involved the investigation of relevant geographical relationships, or attempted to identify spatial patterns or temporal trends.

Most of the very best essays had research questions that could be answered only through the analysis of detailed primary or secondary data.

Criterion B Approach to research question

The best essays approached the investigation through the use of one or more testable hypotheses. Where these were well formulated, the essay invariably proceeded along the right path. In a number of cases, hypotheses were contradictory or badly expressed, were simply too numerous, or were statements that were so patently true that there was little scope to test them at all. Along with the research question, the formulation of hypotheses is an area where the supervisor can play an essential role in guiding candidates along the right lines of approach. Some very good essays that investigated local issues, for example, did not need hypotheses (as in fact they are not a prerequisite of a good essay).

Some difficulty seems to have been experienced in separating the demands of fieldwork from those of the extended essay. A number of essays were just extended fieldwork reports, with lengthy descriptions of how the data was collected and with pages of detailed and repetitive calculations. Whereas it could be argued that a fieldwork exercise is concerned with the techniques of data collection and analysis, these skills are not of such primary importance in an extended essay. What is needed is evidence of the skill of presenting a logical and coherent argument supported by valid data analysis. A significant trend was the use of group data collection, clearly carried out on school field trips, as the basis of an extended essay.

Supervisors are reminded that the extended essay should be an individual study and that the use of collective fieldwork data may run the risk of overlap with or duplication of internal assessment assignments and could lead to candidate disqualification. It was clear from photographs and statements such as “the group then measured the depth of the river at intervals of...”, that a number of candidates were working on the same topic. Centres should guard against the risk of submitting similar work for more than one examination component.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Although very few essays were purely descriptive, many essays failed to provide a sound analysis of the data, believing that the production of many (often inappropriate) graphs in itself would be sufficient enough.

Every graph or calculation must be relevant to the investigation and must be explained in relation to the hypotheses, with clear reasoning in support or rejection of these. A variety of graphing techniques should be used. Too often candidates produced page after page of simple pie or bar charts where the most complicated task was entering the data into a spreadsheet and selecting the chart option. The best essays presented their findings in varied and appropriate ways and used a variety of statistical methods to verify these.

Candidates should guard against drawing far reaching conclusions from limited data, such as one-time measurements of wave height and length on a coast to explain geomorphological variations in beach profiles, or a survey of a small number of current refugees to establish immigration trends for a whole country over a period of years.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

This element in the best essays was excellent. The top candidates presented a logical and balanced argument, showing an impressive level of intellectual sophistication and understanding, while engaging in reasoned reflection on the outcomes of their analysis. The weaker essays simply listed their outcomes, with the mention of one or two limitations. This section more than any other discriminates between the good and the poor candidates and supervisors need to foster it more explicitly.

Criterion E Conclusion

While almost all of the essays included a conclusion, it was often just a summary of the content of the investigation or included personal statements or opinions. It was a delight to read a good conclusion, with the author pulling all the threads of the essay together, linking the outcomes back to the hypotheses and the underlying geographical theory, proposing modifications to the hypotheses and suggesting further or improved avenues of investigation.

Criterion F Abstract

Most abstracts were of the correct length and provided a clear synopsis of the essay, but again too many candidates lost marks by treating it as an introduction to the topic or a justification of the study. Abstracts need to be a simple statement of the research question, scope and results as is clearly stated in the general guidelines.

Criterion G Formal presentation

While the immediate impression gained was of an excellent level of presentation, closer examination showed that many candidates were not quite as skilled with the computer as they believed. Maps in particular suffered and were frequently fuzzy, (the downloaded bitmap graphics unable to provide the clarity of detail required), or only marginally appropriate. Hand drawn maps, however, were usually much better and almost always more relevant. The need for the inclusion of relevant and well constructed maps cannot be over-emphasized as they are invariably the best way to convey spatial information. Some of the best essays were the ones that were able to construct original maps from processed data, such as variations in living standards within a city, or the establishment of core and periphery areas within a country based upon the candidates own indices of economic development and social welfare.

Supervisors are asked once again to instruct candidates that maps, diagrams, photographs and graphs should be included at relevant points in the main body of the essay and not collected at the back, and certainly not moved to the appendix.

Candidates should also be reminded that all secondary information included in the essay must be attributed to its source.

Other common failings included the absence of numbered pages (or misnumbered pages), the inclusion of diagrams that were not specifically referred to in the text, photocopied maps, newspaper clippings or photographs that were not captioned or annotated and were there merely for decoration. Bibliographies were not always used correctly and some were clearly just a list of texts and Internet sites relevant to the topic, but not essential to the essay itself. Only sources that contain material used in the essay should be included.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

Unless the essay was based entirely upon secondary sources and was descriptive in nature, most candidates were able to score on this criterion.

Clearly, the highest marks were awarded to those candidates who carried out an individual study that demanded initiative and detailed personal investigation. It cannot be stressed too greatly that the supervisor's comment is very useful to the examiner in deciding which criterion level to award. Supervisors who make no comment at all are doing their candidates a gross disservice.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Relevance to the discipline of geography, and use of appropriate subject language and terminology

By far the majority of the essays were relevant to the discipline of geography and could only have been attempted by candidates with a good geographical background and a sound knowledge of concepts and issues. Even the weaker candidates were mostly able to use suitable terminology. Essays that were not relevant to the topic were few and tended to examine social issues in a non spatial context.

Criterion K Appropriate sources of geographical information

The best essays used a wide variety of sources including secondary and detailed primary data. A common source of information in many essays was the questionnaire and only the strongest candidates used a sufficiently large sample and showed an awareness of the validity of the data collected. In many cases though, the questions included were not always relevant to the research question. Candidates should always be able to justify the questions they ask when using such a method of data collection. The Internet was another popular source of information and there were some essays that relied entirely on Internet sources. It is essential that in such cases candidates be shown how to discriminate between general interest web sites and those that are more academically reliable.

Criterion L Understanding and application of relevant geographical concepts, issues, theories or ideas

For most of the candidates this criterion provided no difficulty - their essays showed that, with their good geographical backgrounds, they had a clear understanding of the relevant concepts and issues. In the best essays, the understanding of these concepts and theories emerged as a natural, integral part of the development of the argument and not as an 'add-on', such as when candidates embark upon lengthy, filler descriptions of urban models, even though they may not be entirely relevant to the urban topic under investigation.

Criterion M Methods of analysis, interpretation and evaluation appropriate to geographical enquiry

Most essays adopted an analytical approach, using graphical and statistical techniques to identify and quantify trends and relationships. The criticism made in this area in past reports remains valid: far too many candidates still believe that all that is required to satisfy this criterion is a number of simple (and frequently inappropriate) bar or pie charts. The right choice of graph is important, but candidates should not rely on a spreadsheet program to make this choice for them.

More candidates seem to be using statistical techniques such as correlation coefficients. A surprising number of candidates using the Spearman method were unable to rank the data correctly and this invalidated their results.

Too few seemed to realise that the coefficient of correlation is of limited value unless the level of significance is considered.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The same mistakes are made in every examination session, and, although all of these recommendations have been mentioned in previous reports, they are worth another mention:

- make sure that the research question is clearly stated in the text at the start of the essay
 - ensure that the research question is tightly focused and will lead to an analytical approach
 - spend time helping the candidate to formulate a structured plan of approach
 - check that the abstract contains all of the necessary elements
 - ensure that the number of hypotheses (if included) is limited and that they are testable with the data collected
 - ensure that the introduction does not contain statements that would be better placed in the conclusion
 - focus the candidate on integrating geographical theory with the actual study
 - encourage candidates to use more hand drawn maps specific to the topic and not Internet downloads that demonstrate no geographical skill
 - ensure that photographs are captioned, annotated or labelled
 - advise candidates in the selection of appropriate graphing techniques
 - do not allow the inclusion of poor quality graphic downloads from the internet
 - do not duplicate internal assessment work and extended essay topics
 - encourage the candidate to write a discursive essay rather than just another fieldwork report
 - do not supervise too large a number of essays
 - encourage the use of statistical methods and carefully check calculations for flaws
- complete the comments section with special reference to criterion H.

Economics

The range and suitability of the work submitted

As usual, a huge range of topics was chosen. In most cases, the focus of the essay was on an economics concept – though there were frequent problems in terms of veering into business/marketing and economic history. Making this grave mistake makes it very difficult for the candidate to achieve successful scores on the subject specific criteria.

An area which seemed to interest many candidates this session was the ‘9/11’ terrorist attacks; a large number of essays focused on the economic effects of this attack. Generally, these were too descriptive, unsubstantiated and contained far too much information which was not relevant.

There were a disappointingly large number of candidates who chose topics that are best described as economic history and then simply wrote descriptive summaries of secondary sources. Moreover, this led to the problem of not being able to establish a clear research question. Examples of this are as follows: “*This essay is an investigation into The Great Depression.*” or “*This essay is about Roosevelt’s Effect on the U.S. economy after the Great Depression.*” or “*The effect of the formation of the European Union on the economies of its member states from its creation up to the present.*”.

The best essays had quite simple titles and straightforward research questions which allowed the candidate to develop a logical argument backed by clear evidence. These are often in the area of micro-economics based on a local example. Nevertheless, it is not necessary that they be so and teachers do not need to counsel candidates to avoid topics in macroeconomics, international economics or economic development. There is a vast amount of material on the Internet in the form of databanks of primary data, which is suitable. The danger is only when too many secondary sources are used, or when the research question does not lend itself to the use of the economic theory addressed in the IB syllabus.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Many candidates did not focus their question sharply enough for an investigative report of this nature. While it is pleasing to see candidates focus on an area which interests them, it is rather sad that so often the said topic does not lend itself to a systematic investigation involving economic analysis. This tends to be the case when candidates choose a family run business to research.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Weaker candidates tended to write a narrative, descriptive essay, which ends up scoring poorly on many of the criteria. A better approach involves the collection and use of relevant economic theory. In some cases, reasonable economic data were collected, but the relevant economic theory was presented as a separate section of the essay, rather than integrated with the data. Sadly, many candidates failed to gather relevant data but simply provided a synopsis of secondary material on a general topic.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

This tends to be a problem area, with many candidates substituting description or narration for analysis. It was often the case that the candidate gathered useful information/data, but then lumped it together in one section followed by a largely descriptive section.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

The link between analysing one's own data or information and then evaluating it and addressing it to the research question to make a reasoned argument proved to be a difficult task for many candidates. It was not unusual to see data presented with an assumption that it was self-explanatory, rather than stating how the data could be applied to help answer the research question and how it could be used to support or question economic theory. There was little evaluation of the data and how it could be used to form an argument. Better candidates were able to develop an argument based on a clear and cohesive evaluation of the results of the data, which they collected.

Criterion E Conclusion

In most cases, the conclusion was clear, relevant and consistent with the argument. However, a remarkable number of candidates failed to indicate unresolved or unanswered questions.

Criterion F Abstract

Most essays do now contain an Abstract, which is within the word count. Often there was some attempt to include all three required elements (research question, scope and conclusion), but it was rare that these were all clearly stated.

Criterion G Formal presentation

This should be an area where candidates receive top marks, given their IT skills, which appear to be of a high level. Weaknesses are noted in a lack of standard format for the Bibliography, especially organising it in alphabetical order and providing the full information including date and publisher. There seems to be a major weakness in knowing when and how to provide a footnote (or endnote). Given that the candidates are writing a research essay with, in most cases, some use of secondary sources, it is remarkable how often 'bits' of information, which are clearly taken from other sources, are not cited. Another frequent error occurred as candidates would refer to a secondary source in their writing, but then not include the source in the Bibliography. Some students insist on presenting an appendix, which turns out to contain all the research material gathered – with extreme cases where the quantity of the material in the Appendix actually exceeded the quantity of the essay! Too many essays contained references to Internet material by a very simple website address which did not clearly identify the source, date or author of the material.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

Examiners are greatly helped with this criterion when the supervisors write an appropriate comment on the inside cover of the folder in which the essay is submitted. Some evidence of the gathering of primary data was generally enough to score reasonably well on this criterion. Those that relied entirely on secondary sources with no original interpretation scored less well here.

Subject specific criteria

Criterion J Appropriate economic information

The higher scoring essays gathered together and utilised an impressive amount of original data, often from primary sources. It should be noted that data gathered from Internet data banks is also a suitable source of information. Good essays must also, of course, include appropriate economic theory taken from textbooks. In some cases candidates made an earnest attempt to collect primary data through interviews or surveys but used poor questioning techniques, which resulted in data which was superficial and not able to be related to economic theory, or was statistically invalid.

Criterion K Using the language of economics

This should be an area where the candidates perform well. All that is expected is that they use economic terms accurately and reliably whenever they are needed. However, in far too many cases candidates do not define the economic terms that they use, or define them in a very vague or incorrect manner. In the worst cases, candidates do not use the language of economics at all and write in a very general, descriptive manner. These tend to be the lowest scoring essays.

Criterion L Understanding the relevant economic concepts

In far too many cases, candidates failed to include all of the relevant concepts that were needed to answer the questions that they had posed. The ones presented were usually well explained, but concepts such as elasticity, or exchange rate determination were often ignored, when they would have been very useful in supporting the arguments being made in the essays. In weaker essays, economic concepts were often introduced in a separate section of the essay, and then not used again. In the weakest essays no economic concepts were introduced.

Criterion M Use of relevant economic theory

Many essays identified the relevant theory, but were unable to clearly explain or logically apply it to the research question. A significant number of candidates did not include any theory at all in their essays. This is the biggest weakness in this criterion. Too many essays are descriptive efforts that are written around poor, or inappropriate, research questions. Very often, these questions tend to be historic or business studies based. Examples might be, ‘*What were the causes of the Vietnamese War?*’ or ‘*How was the stock market crash of the early 1980’s caused?*’

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

It is absolutely vital that supervisors make themselves very familiar with the IB guidelines and requirements for extended essays and that they make these available to their students. It is often all too evident that neither the candidate nor the supervisor has read the guidelines, as both the research question adopted and the approach taken are far more appropriate to another form of writing such as a research report, or simply a long essay. If teachers are uncertain about topics in which their students are interested or are worried about the suitability of the research questions, they should be encouraged to go onto the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC) for guidance.

There is no reason why the weakest of candidates cannot gain more marks on the general criteria, if they are given proper assistance. The supervisor and candidate can check that the pages are numbered, the research question is stated early in the essay (printed in bold, if possible), necessary terms are defined, a bibliography is presented in a standard format, a conclusion is written, and an abstract is present and under 300 words.

Candidates should be encouraged to ask themselves at all points of their writing if they are still answering the research question that they set themselves in the first place. In this way, they will find it easier to stay focused on their topic. This may be further aided by the candidates turning their research question into a hypothesis, so that they have an outcome to question.

Philosophy

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Submitted essays can be placed into different levels, from excellent performance, better than satisfactory, to clearly less than satisfactory or even very poor. Clearly, 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.

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 sessions. However, we have found comfort in the fact that a number of candidates admirably acquitted themselves of the task.

Main observed problems were:

a) topics that are too broad to allow any sensible discussion in an exercise of this length, some examples: "*The Buddhism*," "*The conception of man in existentialism*," "*Existentialism in Twentieth Century Society*." Predictably, one read a series of 'common places', descriptions and generalities.

b) some (totally in certain cases) inappropriate approaches. With the poorer essays it was often a case of the suitability of topics and their treatment. The question at the heart of their investigation was poorly framed or absent. A group of essays mainly consisted in the presentation of information. This kind of essay can be identified by the following declaration "With my essay I have tried to give the reader the basic knowledge of what exactly X is" (with X standing for 'Female Genital Mutilation', 'Cloning' and whatever the case could be), these essays did not really grasp the sense of what a philosophical approach could be.

c) a tendency to exclusively rely on w.w.w. resources. These essays can be identified by means of the following testimony: "In order to understand and then conceive an opinion on the argument and issues about cloning, it is important to fully comprehend the types of cloning that exist and the processes of how and why they are used." After this introduction a summary of the basics of the issue based on different web sites is depicted without any further analysis. The problem is not the use of this kind of resources as such, but the lack of achievement of the expected objectives. These kind of essays are too general, mainly descriptive, without a well defined focus or personal line of argument.

d) A number of essays were either biographical, polemical, or more relevant to disciplines like sociology, literature and history. As a consequence, these candidates produced essays that, whilst interesting, were not philosophical in tone and/or treatment.

This session main topic areas were:

a) essays on aspects of the work of philosophers, e.g. Aristotle, Descartes, Freud, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, Plato, Russell, Rand, Sartre, Thoreau; with Descartes and Nietzsche being very popular.

b) topics which combined philosophy with natural sciences issues. Facets of Popper's epistemology were examined with some frequency. Some essays dealt with issues related to physics, especially to quantum theory.

c) Ethics and Applied Ethics. Many essays were on, as usual, abortion, euthanasia, cloning and stem cell research.

d) Political Philosophy, for instance, civil rights.

- e) Philosophy of Religion and Philosophy of Art received some attention too.
f) many essays were concerned with Chinese and Indian philosophy, showing an increasing interest in these topics.

A group of essays presented inappropriate topics. Apparently, all the essays, at least in the intentions of their authors, were planned as philosophical but very often the philosophy was summoned in a title and nowhere but in the title. Philosophy of *'Tigers conservation'*, *'Is surfing more than a sport?'* or to use the extremely non-philosophical example *'An analysis of the use of horses to obtain a hormonal replacement'*, the essay fully devoted to the description of pregnant mares urine. In general, these topics are potentially philosophical, but their treatments were not able to show this possible dimension.

Candidates performance against each criteria

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

On the one hand, there were very good results in this criterion. Well focused and succinct questions produced very good essays. Well focused questions were open to sustained philosophical analysis, and, in cases, even to sophistication. On the other hand, the main problem with this criterion is to narrow down the focus of the question. Weaker candidates seemed to struggle with this criterion, causing difficulties in all other criteria. Still candidates are framing questions which are too broad *"How do we know if at all we are behaving ethically? The importance of ethics in everyday life"*, which suggest a descriptive approach *"Aristotle: his historical influence on society and science."* The most successful essays had questions which were concise, focused and clearly signalled the philosophical concerns *"Do stem cells have moral status"* *"The ontological argument as a logical proof of God's existence."*

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Most candidates were able to develop a question. Generally good or satisfactory, although in part of the cases the descriptive account took over the argumentative structure. In other cases the approach simply was quite superficial from a critical and philosophical point of view. When approaches were adequate, the collection of relevant material was good. There is a tendency for students to use web resources exclusively. Web resources were frequently quoted, though their relevance was not always clear. The use of these resources is usually connected with descriptive approaches, which results in lack of depth and critical reflection.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

With the same reservations expressed in B, generally fair results. Though the material gathered was used in all essays, its relevancy to a philosophical analysis was sometimes low. In the better essays there were well-reasoned and justifiable interpretations given, and links to other concepts were made. In the weaker essays a summary of the main arguments or points was made and an interpretation offered, but any analysis attempted was very brief or totally absent.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

An argument was usually present. In the better essays arguments were well developed, sustained and convincing. In these cases, they properly addressed the research question. Evaluations were appropriate and well substantiated. In the poorer essays, the argument was either not philosophically relevant, haphazard in structure, or without sufficient justification in the evaluations. In this last category were a number of essays that were very polemical in their approach and tone. Some essays that surveyed various ideas or arguments often did not make proper evaluations or criticisms, and strictly there was no argument offered. Some candidates that did attempt an evaluation, or pose a counter argument, often relied on generalization or assumptions that were unexamined.

Criterion E Conclusion

Generally satisfactory results here. Nearly all candidates made an attempt at a conclusion based on their arguments (if there were one present). However, some of the candidates merely restated the aims and summaries of their essays without identifying areas for further investigation or making some overall evaluative statements. The identification of other connected concepts was absent in these cases.

Criterion F Abstract

Most candidates were aware of the function of an abstract. The main characteristic of the poorer essays was that candidates spent far too long outlining their personal motives for writing the essay rather than giving an account of their research. Also, candidates were unsure as to how much detail to go into in their abstracts. Some were extremely concise, others were overstated and contained much waffle and padding.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Most candidates presented and referenced their essays well. A significant group of them were excellent in this respect. However, there were a number of essays that did not comply with the formal requirements; it was a lack of a contents page, or page numbers. In some cases, the length of the essays was inadequate. Some essays had bibliographies, but a few did not have any references or footnotes to the items in the bibliography. It was difficult to know if indeed the bibliography had been consulted. In some cases, the lack of texts written by philosophers on specific issues in bibliographies is a concern. One problem was that no section divisions were to be found in the essay.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

In most cases the candidates have shown some degree of personal engagement. Some of them have shown a high degree of initiative too. A significant number of essays presented the expected qualities such as depth of understanding, insight and inventiveness. In the instructions it says that the supervisors report may be taken into consideration. However, too many extended essay covers do not contain a supervisor's report. This can be seen as unfair to the candidate as the essay might not be outstanding but the candidate showed a great deal of industry in writing it.

Subject assessment criteria

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

Generally satisfactory results in this criterion. A significant proportion of essays identified relevant philosophical issues. Many candidates displayed adequate philosophical engagement with the issues that arose from their topics. However, only the group of higher achievement level clearly showed a distinct identification and in-depth exposition of the philosophical issues. In lower level cases the approach was superficial and no philosophical insight or awareness was present.

Criterion K Themes, basic concepts and arguments

Some candidates gave a good account of concepts and arguments. A significant number of the candidates showed a detailed critical and philosophical analysis of themes, and some of them in-depth and extensive treatment. Some were very sophisticated, while the poorer essays just paraphrased summaries from secondary sources without any personal or philosophical insight. The evaluation of arguments (or forms of ethical arguments) remains an untapped source of criticism and analysis. Only a few attempted to rebut anticipated 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. Some poorer essays took a wholly 'objective' tone and thus had little engagement with the topic. Some candidates hardly express a personal view.

Criterion M Language and style

Overall, the essays were readable. Examiners indicated that the use of language in the three languages showed at least a satisfactory level, being in many cases good or even better. In essays that were philosophically relevant, the standard was fairly high. In some, however, the tone was, as said, polemical and hence totally inappropriate. Sweeping generalizations were made with little or no justification, and these begged as many questions as they attempted to answer. Some essays displayed a biographical and/or anecdotal style.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

It could be useful to keep in mind the following recommendations, pointed out by examiners.

1) It is expected that essays construct a personal philosophical argument. The construction of an argument approximately plays in philosophical investigation the role of empirical research in empirical sciences or the role of logical proof in the formal ones. If one is clear about the necessity of constructing a personal argument, many difficulties and problems can be quite easily solved. For instance, the presentation of information about the issue analysed should be concise, relevant and clearly orientated to sustain the argument. The presentation of information not explicitly related to sustained argument should be avoided. In a similar way, personal experiences should be set into a philosophical argument; only within this frame examiners can evaluate their contents.

2) In the same line of thought, extended essays in philosophy must be philosophical, they should not be exclusively based on approaches from other subjects, unless these can be philosophically framed.

3) A main recommendation is to continue to stress that the supervisor prior to writing the essay explicitly requires a philosophical question. 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. Many candidates suffered because of this inability to draw distinctions between various types of questions.

4) Candidates should be clear on what constitutes a philosophical approach to a topic; it goes beyond description and requires analysis and evaluation of arguments. It remains critical to explain to students that they must attempt critical discussion and not merely narrate descriptions if they wish to succeed in philosophy. Avoiding biographies of philosophers and mere exposition of information is a repeated advice every year and remains true this year again. Candidates should be encouraged to take a personal stand and to avoid mere descriptive accounts of studied doctrines. This session some candidates have carried out relevant and thorough research but were not able to critically evaluate the information gathered and to integrate it in a personal argumentative strategy.

5) Whilst not wanting to stifle student initiative and enthusiasm, some assessors recommend that students who have no prior experience in philosophy be advised out of 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.

6) Regarding the presentation, it could be useful to recall: a) introductions should refer to relevant aspects directly related to the specific topic or question or argument, and not merely provide general information; b) tables of contents should indicate specific issues, which are relevant to the presented argument. The anonymous division "Introduction, Development, Conclusion" does not really help to identify and understand the purpose and structure of the argument. On the other hand, subdividing the essay into specific sections tends to tighten up the structure and make clearer the transitions in the line of thought; c) abstracts must state: the research question, the scope of the investigation and the conclusion reached.

7) Directly addressed to supervisors, examiners suggested: a) insist on the importance of narrowing down the focus of the investigation as much as possible and of stating it in a concise and sharply defined leading 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 stress 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. Emphasize the importance of personal critical thinking. d) please, try to write some comments. Fewer and fewer supervisors are making comments. It is helpful to examiners to have comments written by the supervising teacher. Yet very few (it is only the minority) take the opportunity to give any sense of what this work meant to the candidate, or what they feel the value of this work is. It is recommended that teachers take advantage of this opportunity to assist examiners in evaluating their students; a positive supervisor often helps with criterion H. e) 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, be giving students the marking criteria relevant to their discipline.

One example of submitted work can illustrate a sound way to achieve the expected goals. The essay's title is "*Does the End Justify the Means? The religious dilemma in Machiavelli's Prince*". We read from the abstract: "In this essay the religious dilemma in Machiavelli's philosophy is analysed. Therefore, what is Machiavelli's stance with regard to the metaphysical beliefs and, consequently, to religion as an institution. This analysis is based on his two main works *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. The attempt is in comparing the two Machiavellian exegeses by Leo Strauss and Antonio Gramsci. The objective is to define to what extent they perform a sound analysis with regard to their writings on the Florentine writer. The investigation starts with considering the broader ideological space in which the two modern philosophers' analyses insert Machiavelli. Key concepts and links in the works of the authors are presented. In Gramsci, it is important to consider his identification of Machiavelli as a philosopher of praxis and the consequence of this on the religious dilemma. Secondly, it is considered Strauss' presentation of Machiavelli as a theorist of anti-Christian thought. The first part of the argument is focused on Gramsci and his considerations followed by the argument on Strauss. Through the comparison of the two authors conclusions are reached regarding Gramsci's Machiavellism in the understanding of religion as an essentially cultural element of which the "new Prince" should make appropriate political use. Similarly, Strauss' proof of the integral atheism of Machiavelli is presented. In order to understand the moral implications of Machiavelli's stance, the question of Gramsci's collective will against Strauss' individualist understanding of Machiavelli is posed. The understanding of this deep difference between the two interpretations, thus, concludes the investigation carried out in the paper." This essay presents an excellent argument. A sharply focused research question is skilfully analysed. It is an excellent example of personal approach, in-depth understanding and insight, with a very well defined focus. It presents a subtle combination of interpretation of a work/topic and philosophical creativity.

Finally, it can be helpful to have in mind that objectives expected for Paper 1, as they are explained in the Philosophy Guide, could be useful to orientate an essay on a theme, while Paper 2 objectives could guide an essay focused on an author and/or text.

Psychology

The range and suitability of the work submitted

The range in quality of essays was substantial, from near zero to near maximum marks. A basic cause of this discrepancy would appear to be the choice of topic made by the candidate and apparently approved by the supervisor. Two frequently occurring situations seem to contribute to poor performance:

- a) where the topic is over ambitious for an essay of up to 4,000 words length the candidate will be unable to write a coherent essay in the time available;
- b) where the subject matter has very little, or nothing, to do with psychology.

In the case of a), marks will be low on both general and subject specific criteria, and in b) minimal marks may be awarded for subject specific criteria. Essays on crime, on politics or on music are sometimes submitted for psychology: they usually attract low marks. Higher scoring essays will deal with a compact and self-contained aspect of psychology, usually on a topic area that has several references in academic literature that is firmly embedded in psychology.

The extended essay should not be confused with the internally assessed practical research project. Candidates conducting their own surveys or reports or experimentation into the chosen topic penalize themselves as such an approach cannot attract high marks for either the general or subject specific criteria. In addition, such essays often infringe ethical guidelines so cannot be accepted.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Again, candidate performance varied considerably, usually with greater variation for general than for subject specific criteria.

Where a research question has not been explicitly formulated and well expressed, candidates experience difficulty in remaining focused on the topic under consideration in terms of analysis and evaluation. Too frequently, lack of a focused research question leads to an unstructured essay in which relevant material is simply described, attracting minimal marks for a piece of writing which has the potential to be extremely good.

Where a weak research question is posed (or none offered), limited analysis and minimal evaluation tend to follow.

Within the abstract there should be a clear indication of the specific research question, the scope of the investigation, and its findings. Regrettably many candidates found this a difficult process.

A worrying tendency was the inappropriate overuse of the term 'prove' when considering empirical evidence, suggesting a lack of understanding of the nature of psychological research.

Approach, analysis and evaluation carry relatively high marks, and quite a number of candidates performed well in this respect. However, too often both analysis and evaluation were absent or minimal. Many candidates received few marks for C and D either because the essay was almost entirely descriptive, or because they offered only one side of an argument. This has implications for criterion H as in such cases the candidate's own contribution is unclear, the text being simply a series of citations. Conclusions sometimes included the introduction of new material not previously discussed, and were often too brief, 2 or 3 lines, or too lengthy, 2 or 3 sides. Few mentioned the need for further research, or unresolved questions.

References did not always follow an approved style and in particular www. citations were incorrectly presented. Website references should be comparable to book references, containing similar information rather than simply listing the author's address. Essays considerably under the maximum word limit are highly unlikely to be able to fully address the requirements of the extended essay.

It is often difficult to award an appropriate number of marks for criterion H where far more than the recommended 3 or 4 hours supervision has taken place and it is not easy to distinguish the candidate's level of involvement, personal insight and understanding from that of the supervisor.

Subject assessment criteria

Provided the essay was psychological in nature, the assessment criteria were often well met. Occasionally the use of psychological resources and incorporation of theoretical concepts was sparse. However, many essays lacked the evaluation expected in any discussion of psychological issues, not least in terms of methodological, ethical, cultural and gender considerations.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Teachers are strongly recommended to discuss the nature and aim of the extended essay **prior** to the candidate beginning work on it. The guidance should include strong advice that since the final essay is to be submitted as a psychological work, it would be reasonable for it to contain psychology. It is not appropriate to begin work on a fascinating subject and then try to decide which subject it may be submitted under. Appropriate choice of topic should emerge from an area of interest within syllabus content, ensuring the candidate has a theoretical framework against which to examine an explicit research question.

It would be helpful to the candidate if a substantial number of academic references were to be available. Access to previous work on the chosen topic means the candidate is able to use this as a basis on which to make relevant discussive points. Candidates should be aware that not all that appears on the web is reliable and web information needs to be carefully screened for authenticity and reliability. Clarification is required as to what constitutes a primary reference source.

Candidates must be alerted to the dangers of plagiarism before beginning their research. Malpractice is a serious offence and where proven has very serious consequences for candidates.

Social & Cultural Anthropology

Range and suitability of the work submitted

The most successful essays submitted in this session deal with traditional topics that squarely fit within the range that anthropologists regularly research, including for example an essay comparing issues of cultural identity among children brought up in monocultural and multicultural households; a life-history essay examining changes in gender roles of East Indian women; and a theoretically and methodologically focused essay examining how different anthropological approaches interpret the decorative arts in understanding Australian Aboriginal culture and society.

However, as in previous sessions, many essays submitted in this session failed to meet minimal requirements for an essay in Social and Cultural Anthropology. A significant proportion of essays should either have been submitted under a different subject (e.g., an essay that announces that the methodology employed is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) or appear to have been submitted with the assumption that the subject is a catch-all category for essays that would have a difficult time fitting anywhere else (e.g., *“How do Eastern and Western medicine compare in the treatment of pain from migraines and rheumatoid arthritis?”*).

For the most part, “social problems” essays betray a blissfully lack of awareness of the particular insights that anthropology can bring to the social problems in question. For example, an essay on autism was based solely on psychological and medical sources, ignoring the very important alternative perspectives that some anthropologists (e.g., Elinor Ochs) have provided on autism, demonstrating that a great deal of psychological research on the condition is based problematically on a folk understanding of social interaction and culture. Similarly, HIV/AIDS is a particularly popular topic but, unfortunately, very few candidates on the topic seem to be aware of anthropological works on the HIV crisis (e.g., works by such scholars as Paul Farmer). Essays about social problems tend to be of somewhat better quality when they focus on particular social contexts. For example, the moral problems raised by voluntary euthanasia are much easier to treat anthropologically when they are embedded in a relevant social context (e.g., the Netherlands). Some “social problems” topics would lend themselves to anthropological analysis if the candidate were alerted to the particular approach that this would require. A couple of competent essays on the effects of “Title IX legislation” in the United States (requiring schools to deal with gender-based inequality in access to sports) could have been very competently discussed in light of works on the anthropology of sports (e.g., Susan Brownell’s work comparing women in sports in China and the United States). An IB extended essay could be very attractive if it took anthropological works on such a topic as a point of departure and applied it to the candidate’s own acquaintance with the problem in question.

Popular culture continues to be a favourite topic in Social and Cultural Anthropology essays, and this year included essays investigating motivations for getting tattooed; an essay on the social context of Hip-Hop culture; an essay comparing changes in the Barbie Doll to changes in youth culture; and an essay comparing Christian and Pagan themes in the Harry Potter books, Shakespeare’s Hamlet, and the King Arthur legend. However, because candidates lack the background in how social and cultural anthropologists approach these topics, essays that focus on popular culture tend to be unsuccessful.

Many candidates rely heavily on encyclopaedias and the WWW as sources of basic information. This is particularly obvious in the case of candidates with little or no acquaintance with the basic precepts of the subject, who appear to believe that such lacunae can be compensated unproblematically by quoting encyclopaedic definitions of “culture” or “anthropology”. I suggest that advisors would do well to ban the use of quotes from encyclopaedias (as well as dictionaries) in candidates’ essays, particularly general-knowledge encyclopaedias like Microsoft Encarta. These quotes are never put to appropriate use.

A significant number of candidates from international schools attempt to write essays about the experience of multiculturalism and transnationalism but the results are often disappointing, because

these essays generally bypass the corpus of ethnographic and self-reflexive work that has been published in the last couple of decades. One candidate based himself, very ingeniously, on Edward Said's 1999 book *Out Of Place*, but continued with a disappointingly thin survey-based quantitative project that failed to do justice to the complexities of the topic. Similarly, a few essays touched on "endangered" groups such as selected societies of Amazonia, or ethnic revival movements such as are found among Canadian First Nations. In a similar vein, candidates who wrote on these topics lack a critical stance, of the kind that familiarity with the politicisation of tradition literature (e.g., Beth Conklin on Amazonia) would provide. Advisors should encourage candidates to write about the experience of transnationalism or cultural revival, but should direct them to literature that will enable them to address the complexities of the problems involved.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Candidates tend to define their research question too broadly, vaguely, or descriptively, a tendency that is related in many cases to their lack of training in Social and Cultural Anthropology. When candidates do well on this criterion, the overall essay is generally of better-than-average quality.

Criterion B Approaches

As an immediate consequence of their failure to pose a research question, many candidates have difficulties identifying an approach. With some notable exceptions, candidates are unaware of what constitutes an anthropological approach to a problem.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Many essays are limited by an inappropriate approach, hence analysis often had little or no anthropological relevance. Once again, essays that present relevant data, utilize pertinent resources, and draw well-reasoned conclusions were in the minority. Advisors should caution candidates about over generalisations and the insertion of biases and preconceptions in the analysis of data. Candidates must be taught to read research materials as critically as possible.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Without a question to be answered or a hypothesis to be tested, many candidates find it difficult to present an argument or an evaluation. Additionally, subjective judgments and untestable assertions marred a number of arguments.

Criterion E Conclusion

Many essays manage to provide a summary of findings, but few tackle "unresolved questions" and questions for further research. Essays concerned with social problems commonly used the concluding section to make prescriptive recommendations inappropriate to an essay in Social and Cultural Anthropology.

Criterion F Abstract

Candidates need more practical guidance in constructing an abstract. Many waste precious space describing how they became interested in a particular topic. An abstract should summarize the main points of the essay, not contain any materials not elaborated in the body of the essay, and touch on all important points that the essay covers.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Formal presentation is the least problematic of the general criteria, although some candidates are oblivious to the consequences of exceeding word limits. The weakest aspects of formal presentation are in-text citations and reference listing. Citations and references are frequently incomplete and inconsistent in form. Internet citations often contain only URLs, lacking author, title, and date accessed. Referencing is obviously an area where more guidance on the part of supervisors is needed.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

A disappointing number of essays are routine, uncritical, and superficial, but this criterion saves a significant number of works that fail on specific criteria but demonstrate initiative, engagement, and creativity.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J & K Evidence of anthropological reading & Application of anthropological concepts and theory to the research question

These criteria measure candidates' understanding of what social and cultural anthropology consists of, and are thus deeply problematic for a majority of essays. Numerous essays do not score any points on either of them, thereby losing precious ground.

Criterion L Methodological issues involved in the collection, evaluation and presentation of ethnographic or fieldwork data

Some examiners observe an improvement in candidates' attention to methodology compared to past sessions, while others continue to find this area untouched in the majority of the essays they read.

Criterion M Recognition of underlying patterns and causes

Candidates who score very poorly on the other three subject-specific criteria (J-L) manage to earn an occasional point on this criterion, which distinguishes essays that present simple descriptions from essays that attempt to come up with some analysis. Where candidates do not do well is in differentiating their own analytic statements from analytic statements culled from the works of others.

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 students 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 supervisors' duty 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.

While the IBO Coordinators' Bulletin has carried advice from the Chief Examiner warning against allowing candidates not enrolled in Social and Cultural Anthropology to submit essays in the subject, it is clear that this practice continues. Supervisors' notes on the inside front cover continue to praise the energy and determination of candidates who insisted on writing Extended Essays in the subject although they were not studying it. While such experiences may actually function as character-building exercises, it should be realized that the resulting essays are rarely successful, and allowing students to court failure does not constitute responsible supervision.

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 specialized 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

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have been written in the recent past, but many candidates appear not to be aware of these works, the consultation of which would have greatly 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 students formally in how to recognize 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 organizational requirements, and to clarify and focus both the research question itself and the presentation and organization of their materials.

Business and Management

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Overall, the majority of candidates chose suitable topics and were able to conduct systematic research. There were some very weak essays and some extremely good ones, resulting in a broad range of marks.

The better essays permitted candidates to develop an argument based on their own research data. Generally, the best essays had simple research questions and concentrated upon a small firm or business. Candidates seemed to find the information from such organisations easier to collect and interpret.

Simpler research questions allowed candidates to sharply focus their analysis, giving their essays sophistication and clarity. The better candidates were able to apply theoretical aspects and business techniques to a manageable case study, integrating them into their arguments.

The weaker essays were mainly the result of poor research questions that usually lacked focus or were difficult to research effectively. Some of the research questions were too complex, vague or over-ambitious, often attempting to address the global business practices of multinational companies or the problems faced by an entire industry. In these cases, candidates tended to produce low-quality research based on secondary data and/or very descriptive essays with disjointed answers and no clear analysis.

A few research questions focused on an historical event, which again resulted in descriptive rather than analytical essays. Finally, some titles were offered as statements rather than questions.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A The Research question

Most candidates presented their research question early in the essay and chose clear and unambiguous topics that allowed for personal research. Some research questions were too broad and lacked focus, making them difficult to be treated effectively and preventing the candidates from developing a convincing argument. Some essays were merely descriptive or chose a question to which the answer was already known, or confirmed a decision that had already been made.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Performance was usually related to the nature of the question. Most candidates used relevant primary and secondary sources. Some, however, relied solely on secondary research and candidates with too general themes struggled to collect data.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Able candidates carried out competent interpretations of the data they had collected, but sometimes the analysis was not thorough and could have benefited from more sophisticated techniques. Very few candidates produced a full analysis that warranted full marks. Weaker candidates tended to generalise about their own experiences.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

This was one of the weakest criteria. Almost all candidates made some attempt to produce arguments but very few were completely developed and substantiated. Many candidates were subjective in their evaluation and based their arguments on their own opinions rather than on statistical evidence. More able candidates were able to take their analysis and fully develop a business argument from it.

Criterion E Conclusion

Almost all candidates wrote valid conclusions that were consistent with the research question and followed on logically from the arguments they made. Many candidates lost marks when they did not substantiate their conclusions fully or failed to deal with unresolved questions.

Criterion F Abstract

Most candidates produced an adequate abstract. Some, however, did not follow the guidance and therefore did not state clearly the research question, the scope of the investigation and the conclusions.

Criterion G Formal presentation

This aspect was good and there were some outstanding documents. Almost all candidates produced professional essays, making effective use of ICT, diagrams and charts to illustrate their points. The majority made good use of appendices, headings, tables of contents and bibliographies. A few candidates lost marks due to inappropriate methods of referencing and bibliography. On occasion, useful information that should have been in the main body of the report was put in the appendix.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

Some candidates had clearly become very involved in their research and committed to the project. These candidates produced work of an impressive standard. Many candidates, however, failed to be inventive or creative with the question. Supervisors need to write comments on the extended essay cover to assist with this criterion.

Subject assessment criteria

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

Most candidates showed good relevant use and application of the subject theories, using case studies as a basis for their essays and linking them to their investigations. Weaker candidates made little or no reference to business concepts or did not explain the reason for such use.

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

This was generally tackled quite well. Most of the candidates made an effort to use the 'decision-making model' but some methods were quite vague and sometimes the need for decision-making was unclear.

Criterion L Effects of change on organisational activities

This criterion was generally quite weak with many candidates offering limited or no reference to how the organisation would be changed by a decision and how the change would be managed. This was usually due to the research question. Some students showed very good application with implicit reference.

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

Candidates showed much variation in this criterion. More able candidates used a wider range of analytical tools including SWOT/PEST, questionnaires and investment appraisal - especially those who had chosen a financial question. Weaker ones relied upon SWOT analyses, copied existing analyses or failed to use any at all. Sometimes the techniques were not applied clearly to the essay and often the SWOT analysis listed S, W, O and T with no analysis.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

- Supervisors should advise candidates to choose a question that will enable them to carry out personal research rather than summarising various secondary sources.
- Supervisors should discourage candidates from using very long bullet-pointed lists.
- Supervisors should advise candidates not to throw away marks unnecessarily on the abstract and presentation criteria.
- Supervisors should advise candidates to choose focused titles, which would allow more of the business criteria to be met.
- Supervisors should ensure that candidates identify relevant theoretical aspects before starting their research and ensure that candidates concentrate on one specific theory or a very small range of theories.
- Supervisors should encourage candidates to use focused, simple research questions.
- Supervisors should encourage candidates to base their research question on a problem or issue that is currently being faced, instead of one that has already been addressed.
- Supervisors should advise candidates - before they begin their extended essays - that the research question should be based upon an organisation that is willing to cooperate and provide information and, if the data is too difficult to obtain, an alternative research question should be considered.

Information Technology in a Global Society

The range and suitability of the work submitted

ITGS Extended Essays included the widest range of topics that have ever been submitted. Areas of investigation included ethical and social issues relating to music piracy, technology in education, cyber-terrorism, computer games, e-commerce, robotics, technology for physically handicapped people, digitally altered images, online gambling, and the globalization of IT. Unfortunately, there are still a few extended essays which were not appropriate to ITGS because they focused on the technology or history aspect of the topic rather than on an ITGS focus, that is, ethical and social issues. These papers receive low marks when assessed with both the general criteria (A-H) and ITGS criteria (J-L) for extended essays.

Plagiarism is considered malpractice and a serious offense. Unfortunately, there were some papers that contained evidence of plagiarism and the appropriate penalties were imposed. Steps which can be taken to help eliminate plagiarism are making candidates aware of what constitutes plagiarism, and the IB consequences of plagiarism, closely supervising the candidates' research process, and teaching the proper methods for citing sources.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Some candidates seem to understand what is expected in terms of the process of investigating a research question using both primary and secondary research and the expectations of the ITGS extended essay. However, there are a number of candidates who would benefit from careful supervision in developing their research question, monitoring the research process from both secondary resources (Internet, books, magazines, newspapers) and primary research sources (interviews, questionnaires, surveys, hands-on practical experiences). Candidates must be familiar with how to use primary research techniques appropriately within the extended essay and in the abstract to support their findings from their secondary research. The formulation of the research question and the secondary research should be completed before beginning any primary research information collection.

Research skills were often lacking. There was a very clear split between those students who had sound research skills and those who had little idea how to research a topic. The former synthesized ideas from a variety of resources and were able to effectively analyze and evaluate their findings with a well-founded argument. The latter tended either to describe their own ideas, unsupported by evidence, or to list a succession of statements made from one or two sources without expanding these or presenting contrasting points of view.

Some analysis was attempted in most cases. However, it was often incomplete due to the lack of research skills mentioned above. Evaluation was generally even weaker because it is a higher order skill than that of analysis.

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

A large number of candidates scored poorly because they did not state their extended essay research question in a precise manner in criterion A. Many candidates mistakenly think that the statement of the research question is the same as the title of the extended essay. The research question must be stated and explained in the early part of the extended essay itself. Achieving full marks should be a formality for candidates who are familiar with the marking criteria. Writing a concise well-stated research question is crucial for the development of the argument. It seems that many candidates still see the extended essay as writing about a topic rather than as a carefully researched, analyzed and well-structured piece of writing.

Extended essays with research questions which are sharply focused achieve higher marks. Successful candidates often relate their research to a local or national issue. Consequently, this allows for research from secondary sources on the same issue in a broader context, allows for primary research in the local or national context and for further comparative analysis and evaluation. Candidates must be guided right from the beginning that their extended essay research question must be relevant to ITGS and that it is apparent from the beginning that the ethical and social issues involved relate specifically to ITGS.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

The approach to the research question was generally satisfactory, but rarely excellent. Candidates should understand that the best extended essays are supported by extensive research from current sources including both printed and electronic sources. Too many candidates rely only on Internet sources. Some research was too old to be relevant to the research question. Secondary research should be completed before engaging in any primary research so that the candidate has a clear idea of the kind of primary research which is required and how the information is to be collected. The process used for primary research data collection must be reported within the extended essay and the raw data in the appendix.

Many extended essays would have benefited from primary research techniques being used to compare and contrast with the secondary research. Supervisors must be certain that candidates understand how secondary research information is collected, analyzed and appropriately presented within the body and appendix. Otherwise, the research will not properly support the argument.

Candidates who address ethical and social issues in separate chapters in their extended essay tend to focus better on the ITGS subject specific criteria. Candidates must use a standard format for footnotes and bibliographic entries. There were instances where students created their own formats. Generally, candidates have difficulty in citing sources such as web pages or interviews. Candidates tend to just record the URL address or the name and position of the person interviewed. They are unaware that accepted formats exist for citing these sources in the bibliography and in footnotes.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Interpreting and analyzing data found in the secondary and primary research is an important skill relying on critical thinking and reflection and very few candidates performed this well. Arguments must be based on the data collected. Some candidates who did not conduct adequate research provided unsupported statements and opinions. Candidates should be able to formulate well-founded remarks and conjectures regarding the information which they have collected. The fact that they do not indicates to me that candidates are still not fully aware of the criterion against which they will be marked.

Interviews are generally not done well. Some candidates did not indicate who was interviewed, what their qualification was relative to the research question, nor provide evidence in the appendix of the questions and responses. Better extended essays provide a complete transcript of the interview questions and answers in the appendix. Candidates should be guided regarding the process for using interview, how to record and report the information.

Only a few candidates conducted primary research well. Surveys and questionnaires were used to collect data, but the questions were often poorly constructed, so as to yield little supportive information. Restating the results from questionnaires and surveys in charts and words is not 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 provided within the extended essay.

Where candidates used personal computer work and investigations to support their research, these tended to be well explained and documented and demonstrated a high personal involvement by the candidate.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Where schools had provided guidance in the development of argument, this was generally good. However some candidates were not so well advised and depended on a forced presentation of unsupported personal opinion. Generally, the quality of argument presented was less satisfactory than expected and tended to be subjective with little attempt at substantiation.

Criterion E Conclusion

In general, the conclusions presented were relevant to the research question and consistent with the argument presented. Some candidates simply repeated selected statements from the body without trying to draw these together and others regarded a conclusion as simply an end to the writing. The conclusion should relate to the research question and the arguments presented within the extended essay. Candidates should be able to achieve full marks, but tend to lose momentum on this final section of the paper.

Criterion F Abstract

What is an abstract? Writing an abstract should be a formality and is simply a factual synopsis (a compressed version) in 300 words of the entire Extended Essay including the research question, scope of the research and conclusion. Mediocre performance is the norm on this criterion. New ideas or personal remarks are at times mistakenly introduced in the Abstract. Some Abstracts exceed 300 words and others do not include all of the necessary components.

Criterion G Formal presentation

The formal presentation of the Extended Essays was very good: word processed, spell-checked, appropriately laid out with title page (including word count), contents page, page numbering, appropriate subheadings and appendices. One problem that must be corrected is the contents pages that indicate only three broad titles such as introduction, the body of the essay, and conclusion. The presentation style of the paper should be in a readable spacing and font size (suggested spacing 1.5).

A common cause of loss of presentation marks was poor bibliographic referencing or inappropriate chapter headings in the table of contents. Extended essays which exceeded 4000 words automatically received 0 marks for this criterion.

The bibliography should appear in the extended essay before the appendices. Thoroughly researched papers tended to have a substantial number of entries in the bibliography. An accepted and consistent method for citing bibliographic and footnote entries must be provided. All of the references which are included in the footnotes appear in the bibliography and vice versa. Internet site references must include title, author and date, date of access as well as the URL. This was a common omission. Graphs and images used to support arguments must be cited in a footnote.

Candidates must understand how to properly cite their sources and which information requires both quotes and footnote, which require no quotes and footnote reference, and which information requires no footnote. Plagiarism results from failing to properly cite references to the intellectual property of others.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Criterion H states for 0 marks that the "essay is judged to be routine and to show little evidence of any qualities" listed (personal engagement, initiative, depth of understanding, insight, inventiveness, flair) and for 4 marks "judged to be outstanding" with regard to those qualities. The majority of the extended essays were routine. Many candidates demonstrated an interest in their topic and used some relevant secondary research. The effort to extensively research a topic through secondary sources or collect information from primary research was only apparent in a few essays.

The approach to the research question should be well thought out in advance with respect to the research process and possible resources which should be used to ensure that candidates have a clear

vision of how to proceed. The approach needs to be planned in order for the extended essay to be realized as it is intended.

Subject Assessment Criteria

Criterion J Information technology issues requiring ethical consideration

Ethical considerations were not addressed well which is difficult to understand because it is fundamental to the ITGS course. Possibly the low performance could be contributed to candidates not having access to the assessment criteria. Other candidates who did make references to ethical issues did not often relate them to IT. The explanations regarding ethical considerations were not well developed and lacked supportive evidence.

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

Most candidates made some reference to issues with social significance, but often only superficially and without using appropriate IT terminology or substantiating evidence. The few candidates who considered the importance of meeting this criterion did well.

Criterion L Solutions to problems arising from the research question

A small number of candidates thought carefully about this criterion. Many failed to address it at all. Overall, this section was poorly addressed, giving rise to considerable concern this year. "Solutions to the problems arising" are often confused with a conclusion. Candidates need both.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The most influential keys to developing effective extended essays are the appropriate guidance and supervision of the candidate. Normally this would be approximately 3-5 hours of discussion with the candidate throughout the process. The first stage is to ensure that the candidates understand that the extended essay is being developed within the context of ITGS and they must be familiar with all of the general criteria and the ITGS subject specific criteria. Supervisors should also discuss with candidates ITGS social and ethical issues, described on pages 12-15 of the *ITGS Guide* (for examination in 2006).

Candidates need to have better skills in research and using and documenting that research. Where primary research is conducted, especially questionnaires, the formulation of questions and the process for using the questionnaires must be carefully supervised. Otherwise, the data collected may be irrelevant to the research and the appropriate analysis cannot be made. Planning and conducting research (secondary and primary) are skills which can be taught and are rewarded through several of the criteria.

Formulating a concise well-stated research question is crucial to the success of the extended essay. Supervisors are encouraged to spend time and give advice in this phase and the early planning stages to ensure that the approach is appropriate for all of the criteria. It would be advisable for the research question to be refined after some initial secondary research in order to ensure that it is concisely stated. Candidates who focus on fulfillment of the ITGS subject criteria have a greater chance of achieving higher marks for the general assessment criteria as well.

Following researching the topic from secondary literature, the candidate should meet with the supervisor to discuss ways primary research could be undertaken to compare with the findings from the secondary research. Primary research and first hand investigations allow candidates to place their findings in 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. Interview questions and responses must appear in the appendix.

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Key stages where the supervisor may wish to meet with the candidate are:

- formulation of the research question and deadlines
- following some initial research from secondary sources, to discuss relevant information and revise the research question for further research
- after the secondary research is completed, to discuss findings, possible primary research or investigations and outline the chapters in the essay
- to discuss the data collected from the primary and secondary research and due date for the first draft of the essay
- to provide feedback from the first draft of the extended essay and due date for the final version.

Supervisors may wish to use the ITGS discussion forum (<http://online.ibo.org>) to seek advice on guiding candidates. There is also a separate category in the discussion forum for general extended essays: concerns from any subject. Previous ITGS extended essays are available under the extended essay part of the site.

Biology

In providing feedback on the performance of candidates in the May 2003 session, this report will also point out areas where candidates are in need of guidance and supervision. There can be no doubt that the quality, and to a lesser extent the quantity, of supervision received by a candidate can play a major role in the success of an extended essay. Comments made by the supervisor on the circumstances surrounding the research and level of personal involvement of the candidate can also be of considerable assistance to the examiners.

There are inappropriate levels of supervision at both extremes. Some supervisors report spending less than one hour with the candidate and, whatever the local circumstances, this is clearly not enough and may put the candidate at a disadvantage. At the other extreme, and especially where a candidate has worked under external supervision, at a local university or research facility, the level of support and assistance has been such that it is often well nigh impossible to ascertain the level of personal input. This is compounded by the fact that there is often no report or comment from either the school supervisor or the external supervisor.

Range and suitability of the work submitted

Examiners reported a wide range of appropriate topics and research styles in this session. These included essays in ecology, genetics, evolution, animal and plant physiology, biochemistry, biotechnology, microbiology, and a wide variety of human biology topics including behaviour, exercise physiology, health drugs, nutrition and diseases. The most successful research based papers had a small number of clearly defined and easily manipulated independent variables and a quantifiable and easily measured dependent variable. Successful essays often rely on a small amount of simple equipment and can be carried out in the school laboratory or in the local environment.

While literature-based essays per se are not inappropriate, those that rely exclusively on web-based sources run the risk of failing to adequately meet particular criteria (especially the subject specific). These essays are often poorly illustrated and inadequately referenced and show little or no sense of the reliability, or otherwise, of the sources accessed. They tend to be accumulations of fact with little or no attempt to analyze or critically evaluate.

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. Examiners report a small but significant number of inappropriate and or poorly focused topics including ethical, social and religious aspects of biological issues, political and economic aspects of environmental policy, and diagnosis and treatment of disorders and diseases. This is an area where supervisors need to exert more influence. The topic should result from a discussion between the candidate and the supervisor during which a process of identifying, discussing, assessing and narrowing down a suitable area for research is undertaken, and the interest and motivation of the candidate are channelled in an appropriate direction.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Essays with a clearly defined, well focused research question tended to be those that were based on experimental work carried out by the candidate. The best essays include a hypothesis or small number of hypotheses which are based on the research question. Good essays will also refer to the research question in the discussion and will establish the extent to which it has been answered in the conclusion. Candidates need guidance on how to avoid inappropriate, poorly focused or even trivial, research questions. Some reading and preliminary research should take place before the final selection

of the research question. Finally, candidates must ensure that the research question is stated “in the early part of the essay” (in the first two pages or so).

Criterion B Approach to the research question

In most cases the approach selected by the candidate is appropriate. Suitable controls need to be included in experimentally based essays. A growing number of candidates give a brief account of preliminary research that was used to arrive at the final approach. This is helpful and appropriate.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Examiners report a wide range of standards for the criterion, ranging from essays with no analysis to very sophisticated statistical treatments. While candidates should be encouraged to use statistical analysis where appropriate, they must also be selective about the techniques used and should be encouraged to explain and justify their approach. Simply graphing the raw data does not represent data analysis. It is often helpful, if there is a large body of raw data, for this to be included in an appendix and for summary charts and tables to be in the main body of the essay.

Library-based essays often fail to address this criterion well. The exceptions include cases where the candidate analyses published data or attempts to re-evaluate information from a range of sources.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

There is a strong consensus amongst examiners that few candidates meet this criterion to a high standard. Essays based on an experiment designed and carried out by the candidate often have an easily discerned and clearly articulated argument based on a clear sequence of ideas: research question, hypothesis, data collection and analysis, discussion and evaluation, conclusion. Candidates must be reminded to make the argument explicit by constantly referring back to the research question. Weak essays introduce new ideas and arguments that are not related to either the research question or the data/information presented in the essay.

Criterion E Conclusion

While few candidates had difficulty writing a conclusion restating the main findings of the research, examiners report that in many cases candidates fail to refer to unresolved questions and new questions that have arisen as a result of the research. In a good conclusion the candidate will refer back to the research question or the hypothesis derived from this and say to what extent the question has been answered or the hypothesis supported.

Criterion F Abstract

This continues to be a serious weakness. Few candidates pay attention to the requirement for three aspects to an abstract: research question, scope and conclusion. Weak essays have an abstract which is a kind of “justification” for the choice of topic or simply a summary of the introduction. The most difficult aspect of this criterion seems to be dealing adequately with the scope of the research. Few candidates point out how the research was conducted or how the limits of the research were defined. This is particularly noticeable in library-based essays.

Criterion G Formal presentation

The use of word processing and data analysis software has raised the standard of presentation generally to the extent that even weak candidates can produce a well presented essay. There are a number of lingering problems and some new problems arising from this development.

- Candidates need to be selective about what they include in the appendix. An appendix should only be part of the essay if it is necessary. Important data should be in the body of the essay.
- Many candidates do not follow a consistent, standard style for in text referencing. Some candidates are clearly confused about citations, quotations, footnotes, endnotes and bibliographic references and are clearly in need of guidance on this. Most library-based essays are poorly referenced.

- Some essays have no obvious structure. This is often reflected in a table of contents along the lines of “introduction, body, and conclusion”. In other cases candidates use headings in the table of contents which do not appear in the text of the essay.
- Candidates tend not to make good use of supporting illustrative material. On the one hand diagrams and pictures are sometimes copied directly from the sources and included in the essay with no commentary or no attempt to explain or highlight their context. On the other hand some candidates include a plethora of digital images that in the end fail to enhance the quality of the work.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

A well written comment from the school or external supervisor can help to establish the level of inventiveness and flair displayed by the candidate and can be of great assistance to the examiner in awarding the most appropriate level of achievement for this criterion. As mentioned above, however, many supervisors fail to provide any comment and it is left up to the examiner to try to glean the level of personal engagement of the candidate. It is particularly difficult for candidates who undertake library based research, or experimental research at an outside institution, to demonstrate the attributes included in this criterion and it is therefore particularly important for the supervisors to provide an appropriate comment.

Subject assessment criteria

There is a general consensus amongst examiners that candidates who perform their own research (school based, experimental or field study) tend to meet the biological criteria to a high standard. Such candidates are in a better position to demonstrate an understanding of the underlying biological principles, to provide evidence of a personal approach and to be willing (and able) to undertake a critical evaluation of their work.

Criterion J Biological study of living organisms

With the exception of those inappropriate essays mentioned earlier, most essays in this session dealt with biological issues. There is a tendency for biochemical topics to stray into chemical issues and for environmental essays to deal with geographical or even cultural and economic issues at the expense of biology. An ongoing problem relates to essays dealing with diagnosis and treatment of human diseases. These tend to score poorly if the underlying biological phenomena are not dealt with.

Criterion K Use of methods and sources appropriate to biology

Few candidates write about the reliability or appropriateness of the sources they have used. In cases where 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 is often by far the weakest criterion. Few candidates attempt to critically evaluate their own work and seem reluctant to scrutinize the work of others. This is a crucial part of the research process and candidates need to learn not to take printed or web based information or data at face value. Candidates need to be shown that pointing out weaknesses in the data or information improves the quality of the research.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

The amount of time that many supervisors spend with the candidate is insufficient (often less than one hour). Candidates need guidance on several aspects of the writing and research process and this can only be achieved on an ongoing basis. Biology is one of the most popular subject choices for the extended essay and supervisors in many schools may be stretched to meet the needs of their students. However effective supervision is a crucial part of the learning process involved in writing the

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extended essay. Without effective ongoing supervision the process becomes a chore for the candidate and a fruitless exercise in the end.

The reasons for the need for close and effective supervision have been amply discussed in previous reports. The evidence from this session once again is that those candidates that are for whatever reason left to their own devices, tend to do poorly. Candidates who receive appropriate supervision rarely fail to meet the mechanical aspects of the assessment criteria and are in a better position to do well on the others.

Other points from previous reports remain valid. Candidates continue to be in need of guidance on the following:

- writing an abstract
- constructing an effective argument
- establishing, refining and using the research question
- referencing the text
- bibliographic entries especially for web based resources
- structuring the essay (headings and sub headings)
- writing a critical evaluation
- incorporating and integrating diagrams and illustrations
- creating effective controls for experiments
- selecting material for inclusion in an appendix.

Once again it must be reiterated that 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 it can be shown that the candidate has had a sufficient level of input into the research approach and selection of methodology and sources. The supervisors at the outside institution should be apprised of the assessment criteria and be asked to ensure that the candidate will have ample opportunity to work independently. “Outsourcing” the supervision of the extended essay in this manner might seem like an “easy option” but in fact does not meet the spirit or the intent of the extended essay process and puts the candidate at a disadvantage in the assessment process. If the school cannot provide supervision for a school-based research topic in biology then the candidate should chose a different subject.

Chemistry

There were 601 extended essays in Chemistry submitted for the May 2003 session, an increase of 12% over the previous year. Of these 545 were written in English, 47 in Spanish and 9 in French.

Range and suitability of the work submitted

This year the usual wide range of essays was evident both in terms of subject content and in quality. Almost all of the topics chosen were suitable for an extended essay in Chemistry with only a few being totally inappropriate. Unfortunately, there were a few instances this year where the topic could potentially have been good but the treatment given by the candidate was almost completely worthless. This would appear to be more the fault of the supervisor as in these cases there appeared to be almost no guidance given. Happily, this was a rare occurrence. The vast majority of candidates were clearly well prepared in the demands and expectations necessary to achieve a creditable piece of work.

The best essays tend to have two important characteristics. The first is that the students themselves choose the topic. There is clear evidence emerging that where the student has a personal interest or curiosity in the subject then they score more highly on the holistic criteria and the essay itself seems to flow much better. The supervisor has a clear role to help the student refine the topic into a manageable research topic but the essential idea for the topic should be the student's own. Students who select a topic from a list given by the supervisor or who work alongside a Ph.D student in a research laboratory rarely do so well. The second characteristic is that the topic contains experimental work through which the student can demonstrate flair and personal involvement. Although a practical component is not an absolute requirement for the essay, Chemistry is an experimental science and lends itself to hands-on laboratory work. It is pleasing to report that very many of the essays this year did include experimental work. In most cases the student had control of the relatively simple apparatus rather than working in a rarefied university or industrial research laboratory with sophisticated apparatus where a technician does much of the actual practical work.

As with last year 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. Some supervisors, even those who had spent many hours in discussion with the students did not write anything in the space provided for the supervisor's report. In some of these instances a comment from the supervisor might have helped the candidate. The role of the supervisor is important and supervisors are encouraged to look in the extended essay guidelines to ascertain exactly what their role is. It is expected that they are competent in chemistry otherwise it is not fair to the candidate. One of the most interesting essays this year concerned the sensitivity of fruits to the exposure of ethene gas in the ripening process. The candidate exposed four different fruits to 'ethene' and measured the changes in pH, firmness and glucose content to see the effect on ripening. The experiments were performed well and some interesting conclusions drawn. However towards the end of the essay the student described how the 'ethene' had been prepared by adding water to calcium carbide. This completely undermined the whole essay since the student had been adding ethyne not ethene - something the supervisor should have picked up on.

As in previous years many of the essays involved some sort of analytical work, often with an environmental slant. Perhaps the most popular topic essentially involves the analysis of vitamin C in a variety of guises, and a good number involve paper or thin layer chromatography. One of the most interesting essays used a visible spectrometer to see whether the concentrations of two different transition metal cations in the same solution could be followed.

Some other interesting and successful titles included:

Levels of SO₂ preservative in imported and dried apricots.

Does sulfur increase the rate of corrosion?

Do different methods of roasting coffee beans affect their caffeine content?

The existence of morphic resonance. (The candidate looked to see if water that had been frozen once froze a second time more rapidly. All sorts of difficulties, but interesting!)

The analysis of copper in brass.

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. Some students are relying almost solely on the Internet for their source material. Students must learn to distinguish between authoritative scientific articles and material that has not been properly researched or validated. One other change that is noticeable is that students are including more digital images in their essays. Whilst this may be of use, for example to show chromatograms, many are completely unnecessary and often show little more than the student performing a standard titration which does nothing to enhance the quality of the essay.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

One way in which supervisors can help their students is to work with them to draw up a flow chart as to how the essay should proceed so that the essay is planned throughout. Students need to bear in mind that the examiner only sees the final written essay and right from the outset students need to focus their efforts towards fully addressing each criterion. Before submitting their final version students should also use a checklist so that they do not lose marks unnecessarily by omitting some key components. Students can draw up their own checklist or find one ready made in a published study guide for IB Diploma chemistry.

Criterion A Research question

A perceived weakness of the extended essay is that the advanced planning for the pursuit of a topic of interest is too short. There are still candidates who do not have a sufficiently focused question that is capable of being addressed in the 40 hour time period. Sometimes the precise research question is not stated clearly. Ideally it should come *early* in the introduction and be highlighted. 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

The whole essay should be focussed on the research question. Relatively few candidates do achieve this completely. To be successful students 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. The approach should set the scene for all that follows after it.

Criterion C and D Analysis/interpretation and argument/evaluation

These two criteria provide the key to distinguish the excellent essay from the more mediocre. All too often data analysis is accepted without any critical evaluation. It is not good enough to simply quote results without evaluating their reliability. There is often sloppy use of significant figures. When averaging results more significant figures should not be given than those used in the individual measurements. Students should be encouraged to question the uncertainty inherent in their method and to question the validity of all assumptions made.

Criterion E Conclusion

All that is required is that students 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 almost always is appropriate to also indicate unresolved and new questions that have emerged from the research. In theory this should be one of the easier criteria for students to gain good marks. Although most candidates are able to present a reasonable conclusion to their work some seem to hesitate when it comes to stating a conclusion that is not consistent with their original hypothesis or research question.

Criterion F Abstract

Many candidates are still unable to write a clear and concise abstract. This is an area where the supervisor should give clear advice. The element that students find most difficult is to describe the scope of the investigation. Some students are still writing more than 300 words.

Criterion G Presentation

There is considerable variation in the way essays are presented. Almost all the essays submitted look good superficially as they are word-processed competently. However students also need to pay attention to drawing and labelling diagrams and graphs correctly in order to gain maximum marks for presentation. It is sometimes better to hand draw a diagram accurately than rely on one drawn badly using a computer programme. Students also need to use annotated footnotes properly and be able to distinguish clearly between references and the bibliography.

Criterion H Holistic judgement.

The supervisor's report is taken into consideration when awarding marks for this criterion and it is not helpful if the supervisor has made no comment. In order to gain high marks students 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 student's own ideas and which came from an external source. As mentioned earlier there is a high correlation between students with a personal interest in their topic and good marks for this criterion.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Principles and ideas used to describe and explain the properties and behaviour of materials

Students need to demonstrate in their essay that they understand fully the chemical principles upon which their work is based. Only rarely do students include any chemical principles but often what is included is too superficial or incomplete. It is not necessary to repeat in detail theory that is covered in the teaching programme. Where a particular piece of apparatus is used then the student must show that they understand the underlying theory. If 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 tabular form. Balanced chemical equations and structural formulas should be given wherever possible to support the text.

Criterion K Methods and sources appropriate to chemistry

Most of the methods selected were relevant to the investigation although there were a few cases of students attempting wrongly to use qualitative methods quantitatively. 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. 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 analysed regarding the quality of the scientific method(s) employed and compared with secondary sources. Students should show that they appreciate the limitations of their apparatus and the 'time' factor as often it is unreasonable to expect reproducible results within the 40 hour framework.

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

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recommendations.

The candidate must be 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 students is in the process and if a block occurs can help the supervisor to suggest possible ways around a particular problem.

Ensure that the research question is sharply focused and stated early in the essay. 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 students do carry out work in an external laboratory then ensure that the work is genuinely all their own. Encourage students to show clearly and emphasise 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 students 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. Encourage students to avoid including unnecessary digital images simple because they have the technology.

Supervisors are strongly encouraged to write a report when completing the cover sheet of the essay.

Physics

A good number of candidates exhibited great skill, originality and flair in their essay. This report highlights general problems and weaknesses shown by candidates.

The range and suitability of the work submitted

Investigations covered several domains of physics including mechanics, the most popular (e.g. efficiency of a dynamo, wind energy, motion in fair-ground rides, airplane models in wind tunnels, resonance, catapults, impact of a tennis ball, bungee jumping, thrust of propellers, potato-guns, figure skating, soap bubbles, car engines and brakes...), sound (sound decay, sound from a sliding object, harmonics in a violin...), electricity (pendulum oscillating in a magnetic field, thin –film solar cell, effect of temperature on resistivity, power line corona, superconductivity...), thermodynamics (Sterling engines, icebergs...), optics (dispersion...) atomic and nuclear physics (efficiency of nuclear reactors, nuclear magnetic resonance, photoelectric effect using a neon bulb in a relaxation circuit...), astrophysics (impact of asteroids, black holes, pulsars...). Other “exotic” topics included nanotechnology, time travel, space engines, plasma physics, superluminal velocity, and photon entanglement. These last topics were either too new or too difficult to be dealt efficiently within an extended essay. Essays dealing with difficult theoretical topics tended to end up as a collection of paragraphs distilled from the sources.

As usual, students attempted to involve their favorite sport as part of the essay. Sailboats, mountain bikes, basketball footwear, golf-balls, gymnastics, ski waxing, tennis, squash and table-tennis balls all featured. However, a number of these studies were rather unsuccessful due to the difficulty in performing experimental operations accurately with typical school equipment.

The best essays were generally involving an experimental investigation performed by the candidate or, to a lesser extent, databased topics. However some laboratory based essays did not address a research question; instead, candidates reproduced a standard piece of work in order to validate a well-known relationship. Some essays were far too simplistic an investigation. Other candidates confused fundamental concepts thus seriously weakening the value of their investigation.

A number of essays were original, imaginative and highly focused. However a number of topics were too broad and generated only a very superficial survey. Candidates were unable to define a clearly focused hypothesis and tended to discuss concepts and develop arguments that were not relevant.

Essays that dealt mostly with print resources were average or worse, mostly poor. A good number of candidates could not carefully choose or critically analyse resources and synthesize their own content. Hence they were unable to put their personal “stamp” on their essay. Some candidates manipulated data from the Internet Library like pieces of a puzzle and they produced “scientific papers” without showing their own relationship to the content. They were cases where the contrast between the language of the parts taken from the sources and that of the candidates was a strong indication that some candidates did not produce an original essay. Secondary research or survey essays were often only thin summaries of readings. Essays associated to topics far too broad or too technically advanced were doomed to failure.

Some topics were not directly relevant to physics (forecast of earthquakes, effect of electromagnetic waves on health) but rather of interest to the candidate. Even if the candidate was personally involved in the topic, he/she could not score well in the physics assessment criteria. Some topics detrimentally relied only on a very few sources.

Several essays produced a good theoretical overview of the small area on which they were written and they were often accompanied by some additional experimental work, but there was often very little integration between the theoretical and experimental sides of the essay.

Some candidates used a computer with sophisticated interface equipment, but wrongly considered this technique as an end by itself, not a tool. The reliability of this equipment was often not verified nor its limitations considered. In some cases, the use of computer simulation was confused with computer data collection.

Candidates' performance against each criterion.

Criterion A Research question

The majority of candidates outlined clearly the specific topic of their essay in an introduction. However some candidates found it difficult to state exactly the question; often the titles themselves were vague and unfocused. As a consequence, these candidates encountered serious difficulties afterward.

Collecting data, e.g. the frequencies present in the vibrating string of a music instrument, was not an in-depth investigation "per se".

Some questions were precisely stated but were much too broad in scope. Unfortunately, some essays on catapults often boiled down to little more than a simple projectile problem of measuring the angle that produces the maximum range.

Essays on the possibility of time travel were also popular. Much of the physics involved in this was way beyond the scope of IB students and the essays were often little more than poor science fiction.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Most candidates scored at least two marks. The approach showed a reasonable degree of skill in the methods of physics. However some candidates tended to recite secondary sources, becoming informants rather than being involved in the development of the essay. In the case of an inappropriate topic, it was very difficult to adopt a well-focused approach. In some weaker essays, candidates tended to compensate by giving unnecessary details of basic physics, e.g. Newton's Laws of motion, definitions of wavelength, amplitude etc.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Interpretations were generally good but sometimes limited in scope and originality or personal input. Some candidates were not sufficiently objective or did not provide adequate support. In survey type essays, candidates tended to just summarize information from different sources. In experimental essays, some candidates relied on computer-plotted graphs without really knowing how to properly interpret them. Systematic errors were not identified. Regression and correlation factors were quoted without understanding their meaning. Some X-Y plots were used with lines simply drawn from data point to data point.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Arguments were rarely fully substantiated. In many cases, the evaluation of the techniques used was limited or superficial. Inappropriate or too broad essays scored poorly. Where the research question required an argument, candidates frequently performed well. Some candidates failed to give attention to counter-arguments, leaving their evaluation rather subjective and insubstantial.

This criterion tended to separate candidates according to their level of understanding and knowledge.

Criterion E Conclusion

A number of candidates did not indicate unresolved sensible questions when it was relevant to do so. Survey essays were generally weak, as there was no intention to give a conclusion since the study was based on reporting facts. In experimental essays, the major weakness was not to consider the reliability of the results. Candidates recognized the uncertainties attached to the measurements but failed to recognize their impact on the final results.

Criterion F Abstract

Unfortunately, many candidates missed out the conclusion or scope, thus losing two marks. The majority of the candidates provided a clear and complete abstract.

Criterion G Formal presentation

Generally good results were obtained. Some candidates received little guidance if any. There was still a tendency to put all experimental data tables and graphs in the appendix, making the reading of the essay difficult. Some had no labels on graphs or diagrams, or these were “cut-and-paste” without a reference.

Although most candidates listed sources in their bibliography, it was rare to find the sources referred to in the core of the essay. In some cases, footnotes were also included but no quotation marks were inserted in the text where whole sentences and even paragraphs were directly taken from textbooks, magazines or web pages.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Many supervisors did not offer any comments on the cover sheet, making it more difficult for the examiners to assess the originality of the essays or the personal input of the candidates. Routine investigations or general surveys could not score well. Generally, inventiveness and flair were rare. Experimental techniques in laboratory-based essays were not always challenged. Top marks were few.

Criterion J Principles of physics

Overall, the knowledge of the candidates was acceptable. Very few students managed to demonstrate excellent knowledge. Some failed to communicate their knowledge or chose trivial topics. Candidates who chose a “straightforward” topic (outside the syllabus) and performed their own experimental investigation were able to score high marks. Some survey essays contained little or no physics. In the weaker essays, there was a tendency to give what are essentially qualitative descriptions of physical events.

The study of a topic beyond the level of understanding expected in the theory examinations should generally be discouraged, as it is here that weaknesses become apparent! Examiners are not necessarily impressed by complicated equations extracted from advanced textbooks or web pages when it is evident that the candidate is actually overwhelmed by the topic! Some models associated with difficult topics were actually flawed. Some candidates explored concepts beyond the IB physics syllabus and successfully took advantage of external resources to the school.

Criterion K Use of methods or sources appropriate to physics

In a good number of laboratory essays, the methods chosen were appropriate but, unfortunately, they were executed routinely with little flair or personal input. Very few candidates were able to demonstrate that they developed their own experimental design. In survey essays, the weaker candidates relied too heavily on material copied from the Internet.

Criterion L Reasoning surrounding the research and its limitations

Generally, candidates did not perform well in this criterion. In survey essays, little or no attempt was made to assess the quality of the sources used. Back-of-the-envelope calculations were extremely rare. Some candidates were not aware of the need to provide support for their statements and to be aware of the quality of the information they provided.

In many laboratory essays, the error analysis was completely flawed or ignored. In some cases, uncertainties were mostly dealt with in a mechanical fashion but with little further comment on their relevance. The connection of the size of the uncertainty to the experimental design was rarely made. Significant figures were at times ignored, even if uncertainties were included as well as calculations of errors. The percentage difference between the experimental value and the accepted value did not represent the error in an experiment as suggested by some candidates who ignored the uncertainty attached to the experimental value or did not appreciate its significance.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Supervision

The supervisor carries specific responsibilities as defined in the Guide for Extended Essays (May 1999) and plays an active role. Guidance and encouragement are essential aspects of supervision.

The supervisor should:

- help candidates to choose a realistic and suitable research question that represents an “in-depth study of a limited topic restricted to physics”
- monitor closely and continually the progress of candidates, offering advice during the drafting and the development of the essay (e.g. “verify your units!, check this law!”...)
- show candidates examples of well-written articles or essays in physics
- make the Guide (including general and subject criteria) available to candidates
- assure that the essay is in fact the product of the candidate’s work and, if necessary, spot plagiarism
- in the case of essays involving out-of-school laboratory, demonstrate in their comments (on the cover sheet) that the work is genuinely the candidate’s own. Factual comments related to the research done by the candidate, circumstances and practical problems, will help the examiner judge the level of understanding and personal input of such candidates
- in the case of a particularly exceptional essay, superbly written, inform as well the examiner of the special abilities of the candidate
- underline to the candidates the importance of **personal** thinking
- recognize that the production of an extended essay is part of the learning process. Candidates, with little experience writing essays, should not be abandoned to their own devices.

Research question

The research question should:

- not be beyond the candidate’s ability in terms of the depth of understanding of the physics required or too broad in scope
- give the candidate the ability to demonstrate flair and competence from within their studies
- truly be a precise question, not just the repetition of standard investigations e.g. verifying Snell-Descartes’ law of refraction.

Topics

Some topics should be avoided e.g. topics:

- involving philosophical discussion (Feynman against Schroedinger)
- related to “frontier” physics (superstring theory, dark matter, dark energy...) or more closely related to science fiction than pure science (time travel, superluminal motion...)
- involving other branches of science (biology, medicine, geology, economics, engineering...)
- requiring complex instrumentation.

Candidates should be cautioned about choosing secondary research-based essays (survey essays). If they do, they should be very clear in what they want to show, have a precise idea of the sources they would use and be able to assess the quality of those sources. The best essays were those with a tightly defined aim and plenty of physics.

Specific recommendations

- read the criteria carefully
- attention should be given to the computation and analysis of errors and the limitations of research
- aim for clear communication and avoid repetitions. Refer to **annotated** diagrams, tables and graphs well integrated in the core of the essay.
- all symbols should be clearly defined
- drawings, graphs and tables of data should accompany the text and not be put in the appendix. If some elements are repetitive, the appendix can be used **but** a specimen of each must appear in the core of the essay. The argument should flow naturally without the reader having to jump from one section to another
- extract the relevant information/observation from tables or graphs instead of just writing “it is evident from the graph that...”
- preferably include an experimental part which would follow a theoretical introduction. Topics where there was an experimental input were often more manageable. Be careful about choosing secondary research-based essays; choose them if you will, but do them well. This was seldom the case.
- tables of data, relevant graphs and proper analysis of a single experiment or manipulation should be closely connected. Repeat the procedure if a second experiment was performed.
- design realistic techniques for measuring different variables.
- avoid using computer graphing techniques unless fully aware of how to use this facility properly. The addition of large number of charts and graphs can just indicate prowess rather than add to the clarity of the essay.
- often the candidates themselves did the best diagrams in order to illustrate the relevant physics.
- the title should be precise, well focused and clearly indicative of the topic of the essay
- the extended essay should not be a collage built up from a series of cut-and-paste.

Plagiarism

Some scripts were patently plagiarized. Candidates must always ensure that they acknowledge **fully** and in detail the words and/or ideas of another person.

Some candidates listed in their bibliography all textbooks, articles and web pages they consulted but did not specifically offer references in the core of the essay with the help of footnotes. This was not correct. Some candidates introduced footnotes giving relevant references but did not use quotation marks where the text was taken directly from a book or article. This was also very wrong and very seriously misleading. Some candidates evidently scanned or printed diagrams from web sites or textbooks without acknowledging the source. This was also wrong.

Candidates should not copy chunks of material off web sites or from textbooks. In the case of secondary research, supervisors could insist on seeing hard copies of any material from sources used by the candidate. Search engines and software, such as "Endnote" can help with referencing and organizing references. It is often easy to spot plagiarism and there are tools for doing this. In this regard, abrupt changes in the style and the quality of the language of the essay can be quite revealing.

It is the responsibility of schools to clearly inform the candidates of the strict policies to be followed to avoid plagiarism. It would be unfortunate if the ignorance (or negligence) of a candidate on these matters triggered an accusation of plagiarism.

Design Technology

Range and suitability of work submitted

The quality and standard of the Essays read was generally very good. The range and suitability of the work was very much as expected. 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. When the research question was clearly understood, sharp and well defined, the candidate was more likely to complete a successful essay.

Many of the least successful essays relied solely on Internet research often focusing on an historical account of a technological development. Though it may be relevant to introduce a topic with a sequence of historical events this should not provide the bulk of the work. Too few of the essays involved practical experimental or investigative work. Many of the essays would have benefited from an increased use of scientific / technological language. Design Technology does lend itself to environmentally based projects, though a number of these lacked a sharp design technology focus. The best work included a design solution to an environmental issue. A Design Technology essay requires more than just a description of an environmental problem.

Solutions to a design technology problem are needed. The most successful essays demonstrated an appreciation and understanding of the scientific concepts and theories related to their chosen topic. These students were able to provide original, innovative and forward thinking ideas.

Candidates performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Most candidates performed well against the general criteria.

Criterion A Research question

It was felt that most of the candidates successfully chose topics that could be clearly expressed and specified. Some essays were not sharply focused. The role of the supervisor at the outset of the study is very important.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

In most cases the approach to the research question was appropriate. The most successful essays were able to collect relevant information from a wide variety of sources, making use of personal experiences, interviews, direct measurement, experiments, modelling and direct testing. The least successful obtained all their information from just one type of source usually a number of web sites.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Students were more successful analysing and interpreting their information, in the instances where the essays were clearly defined and information obtained from a wide variety of sources. Some candidates may have considered the evidence but they did not methodically record this in their essays.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

A majority of candidates were able to develop an argument. Most success was achieved where candidates had clearly defined the research question. The most successful candidates developed convincing and well-formed arguments.

Criterion E Conclusion

Most of the essays included a conclusion though some were not clearly presented. A number of candidates were unable to clearly indicate unresolved questions. This prevented these candidates from obtaining the maximum two marks for this criterion.

Criterion F Abstract

Most abstracts were well written though a number did not contain all the relevant information. Candidates need to be reminded that to gain two marks the abstract needs to state the conclusions reached.

Criterion G Formal presentation

All essays seen were word processed and clearly presented. The weaker essays lacked relevant illustrative material. Many of the essays lacked graphical information through drawings, sketches, graphs, photographs, tables and charts. Though it should be remembered that it is important that the illustrative material is relevant. A number of weaker essays included printouts of pictures from Internet sites, which were not specifically relevant to the issue being discussed. The best essays were carefully structured and a clear contents page given.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

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

Subject assessment criteria

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

Design Technology may appear attractive to students who have written a “technological” essay but have not studied the subject. It is important that both students and supervisors closely consider the subject specific criteria. It would also be advisable to look at the Design Technology subject guide. This information needs to be understood at the beginning of the study.

The most successful students have a clear understanding of the design cycle and design process. The weaker candidates failed to clarify scientific and technological knowledge relevant to their essay.

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

To obtain marks for this criterion candidates must ensure their essay addresses the impact of their design concept on the user /consumer. There needs to be a discussion of relevant economic, aesthetic and ergonomic factors. Many essays had only a passing reference to these issues.

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

To obtain marks for this criterion, candidates must ensure their essay addresses the impact of their design concept on society and the environment. There needs to be a discussion of the impact of the chosen design concept on society and the environment. Many essays briefly mentioned related environmental issues but were unable to solve problems and discuss solutions, which demonstrate a genuine understanding of the issues.

Criterion M Values in design technology

To obtain marks for this criterion, candidates must ensure their essay addresses the impact of their design concept on values in design technology. They need to consider the issue of values relating to their design concept.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates:

It is essential for students to be guided on defining a suitable topic and formulating a precise and appropriate research question. The comments from supervisors are always very useful. It is clear that many of the best essays have been guided by quality supervision. The length of supervision time ranged from 0 (most common) to 15 hours. The most successful essays benefited from between three and four hours of quality supervision. Unfortunately, there were a number of supervisors who only became involved in the study towards the end, their main role being to proof read the essay. This is too late in the proceedings and is, in any case, not appropriate.

It is important that all supervisors familiarise themselves with the subject specific criteria prior to accepting a topic as a suitable Design Technology essay. Try to avoid topics of a purely historical nature or merely descriptive of a sequence of technological developments.

Mathematics

There has been an increase in the number of students submitting an extended essay in mathematics, which is very pleasing, as is the continued variety of topics chosen for the essays. In this respect, in almost one hundred essays that I personally read there were some topics that I had hardly seen in previous years, with sport and stock markets making several appearances. There were some essays with very imaginative titles, demonstrating the limitless ways in which mathematics can be successfully made applicable or merely appreciated for its beauty. Graph theory, number theory, analysis and statistics were popular areas for essay topics. Generally, it has again been an enjoyable experience to read and assess extended essays in mathematics

The range of marks awarded extended from low single figures to close to, and possibly at, the maximum thirty-six. I have mentioned one worrying aspect in my previous reports, and I do so again because there has not been any major change in the situation. It is the number of essays that are submitted without any comment whatsoever from the supervisor, and it is not just at one end of the quality range that this happens. In my own initial allocation, the best essay had no comment from the supervisor. It may not follow that the absence of comments indicates a lack of involvement with the student in the essay writing process, and nor that if there is such a lack it is necessarily the teachers fault. Some teachers do report that they were not consulted at all or were given drafts to read before submission. I also realise that these duties are perhaps not evenly distributed among members of staff and hence there are pressures on those that do supervise essays. However I do stress the value of teachers' comments to those assessing the essays. This year again there were essays wrongly submitted as mathematics essays. I marked one such which scored highly on the general criteria but zero on the subject specific criteria. It contained no mathematics at all, but it was a good essay. If an essay is submitted as a mathematics essay it has to be marked as such, and the onus is on the supervisor to ensure that an essay is assessed under the correct subject specific criteria. The assessment criteria are freely available and I think that teachers would find it beneficial to judge the essay against them before it is submitted.

Although the general assessment criteria A *research question*, carries only two of the twenty four general marks available, it is crucial to the success of the essay. The maximum mark is awarded when the research question is clearly and precisely stated in the early part of the essay and it is sharply focused, making it susceptible to effective treatment within the word limit. Get this right and an acceptable essay will almost always result, get it wrong and marks will be regularly dropped throughout the assessment. I read one essay this year which attempted, in four pages, a similar task to that which Bertrand Russell wrote several volumes to achieve. *The Development of Mathematics* is not a suitable topic for an essay. The chosen topic must be focused, and both the student and the supervisor must remember that an essay is what is required, certainly nothing more, but equally nothing less.

Before continuing with a few comments from the examiners, a remark on word count appearing in criterion A. Word count is rarely an important factor in a good extended essay on a mathematical topic. Concise, elegant mathematics supported by graphs, diagrams and important proofs that do not interrupt the development of the essay are encouraged. Clearly an essay that is excessive in its length will be penalized, especially if it is because of unnecessary content. There is no mandatory minimum length for an essay in mathematics, and credit will be given for organizing the content in an efficient readable style, rather than for a page or word count. Mastery of appropriate concepts, and an ability to present these in an effective way using mathematical means, should be the aim. Essays in mathematics have their own specific requirements in their formation, with necessary divisions, headings *etc* that are not so important in other subject essays. It is in this structuring of the essay that supervisors have an important responsibility, as they do in the elimination of simple errors that often survive into the final essay.

General assessment criteria

On the whole these first seven criteria were satisfied, provided of course that the essay had a focus. However, some students do not give sufficient attention to the *abstract* and the *conclusion*, both very important sections of the essay, though for different reasons of course. Again, supervisors have a real responsibility here, to check that the formal requirements have been observed. Such is the availability and sophistication of word processing now that the expected standards in formal presentation have crept up, not least of all because many students are producing very well presented essays, setting the standards themselves. The spread of marks for criterion H, *holistic judgement* is an accurate reflection of the range of quality of the essays.

Subject assessment criteria

There has to be a balance in the level of mathematics that is made use of in the essays. It has to be relevant to the topic, of course, and it must not be of an elementary nature. Equally though it must not be at a level far beyond what is necessary, or what diploma students can reasonably be expected to appreciate. A good essay is one that would make sense to the author's fellow students. Sometimes, because of content and style, the perception is that not even the author understands the mathematics. Depth and sophistication are to be applauded, but only up to a point. Once again the supervisors have a responsibility because competent work sometimes includes serious errors. Statistical essays seem prone to this occurrence, and it is not uniformly apparent throughout all schools. There are clear differences in quality of essays from school to school, perhaps because for many new schools the demands on both the student and the teacher are also new. Perhaps there is a need for a list of past essay titles to help new teachers.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

- First a repeat of what is stated above. Encourage and assist students to take great care in choosing a suitable topic for an extended essay in mathematics, with sufficient potential for development as an essay.
- Prevent essays being submitted if there is very little mathematics in them.
- Advise them on structure, and ensure that sufficient time is left to write an abstract and conclusions. Abstracts must be precise, and conclusions should also, where applicable, indicate suggestions for further work.
- Encourage proper use of the Internet and library resources. (It is, for me, always pleasing to see books in the bibliography as well as web sites.) Discourage mere parroting of work from sources and emphasise the need to display understanding of any work that is included.
- Read the assessment criteria carefully.

Visual Arts

Range and suitability of work submitted

The most successful essays were well focused and often involved local topics and questions, visits to the site of the study, engagement with original art works, 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.

We continue to be amazed that, in a subject named Visual Arts, there were still some essays submitted that lacked any visual material or visual analysis! Illustrations at the end of the essay are not as appropriate as in the body of the text where they can be referenced and commented upon. In some cases it was gratifying to see candidates photographing the local examples needed for visual documentation and discussion

As outlined below, candidates showed enthusiasm and imagination in searching out and selecting topics but, in many instances, less skill in formulating a research question. There remain too many candidates struggling with unwieldy topics, e.g. *The variation within perception amongst human beings*, or *Architecture: Art with a purpose*. Such essays form a strong contrast to an essay such as: *The amount of creativity possible in traditional Indian Mehndi art and in contemporary American Mehndi art*, where a resourceful candidate conducted much of her research interviewing Mehndi artists by e-mail.

There are still too many biographical essays. As one examiner commented: “The 10% of candidates addicted to Dali seldom find personal insights along this well-trodden path.” Another: “The largest category [of essays] was still the familiar Western Art studies; Van Gogh, Frieda Kahlo this time, as a predictable result of the new movie on her, entirely researched in the library, [or internet] with no primary resources consulted. The conclusions were utterly predictable and found in any good art book. I wish we could discourage these tedious, routine essays.” However, the same examiner, and others, commented that they are “beginning to encounter a larger number (still not very large) of finely researched essays, using local primary resources, visits to the site of the subject of the essay and interviews with people directly involved with the area of study.” For example, a candidate contrasting a local painter in Bangkok to a “known” American painter demonstrated how freshness of observation, and the opportunity to make verbal contact, enlivened and enhanced the essay, as opposed to simply regurgitating second hand information and impressions about the American artist.

Although not an overall problem, one examiner reported that more than half of the essays from one school exceeded the 4000 word count. A number of abstracts exceeded the 300-word limit.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A Research question

Despite last year’s advice that it is always a good idea to frame the title of the essay in the form of a question, there were still a number of essays that had a “topic,” but no research question. In others, although mentioned in the abstract or title, the question still got lost in the body of the essay. Sometimes the scope of the question is too broad.

Students need to realize that they are not writing a “report,” they are responding to a research question. Inevitably, those essays that do not foreground the question seem to end up as purely descriptive essays, with little discursive analysis. As recommended on previous occasions, within a large field (e.g. “surrealism,” “graffiti,” or “Islamic architecture”), candidates should seek a focused and original research question. There are still 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. A few candidates submitted quite short essays and did not take advantage of the number of words available to develop their argument.

It is important to focus the question. For example, one essay (somewhat typical of others), *What was the influence of the Italian Renaissance on society between the 14th and 16th centuries?* Although demonstrating an abiding interest was unfocused and suffered from information overload.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Not all students are clear as to what evidence is appropriate, or how to analyse and appraise it. Students 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. Some students need to become more familiar with critical approaches through which they might compare and contrast the views of different critics and writers.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

There is usually an attempt to analyse/interpret, but often there is little attempt to place the evidence in context or to compare, particularly if there are different views. Some students confuse description and analysis. They need to support their own interpretations through reference to visual evidence, expert opinion, etc.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Arguments and evaluation need to be clearly referenced. The use of subheadings to show the structure of the essay may help some students. To whose voice does the text belong? In general, despite having a research question clearly stated “up-front,” too many of the essays lacked an argument. One examiner remarked that “Candidates whose own studio practice enables them to make informed judgment about the nature of works studied bring an acuity of perception which is particularly pleasing and this was observed in [refreshing] essays on Diane Arbus and Jackson Pollock.”

Criterion E Conclusion

Again, 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. The conclusions to many essays did not pose unresolved questions and admit limitations in the nature of the research. Students who do a good job with both the conclusion and the abstract, tend to also perform well against most other criteria.

Criterion F Abstract

Good teaching is immediately apparent in those essays where candidates demonstrate a sound ability to précis argument, ideas and information. The abstract should be distinct from the introduction to the essay. It is not simply an introduction. 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. Abstracts must mention the conclusion/s reached.

Criterion G Formal presentation

As might be expected in the visual arts, formal presentation is usually quite well done, but still with one major exception. Despite advice given over the past few years, some students still do not identify the sources of their visuals (i.e. where they found them). Also, some students are far too reliant on only one print or Internet source for their visuals.

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 through knowledge of the visual arts aspects of the chosen topic

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

Criterion K Use of appropriate sources

As a major source the Internet has gained increasing popularity. Books and journals are also extensively used. The point is to use a range of sources, (including some primary resources) and to choose a research question that can be answered with available sources. For most research questions, use of the Internet as a sole source of reference is problematic. Often it is impossible to find some URLs and check on the author's research. Some students use Internet sources that are not academic and that amount to little more than one person's opinion. These are not appropriate sources, but students (and by implication their advisers) seem unaware of this. One candidate used images of Australian aboriginal boomerangs that came from a tourist craft shop site as examples of "sacred artifacts with deep spiritual meaning"!

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

Many students find it difficult to contextualise their studies. Except in the very best essays historical/social/cultural context is sometimes treated rather superficially. As stated last year, candidates need to ask more "why" questions. Sometimes essays were artificially expanded by use of unnecessary historical background (in one case 5 pages with little relevance to the research question). Historical pointers should be significant and to the point.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

It is disturbing that in over 50% of the essays marked, no teacher/mentor comments were recorded. We would like to see more evidence of supervisors functioning as mentors. 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 covers of the essays. One examiner wrote: "It seems that some supervisors do a superior job of advising candidates while others do not. None of the essays for school X had a contents page, and only two out of six had illustrations, Two out of three of the essays from school Y had abstracts that exceeded 300 words." Another wrote: "It is always disheartening to witness enthusiastic, industrious candidates let down by inadequate skills in the strategies of discussion, argument, and the resolution of ideas. Candidates' ability to exercise such skills is the responsibility of teachers and supervisors and it is sad to see this responsibility so frequently neglected."

Supervisors could provide guidance in the following areas:

- School supervisors should review each of the required assessment criteria with candidates early in the IB diploma course. (As stated above, even such simple matters as word count need to be clearly understood).
- Approaches to text referencing. (In some schools this was impeccable, while in others candidates appeared to have received little guidance).
- The need to include visual evidence and the need to identify the published sources from which this is derived.

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- Selection of suitable research questions. Encourage the choice of a question that requires students to go out into “the field” to track down some primary resources. Discourage all essays written primarily from library books or Internet resources.
- Developing appropriate research methods. Warn your students that “Google” is not the definitive authority on every subject!
- 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.
- Organizing their material, suggesting use of subheadings, etc.
- Encourage the student to:
 - Proofread and edit the essay.
 - Have someone else read it to see if it makes sense.
 - Use, but not totally rely on “Spell Check.”
- And, supervisors, it really helps if you are able to write a report for each student!

Music

Range and suitability of work submitted

This year a major problem emerged in that there was an unacceptably high proportion of essays that had topics which either verged on the unsuitable, were too broad or simply were not music orientated. Again, the approach to certain essays was inappropriate to the research question; candidates gave elementary narratives on composers, performers and general musical themes – too many failed to address analysis, arguments and evaluation. Some opted for the simple choice.

Finally a general comment from all members of my team of examiners is that all schools must choose topics that confirm to the guidelines set out in the IBO Extended Essay guide, pages 94-95.

Candidate performance against each criteria

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

In most cases the question had been re-stated in the early part of the essay.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Candidates' approach was generally appropriate.

Criterion C & D Analysis/interpretation Argument/evaluation

Analysis and argument had improved over the last few years, but this year few achieved top marks; that is to say, almost none exhibited noteworthy skill and understanding or presented a well-developed, fully substantial and articulate argument.

Criterion E Conclusion

Generally most essays had acceptable conclusions.

Criterion F Abstract

Abstracts on the whole were very good.

Criterion G Presentation

Presentation was neat and bibliographies presented according to a recognised format. Again this year, there was a lack of musical illustrations, expecting the examiner to know the work? Also, there were fewer CDs/cassettes included – some were essential in marking certain essays.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

Some candidates scored marks for 'personal engagement'; sadly fewer this year, but more achieved marks for 'depth of insight' and 'understanding' and only a few for 'flair'.

Subject assessment criteria

Criterion J Choice of music and method of study

This year, more than ever, too many candidates did not choose to use music in their essays.

Criterion K Use of appropriate primary and secondary sources

Quite a few candidates relied almost entirely on secondary sources, yet there were some (not many, sadly) who were inventive and used a range of primary sources as well.

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

EXTENDED ESSAY REPORTS – MAY 2003

Most candidates managed to place the music in some form of context, but others tended to be superficial or misunderstood at times.

Criterion M Historical, social and cultural context

Most candidates did place music in correct context, though some were rather overdone at the expense of more detailed investigation of the topic in hand. The ‘potted’ biography emerged again.

Recommendation for the teaching of future candidates

In the past I have been pleased to report that IB extended essays in Music have generally improved in quality. Sadly, I am sorry to say the opposite this year – as do my team of assistant examiners. Far too many candidates are not getting the research question right! Certain supervisors would be wise to read again and again very carefully the advice given in the Extended Essay guide before allowing candidates to begin their research. If teachers are not sure of any criteria they should seek advice from IBCA.

It is vital that extended essays should deal with real music and not be about ‘lyrics’, ‘lives of musicians’ or ‘instruments’.

However, the greatest problem which is rearing its ugly head each year now is access to the Internet – an excellent resource, but not for plagiarism which is suspiciously on the increase it seems.

Theatre Arts

Range and suitability of work submitted

One exciting thing of the Extended Essays in Theatre Arts is that there is no real predicting either what will turn up, or what will work... That said it's sadly always predictable that those students (and supervisors) who somehow take the subject actually to be the generic 'Performing Arts' rather than 'Theatre' and submit essays on dance, on television, on cinema, are doomed to disappointment. Those who are writing thinly disguised literature or history or social science essays will also have problems. It's worth referring right at the beginning of the process to the criteria, especially Criterion K which asks how well the students have related their research findings to the practice of theatre - this is crucial.

But equally, there are wild and wonderful and unpredictable successes, usually driven by a particular interest - this seems indispensable for the really excellent essays, and almost enough to lift any essay out of the routine, given some sympathetic supervision.

There were also the same unfathomable patterns - why should Appia and Artaud suddenly become so fashionable? Why did the history of stage design suddenly become so interesting? What happened to all those essays on 'Oklahoma'? These patterns don't seem even to be relatable to recent stage successes or countries or events.

There has been a distinct increase in the number of essays that tackle quite difficult issues, particularly the various functions or roles of theatre in different societies - these are welcome, and credit is always given to students who want to go beyond the more mundane / summary-based topics, even if they may find it hard. These kinds of essays often provoke serious thought, and some wrestling with really complex basic issues - and this is a large part of the function of the Extended Essay.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

It cannot be over-emphasized how absolutely crucial the framing of the Research Question is. There are always many essays in which one can see what must have been a real and manageable topic, which has been diverted by a badly phrased RQ into a history or literature, or even unanswerable, endeavour. It is very well worth trying to phrase the topic as a question that can be answered, and *actually envisaging what form the answer might take*, before you start. With that established as a basis, the candidate could explore other 'looser' options and directions, whilst keeping that starting point in mind as a constant reference point.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

There are many many options here, but candidates should carefully consider before they really start, just what all the options for approaches are (summary of secondary sources, surveys, interviews, action, research, performance...) and what information is *needed* - not just what information may be available.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

Analysis seems to be often tackled fairly competently now - candidates can look at their material and think about what it means or implies. Interpretation, and especially a little thought about the reliability or worth of sources, is still lagging.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

This again is almost completely dependent on getting the Research Question right in the first place. Where there is a clear question or issue, then the argument can consider it and work to a conclusion; where there is not, the essays meander around the topic, usually in the form of a set of statements - often actually just assertions - which have no structure.

Criterion E Conclusion

Again - the vital importance of the Research Question that predisposes the conclusion to be an answer in some form. In the weaker essays the conclusion still falls into the trap of being a summary of all that has been said, rather than seeing what the information / observations have lead to. It is also very useful for candidates here to put their final thoughts into some context - where were they limited or constrained? What would they change? What flaws were there?

Criterion F Abstract

These were generally adequate - and once one sees that there must be 1) a statement of the Research Question, 2) a description of the scope (what ground the investigation covered) and 3) a conclusion, then there is no reason why all candidates shouldn't get maximum points here. But they don't.

Criterion G Formal Presentation

This has tended to improve year on year, as candidates see the importance and use of this. It's a very very helpful protection for them with the problem of plagiarism still lurking. The helpfulness of illustration in Theatre Arts essays in particular is still worth thought - but a helpful tip is to consider that the point of including any diagram or picture should be explained.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

There was often clear evidence of personal engagement and that was always pleasant to see. Some of the topics chosen had become frankly eccentric rather than personal, and that does need thought - and help from the supervisor. This is also a point where the degree of initiative and ambition can be rewarded, and the supervisor's comments cast a strong light on that.

Subject specific assessment criterion

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

This is a rather odd criterion - the personal points of view often emerged quite clearly; there was often uncertainty about theatrical aspects - candidates do need to relate what they feel or believe to the theatre, rather than any other set of interests or prejudices.

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

This has almost always been the weakest area of performance - candidates may do a creditable job of describing the history of a theatre form or the development of a theorist's ideas, but then fail to connect it to *what actually happens in a theatre* as result of what is discovered or described.

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

This generally has improved, as candidates seem to have been encouraged actually to take conscious note of this criterion. It's valuable for candidates to think of how their ideas / results / conclusions are dependent on a particular framework or even set of assumptions about what theatre 'is' or is assumed to be - how would they look differently at what they say if they were members of a completely different society? This is often helpfully linked to the conclusion, but can usefully inform all their research and argument.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

These seem to be eternal verities. Make sure the students have read all the Criteria and understand how their essays will be marked before they start. Make sure candidates have their own copies of the Criteria for reference. Always ask the student how their essay will fit the Criteria (especially the Subject - specific criteria) right from the start. Give them copies of the last three examiners reports. The absolutely crucial step is helping them frame the Research Question and imagining what form the 'answer' will take. A very useful question during the process is 'so what?' - to keep them thinking how their work is meant to be working towards a conclusion. Enjoy the excitement of students actually investigating something that they are enthused about and commit to - that shared interest keeps them going.

Computer Science

The range and suitability of the work submitted

In general the range and suitability have improved since last year. Topics that addressed the technical aspects indicated some depth in understanding a computer system and in the structure of a computer. Good essays included methods of data transmission, over clocking a processor, a study of Hurd's design, the efficiencies of Triple, Hamming and Cyclic codes, and analysis of the future of quantum computing.

Most of the topics were however variations of security issues, networking and artificial intelligence. The majority of essays appropriately researched the topics described or outlined the issues and made some general evaluations of the research question. A few students went beyond this format however 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. The added levels of actually applying the theory and demonstrating some development of the theory were examples of the higher order research essays.

Weaker essays were more descriptive in format. Some essays were just rewording published papers and information found on the Internet. Whilst not counting as plagiarism as sources were acknowledged, these essays lacked a logical argument from the candidates and were often either weak in conclusion, or concluded with quotes. Some essays reflect the treatment of the subject like an historical summary of facts and dates. In these cases the essay is mainly an historical one where the candidate should put their findings and conclusions in the essay and put the historical facts in the appendix.

Candidate performance against each criterion

General Criteria

Criterion A Research question

Most of the research questions put forward were suitable with a few being over ambitious and a few more suited to ITGS.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

The collection of relevant material was generally good and it was encouraging to see some candidates carrying out their own experiments to gather comparison data. There were many instances where this would have been a good idea for those who relied on statements from other sources.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

The analysis / interpretation was carried out by the majority of the candidates but not always thoroughly or correctly.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

The majority of candidates developed an argument, which addressed the research question but was incomplete.

Criterion E Conclusion

The majority of candidates were able to attempt some sort of conclusion. Those whose research question were weak also found themselves in the position of being unable to conclude, apart from stating that they were happy with their work or program. Conclusions should contain reference to unresolved problems. A good conclusion is one that poses questions that give rise to other research topics, other essays.

Criterion F Abstract

The standard of abstracts has improved with only a few missing or written as an introduction.

Criterion G Formal presentation

The majority of the presentations were good or excellent. Graphics, tables etc were presented and labelled. The only weak area seems to be setting out a clear table of contents. This is clearly linked to the structure of the essay.

Criterion H Holistic judgment

The full range of marks were given. It is clearly stated that the supervisor's comments may be taken into account here and yet very many supervisors did not make a comment at all.

Subject specific criteria

Criterion J Use of the theory and practice of computer science to answer the research question

A very wide range of levels were evident. Some candidates assumed that they had to give all details that you could find in a computer science textbook.

Criterion K Analysis of the role of a computer system in relation to the research question.

The majority of candidates could describe the role of a computer system and relate this to the research question. However the computer system was often ignored in essays where its role was significant. This criterion proved to be the hardest for candidates.

Criterion L Application or use of the research question

This was well done. The application or use of the research question was analysed and evaluated by candidates.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

Supervisors should ensure that candidates choosing to do their extended essay in Computer Science have carefully read the subject criteria in advance of starting the essay and that they can see how the criteria relate to their topic.

With such a wealth of information available, particularly on the Internet, candidates can fall into the trap of thinking that by simply collating the material they are completing the task. By asking the candidate to explain why a statement has been made or how a conclusion has been reached, supervisors can play a key role in pushing the candidate beyond simply collecting sources. These challenges should begin early in the process. It is advisable for the supervisor to make comments about the essay as this helps the assessment process.

World Religion

The experiences of the examiners were rather different this year. A few saw almost no problems with research questions and approaches, while the others continue to identify problems with lack of specificity and appropriateness in research question, and bias in approach. Two examiners claimed that this year's essays were consistently better than previous years; two claimed that they were worse. Four examiners mentioned a narrowing of topics; the others were happy to see a wide variety. Statisticians, I suppose, would claim that these things even out over time.

In general, it was a pleasure to get to moderate the essays marked by other examiners this year. It meant that I got to read many more truly excellent essays, a real pleasure when the essays I was assigned this year were much worse than in previous years.

My sense of the essays submitted this year is that there continue to be several excellent essays on a wide range of topics. I was pleased that the topic "*Women in Islam*" was less prevalent than the last few years, when it seemed that every other essay addressed it. Unfortunately, there were many more mediocre essays this year, even if the good news is that there were also fewer really bad ones. With the exception of one school that submitted 11 essays, none of which included an abstract, a table of contents, or any real scholarship, the overall level of presentation has improved dramatically. The research questions continue to suffer from an inability to frame a question, which makes the development of an argument to answer the question next to impossible. Most essays are organized around a topic, and usually an overly broad topic at that. There continue to be far too many "same and different" essays, too often a recitation of obvious and superficial differences and a naïve attempt at forcing similarities.

While many students handle the difficulties of being objective about their own religious commitments with at least incipient dexterity, two groups regularly do not even attempt objective analysis: conservative evangelical Christians (both Protestant and Catholic) and Ba'hais. There continue to be far too many essays that attempt to demonstrate (or debunk) the truth claims of a religion. I am close to suggesting that creationism be ruled off limits, since the approach of assessing the role of creationism within the religion is never actually used. The same is true of "progressive revelation" in the Ba'hai tradition.

Source material used has in general improved, with fewer essays depending exclusively on a few confessional websites and a textbook. Still, there was a problem, especially evident in the essays I was assigned, with using only sources from one tradition for material on another. Too many students continue to use their own personal interpretation of scripture without seeming even to be aware of the existence of scholarly analysis. This naïve hermeneutic is especially problematic when assessing a tradition other than their own. Students can make good use of interview material, but most rely instead on a single interview with one practitioner, the perspectives of whom they accept uncritically.

Analysis and argument continue to be the heart of the extended essay. Here the essays continue to rely far too frequently on subjective analysis and too few insights, without either analytical depth or logical argumentation.

Without sufficient analysis and argument, the production of a solid conclusion is next to impossible. I found the conclusions generally weak, with most that had any conclusion at all merely summarizing the essay.

The abstracts continue to be a problem. I rarely find an abstract that actually fulfils its function. It is not meant to be an introduction or a summary, but rather a systematic (if brief) explication of question, approach, and conclusions. Few essays accomplish this task, in my opinion. Formal presentation was better this year, with many more 2s, but still too few 3s.

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Holistic judgments varied, especially the willingness to give the highest and lowest marks. That is to be expected from a subjective criterion where we are prompted to cluster our marks in the middle.

The subject criteria continued to be somewhat disconnected from the general ones. I mean that students could score very high on the general criteria and low on the subject areas, although it was more commonly the converse. Objectivity was often a problem. This was true not only of students who demonstrated bias in their essays, but also in the sense that students did not address their own arguments objectively, considering counterarguments and taking into account the perspective of practitioners. There continue to be serious errors of fact, including at least one essay which purported to quote from the Quran and the Gospels, while in fact quoting from Hindu devotional tracts. Sensitivity, really getting a feel for the religion from the inside, remains somewhat weak.

Politics

Range and suitability of the work submitted

I reported last year that I had been disabused of the idea that earlier problems concerning the appropriateness for Politics of some essay topics were being overcome. This year has reinforced that perception. My examiners and I saw a number of essays that were inappropriate. As I have said before this is particularly galling when the essay is a good one. The range of generic skills that are required in a politics essay are clearly set out and essays have to be marked accordingly, and appropriateness will always be a factor in assessing the strength of analysis and argumentation, as well as of the question itself. Some candidates were over ambitious in selecting their topic and others were only minimally tutored so that their topic grew out of hand and the standard of analysis suffered as a consequence.

It has to be said though that my 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. We are unanimous in advising greater monitoring of choice of topic and approach.

Candidate performance against each criteria

Some candidates continue not to understand the importance of the research question. I have consistently argued that essays should be framed in the form of a clear question or hypothesis and I have not changed my views on this. Each of my examiners had examples of essays which did not pose a question at all and some which did not pose a researchable question. It is true that a good tutor will offer corrective advice at a very early stage but this certainly does not always happen. Some of my team would say that it rarely happens. The suitability of the research question seems critical to the framing of the abstract and to forming a genuine conclusion that frames the discussion. If the research question is weak or even non-existent then it becomes difficult or even impossible properly to address it. The structure of the essay suffers in proportion and candidates are likely to be marked down on all criteria.

A number of candidates produced chiefly 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.

I have consistently written critically about the balance in the assessment criteria between analysis and description (which seems to see them as being of equal value) but would like to repeat my enthusiastic support for the criterion of holistic judgement. This 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 responses from my examiners, together with my own marking experience, I am led 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 tutors are not Politics specialists. I have said previously that we should not necessarily expect 'political science' criteria of analysis to be used but we have the right to expect an understanding of political concepts, culture and institutions to inform the discussion. We frequently get none of these. I should conclude by saying that my colleagues and I believe that greater attention should be paid by tutors to setting their students up, so

to speak, at the beginning of their research, so that students concentrate on what is specifically political (in the broad sense) about their research topic. Some of my examiners would want to go further in their criticism of lack of input from tutors and I am clear in my own mind that the time spent with students, 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 students insisted on going their own way and eschewed advice. Well, that is a perennial problem. Nevertheless the number of hours spent (or at least recorded as having been spent) with students is 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 students and their teachers could be proud. The increasing use of the Internet makes plagiarism a real worry, though we seem to have had no major cases this year. I signposted a concern about the growing use of the Internet last year. This is a growing worry. We are naturally delighted to see exemplification of argumentation by up-to-date web sources, or the use of case studies taken from the web. What is of concern is the absence in a growing number of essays of any secondary sources which, by their nature, are likely to provide a sound conceptual and analytical framework for an essay. I believe that this process can lead to a general dumbing down of the essay.

Peace and Conflict Studies

This session 180 candidates from schools submitted extended essays in this subject. The essays submitted included topics from all sections of the syllabus and all but a very few were appropriate to Peace and Conflict Studies. Some of the latter were more appropriate to History. These included *The German offensive and subsequent battle at Stalingrad was ill-advised and lost them World War 2*, and *The Dakota conflict of 1862: Silence is not a solution*. Both of these were overwhelmingly descriptive in approach, and both scored badly when assessed against the subject assessment criteria for Peace and Conflict Studies. An essay on *The Jewish Homeland* was a superficial historical survey from biblical times to the holocaust, with the aim of justifying the Jewish claim to Israel. No other factors were considered and no conflicting claims examined. This year there were several essays on conflicts related to terrorism, drugs, AIDS and crime and punishment. Political topics such as situations in the Middle East, Kashmir, Korea and Sri Lanka were also popular.

Many candidates writing extended essays in Peace and Conflict Studies run into problems arising from the fact that they have not studied it as part of their diploma package. It is a school-based syllabus which is taught in only one school and there is clear evidence that, in the many schools where only one or two candidates choose it as their extended essay subject, neither the candidates nor the supervising teachers are familiar with the syllabus and the subject assessment criteria. One result of this is that many essays score well on the general criteria but do far less well on the subject criteria. (See also section C of this report).

In spite of the above comments, this year's essays included some excellent studies in depth. Outstanding amongst these were essays on: *Internal conflicts involving refugees in Uganda and ways of finding peace*, *How effectively can the conflicts caused by international terrorism be addressed by international courts?* and *Has the Kashmir problem become a vendetta for India and Pakistan? Is a political solution possible?*

Candidate performance against each criterion

General assessment criteria

Criterion A Research question

Because so many other criteria refer to the 'relevance to the research question', candidates who fail to state the research question clearly penalise themselves. Usually the research question is stated not only in the early part of the essay but also in the abstract and the title. Where the title is not in the form of a question some schools require candidates to state the research question separately on the title page.

Criterion B Approach to the research question

Generally, the approach to the research question and the resources used were appropriate. However, it is difficult to award levels 2 or 3 when the research question has not been clearly stated.

Criterion C Analysis/interpretation

The approach of some candidates was too descriptive; but in most essays there was at least some attempt at analysis.

Criterion D Argument/evaluation

Most candidates attained at least level 2 here and levels 3 and 4 were often reached. Again, however, these scores were dependent on a clear statement of the research question.

Criterion E Conclusion

Though many candidates list sub-titles in the table of contents these are not always used in the body of the essay. This is a pity since they are useful to the reader in following the argument. The use of a sub-title to identify the 'conclusion' is particularly helpful and advisable.

Criterion F Abstract

Since the requirements of the abstract are clearly laid down in the guide to 'The Extended Essay', it is disappointing that so few candidates gain the maximum two points available here.

Criterion G Formal presentation

The quality of presentation was generally high. Most candidates take pride in giving their essays a professional appearance. However, it is again disappointing that many candidates fail to gain the maximum 3 marks here because of careless omissions such as the failure to include a table of contents or to number the pages. Only a very few candidates lost marks for exceeding the word limit of 4000 words.

Criterion H Holistic judgement

A significant number of candidates demonstrated sufficient evidence of the qualities listed in this criterion to reach levels 3 and 4. Very few candidates failed to score at least 1 point.

Subject assessment criteria

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

Most candidates scored better on this than on any of the other subject assessment criteria, but more could have been done in many cases to relate the study to a particular aspect of peace/conflict and to identify why the issue or topic was important.

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

This remains the weakest aspect of all the essays. Very few candidates showed any awareness of the theories that underlie the study of Peace and Conflict Studies. Only about 5 of the candidates included any books in their biographies which dealt with the basic theories underpinning the study of the subject. Candidates should note the following statement on page 98 of The Extended Essay guide - in particular, they should realize that extended essays in this subject will be expected to show that the candidate possesses a knowledge and understanding of the different theories about the causes of peace and conflict.

Criterion L Awareness and understanding of the different roles, interpretations and actions of all conflicting parties

Some candidates did well against this criterion. Others, however, had problems partly because of the choice of topic which was so one-sided that there was little to be said about the roles and views of those on both sides of the conflict.

Criterion M Solutions to conflict situations

Here again the choice of topic was often crucial in providing the candidate with opportunities to respond effectively to the requirements. Conflicts which are still on-going and await resolution provide the best opportunities here.

Recommendations for the supervision of future candidates

All examiners in this subject are agreed that there is a need for more pro-active guidance and advice to be given to candidates writing extended essays in the subject. It is essential that supervisors should be fully conversant with the section in The Extended Essay guide (pages 5 and 6) where their responsibilities for giving candidates guidance and advice are set out in some detail. They should ensure that candidates have access throughout the period when essays are being written to The

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Extended Essay guide and also to a copy of the Peace and Conflict Studies syllabus (obtainable from IBCA). They must provide advice and guidance to the candidate, including assistance with:

- defining a suitable topic
- formulating a precise research question
- gaining access to appropriate resources
- techniques of 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 following list of the commonest reasons for the loss of marks. These include the failure to:

- include a table of contents
- number the pages
- state the research question clearly in the required places
- include in the abstract the three essential elements - the research question, the scope of the investigation and the conclusion
- provide all the necessary information about the sources listed in the bibliography
- acknowledge sources by the use of an accepted system
- keep within the permitted word limit for (a) the Abstract (300 words) and (b) the main body of the essay (4000 words).

If supervisors are afraid that they might be giving candidates too much help and advice, they should read again pages 5 and 6 of The Extended Essay guide.