

## ECONOMICS

### Overall grade boundaries

#### Higher Level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 15	16 - 30	31 - 43	44 - 55	56 - 67	68 - 80	81 - 100

#### Standard Level

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 13	14 - 28	29 - 39	40 - 52	53 - 65	66 - 77	78 - 100

### Higher and standard level internal assessment

#### Component grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Mark range:</b>	0 - 6	7 - 12	13 - 20	21 - 26	27 - 31	32 - 37	38 - 45

### Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

This was the second November session for the new syllabus and most centres adapted well to the new criteria. There were a few exceptions, described below. Overall the standard was good, although a few candidates were hampered by weak English. Some centres produced excellent work.

A number of centres seemed either unaware of the assessment criteria or were hugely generous in the marks given to their candidates. A substantial number of portfolios did not include a summary portfolio coversheet. Template versions of a summary portfolio coversheet and a commentary coversheets are available in the 'Forms' section of the Teacher Support Material (TSM), which is available on the Online Curriculum Centre (OCC). Filling in the front page "Titles and dates of work" section of the 3/CS form does not replace a summary portfolio coversheet.

A number of centres did not accurately complete the 3/CS form and as such are advised to check the addition on the reverse side of the 3/CS form and to make sure the forms are signed by the candidate and teacher.

The maximum time lapse between the source article and the written commentary is one calendar year. The maximum word count is 750 words but there is no minimum word count. If a commentary is longer than 750 words the moderator will stop reading at 750 words so the candidate could lose marks from their analysis and evaluation. Some centres and candidates have not adjusted to the requirement that footnotes are only used to provide references, but not for definitions. Specific definitions are not required: the important thing is to demonstrate that the terms are understood and to use them accurately.

It is important to carefully follow the rubric requirements. Many candidates lost a mark under criterion F because they did not provide a summary portfolio sheet with details of the sources, syllabus sections, the date commentaries were written and word counts. It is advisable to give the full URL of the articles used. Articles should be complete and the parts that the commentary is focusing on should be highlighted. If an article is in another language the candidate must provide a full translation that is comprehensible. Google translate is not always adequate. It is recommended that teachers include a comment on the portfolio, explaining the marks awarded. These comments should be on a separate sheet; the portfolios should not be annotated by the teacher. A few teachers marked on the scripts with red pen, which can create confusion if portfolios are moderated a second time.

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

Most candidates followed the rubric requirements and submitted three commentaries from different sources, covering three syllabus sections, while complying with the word count limit. When this does not happen, it is important that the teacher takes this into account when assessing the portfolio as it will affect the moderating factor for the centre.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### **Criterion A: Diagrams**

Most candidates included relevant diagrams but these were not always explained well. Too many simply copied generic graphs from textbooks or internet sources without making them specific to the commentary. It is preferable that candidates create their own graphs, either by hand or using computer skills. If candidates have copied graphs they must give the source. Please note that the criterion descriptor assesses whether the candidate “is able to construct and use diagrams” so copy/paste diagrams will not achieve maximum marks.

Candidates should avoid very lengthy descriptions of graphs, especially where these are generic graphs which have been copied.

Some candidates made reference to colours on their graphs but then sent portfolios printed in black and white.

**Criterion B: Terminology**

Terminology needs to be used appropriately, but this does not mean every term must be defined. Terms like “price elasticity of demand” could be briefly explained with a comment such as “which measures how responsive the quantity demanded is to a change in price”. If precise definitions are copied they must be in quotation marks and a source be given. They must not be in footnotes or they will be ignored. This criterion implies that the candidate displays understanding of the terms used. A number of candidates used an inappropriate dictionary definition for economic terms like deficit or depreciation. Most candidates scored well here.

**Criterion C: Application**

This criterion tests whether the candidate has recognized the appropriate economic issues from the chosen article. It is important to make links to the article, and not simply present some economic theory that is faintly relevant. Some candidates made very little reference to the articles, and a few did not understand the articles. A common fault was to choose articles that were far too complex or dealt with issues not in the syllabus. Most candidates recognized the appropriate economic issues and scored well.

**Criterion D: Analysis**

This criterion deals with explaining and developing economic theories linked to the article. It is important that the commentary makes repeated references to the article and integrates the theory and practice. An example might be discussing whether taxing alcohol is a better solution to market failure than regulating sales or prohibition.

A common fault was to simply summarize some economic theory without clearly linking to the article. The descriptors for level 2 and 3 distinguish between “appropriate” and “effective” analysis. Many commentaries were considered “appropriate” as the analysis was not developed enough.

**Criterion E: Evaluation**

A key issue here was whether the candidate “synthesizes his or her analysis”. If candidates have simply paraphrased an article that has already done the analysis and evaluation of an issue it is not possible to get the top levels on this criterion – the evaluation is not of the candidate’s own analysis. Many simply explained an article, generally agreeing with the author. Too many candidates gave opinions that were not backed up by appropriate economic reasoning. It is not possible to reach the top level unless the candidate considers counter-arguments, and discusses advantages and disadvantages of a policy.

**Criterion F: Rubric requirements**

It is important to carefully follow the rubric requirements. Many candidates lost a mark under criterion F because they did not provide a summary portfolio coversheet with details of the sources, syllabus sections, the date commentaries were written and word counts. The descriptor about “different and appropriate sources” was designed to avoid candidates choosing excerpts from books, tutorial guides, government reports or personal blogs. A number of online

media now include opinion columns which are technically “blogs” but these are acceptable if they are in a recognized news media source.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- The internal assessment (IA) should be an integral part of the course, not simply a set of homework assignments at the end of the course. The IA can be valuable to understanding the different parts of the syllabus and is especially important in providing examples that can be used in the externally assessed components. I would recommend that candidates read through their IA as part of their revision.
- It is recommended that the IA be spread across the teaching of the syllabus, with one or two of the commentaries completed in the first year. This reduces stress on candidates in their second year and reduces the risk of incomplete portfolios being presented.
- Centres should provide guidance in the selection of suitable articles but the choice must be made by the candidate. Some centres used a very limited selection of sources and topics for their IA, which gave the impression that teachers had selected the articles. Teachers are reminded that they are allowed to give feedback on a first draft of the commentary but the second draft is considered final. A few centres, or candidates, did not appear to have produced a first and subsequent final draft of the commentaries.
- It is important to promote academic honesty and to stress the potential consequences of plagiarism. Teachers should take care to verify the authenticity of work presented, ensuring that the language and analysis presented is really that of the candidate. It is also necessary to remind teachers that providing a candidate with undue assistance is unacceptable. It is part of the candidates' task to find and analyse the article – this should not be carried out by the teacher. A number of centres presented samples where many candidates had used the same articles. Teachers should provide candidates with advice and guidance in the choice of articles for his or her commentaries, but must not choose these for the candidate.