# GLOBAL POLITICS

## Overall grade boundaries

**Higher level**

| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 15 | 16 - 30 | 31 - 41 | 42 - 54 | 55 - 66 | 67 - 78 | 79 - 100 |

**Standard level**

| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 15 | 16 - 30 | 31 - 40 | 41 - 52 | 53 - 65 | 66 - 77 | 78 - 100 |

## Higher and standard level internal assessment

**Component grade boundaries**

| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0 - 3 | 4 - 6 | 7 - 8 | 9 - 10 | 11 - 13 | 14 - 15 | 16 - 20 |

## General comments

'There were cases where teachers had assigned the IA task for the whole class, and this detracted from the student's justification for the engagement and ownership of the results. Students do need to own their own projects. This gives them more opportunity to reflect on their engagement and to delve into a political issue they genuinely care about, and also prevents their "getting away" with the minimal assignment made by the teacher.

It should be noted that students can do very well even if they do not have access to higher level organizations or political entities. The quality of the IA is not dependent on the perceived significance of the organization or the seniority of the people with whom the student has engaged. Many of the better reports were based on engagement with political issues affecting people's everyday lives in their own communities.

Students need to use a variety of sources when putting forward their points of view and when discussing their engagement. It is often a problem for a student who is using a single interview as an engagement activity to include a wider view of the political issue, particularly if the person interviewed has a personal connection to the student. A variety of points of view is also necessary. For example, if a student is discussing Iranian nuclear capacity and is not

including reference to Israel's capacity, a significant perspective is missing. Where the point of view is biased, the student should state that bias insofar as he or she is aware of it, including a recognition of his or her own possible bias.

Satisfactory research informs a more meaningful engagement, **but** it needs to be emphasized that research alone is not an engagement activity.  Engagement activities **without** research, on the other hand, often produce assumptions without justification.  The importance of both – and re-iteration between the two – needs to be emphasized in the engagement activity.

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

Too many students concluded that one interview on a subject very far away from their school was sufficient; some treated the IA as another form of extended essay. In general, too many students did not engage with the chosen political issue, or used topics that were too close to their own experience (i.e. using parents as primary sources, or concluding that one friend of the family's experience represented enough data for them to write up an IA). Reflective engagement seems to be a concept that needs more explanation, and perhaps more practice, before a final IA is submitted.  Few of the written reports submitted in this first session reflected that the potential of the task had been realised.

It seemed at times that the IA was treated as an aside that had to get done rather than as a major part of course activities. Teachers were often not following the directions and credited students with work that did not fit the task guidance and assessment criteria.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### A Identification of issue and justification (4 marks)

Generally, candidates indicated what their engagement activity was and the political issue within it, and some were successful in identifying the political challenge as it relates to the course content and world politics in general. However, sometimes the issue chosen was too broad, which naturally led to overgeneralisations and prevented a thorough and effective analysis, or was justified only to a limited extent ("the topic is very relevant in today's world, widely in the news, and of great importance"). Where the activity was based on a compulsory school activity such as MUN, candidates could not always develop convincing reasons *why* they underwent those engagement activities.

### B Explanation of engagement activity (2 marks)

In the best IAs the candidates' description of the engagement activity was not only thorough, but was also linked to the concepts and prescribed learning outcomes of the global politics syllabus. In weaker IAs there was only an implicit connection between the activity and their learning about the subject, or the engagement was not fully developed. Some activities were too limited in scope to provide a good basis for analysis: for instance, it is recommended that candidates interview more than one individual to help gain a broader perspective and avoid biased conclusions. Students should eventually have guidance about interviewing individuals:

specifically, that this alone represents only one line of evidence that must be supported and balanced against as a part of the overall engagement activity.

Transcripts of interviews should be included in an appendix, and not in the main body of the report.

**C Analysis of issue (6 marks)**

In the better IAs there was ample analysis, but in general candidates' points could have been justified with evidence in a more explicit manner, and with reference to more than a single source. Poorer analyses demonstrated limited understanding of the issue under consideration or of the key concepts of global politics that it linked to: sadly, there were plenty of missed opportunities to draw in highly relevant key concepts and theories. Poor referencing led at times to confusion as to where ideas were entirely the candidate's, or were at least partially based on other sources: sources **must** be acknowledged properly, as lack of referencing can be regarded as a potential academic honesty issue.

Occasionally analysis was done largely from a historical standpoint, without reference to recent events.

**D Synthesis and evaluation (6 marks)**

Better candidates demonstrated a good synthesis of knowledge by providing perspectives from different standpoints and claims; in weaker work the synthesis and evaluation was partially or completely one-sided, without reference to counter claims, or with over-generalisations, and only superficial reference to alternative points of view.

Too often a simplistic conclusion was offered, which was largely irrelevant to the demands of the engagement activity and political issue examined.

# Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Engagement activities and political issues need to be fully thought out before the student writes up an IA. What an IA consists of, what are fruitful activities, what kind of data is needed, who represents a credible source, and background research all need to be more fully covered.

- Teachers and students are advised to read the IA task guidance carefully and the assessment criteria given in the global politics guide, as well as to study the May 2014 samples that will be provided in the teacher support material..

**Further comments**

The engagement activity is not an exercise that simply is an addendum to other work but is an exercise that is an important and major activity in the global politics course. The May 2014 session saw the results of the first round of engagement activities and the better reports gave an indication of the wonderful potential of the task. More work is required to help all students

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of global politics achieve this potential and to enrich their growth as active, reflective citizens through the IA.

# Higher level extension

**Component grade boundaries**

| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mark range: | 0 - 5 | 6 - 10 | 11 - 16 | 17 - 22 | 23 - 27 | 28 - 33 | 34 - 40 |

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

Students typically chose relevant work, although some chose topics that were far too historical in nature or did not have a clearly enough identified political issue in their presentation. Teacher guidance is advised to ensure that students select appropriate case studies.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

**Criterion A**

> Students typically performed well in the first criterion—main actors, details and a reasonably effective summary were provided.

**Criterion B**

> Not surprisingly, students had a more difficult time analyzing their topic using the theories taught throughout the two year course. When students did choose a theory to apply, the application was often done poorly, or artificially, and not sustained throughout.

**Criterion C**

> Students also struggled with the evaluation of their topic—how to dig down not only to determine why their topic may matter in a local context, but also why their topic matters in a global context.

**Criterion D**

> The quality of presentations varied, with some candidates actually presenting with very little support, to others who read out an entire document either in hand or on

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screen. This will not be acceptable in future sessions, and additional guidance from teachers is needed here.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates should consider framing their presentation around a central question, tightly linked to their chosen political issue, as outlined in the course guide. This question could serve as the driver of the presentation, i.e. a question the presenter clearly seeks to answer by crafting a well honed, well supported, compelling argument that any audience would be forced to consider. This includes referencing material taught from the core units to demonstrate learning as well as resources consulted to demonstrate their research. This will come with better teacher guidance.

- Teachers and students are advised to read the HL extension task guidance carefully, and the assessment criteria given in the global politics guide, as well as to study the May 2014 samples that will be provided in the teacher support material..

# Higher level and standard level paper one

**Component grade boundaries**

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

## The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Question 3 and Question 4 - Many candidates lost marks by simply not referring to the source at all, despite a clear instruction to do so in the question, while others neglected to bring in their own knowledge. Candidates must address all parts of a question if they are to gain high marks. Similarly candidates missed out in gaining marks by not including examples, or by offering only a one-sided evaluation.

The most able candidates were able to evaluate, using appropriate examples. Weaker answers lacked either or both breadth and depth, omitting key issues or failing to evaluate them.  Question 3 and Question 4 required points to be not only explained, but also evaluated. For example, candidates missed many opportunities to point out that what initially seem like strengths can also be viewed as weaknesses, when examined from another viewpoint.

## The level of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

On the whole, candidates coped well with the paper and there seemed to be no special problems with understanding the demands of the questions. There were some excellent responses to these questions. Candidates who understood humanitarian intervention and who were able to use the example in the sources, coupled with examples drawn from their own knowledge, to explain it, scored well.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

**Question 1**

> This was a straightforward comprehension question that demanded very little from candidates so the majority received full marks.

**Question 2**

> The majority of responses identified at least two reasons from the source why humanitarian intervention can often be the cause of protests and controversy. Better answers were able to elaborate on these reasons.

**Question 3**

> Most answers were well-constructed and had logical, well-developed themes. Some candidates however did not understand the question and compared and contrasted the sources, rather than solely contrasting them, which restricted their progress.

**Question 4**

> There was a range of responses which was excellent as this was the question which allowed the examiners to really differentiate between the candidates. The most able candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge and understanding both of the process and importance of humanitarian intervention. In poorer answers candidates were providing their own opinions, rather than backing them up with evidence from the sources in the question paper or from elsewhere.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Candidates need to be made aware of the importance of referring to the sources and/or to own knowledge, as directed. Many responses lost marks by simply not referring to the source at all, despite a clear instruction to do so in the question, while others neglected to refer to their own knowledge.

- Candidates must address all parts of a question if they are to gain high marks. Examiners noted that students should be reminded to read questions carefully and to carefully read the instructions.  Many students, for example, were using examples

from sources given for other questions rather than using their own knowledge, which often further confused their answers and further confused the structure of their responses.

- Candidates need to practice skills of evaluation: the most able candidates were able to evaluate, using appropriate examples.

# Higher level paper two

**Component grade boundaries**

| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mark range: | 0 - 13 | 14 - 26 | 27 - 35 | 36 - 44 | 45 - 51 | 52 - 59 | 60 - 75 |

# Standard level paper two

**Component grade boundaries**

| Grade: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mark range: | 0 - 8 | 9 - 17 | 18 - 23 | 24 - 28 | 29 - 34 | 35 - 39 | 40 - 50 |

# The areas of the programme and examination which appeared difficult for the candidates

Comments are applicable to students at both higher and standard level, as the only distinction between the levels is the number of questions answered.

The standard of the answers was in general somewhat uneven, and probably more miss than hit. This is not to say that there were not some excellent responses but these generally seemed to be the exceptions that otherwise proved the rule. Candidates did not seem to be able to refer adequately to the key concepts and to the prescribed content of the course in their answers:  a balanced all-around understanding of concepts and content is needed, including some knowledge of differing interpretations of the concepts and some depth and breadth in the prescribed content (e.g. in many responses, Rostow was the only development model referred to in Q4).

Factual knowledge of prescribed content, theories, and central terms was for the most part missing, for instance in questions like Q3 (different ways of ratifying and enforcing human rights), Q7 (peacemaking, peace keeping and peace building) and Q8 (structural violence). Instead answers included simplistic statements that were often not suited for the purposes of

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the argument and which were often only mentioned in passing instead of being well-founded in the course content.

Concepts, theories and examples were often just mentioned in answers without further explanation or context or application.  This often led to inaccurate or inappropriate use of these concepts, theories and examples, with answers focusing on their inclusion instead of on their meaning. Students need to take their answers back to the key concepts, which often get lost by the end of the answer.

There was in places an uncritical use of the key concepts and the prescribed content of the course.  A good example of this is Rostow's concept of development, which was often used as a viable source of background and application, rather than it being noted that it is a formulation that has been deeply criticized and widely dismissed by development specialists. The key concepts, prescribed content and possible examples are not offered in the global politics guide as 'correct' interpretations of the course themes. They are meant to be engaged with critically in teaching. This way, students have a greater chance of also maintaining a critical approach in their examination responses.

There was often a lack of essay structure, which led to the marking down of answers that were otherwise strong. The importance of emphasizing structure is important here.

## The level of knowledge, understanding and skill demonstrated

See above.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

### Question 1

Many candidates seemed unable to face the challenge of correctly defining and applying concepts such as soft power, or even of using concepts such as smart power and soft power. A few of them did so, however, very well and effectively.

Strengths: many candidates were able to justify their point of view effectively i.e. why they agreed with the statement, or not.

### Question 2

This question on sovereignty was quite straightforward. However, many answers were unable to distinguish between NGOs, IGOs and MNCs. Some of them made basic factual errors such as calling the UN an NGO.

Strengths: many candidates appeared to have understood the concept of sovereignty well.

### Question 3

Many candidates appeared to have a limited knowledge of approaches to the ratification and enforcement of human rights, whether institutional or non-institutional.

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**Question 4**

Many candidates seemed to find it challenging to connect the two concepts of power and human rights, although they might have been clear about both concepts independently.

**Question 5**

Many answers to this question seemed to drift away from the main issue at hand to a discussion about whether aid is good or harmful. Many candidates also seemed to be convinced that aid is harmful and a tool of exploitation of developing countries.

Strengths: some candidates were able to give very interesting and apt examples to support their points of view.

**Question 6**

For this question on development goals such as the MDGs, very few candidates were able to give concrete examples of MDGs to build their case. This appeared to be a challenging question for candidates in terms of formulating their answers and supporting their claims with clear examples.

**Question 7**

For this question many candidates were again unable to clearly define and describe the three concepts correctly. Also in terms of examples, a few faltered.

**Question 8**

The last question was perhaps the most challenging one for candidates since most of them did not accurately understand the concept of structural violence. They were also unable to build convincingly on the answer with appropriate examples.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

- Thought needs to be given by teachers as to what constitutes having covered "enough" of the prescribed content and examples. The ideal is for students to have a rich and balanced understanding of the course content **and** the key concepts. Much of this can be done through continually and systematically linking interesting discussions of examples, case studies and current affairs to the prescribed content and the key concepts of the course.

- Candidates should focus less on fast-moving coverage of factual content in their answers and more on greater depth, with more analysis, so as to demonstrate both their knowledge *and* the correct application of theory.

- Candidates need guidance and practice in structuring their answers to meet the demands of the questions. Many answers were haphazard, not logically argued, or unclear: essay writing skills need to be developed.