

Film assessment clarification

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Introduction

This document is intended to provide a clarification for the Diploma Programme (DP) film assessment tasks. Teachers are encouraged to use this document in conjunction with the published *Film guide* (2008). The information provided here does not replace any of the instructions or criteria contained in the guide. It is intended to unpack and explain the assessment guidance in more detail.

External assessment: Independent study

Students must produce a script for a complete short documentary production exploring an aspect of film theory or film history, based on the study of films from more than one country. The documentary should be targeted at an audience of film students in the 14 to 18 years age range. (*Film guide* 2008 24)

Clarifying the assessment task

The independent study must be presented in the form of a written dossier composed of the following three items.

- Rationale, which clearly specifies the theoretical or historical topic
- A documentary script (that is two column-script in vertical format)
- Annotated list of sources

The documentary should be targeted at an audience of film students in the 14 to 18 years age range. Examples of the topics students may choose to investigate are outlined below.

Please note: All examples given here are for clarification only, and teachers are encouraged to work from their areas of strength in both history and theory.

The musical genre

A genre theory examination of the codes and conventions of the musical film and the way they are expressed through cinematic techniques in different cultures.

- At standard level (SL), the study could be Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly's *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) and Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan: Once Upon A Time In India* (2001).
- At higher level (HL), these films could be studied in addition to Takashi Miike's *The Happiness of the Katakuris* (2002) and Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge!* (2001).

The influence of expressionism

A historical examination of the influence of the Expressionist movement in Germany on later film genres, films and their directors.

- At SL, the study could be of Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920) and Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* (1990).
- At HL, these films could be studied in addition to Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) and *Scarlet Street* (1945).

Images of women in action

A gender theory investigation of the way women are portrayed in sports films, particularly in terms of their treatment by the camera and in the light of “the male gaze”.

- At SL, the study could be Gurinder Chadha’s *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002) and Robert Towne’s *Personal Best* (1982).
- At HL, these films could be studied in addition to Penny Marshall’s *A League Of Their Own* (1992) and Omung Kumar’s *Mary Kom* (2014).

The outsider

An auteur study of how representations of “the outsider” are constructed with particular reference to the *jidaigeki/Chanbara* films of Akira Kurosawa, and their Western remakes by John Sturges (and, at HL, Sergio Leone).

- At SL, the study could be of *The Seven Samurai* (1954) and *The Magnificent Seven* (1960).
- At HL, these two films could be studied in addition to *Yojimbo* (1961) and *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964).

The male gaze

Laura Mulvey’s feminist film theory applied across different film cultures.

- At SL, the study could be of Quentin Tarantino’s *Kill Bill: Vol 1* (2003) and Takashi Miike’s *Audition* (1999).
- At HL, these two films could be studied in addition to Luc Besson’s *La Femme Nikita* (1990) and Dennis Dimster’s *Double Identity* (2009).

Development of noir

Use formalist theory to analyse the historical development and changes in film language from noir to neo-noir.

- At SL, the study could be of Andrew Lau’s and Alan Mak’s *Infernal Affairs* (2002) and Carol Reed’s *The Third Man* (1949).
- At HL, these two films could be studied in addition to Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* (1982) and Jules Dassin’s *Rififi* (1955).

Focus on editing

How editing techniques are used to blur the line between fantasy and reality for an audience.

- At SL, the study could be of Hayao Miyazaki’s *Spirited Away* (2001) and Jean-Pierre Jeunet’s *Amélie* (2001).
- At HL, these two films could be studied in addition to Wes Anderson’s *Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) and Sam Mendes’ *American Beauty* (1999).

What are examiners looking for?

Examiners are looking for evidence that the audience has in some way been enlightened. To what extent have the rationale and argument been explored and developed coherently with some depth and complexity? The rationale should be clear-cut and interesting, firmly rooted in cinema history or theory. The script should read like a visual documentary, not an essay. The student will need incisive and well supported analysis skills, complete command of film language and the required audio-visual format. Effective integration (and comparison at HL) of a variety of films, supported by substantial depth of research should be present. The student voice should be clear, accessible and informed.

The audio-visual format

The visual column should describe what we see, preferably in film language. The audio should be the student's voice as narrator and make insightful analysis and observations. Good independent studies will "cut" meaningfully from one scene to the other in unfolding the thesis or argument. Average independent studies will string scenes together. Students should pay attention to the minimum requirements in terms of number of pages and page layout. Time codes of scenes from selected films or for the student's script are not necessary.

Research

An annotated bibliography is part of the requirements and the best students will evaluate the relevance of these resources in regard to their rationale. A deep knowledge of genre, theory, practice or technique is expected. The independent study is not four text analyses (or two in the case of SL) linked together by a common thread. Appendices should not be submitted.

The student voice

An informed and engaged commentary is ideal. Attributed quotes are permissible, but guest or expert narrators should not be used. The narration should not be a mini essay. It should connect with an educated film audience of the student's peers in tone and content, but still be film literate. This obliges the student to use film language and have substantial evidence of text analysis, which shows how the thesis being argued is presented cinematically.

Guidance for completing the assessment

In this assessment task the students are required to move beyond their own observations of film language (primary research) into secondary research in order to support their ideas with evidence from film academics, scholars, cineastes and practitioners. The following key questions may help students in examining each film.

Who made this film?

In general, most students will approach this question from the perspective of the auteur theory. Students should understand that they have accepted a theoretical position when they do this.

What can we tell about the film-makers?

Frequently, this question will lead students to deeper questions of film history. However, it might also lead them back to a consideration of the style of the film, since they will begin by making judgments about the film-makers by looking at the structure of what they have created. When students do this, they are employing formalist film theory (analysing the film by looking at the effects the film-makers wanted to achieve with their practical work from initial design through shooting to the final edit). This is called deconstruction, taking the individual elements apart in order to look at how the film-makers communicate.

So, answering this question will involve a student's own viewing of the film (primary research) and usually secondary research too (looking through print, internet, and other media sources for information from academics, scholars, cineastes and practitioners).

For whom was this film made? How does it address its audience? What is the nature of our engagement with the film?

Frequently, these questions will focus students on issues of film history and film movements.

What outside influences can we perceive in terms of finance, ownership, institution, and sociocultural context?

This question touches on both film history (the reason why films are made) and representation (the way history, institutions, and especially people, are represented by film, which is what gives film its sociological context). Ownership and institution will have profound effects on how issues and people are represented. A deconstruction of film technique will be employed when considering parts of this question. However, when sociological contexts are examined, there should be an examination of how social institutions are represented, how people are represented, and what their power relationships are.

What tradition is identifiable in the film?

This question leads us to both genre history and genre theory.

To what other works might it be connected?

This question leads students to consider large questions of both history and theory. For example, if the focus is the auteur theory, a student might consider how a collection of films by the same director are connected, or equally as important, how the work of different directors might influence the work of one specific director. If a student's focus is genre history, he or she might consider how the evolution of conventions and audience expectations have influenced acting portrayals or set design in modern film.

How do you know?

This is certainly the most important question. In all cases, in this section of the course, students will be drawing on their own primary research (the viewing of films and textual analysis) and on secondary research (the work of academics, scholars, cineastes and practitioners).

Frequently asked questions

Do the different films required for analysis for the independent study have to be from different countries of origin?

The films selected should be from at least two different countries. At HL, the four films could be from four different countries, or three from one country and the fourth from a different one, for example. It is important that the films selected are treated equally in the independent study.

What is the correct format for the independent study?

The correct script format for the independent study has two columns, which allow the visual and auditory components to be put side by side. The descriptions of video and audio elements must be both detailed and specific, as well as adequately linked. Scripts must be 8–10 pages long at SL and 12–15 pages at HL, using an accepted size of paper (for example, A4 or US letter) and students are required to use the 12-point Courier font (not in block capitals) and single spacing.

How do you define the country of origin of a film?

Generally, dedicated websites like IMDB display the film's country of origin. This is nearly always the country where the main production company of the film is based. However, in the case of an international co-production that involves several production companies located in different countries, students are advised to select a different film with a less ambiguous origin.

Can the student create a fictional narrator for the independent study?

No. The prime voice of the documentary must clearly be that of the student, who will also act as the narrator, on-screen host and/or voice-over. Existing experts or celebrities may appear in the documentary, but only when students ensure that any comments or ideas that they attribute to these guest speakers are fully supported by detailed references in the annotated list of sources, allowing the examiner to verify them in case of doubt.

External assessment: Presentation

In this component, the student is required to make an oral presentation to the teacher of an analysis of an extract lasting no more than five minutes from a prescribed film. The list of films prescribed by the IB is published each year in the November edition of the Diploma Programme *Coordinator's notes* and can also be found on the online curriculum centre (OCC). It is not carried over from year to year. (*Film guide 2008: 25*)

Clarifying the assessment task

The heart of the presentation task is detailed textual analysis showing how meaning is constructed in filmic terms. Students are permitted to explore character and themes but will need to show how these are explored within the grammar of film-making.

At both SL and HL, students must demonstrate an understanding of the film's position in its sociocultural context. This does not simply mean offering a brief history of the times in which the film was made.

Students should avoid spending time summarizing the narratives of their chosen films. Likewise, descriptions of what students see or hear, however detailed, are not substitutes for close textual analysis. Students should discuss how or why film-makers use specific techniques to represent elements such as major themes, ideas and character.

Students should avoid listing the cast and crew of the film or simply quoting box office receipts as these rarely assist analysis.

Although it is possible for students to follow the extract through a shot-by-shot approach, this is not necessarily the most efficient or effective method to use for the presentation as it can often lead to much repetition. Students should identify key elements in the extract and the extract's relationship to the film as a whole, and explore how meaning is constructed in the chosen extract. This could begin with the director's intentions.

Analysis in the presentation task should be seen as an evaluative interpretation. Close analysis is more valuable than very heavy reliance on simple analysis such as "black shadows signify something bad", "high angle camera shows power" or "red means danger".

What are examiners looking for?

At both SL and HL, examiners are looking to reward those students who are able to fully integrate a thorough and perceptive insight into the themes, issues and sociocultural contexts of the selected films as a whole with a close, detailed textual analysis of their chosen extract.

HL students should avoid providing simple lists of awards when indicating how films were received by audiences. Likewise, brief quotations from critics or scholars are not sufficient when addressing the requirement of "reference to the responses from audiences and reviewers, critics or scholars at the time of its release and/or subsequently". Students should offer some form of discussion of these responses.

Successful students in this component are most often those who offer a straightforward response to the task making sure all the requirements are met and that redundant material is altogether avoided.

Guidance for completing the assessment

Teachers are encouraged to use the following script as an introduction to each student's recording, to avoid any confusion regarding the timing of each presentation.

"This is an [SL or HL] film presentation for [name and number of school/college]. This candidate is [name and number of the candidate]. The presentation will be on [title of the film]. The scene chosen is [identify the scene as on the coversheet]."

Then say to the student:

“You may begin your presentation.”

This will enable the examiner to more clearly identify when to begin timing for each student.

Frequently asked questions

Once a student has started his or her presentation, is he or she permitted to stop and start again?

Only if the student becomes ill and cannot continue. These special circumstances must be reported to the Diploma Programme coordinator.

What if a student brings in a prepared script?

The student may not use a prepared script to be read word for word. The supervising teacher must remove the script and the student must be rescheduled to undertake the presentation with notes only at another time.

Should a student have a free choice of the prescribed films?

The guide states that teachers choose **three** films from the prescribed list. Teachers are required to make this selection of three as they deem appropriate for their cohort of students and allow the students to then make a free choice from these three.

May students choose a film that they have been taught at any time during the course?

Under no circumstances is this allowed.

May students choose a film if they have been taught about a film by the same director?

This is acceptable.

May students choose a film if other films from the same genre have been taught?

This is acceptable.

Internal assessment: Production portfolio

This component consists of a student's completed film project and its accompanying documentation.

Students submit a single production piece. (*Film guide 2008: 35*)

Clarifying the assessment task

In all cases, students must keep evidence of their work in their role in their production journal. Excerpts from this journal should be used as evidence to develop their commentary. This evidence may consist of any graphic or photographic material, which can be worked into the body of the commentary to present a complete picture of the production process or the student's work in his or her chosen role. These might, for example, consist of sample drafts of scripts, photographs of set design or lighting design or other work during production; screen grabs from the edit process or other graphics related to technical work could also be included.

The commentary should present a complete picture of the production process as well as present the student's work in his or her chosen role. The artistic and logistic analysis of the finished film, along with other observations, will require all students to participate throughout the entire production process, regardless of the selected role. It is likely that some details of the collaboration with the director, at least, will be present.

What are examiners looking for?

In this task examiners want to see a well-made film that fulfils the descriptors in the criteria. This might not be the best film that students could ever make: that film might be longer or shorter, violate some of the formal requirements of the task, or ignore some criteria. Examiners want to see the best film that students can make that meets the assessment criteria.

At least 20 marks out of 50 will be awarded based on the commentary, so it is important that students plan for this and gather supporting evidence as they make their film.

In the commentary, examiners first of all want to see documentation of all the relevant production stages, with special emphasis on each student's work in his or her chosen role. When a student is focused on his or her individual role, they are expected to reflect and evaluate on their work both artistically and logistically. What did the group do? What did the individual student do? How did the film work out?

All of this should be supported with graphic and photographic evidence woven into the writing (no appendices). There should also be a critical evaluation of the project as a whole. This should take the form of a clear appraisal of the final film, and not as a blurb that says how wonderful the final film is or a simple reflection on what the student learned.

For HL students, it is crucial that the creation of the trailer is discussed in the body of the commentary, since it is required by criteria A and B.

As for the film itself, examiners want to see the most creative work that students can produce. The work should demonstrate students' understanding of film language and showcase their professional and technical skills. Examiners want to see a film that has been well planned before it is shot and that demonstrates technical competence in all the roles. Finally, examiners want to see students create as much of their own original work as they can, such as video inserts, sets and location design, music or soundscape, costuming and props, and so on, as appropriate to the demands of the film. Of course, students must work within a limited amount of time, so they start their planning as early as possible and be as creative as they can be within the constraints of the task.

For HL students, it is important to remember that examiners must see a trailer that shows they individually have the editing and narrative skills necessary to create an effective trailer. This must be their own individual work.

Guidance for completing the assessment

Cinematographer

A cinematographer's portfolio will be focused on the production stage more than most other roles. Since the responsibilities of the cinematographer involve the creation of the image—both in terms of camera angle and movement—and lighting, much of the cinematographer's work will take place during the shoot. Evidence for the role of cinematographer in this assessment task might involve (but is not limited to) the following.

Pre-production	Production	Post-production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test shoots using different focal lengths, camera placement, and so on • Lighting tests in the actual locations • Checklist of equipment for the shoot • Evidence of collaboration with the director to negotiate how mise en scène, locations and lighting will be handled • Documented workflow showing your set-up sequence • Map of each location showing camera placement/camera movement • Notations on storyboards • Map of each location showing lighting • Map of each location showing character blocking/movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of camera preparation, movement, angles, shot design (the main focus of this role) • Description of choices made when selecting shot types with justifications • Evidence of how lighting design was used to create mood, atmosphere, and perhaps even genre • Evidence of consultation with the editor about the coverage needs for the film • Evidence of alternative shots and why you chose the one used in the final film • Identification of problems encountered during shooting and how you solved them • An evaluation of your camerawork and lighting on an artistic level as well as technical level • Identification of influences from films you have seen—name the cinematographer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of continued contribution with director and editor through advice, assistance and any scheduled re-shoots as a result of the editing process • Consideration of how your film could have been improved (without blaming equipment or other people involved)

Editor

An editor's portfolio will be focused on the post-production stage more than most other roles. The main area of focus will be the pacing and rhythm of the final film, and making sure the cut effectively communicates to the audience. Focus in the commentary should be on pacing and narrative rhythm, the creation of tension, as well as editing styles (continuity or montage) and the effects of specific edits (straight cuts, dissolves, fades in and fades out) in terms of narrative purpose. The commentary should be focused on creativity and creation of narrative, mood, and atmosphere rather than discussing how the editor dealt with mistakes. It may be necessary to discuss how the editor used editing to cope with problems that occurred in the shoot. Evidence for the role of editor in this assessment task might involve (but is not limited to) the following.

Pre-production	Production	Post-production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test shoots using different focal lengths, camera placement, and so on • Evidence of planning with the cinematographer on shot types to help editing • Influences of editing from films you have seen—name the editor • Notations on storyboards to plan a rough edit plan or pre-visualization • Researching the editing program necessary for the specific production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of collating rushes from the filming, labelling and storing the footage to enable an organized edit process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of discussions with the director and justification for choices • Test edits • Evidence of continued contribution with director • Before/after evidence using screenshots of your editing software • Before/after evidence of colour correction or special effects (such as screenshots of various stages of development) • Consideration of how your film could have been improved (without blaming equipment or other people involved)

Sound designer, recordist or mixer

This role is a combination of roles, and like the director, will probably require the student to distribute equal time during each part of the production. For a sound designer, recordist, mixer to be assessed in this task, the finished film should rely on the use of sound as an integral part of the production process.

During pre-production, the commentary should present evidence of the sound designer carefully going over scripts and storyboards with the director in order to decide what sound will be necessary for the production. In some cases, this may require *foley* (sound that is performed, such as knocking on a door or the sound of footsteps), which will have to be recorded by the students themselves and not taken from existing sound effects libraries. In other cases it may require designed sound, that is, recorded sounds that will be altered in a program such as GarageBand® or Audacity®. Sometimes for safety reasons students may need to use sounds from a pre-existing sound package (such as explosions). If original sound work can safely be created, however, then the work of the sound designer, recordist and mixer will be much easier to evaluate. During production, sound must be captured on set. This may require working the boom mike, making sure sound capture is accurate, and many other tasks that are the responsibility of the recordist. During post-production, the major role will be as the mixer for the project, creating a mix of sound effects and dialogue to create a pleasing effect for the audience, as well as mood, atmosphere and drama.

Please note: in a “real-world” scenario of film production, the creation of music would not necessarily be the responsibility of the sound editor/sound designer; music would generally be written by a composer. For the purposes of this film assessment task, however, the role of music composer is not available. Sound editors/sound designers are expected to be responsible for the final sound mix (which includes the music, as well as foley, sound effects, dialogue, ambient sound, and so on), but it would not be fair to mark these students for the creation of an element that is outside the structure of the film course. For this reason, any

music used in the film should be created with the input of the entire production team and should, ideally, be original (please refer to the new copyright and creativity statement below). If the creation of the soundtrack is the responsibility of the sound designer, recordist or mixer, it may be a focus of the commentary. However, it should not outweigh the other responsibilities outlined above.

Evidence for the role of sound designer, recordist or mixer in this assessment task might involve (but is not limited to) the following.

Pre-production	Production	Post-production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test recordings in the actual locations—make note of problems/solutions and make note of best settings on the recorder • Making a checklist of equipment • Making a workflow showing your recording set-up sequence • Evidence of discussions with the director and justification for choices • Map of each location showing placement of the recording equipment • Problems during recording and how you solved them • Influences from films you have seen—name the sound designer • A list of foley sounds needed for the film—should include times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of capturing sound on set as part of the shoot • Evidence of how you created the foley sounds and how this was captured • Evidence of collating sound material, labelling and storing the footage to enable an organized edit process • Description of choices you made with justifications • Consideration of how music has been composed or created with a composer and the director • Consideration of what has influenced the musical score 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of how effective your sound design is on an artistic level as well as a technical level • Consideration of how your film could have been improved (without blaming equipment or other people involved)

Screenwriter (referred to as **Writer** in the guide)

A screenwriter’s portfolio will be focused on the pre-production stage more than most other roles. Finding the idea, research, treatment, and finally script development as the project moves through pre-production will be the focus of much of the commentary. The student should be sure to include samples of research, of how drafts of the script developed, and how other parts of the pre-production phase (such as the creation of storyboards) affected the development of the script. Casting may also be significant and other preparation may be central to development of the script.

The screenwriter’s commentary should present a complete picture of the production process as well as present the student’s work in his or her chosen role. Among other observations, the artistic and logistic analysis of the finished film will require all students, regardless of their role, to participate throughout the entire production process. It is likely that some details of the collaboration with the director, at least, will be presented.

If a student is taking on the writing role, the script should (in almost all cases) have dialogue as an aspect of the work. With a silent film there is so much work focused on the creation of image by others that the screenwriter role will be hard to assess. Evidence for the role of screenwriter in this assessment task might involve (but is not limited to) the following.

Pre-production	Production	Post-production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple drafts of script with explanations of developments/changes Evidence of characterization development Clear influences from movies—name the screenwriters Pitch Treatment Correctly formatted script Identifying costume/props that help characterization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of contribution to the shooting script Challenges faced during shooting and how you solved them Any on site re-writes during production Any assistance given to the director when working with actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of any further input, such as additional dialogue, provided during post-production An evaluation of your script on an artistic level as well as technical level Consideration of how your film could have been improved (without blaming equipment or other people involved)

Director

This role requires the student to distribute equal time during each part of the production. The director's role involves overall control of the artistic and dramatic aspects of the film, guiding the technical crew and actors to transform the script from page to screen.

The director's commentary should present a complete picture of the production process as well as present the student's work in his or her chosen role. Among other observations, the artistic and logistic analysis of the finished film will require all students, regardless of their role, to participate throughout the entire production process. Evidence for the role of director in this assessment task might involve (but is not limited to) the following.

Pre-production	Production	Post-production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear explanation of the vision or concept behind the film, including the reasons for wanting to make this film • A description of the target audience and the intended reaction of this audience • Evidence of research into the genre/style of the film • Clear influences from other films—be specific and name directors/cinematographers/composers/costume designers, and so on • Evidence of consultations with the cinematographer/editor/sound designer—include notes, emails, storyboards, photos, drawings where appropriate • Evidence of location scouting • Evidence of casting decisions • Evidence of permission to shoot at locations • Evidence of scheduling with call sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production notes for each day of shooting—before and after: a set of expectations for the day and a list of what was achieved or not achieved; notes on ways to solve problems • Ongoing discussions with key production team members and actors and evidence of instructions to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of working with the editor and discussion of decisions made and why • Changes between the initial script and the final version, as well as an evaluation and justification of the changes • Discussion of reactions to the final cut • Evaluation of the film, both technically and artistically. Did it achieve the original vision?

Creativity and copyright statement

Student work must not contain any copyright material.

Students must not seek permission to use any copyright material, whether audio or visual. Even if copyright material is legally obtained, this is a violation of the course's intended outcomes.

The expectation of the film course is that students will be the original creators of, or have a significant role in the creation of, any audio or visual material that they use in their work. Therefore, for the purposes of the production portfolio, a hierarchy of different levels of creativity can be shown, which directly corresponds to the five levels of criterion E:

- simple addition of existing non-copyright audio-visual material
- basic manipulation of existing non-copyright audio-visual material
- substantial manipulation of existing non-copyright audio-visual material
- innovative interpretation of non-copyright existing audio-visual material or creation of basic original audio/visual material
- creation of sophisticated original audio/visual material.

Audio material

Students are permitted to include music that is not subject to copyright laws. An existing musical composition that is not subject to copyright, or that has been made available on an online repository and licensed by the creator to allow others to use their work in certain ways (commonly known as creative commons licenses), would be permitted. It should be understood that this is not as creative an endeavour as making an original soundtrack, and so marks awarded may be limited.

Students would either need to arrange for the musical score to be performed specifically for the film, or source an existing performance of the musical score from a creative commons website. In such cases, the student must comply with the principles of academic honesty and the terms and conditions of the creative commons license (if creative commons materials are used) so that the writer, performer and/or source are clearly and accurately referenced in the credits and the commentary. Collaboration with local musicians or other students to help create the soundtrack is permitted. Students must clearly explain how the music contributes to the overall tone of the film to demonstrate the creative process involved. Copyright-free software may also be used as appropriate.

Sound effects sourced from creative commons websites or copyright-free software are permitted.

Please note that any music used in the film should be created with the input of the entire production team (as explained in the sound designer, recordist or mixer role description above).

Visual material

Students must avoid including visual material subject to copyright in their work, such as extracts from TV/film appearing in the background of a scene or video games/video game animations being used as an integral part of the narrative. Original creation of such visual material will be rewarded.

Frequently asked questions

Can students use copyright free music?

Students are permitted to include music that is not subject to copyright laws. An existing musical composition that is not subject to copyright, or that has been made available on an online repository and licensed by the creator to allow others to use their work in certain ways (commonly known as creative commons licenses), would be permitted. It should be understood that this is not as creative an endeavour as making an original soundtrack, and so marks awarded may be limited. (See the creativity and copyright statement above.)

Can product brand names and logos be prominently present in the portfolio films?

Teachers and students are advised to inform themselves of their local laws and regulations regarding copyrights and the fair use policies. As a rule of thumb, students should avoid filming or referring to any product, logo, brand name and trademark that shows a company or its product in a detrimental way. However, if a student is walking away from the camera and we see the logo of the backpack company but it does not feature prominently, is non-distinctive and no reference is made to the product, then students would not necessarily need to get the company's permission. To avoid potential pitfalls, however, it is advisable not to include film logos, unless they cannot be removed like on cars or buildings, and do not feature prominently in the film. Existing logos on objects could be replaced by fictional logos by the student's art department.

Can SL and HL students collaborate on the making of one portfolio film?

Due to the different assessment expectations, it is not recommended that SL and HL students work together on one project for submission. However, if circumstances require that they collaborate on a single project, the SL students must produce a significantly shorter film than the HL students, which can be challenging.

Film course frequently asked questions

The following questions about the general film course have been compiled from teacher queries raised on the Diploma Programme film forum on the OCC.

Can the Diploma Programme film course be delivered in one year?

The film course is conceived and designed as a rigorous two-year course to allow students to develop and reach their full potential as critical, well-informed and creative young film-makers with adequately developed film-making skills and techniques. Students are expected to be familiar with, among other things, film history, socio-economic forces that have shaped modern films, national cinemas and alternatives to mainstream Hollywood cinema, the main film theories, as well as a wide range of cinematic film-making techniques, to prepare them adequately for the three assessment components at the end of the two-year course.

How can the various electronic accompanying forms be accessed?

All three assessment components need to be sent with the correct accompanying forms completed by students and teachers. Links to electronic copies can be found in section B6d.2 of the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*, which is published annually on the main OCC film page.

When and where are the deadlines for assessment published?

The deadlines for submitting the predicted grades, the marks for internal assessment and latest arrival dates for the three assessment components are stated in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*, which is published annually on the main OCC film page.

Can I show a film that is rated 18 in some countries?

Local laws, cultures and rating systems of films vary worldwide. A film could be rated 18 in one country but 12 in another, therefore teachers are advised to use their own discretion and understanding of the laws and sensitivities of their local community when deciding if a film is suitable for viewing. Some teachers inform their students and parents at the beginning of the course that, for educational purposes, the students may be exposed to certain controversial films.