GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

| Paper 9239/11 |
| Written Examination |

Key messages

It is important that candidates read the paper carefully, paying close attention to the key words, to answer all the questions set. This applies to all questions. For example, in **Question 1(a)**: 'identify' and 'two individual musicians', and in **Question 1(b)**: 'identify', 'three other challenges' and 'cultural heritage'. In **Question 2,** the key words were 'evidence', 'strengths and weaknesses' and 'impact on the argument'; and in **Question 3**: 'perspectives', 'judgement', 'arguments' and 'stronger'.

Candidates managed their time well and allowed more time for **Questions 2** and **3**, which carry higher total marks than **Question 1**. **Question 1** only requires short answers or bullet points, and most candidates responded accordingly.

To achieve higher marks in **Questions 2** and **3**, candidates should develop their points clearly. This involves making a point, illustrating it with information or appropriate quotes from the text, and explaining it in the context of the document. Instead of just stating what a strength or weakness may be, the candidates should also explain how or why it is a strength or weakness. There should also be reflection on the impact of the evidence in **Question 2** and explicit reference to perspectives in **Question 3.**

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not contained within the documents. Copying from the document is acceptable in the identification questions in **Question 1**, but is not appropriate for perspectives, analysis, and evaluation in **Questions 2** and **3**.

The marking approach is closely linked to the Assessment Objectives (AOs) given in the syllabus and the AOs are divided into distinct aspects. Candidates should be aware of what each question is assessing and develop their answers accordingly.

Candidates could improve in the following Assessment Objectives: **AO1b (Explanation)** in **Question 2**, and **AO1b (Perspectives)** and **AO1c (Evaluation of key components)** in **Question 3**.

General comments

Most candidates understood the documents, and many demonstrated a clear grasp of the question requirements. **Question 2** is focussed solely on the evidence in the first document, so candidates should concentrate on this aspect only. Many candidates recognised the need to explain the impact of the evidence on the author's argument in **Question 2**, reaching a reasoned judgement by the end. However, while candidates provided reasons why a piece of evidence was strong or weak, these were rarely developed into clear explanations.

In **Question 3**, it was increasingly common to find attempts to identify and describe perspectives as an introduction to the answers, which is perfectly acceptable practice.

In **Question 3**, stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate key components of argument and compared and evaluated them. These comparisons were most successful when they were direct comparisons.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Question 1 encourages candidates to fully read and understand the details of both documents before answering the questions. The question paper indicates that approximately 15 minutes should be used for this, which is included within the exam time. These questions are designed to be straightforward, so answering them in order is recommended. The aim of these questions is to ensure that candidates fully understand the meaning of each document.

There are two parts to **Question 1**. **Question 1(a)** refers to Document A and **Question 1(b)** refers to Document B. Candidates are encouraged to answer both questions before proceeding to **Question 2**.

Question 1(a) asked candidates to identify two musicians who have tried to spread the Garifuna language and culture, as given by the author of Document A.

There were only two possible correct answers. Most candidates successfully identified both of them. A few candidates made mistakes by identifying some of the other people mentioned in the document, none of whom are musicians.

Question 1(b) asked candidates to identify three *other* challenges to Nigeria's cultural heritage, as given by the author of Document B, i.e., *not* 'a lack of funding' or 'the mismanagement of cultural resources'. It was important that candidates understood the idea of 'other'. Therefore, responses 'a lack of funding' and 'mismanagement of cultural resources', or ideas related to these two responses, were not correct.

Question 2

This question produced some strong responses. Most candidates correctly assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence used by the author to support their argument. However, explanations for why a piece of evidence was strong or weak were often limited to terms such as 'more trustworthy,' 'expert,' or 'can't be fact-checked'. More development is required for an explanation to be credited under **AO1b**, where candidates must fully explain why a particular piece of evidence supports the claim it is intended to support. For **AO1c**, candidates must explain the impact of the evidence on the author's argument or on the reader. Candidates were better prepared for this part of the question and demonstrated skill in this assessment area. Additionally, some candidates attempted a reasoned summary judgement. The question focused on the analysis of 'evidence,' so answers that related to language or structure were not credited. Common discussion points often included the use of the statistics and survey information in the document.

Candidates were assessed on **Assessment Objective 1 (AO1 – research, analysis, and evaluation)**. The three aspects were: Identifying evidence (**AO1a**), Analysing the strengths and weaknesses of evidence (**AO1b**), and Evaluating evidence (**AO1c**). A score of 5 marks for **AO1a** was common. For **AO1b**, most candidates scored 3 marks but were unable to develop their explanations sufficiently to access the higher mark bands (4 or 5 marks). Marks for **AO1c** were much improved on previous years with many candidates scoring 3 or 4 marks.

A clearly structured approach is:

- Identifying a type of evidence (**AO1a**);
- Giving an example of that type of evidence from the document (**AO1a**);
- Clearly assessing whether it is a strength or weakness (**AO1b**);
- Providing a developed explanation of why it is a strength or weakness (**AO1b**);
- Evaluating the impact of the evidence on the argument or on the reader (**AO1c**).

The following example shows that the candidate identified a strength, quoted it and explained why it was a strength (**AO1a** and **AO1b**):

'One strength of the evidence in Document A is that it was published by a non-profit organization. The evidence for Document A was published by 'National Geographic Society,' which is a reliable and global organization. This is a strength because there are no monetary ties, meaning that the information is reliable and unbiased. This means, they do not favor a certain side which makes the evidence more persuasive and reliable.'

For **AO1a,** the evidence is the publisher (the NGS). For **AO1b,** this evidence is declared a 'strength' as it is a 'reliable global organisation'. The explanation of this strength is further explained using a three-pronged approach. Firstly, the candidate notes that it has no monetary ties, as it is a non-profit. Secondly, it has unbiased information and so it does not favour one point of view. Thirdly, it is persuasive and reliable.

For **AO1c – Evaluating evidence**, candidates were expected to evaluate the impact of the evidence on the argument or on the reader. Answers ranged from simple assertions to some evaluation of the impact, to evaluation that included a judgement.

Many candidates scored highly on **AO1c** with more extended and detailed evaluations of the impact of the evidence on the argument. Again, a three-pronged approach was effective, for example:

'One strength is that the author named prestigious institutions such as UNESCO, and quoted people affiliated with them for example 'Andy Palacio, UNESCO Artist of Peace'. This may be considered a strength as it may make the readers understand the phenomenon of disappearing language and how it might be saved. This can be because if people working with institutions like UNESCO believe this is a real problem, it might lead to the readers believing this too. This may make the reader more open minded to the author's argument, and the possible solution presented, because they can see how both people and institutions agree with it.'

In this example, the candidate makes a more extended point and includes three ideas in their evaluation of the impact of the evidence on the argument. Firstly, readers understand the importance of the problem of language disappearing, secondly, readers are more convinced because UNESCO is taking the issue seriously, and finally, readers are more likely to be convinced by the author's argument because both people and institutions agree with it.

Question 3

The question asked candidates to evaluate the arguments of both authors and consider their perspectives. Candidates were also required to provide a judgement on whether Document A was stronger than Document B, Document B was stronger than Document A, or if they were both equally strong. Any of these conclusions are equally valid.

The most common approach was to first identify and describe the perspectives of each document and then directly compare the key components of the arguments throughout the answer. The higher scoring responses achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each document and were able to make a judgement as to which was stronger. There was no correct answer, and candidates were free to argue for their preferred judgement. It was also possible to evaluate the arguments of both documents separately and then provide a concluding judgement. However, this approach often led to repetition in the conclusion, and a lower mark overall.

Many candidates successfully identified and compared aspects that reflect a strength, such as the expertise of the authors, the level of potential bias, and the amount of supporting evidence provided. Responses achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents and explained the impact on the overall argument, culminating in intermediate judgements. It is important that candidates exemplify the key components using the documents rather than listing pre-learned key components that might apply to any document.

There were two assessment objectives used – **AO1 (Research, analysis, and evaluation)**, which was separated into four aspects: Identify and compare key components of arguments (**AO1a**), Analyse and compare perspectives (**AO1b**), Evaluate arguments (**AO1c**), and provide a judgement about argument and perspective (**AO1d**). The second assessment objective was **AO3 – Communication**.

The highest-scoring responses adopted a structured approach to answering the question by methodically:

- Identifying, describing, and explaining the perspectives of the authors of both documents (**AO1b**),

  and then:

- Identifying and comparing key components of the argument (**AO1a**);
- Evaluating the relative strengths of the key components of the argument using appropriate examples and analysis of impact (**AO1c**);

- Giving an intermediate judgement (**AO1d**);
- Coming to a reasoned judgement as to which argument is more convincing in a final conclusion (**AO1d**).

For **AO1b** – **Analyse and compare perspectives** – marks for this assessment objective were varied as some candidates did not provide any analysis of perspectives. Lower scoring responses simply identified perspectives, often from just one document. However, higher scoring responses compared, described and explained the significance of the perspectives in both documents.

The most challenging aspect of **AO1b** was identifying that the perspectives of each document were quite complex. Document A refers specifically to the use and spread of music to help save the Garifuna language, while Document B refers to specific actions which the Nigerian government needs to take in order to help protect the country's cultural heritage. It was important that candidates identified these clearly. Also, to score higher marks, candidates needed to draw some active comparison between the two perspectives.

The following is an example of a higher scoring response that correctly identified the perspectives of both Document A and B.

'The author of Document A focuses on using music to solve the problem of Garifuna's culture. She mentions their efforts to share the Garifunan culture and language through music and song. Seun Lori-Williams, author of Document B, addresses the importance of protecting cultural heritage, and provides several negative impacts that can be addressed as well as the solutions: for example, the author explained the law on cultural heritage is outdated in Nigeria. The author then provided how fixing the issue can benefit Nigeria, as amending the law can reduce cultural heritage violations by including fines and punishments for damaging heritage.'

The following is an example of a higher scoring response that described those perspectives and then drew an active comparison between them.

'Both Documents A and B are about protecting heritage and culture. However, Document B has the better argument. Document A makes a good argument as to how music, song, and dance can save Garifuna culture and language, but Document A only provides <u>one</u> solution on how to solve the problem. On the other hand, B provides <u>many</u> solutions as to how the government can help to protect Nigerian culture. For example, it explains that if the law on heritage was updated to be stricter, it would protect the culture more.'

For **3AO1a – Identify and compare key components of arguments**, many candidates gained high marks as they were able to compare a range of key components of arguments from both documents. The strongest responses provided a smaller number of well-developed comparisons. This enabled time to be used more effectively to demonstrate and develop other assessment objectives.

For **3AO1c – Evaluate Arguments**, higher scoring responses evaluated the key components of arguments that had been identified with clear illustration from the documents and made balanced reference to both documents. The following is an example of a higher-scoring response that a direct comparison of one key component, the way language is used in the two documents:

'In terms of language, Document A uses a more informal and subjective approach. Using words like 'cool' and 'masterpiece' draws the reader in, making them feel close to the topic, and making the argument more persuasive. Conversely, Document B adopts a more objective and third-person style. This objectivity allows readers to trust what is being said, making the argument more logical and therefore persuasive, but in a different way. However Document A's more audience-friendly approach may outweigh the benefits of objectivity as a thorough understanding of the topic from a closer perspective is essential for readers to get consumed.'

For **3AO1d – Judgement about argument and perspective** higher scoring responses compared key components of the argument throughout their answer. This allowed intermediate judgements to be made when both documents had been evaluated and compared. Candidates then provided a conclusion summarising the intermediate judgements they had made to come to an overall conclusion. The strongest responses concluded with comments which summarised the intermediate conclusions throughout the answer.

For **AO3 – Communication** – higher scoring responses produced a clearly written, well-structured and logical argument focused throughout on the question. Lower scoring responses produced arguments that lacked clarity, had an uneven structure, were in bullet points or did not always link answers to the question.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/12
Written Examination

Key messages

It is important that candidates read the paper carefully, paying close attention to the key words, to answer all the questions set. This applies to all questions. For example, in **Question 1(a)**: 'identify', 'three different ways the processes for dealing with child migrants should be changed'; in **Question 1(b)**: 'identify', 'two different ways the GAL program could support child migrants'; in **Question 2**: 'explain,' 'evidence' and 'impact'; and in **Question 3**: 'perspectives', 'judgement' and 'stronger'.

Candidates managed their time well and allowed more time for **Questions 2** and **3**, which carry higher total marks than **Question 1**. **Question 1** only requires short answers or bullet points, and most candidates responded accordingly.

To achieve higher marks in **Questions 2** and **3**, candidates should develop their points clearly. This involves making a point, illustrating it with information or appropriate quotes from the text, and explaining it in the context of the document. Instead of just stating what a strength or weakness may be, the candidates should also explain how or why it is a strength or weakness. There should also be reflection on the impact of the evidence in **Question 2** and explicit reference to perspectives in **Question 3.**

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not contained within the documents. Copying from the document is acceptable in the identification questions in **Question 1**, but is not appropriate for perspectives, analysis, and evaluation in **Questions 2 and 3**.

The marking approach is closely linked to the Assessment Objectives (AOs) given in the syllabus and the AOs are divided into distinct aspects. Candidates should be aware of what each question is assessing so that they may develop their answers accordingly.

Candidates could improve in the following Assessment Objectives: **AO1b (Explanation)** in **Question 2**, and **AO1b (Perspectives)** and **AO1c (Evaluation of key components)** in **Question 3**.

General comments

Most candidates understood the documents, and many demonstrated a clear grasp of the question requirements. **Question 2** is focused solely on the evidence in the first document, so candidates should concentrate on this aspect only. Many candidates recognised the need to explain the impact of the evidence on the author's argument in **Question 2**, reaching a reasoned judgement by the end. However, while candidates often provided reasons why a piece of evidence was strong or weak, these were rarely developed into clear explanations.

In **Question 3**, it was increasingly common to find attempts to identify and describe perspectives as an introduction to the answers, which is perfectly acceptable practice.

In **Question 3**, stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate key components of argument and compared and evaluated them. These comparisons were most successful when they were direct comparisons.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Question 1 encourages candidates to fully read and understand the details of both documents before starting the questions. The question paper indicates that approximately 15 minutes should be used for this, which is included within the exam time. Answers to **Question 1** are designed to be straightforward, so answering the questions in order is recommended. The aim of these questions is to ensure that candidates fully understand the meaning of each document.

There are two parts to **Question 1**. **Question 1(a)** refers to Document A and **Question 1(b)** refers to Document B. Candidates are encouraged to answer both questions before proceeding to **Question 2**.

Question 1(a) asked candidates to identify three different ways the processes for dealing with child migrants should be changed, as given by the author of Document A.

Most candidates successfully identified three of the possible answers; where candidate missed out on marks, it was usually because they missed key words like 'immediately' which were deemed essential to keep the author's intended meaning. It was much rarer for candidates to give entirely incorrect answers unless they had misunderstood the question.

Question 1(b) asked candidates to identify two different ways the GAL program could support child migrants, as given by the author of Document B. Many candidates scored full marks for this question.

Question 2

There were many strong answers to this question. Most candidates correctly assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence used by the author to support their argument. However, explanations for why a piece of evidence was strong or weak were often limited to terms like 'more trustworthy,' 'expert,' or 'can not be fact-checked'. More development is required for an explanation to be credited under **AO1b**, where candidates must fully explain why a particular piece of evidence supports the claim it is intended to support. For **AO1c**, candidates must explain the impact of the evidence on the author's argument or on the reader. Candidates were well prepared for this part of the question and demonstrated skill in this assessment area. Additionally, some candidates attempted a reasoned summary judgement. The question focused on the analysis of 'evidence,' so answers that related to language or structure were not credited. Common discussion points often included the use of the statistics and first-hand evidence in the document.

Candidates were assessed on **Assessment Objective 1 (AO1 – research, analysis, and evaluation)**. The three aspects were Identifying evidence (**AO1a**), Analysing the strengths and weaknesses of evidence (**AO1b**), and Evaluating evidence (**AO1c**). A score of 5 marks for **AO1a** was common. For **AO1b**, most candidates scored 3 marks but were unable to develop their explanations sufficiently to access the higher mark bands (4 or 5 marks). Marks for **AO1c** were much improved on previous years with many candidates scoring 3 or 4 marks.

A clearly structured approach is:

- Identifying a type of evidence (**AO1a**).
- Giving an example of that type of evidence from the document (**AO1a**).
- Clearly assessing whether it is a strength or weakness (**AO1b**).
- Providing a developed explanation of why it is a strength or weakness (**AO1b**) to support a claim.
- Evaluating the impact of the evidence on the argument or on the reader (**AO1c**).

The following example shows that the candidate identified a weakness, quoted it and explained why it was a weakness (**2AO1a** and **2AO1b):**

The sources of evidence are often not cited and left vague. An example of this is reference to the 'psychologists' statements'. There is no indication of who these psychologists are and if they are even qualified. This vagueness and general lack of cited sources is a major flaw as it impacts the reliability of the claim made by the author that children's 'brains are disrupted' by these experiences as we do not know if the source is reliable in the first place.

For **2AO1a,** the evidence being uncited is illustrated accurately by writing about 'the psychologists' statements'. For **AO1b,** this evidence is declared a 'major flaw' so we know it is weak. The explanation of this weakness is explained using a three-pronged approach. Firstly, the candidate notes that there is no citation to say who the psychologists are. Secondly, the candidate notes that this impacts the reliability of the claim made by the author that children's 'brains are disrupted'. Finally, the candidate states that this is because we do not know if those psychologists are reliable in the first place.

For **2AO1c – Evaluating evidence**, candidates were expected to evaluate the impact of the evidence on the argument or on the reader. This ranged from making a simple assertion to some evaluation of the impact, to an evaluation that included a judgement.

Many candidates scored highly on **2AO1c** with more extended and detailed evaluations of the impact of the evidence on the argument. Again, a three-pronged approach was effective, for example:

Something the author does, however is use quotes to increase the emotional appeal of the article to the audience. The author uses a quote from a 14-year-old boy from Guatemala who was separated from his family during the migration process. 'I do not understand why they separated us, they did not give me a chance to say good-bye.' This quote wonderfully reflects the struggles of child migrants who are separated from their families and helps the reader to sympathise with the author's cause.

In this example, the candidate makes a more extended point and includes three ideas in their evaluation of the impact of the evidence on the argument. Firstly, the quote from the boy is a strong emotional piece of evidence, secondly, this reflects the real struggles of child migrants, and finally, this makes the readers sympathise more with the author's cause.

Question 3

The question asked candidates to evaluate the arguments of both authors and consider their perspectives. Candidates were also required to provide a judgement on whether Document A was stronger than Document B, Document B was stronger than Document A, or if they were both equally strong. Any of these conclusions can be equally valid.

The most common approach was to first identify and describe the perspectives of each document and then directly compare the key components of the arguments throughout the answer. The higher scoring responses achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each document and were able to make a judgement as to which was more convincing. There was no correct answer, and candidates were free to argue for their preferred judgement. It was also possible to evaluate the arguments of both documents separately and then provide a concluding judgement. However, this approach often led to fewer points being made, less direct comparison (which is a requirement of the question), repetition in the conclusion, and a lower mark overall.

Many candidates successfully identified aspects that reflect a strong argument, such as the expertise of the authors, the level of potential bias, and the amount of supporting evidence provided. Responses achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents and explained the impact on the overall argument, culminating in an intermediate judgement. It is important that candidates exemplify the key components using the documents rather than listing pre-learned key components that might apply to any document.

There were two assessment objectives used – **AO1 (Research, analysis, and evaluation)**, which was separated into four aspects: Identify and compare key components of arguments (**AO1a**), Analyse and compare perspectives (**AO1b**), Evaluate arguments (**AO1c**), and Provide a judgement about argument and perspective (**AO1d**). The second assessment objective was **AO3 – Communication**.

The highest-scoring responses adopted a structured approach to answering the question by methodically:

- Identifying, describing, and explaining the perspectives of the authors of both documents (**AO1b**),

and then:

- Identifying and comparing key components of the argument (**AO1a**);
- Evaluating the relative strengths of the key components of the argument using appropriate examples and analysis of impact (**AO1c**);

- Giving an intermediate judgement (**AO1d**);
- Coming to a reasoned judgement as to which argument, if either, is stronger in a final conclusion (**AO1d**).

For assessment objective **AO1b** – Analyse and compare perspectives – marks were varied as some candidates did not provide any analysis of perspectives. Lower scoring responses simply identified perspectives, often from just one document. Higher scoring responses compared, described and explained the significance of the perspectives in both documents.

The most challenging aspect of **AO1b** was identifying that the perspective was not a simple 'for' or 'against'. The perspectives from Document A and B were more multi-faceted than that.

The following is an example of a higher scoring response that correctly identified the perspectives of Document A and B:

Doc A focuses on the process of immigration in the US and how children go through harsh conditions alone; moreover, the author says how it must be improved for the children. Doc B, on the other hand focuses more on the aftermath of the immigration system and on the children's legal cases and courts and presents a solution of providing legal guardians and supporting volunteers so migrant children do not have to go through harsh conditions.

The following is an example of a higher scoring response that described those perspectives, **3AO1b,** Level 4:

Document A focuses on the poor conditions of child migrants and the subsequent maltreatment that can be mitigated by creating a less vindictive customs operations and allowing whole families to seek asylum. Document B, on the other hand, while admitting that children do get neglected and abused as immigrants, advocates for their legal representation in US courts. The legal system makes sure that they do not get asylum and a fair treatment. So, it must be improved. Here it can be seen that Document A argues for an equitable process of child immigration to prevent them from any harm while Document B advocates for their authorization once they have entered the US as immigrants.

For **3AO1a – Identify and compare key components of arguments**, many candidates gained high marks as they were able to compare a range of key components of arguments from both documents. The strongest responses provided a smaller number of well-developed comparisons. This enabled time to be used more effectively to demonstrate and develop other assessment objectives.

For **3AO1c – Evaluate Arguments**, higher scoring responses evaluated the key components of arguments that had been identified with clear illustration from the documents and made balanced reference to both documents. The following is an example of a higher-scoring response that provided two evaluative points and a direct comparison of the key component, expertise of the authors.

Document B is authored by an 'experienced professional in child welfare' development and 'qualified in child protection' who has seen first-hand how intimidating the court process is for children, hence the audience would deem her an expert on the subject since she is well versed in child protection and is seen as credible enough to opine on the issue. Document A contrastingly is authored by the Associate Director of Vera whose institutional credentials however authoritative are not helpful since her own credentials and relevance to the subject are not made clear in the introduction. This means the reader would deem her to be as lay as themselves on the subject and hence her arguments would be less persuasive since she's not an authority figure on the issue.

For **3AO1d – Judgement about argument and perspective -** higher scoring responses compared key components of the argument throughout their answer. This allowed intermediate judgements to be made when both documents had been evaluated and compared. Candidates then provided a conclusion summarising the intermediate judgements they had made to come to an overall conclusion. The strongest responses concluded with comments which summarised the intermediate conclusions throughout the answer, for example:

All in all, I find Document B to be stronger than Document A since its expert provenance and use demonstrative practical examples render its arguments more persuasive than Document A whose vague provenance and lack of examples are less convincing in terms of its arguments. Even though the

perspectives they hold are equally strong, and their lack of cited sources is equally weak. Document B is stronger because of the practicality of its proposed solutions which make its arguments all the more valid.

For **AO3 – Communication**, higher scoring responses produced a clearly written, well-structured and logical argument focused throughout on the question. Lower scoring responses produced arguments that lacked clarity, had an uneven structure, were in bullet points or did not always link answers to the question.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Key messages

It is important that candidates read the paper carefully, paying close attention to the key words, to answer all the questions set. This applies to all questions, but most specifically **Question 2** and **3**. In **Question 2** the key words were 'evidence,' 'explain' and 'impact on the argument'; and in **Question 3**: 'perspectives', 'judgement' and 'more convincing'.

Candidates managed their time well and allowed more time for **Questions 2** and **3**, which carry higher total marks than **Question 1**. **Question 1** only requires short answers or bullet points, and most candidates responded accordingly.

To achieve higher marks in **Questions 2 and 3**, candidates should develop their points clearly. This involves making a point, illustrating it with information or appropriate quotes from the text, and explaining it in the context of the document. Instead of just stating what a strength or weakness may be, the candidates should also explain how or why it is a strength or weakness. There should also be reflection on the impact of the evidence in **Question 2** and explicit reference to perspectives in **Question 3.**

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General comments

Most candidates understood the documents, and many demonstrated a clear grasp of the question requirements. **Question 2** is focused solely on the evidence in the first document, so candidates should concentrate on this aspect only. Many candidates recognised the need to explain the impact of the evidence on the author's argument in **Question 2**, reaching a reasoned judgement by the end. However, while candidates often provided reasons why a piece of evidence was strong or weak, these were rarely developed into clear explanations.

In **Question 3**, it was increasingly common to find attempts to identify and describe perspectives as an introduction to the answers, which is perfectly acceptable practice.

In **Question 3**, stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate key components of argument and compared and evaluated them. These comparisons were most successful when they were direct comparisons.

It appears that a small but noticeable minority of candidates this year were not adequately prepared for the assessment requirements of this exam. Some candidates left responses blank, while others wrote about topics unrelated to the examination questions.

It is important for the centres to be aware that the Global Perspectives examination requires specific skills that must be explicitly addressed in teaching and learning. It is essential that candidates are supported in developing these skills to ensure they are equipped to meet the demands of the assessment.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Question 1 encourages candidates to fully read and understand the details of both documents before starting the questions. The question paper indicates that approximately 15 minutes should be used for this, which is included within the exam time. Answers to **Question 1** are designed to be straightforward, so answering the questions in order is recommended. The aim of these questions is to ensure that candidates fully understand the meaning of each document.

There are two parts to **Question 1**. **Question 1(a)** refers to Document A and **Question 1(b)** refers to Document B. Candidates are encouraged to answer both questions before proceeding to **Question 2**.

Question 1(a) asked candidates to identify two problems with employment in the tourism industry, as given by the author of Document A.

Most candidates successfully identified three of the possible answers. It was rare for candidates to give entirely incorrect answers unless they had misunderstood the question.

Question 1(b) asked candidates to identify three specific changes proposed by the NRDC report, as given by the author of Document B. Many candidates scored full marks for this question part.

Question 2

This question produced some strong responses. Most candidates correctly assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence used by the author to support their argument. However, explanations for why a piece of evidence was strong or weak were often limited to terms such as 'more trustworthy,' 'expert,' or 'can not be fact-checked'. More development is required for an explanation to be credited under **AO1b**, where candidates must fully explain why a particular piece of evidence supports the claim it is intended to support. For **AO1c**, candidates must explain the impact of the evidence on the author's argument or on the reader. Candidates were better prepared for this part of the question and demonstrated skill in this assessment area. Additionally, some candidates attempted a reasoned summary judgement. The question focused on the analysis of 'evidence,' so answers that related to language or structure were not credited. Common discussion points often included the use of the statistics and survey information in the document.

Candidates were assessed on **Assessment Objective 1 (AO1 – research, analysis, and evaluation)**. The three aspects were: Identifying evidence (**AO1a**), Analysing the strengths and weaknesses of evidence (**AO1b**), and Evaluating evidence (**AO1c**). A score of 5 marks for **AO1a** was common. For **AO1b**, most candidates scored 3 marks but were unable to develop their explanations sufficiently to access the higher mark bands (4 or 5 marks). Marks for **AO1c** were much improved on previous years, with many candidates scoring 3 or 4 marks.

A clearly structured approach is:

- Identifying a type of evidence (**AO1a**).
- Giving an example of that type of evidence from the document (**AO1a**).
- Clearly assessing whether it is a strength or weakness (**AO1b**).
- Providing a developed explanation of why it is a strength or weakness (**AO1b**) to support a claim.
- Evaluating the impact of the evidence on the argument or on the reader (**AO1c**).

The following example shows that the candidate identified a weakness, quoted it and explained why it was a weakness (**AO1a** and **AO1b**):

Document A had a series of strengths and weaknesses. Beginning with the strengths, the author of the text is a journalist which means that she has research abilities that lead her to do a thorough investigation. Also, she lives in Cornwall, UK, which is the place and subject from the investigation regarding the mining industry

in lithium. This could have facilitated the author to do a high-quality investigation as she could have more contacts that know about the matter.

For **AO1a,** the evidence is the Cornish journalist. For **AO1b,** this evidence is declared a 'strength' as she is a 'journalist with research abilities'. The explanation of this strength is further explained using a three-pronged approach. Firstly, the candidate notes that these research abilities will lead her to do a 'thorough investigation'. Secondly, the candidate notes that she is also from Cornwall, the subject of the document, so this adds to her knowledge. Finally, the candidate states that her 'local contacts' would lead to a high-quality investigation.

For **AO1c – Evaluating evidence**, candidates were expected to evaluate the impact of the evidence on the argument or on the reader. Answers ranged from simple assertions to some evaluation of the impact, to evaluation that included a judgement.

Many candidates scored highly on **AO1c** with more extended and detailed evaluations of the impact of the evidence on the argument. Again, a three-pronged approach was effective, for example:

One strength in Document A is that it contains numbers and statistical data. Throughout the document, there are many facts that the author provides. For example, Document A states, 'Cornish Lithium plans to produce 20,000 – 30,000 tonnes per year from water and rock and expects its first site to open in 2026.' This clearly shows how these numbers are facts. Statistical data proves that the information is accurate and measurable. This convinces the reader and strengthens the overall argument.

In this example, the candidate makes a more extended point and includes three ideas in their evaluation of the impact of the evidence on the argument. Firstly, the 20,000 – 30,000 tonnes per year is strong statistical data. Secondly, numbers tend to be factual, accurate and measurable. Finally, this factual basis will convince the reader which strengthens the argument.

Question 3

The question asked candidates to evaluate the arguments of both authors and consider their perspectives. Candidates were also required to provide a judgement on whether Document A was more convincing than Document B, Document B was more convincing than Document A, or if they were both equally convincing. Any of these conclusions are equally valid.

The most common approach was to first identify and describe the perspectives of each document and then directly compare the key components of the arguments throughout the answer. The higher scoring responses achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each document and were able to make a judgement as to which was more convincing. There was no correct answer, and candidates were free to argue for their preferred judgement. It was also possible to evaluate the arguments of both documents separately and then provide a concluding judgement. However, this approach often led to fewer points being made, less direct comparison (which is a requirement of the question), repetition in the conclusion, and a lower mark overall.

Many candidates successfully identified aspects that reflect a convincing argument, such as the expertise of the authors, the level of potential bias, and the amount of supporting evidence provided. Responses achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents and explained the impact on the overall argument, culminating in an intermediate judgement. It is important that candidates exemplify the key components using the documents, rather than listing pre-learned key components that might apply to any document.

There were two assessment objectives used. The first assessment object was **AO1 (Research, analysis, and evaluation)**, which was separated into four aspects: Identify and compare key components of arguments (**AO1a**), Analyse and compare perspectives (**AO1b**), Evaluate arguments (**AO1c**), and Provide a judgement about argument and perspective (**AO1d**). The second assessment objective was **AO3 (Communication)**.

The highest-scoring responses adopted a structured approach to answering the question by methodically:

- Identifying, describing, and explaining the perspectives of the authors of both documents (**AO1b**),

and then:

- Identifying and comparing key components of the argument (**AO1a**);
- Evaluating the relative strengths of the key components of the argument using appropriate examples and analysis of impact (**AO1c**);
- Giving an intermediate judgement (**AO1d**);
- Coming to a reasoned judgement as to which argument is more convincing in a final conclusion (**AO1d**).

For **AO1b** – Analyse and compare perspectives – marks were varied as some candidates did not provide any analysis of perspectives. Lower scoring responses simply identified perspectives, often from just one document. Higher scoring responses compared, described and explained the significance of the perspectives in both documents.

The most challenging aspect of **AO1b** was identifying that the perspective was not a simple 'for' or 'against.' The perspectives of Document A and B were more multi-faceted than that.

The following is an example of a higher scoring response that correctly identified the perspectives of Document A and B:

Document A suggests that mining lithium is very beneficial to the UK and itself but without community support, it will be more of a downfall. Document B suggests that mining lithium is very dangerous to indigenous people and should stop or they should figure out other ways to get it because of the high demand for it.

The following is an example of a higher scoring response that described those perspectives, **3AO1b,** Level 4:

While the author of Document A stands with the positive consequences that lithium mining may have on her city, the author of Document B talks about the negative repercussions this practice will have in Chile's indigenous communities. In Document A, the author emphasizes the positive economic and cultural aspects of lithium mining, as she believes that this method will revive the mining industry in Cornwall and is positive that it will provide good, long-term, well-paid jobs to residents. However, she also argues that lithium mining needs to be controlled and that resident's involvement is a priority. On the other hand, the author of Document B argues that lithium extraction through sedimentary rock is negative for Chile's indigenous communities as it is proven to drain water resources, damage wetlands and endanger ecosystems. She uses different testimonies from community members and data to show the concern of the people. Toward the end, Greenfield recommends some solutions that could be implemented so that the lithium extraction can be completely banned and indigenous communities can be protected.

For **3AO1a – Identify and compare key components of arguments**, many candidates gained high marks as they were able to compare a range of key components of arguments from both documents. The strongest responses provided a smaller number of well-developed comparisons. This enabled time to be used more effectively to demonstrate and develop other assessment objectives.

For **3AO1c – Evaluate Arguments**, higher scoring responses evaluated the key components of arguments that had been identified with clear illustration from the documents and made balanced reference to both documents. The following is an example of a higher-scoring response that provided two evaluative points and a direct comparison of the key component, expertise of the authors.

First, Document A has a two-sided view, a counterargument. It talks about multiple views, showing why lithium mining is good but why it may not be the best idea: 'It is not about how much money is generated, it is about how that money is used and whether it circulates in the local economy.' This shows the author's credibility as it shows his willingness to accept the positive and negative facts. This builds trust for the readers as it proves the author is not biased and is fair and balanced, which strengthens the argument. In contrast, Document B does not have a counterargument; in fact, it is deeply based on the negative side of lithium mining which is clear bias. All the evidence and perspectives come from only one side. This means the author may not be sharing all the information which makes the author less reputable. And this lack of balance and trust weakens the whole argument.

For **3AO1d – Judgement about argument and perspective -** higher scoring responses compared key components of the argument throughout their answer. This allowed intermediate judgements to be made when both documents had been evaluated and compared. Candidates then provided a conclusion summarising the intermediate judgements they had made to come to an overall conclusion. The strongest

responses concluded with comments which summarised the intermediate conclusions throughout the answer.

For **AO3 – Communication** – higher scoring responses produced a clearly written, well-structured and logical argument focused throughout on the question. Lower scoring responses produced arguments that lacked clarity, had an uneven structure, were in bullet points or did not always link answers to the question.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

> **Paper 9239/02**
> **Essay**

Key messages

Candidates should make links between their research materials and not treat each source in isolation. This is synthesis. By synthesising their source material candidates will build coherent perspectives that respond to their title question.

Themes are approaches to topics or issues, for example culture, economics or health. Candidates should use different themes to analyse the implications of their title questions. In the essay candidates should clearly state and then develop three or four different thematic approaches to their title question.

There is no requirement to offer solutions in this component of Global Perspectives and Research.

General comments

There are still many candidates not addressing all the assessment aspects in their essays. Candidates need to plan carefully to ensure they demonstrate all the skills assessed in this component. There are ten different aspects used for assessment that are split across three assessment objectives; the first five relate to research, analysis and evaluation, the next three relate to reflection and the final two relate to communication. Each aspect is given its own heading in this report.

Most candidates chose issues with global significance that derived from the topics listed in the syllabus. Popular topics for focus were Impact of technologies, Migration and work, Climate change and Social inequality. The essays were for the most part well researched and made for interesting reading.

Comments on specific aspects

Analysis of Question

Candidates should construct a title question that is both concise and sets up a debate between contrasting perspectives. The title question should raise an issue of global significance. The following title questions from this series are all effective: *'Does social media positively influence democracy?', 'Do the benefits of AI outweigh the costs?', 'Should drugs be decriminalized?', 'Is migration beneficial for the host country?'*.

Having constructed an effective title candidates should analyse the implications of their question. This is achieved by considering the title question through different lenses or themes. Each specific lens or theme should be clearly stated by the candidate. Each section of the essay should ideally relate to a specific theme. An example from the essay titled *'Does social media positively influence democracy?'* reads *'The first way the social media's impact on democracy can be considered is by looking at online protest groups.'.* Protest groups is a clear implication of the question that can be used to analyse the question. A second example can be seen in the essay titled *'Should drugs be decriminalized?'*. In this example, the candidate uses 'Economics' which is one of the broad themes detailed on page 14 of the syllabus. *'One of the potential benefits of drug legalization is increased tax revenue, this links to the economic theme.'*.

Candidates should incorporate three or four discrete themes in their essays and the thematic analysis of their title question should be supported by two or three different sources.

Building Perspectives

For candidates to achieve in this assessment criterion, their essay must have contrasting perspectives. This reiterates the importance of constructing an effective title. Essays that do not set up a debate will not be able to achieve in this assessment criterion.

Candidates are required to make connections between their source materials by synthesising arguments and evidence together to build coherent perspectives. The abridged example below comes from an essay with the title *'Is the media biased in its reporting?'*. The candidate states clearly that this section of the essay will examine the question through the cultural theme (see Analysis of Question above). The candidate then uses two different studies to develop the point that cultural bias exists amongst media producers. The synthesis is made explicit as the candidate shows the reader how the one source 'concurs with' the other.

'The cultural theme can be used to investigate the question of media bias. The media, unsurprisingly, often have cultural biases. This can be either in underrepresentation or misrepresentation. This can lead to a distorting of public attitudes. Researchers linked with the American University of Southern California published a study on arXiv – an academic archive – of over 300,000 images taken from U.S.–based fashion magazines, movie posters, and advertisements across more than 50 years. Minorities were far less conspicuous than Whites, and when they were present, they were also framed less importantly with more negative affect . . . These differences in representation, according to the USC study, reinforce societal stereotypes and perpetuate systemic biases (Chen et al 2024).

Media representation tends to reinforce cultural biases by perpetuating stereotypes based on race and ethnicity. To this extent, the Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Communication concurs with the University of California study above that media producers, either unconsciously or knowingly biased, place ethnic minorities in stereotypical positions-for example, Black persons as criminals or Latinos as illegal immigrants. These are not only distorting the realities of the communities but also promulgating an 'ethnic blame discourse' where social issues are being ascribed to minority communities. Such distorted images may shape public opinion and feed prejudice, promoting systemic inequalities (Lichter et al 2020).'.

Range of Sources

Range refers to sources that emanate from different global contexts or present arguments and evidence pertaining to different global contexts. Ideally sources will pertain to or come from four different global contexts. Candidates should clearly state the global context of their material. In the example shown above (see Building Perspectives), from the essay '*Is the media biased in its reporting?*', the US context of the Chen et al 2024 source is made clear by the candidate.

Candidates are also required to use the source material to support perspectives. This requires engaging with the source in a way that uses evidence from the source and explains how the source supports the perspective. The example below comes from the essay titled '*Does social media positively influence democracy?*'. The candidate shows good control over their research material and uses argument and evidence from the relevant source to develop the perspective in support of the title question. The global context of the source is again made clear.

'Ngoka et al (2024 argue that social media can be an effective tool in mobilising voters in countries where political processes are less transparent, participatory, and democratic like Nigeria. Sharing the example of young candidates of University of Nigeria in Nsukka who were effectively mobilised for the presidential campaigns 2023 using WhatsApp, they argue that a positive use of social media can generate constructive effects on the political dynamics of a country. Unlike earlier elections in which the voting turn-out of young people always remained marginal and fluctuated between 35 per cent to 58 per cent, University of Nigeria offers an empirical example of how thousands of candidates were activated in two other campuses of Enugu and Ituku-Ozalla. Ngoka makes an important point here and argues that unlike other countries, social media campaigns in Nigeria was carefully gender-planned as among a total of 48000 to 65000 candidates, a large number was of female candidates, which was testified by their survey with 400 candidates.'

Candidates who use too many sources will not be able to demonstrate engagement. Candidates should be encouraged to be more selective in their research and use six to eight relevant sources with global range to support their essays.

Appropriateness of Sources

The skill of critical evaluation of source material is assessed in all components of the Global Perspectives and Research syllabus. Candidates are not required to critically evaluate every source used and the most

successful candidates focused on four key sources. As this is a skills-based syllabus, candidates will achieve more if they use one criterion for critical evaluation per source and fully develop that specific line of interrogation, rather than offering several different lines of evaluation without development. Criteria for evaluation could include quality of evidence, logic of argument, credibility of author or issues of bias and vested interest.

Below is a good example of developed critical evaluation; it comes from the essay titled '*Do the benefits of AI outweigh the costs?*'. The candidate evaluates the expertise or credibility of the author. The example may be considered developed because the expertise of the author is clearly linked to the issue under discussion.

'Evidence taken from this speech by Dr. Ascelin Gordon can be deemed creditable because he has a PhD in physics and experience in high-performance computing, machine learning, and data science. Dr. Ascelin Gordon is an Australian academic who specializes in the fields of biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability, which means that he has expertise in researching technology's impacts on the environment. This expertise links directly to my title question and the environmental theme.'

Many candidates are still not addressing this aspect of assessment in their essays.

Comparison of perspectives

To further emphasise the importance of an effective title question, if the candidate's essay does not set up a debate between contrasting perspectives they will not be able to achieve in this assessment criterion. There are several ways for candidates to compare perspectives. Firstly, candidates compare perspectives in their introduction (see example below). To gain credit in the introduction candidates are required to juxtapose at least two ideas for each perspective.

Secondly, many of the themes used to analyse the implications of the question will be able to support both perspectives. In the essay referenced earlier (*Is the media biased in its reporting?*), the candidate considered the cultural implications of the question. Having outlined the arguments for cultural bias in the media the candidate then went on to examine the contrasting perspective from a cultural theme, by discussing the opportunities that new media presents for marginalised minority ethnic voices.

Thirdly, it is expected that candidates will compare their perspectives holistically before arriving at their final judgement.

The below example comes from the introduction of an essay with the title '*Should economic sanctions be banned?*'. The candidate partially develops and juxtaposes two ideas from each perspective. It is more common for the candidates to offer more developed and evaluative comparisons at the end of their essay, before the final judgement.

'Some argue that economic sanctions are detrimental to the human rights of innocent civilians by depriving them of basic necessities such as healthcare which adversely affects the lives of these people. Similarly, opponents of sanctions also believe that they affect not just the targeted country but also the neighbouring ones which disrupt global trade and supply chains. On the other hand, in an increasingly interconnected world, countries find themselves in the need to coerce the behaviour of other countries. For example, the sanctions imposed on Iraq and South Africa have influenced the actions of these nations. Added to that, these economic sanctions can encourage innovation in the receiving country, such as in Iran and Russia, by allowing them to develop ways to curtail its threatening effects. Thus, this essay will assess the impacts of imposing economic sanctions from medical, global trade, political and economic perspectives.'

Consideration of Contrasting Perspectives

This assessment criterion requires candidates to approach their chosen issue in a balanced and objective way. If the title question raises an issue that the candidate holds a strong viewpoint about, it can be difficult to give due consideration to both perspectives. Sometimes candidates use very loaded language in their treatment of perspectives and make clear their personal viewpoint throughout. This can lead them into not treating each perspective fairly. Generally, candidates demonstrated maturity in their considerations and were able to apply the same levels of research, critical evaluation and word-count to both perspectives.

Reflection and Impact on Personal Viewpoint

Reflection is a skill that is assessed in the majority of components across the Global Perspectives and Research syllabus. Candidates should reflect on how engaging with the contrasting perspectives has

impacted their personal viewpoint. Candidates' opinions may have been changed or consolidated. The following example is an extract from the candidate's reflection. It comes from the previously referenced essay titled '*Should economic sanctions be banned?*'. A reflective tone is clearly established, and the candidate sets out how their personal viewpoint has changed. To have reach the highest attainment level the candidate would have needed to make specific reference to a source and develop how it had impacted their viewpoint.

'Prior to this essay, I believed that economic sanctions did more good than harm due to the positive connotation it had. While this is true to an extent, after assessing the information I have researched, I now believe that the disadvantages of economic sanctions outweigh the advantages. The idea that these sanctions encourage self reliance and promote global peace is flawed. This is because sanctions restrict access to the necessary resources and investment needed by the target counties to develop innovative ways to combat the harmful effects.'

Further Research

For this area of assessment candidates are required to identify a specific new area for research and then offer some development of the potential research. To reach the higher attainment levels, candidates should also offer some reasoning as to why this research should be undertaken.

The following example comes from an essay titled '*Does participation in sports improve academic performance?*'. The candidate identifies a new theme (one that had not been considered in the essay) and then develops this with some detail. To have reached the higher attainment levels the candidate would have needed to say why this research would be important.

'I could further this research by focusing on the scientific part of the impacts. For example, I could research types of physical activity involved with sports and how it directly impacts different parts of the brain, and how those functions are related to improving or harming performance in school.'

Several candidates did not address this area of assessment in their essays or offered solutions to the issue. Solutions are required in Component 3 only and are not creditworthy in Component 2.

Structure

Most candidates presented essays with a lucid introduction followed by the main body of the essay and culminating in a supported conclusion. Each theme or implication of the question should be separated with logical paragraphing. Effective use of discourse markers is required to reach the higher attainment levels. Discourse markers include terms such as 'on the other hand, furthermore, in conclusion'. To demonstrate good structure candidates also need to remain focused on their title question. Quite often candidates drift away from their title question. For example, in the essay '*Does social media positively influence democracy?*', the candidate began to discuss the impacts of social media on mental health. Candidates should ensure that their essays are between 1750 – 2000 words. Candidates should not include tables, charts or diagrams in their essays.

Referencing

A Harvard style system of referencing is recommended. This is exemplified in the extract shown above in the 'Building Perspectives' section. The source cited *(Lichter et al 2020)* was referenced in an alphabetically organised bibliography in the form shown below. This can be considered effective referencing.

'Lichter et al (2020). Media and cultural bias: Stereotypes in representation. Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Communication. Oxford University Press. https://oxfordre.com/communication/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228613-e-502'

Candidates are free to use any system of referencing they choose, and footnote systems are accepted. However, footnotes should only be used for reference details and not extra information or critical evaluation. Candidates need to cite all sources used.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/03
Team Project

Key messages

Overall, the standard of work submitted by the candidates was good, with many candidates demonstrating understanding of the collaborative research process and the key principles of the syllabus. Most candidates engaged meaningfully with their chosen global issues, making efforts in research and reflection on learning and collaboration.

The following key messages are important for centres to note:

There are still adherents to the old syllabus in terms of naming team members and perspectives and demonstrating why the candidate's particular solution is the best. Naming team members and perspectives is not generally an issue, unless the candidate spends a significant amount of the10 minutes on this element. Stating why a particular solution is better than others in the team, though, is not required and time would be better spent developing the candidate's own solution and backing it up with evidence.

A couple of centres presented a joint team presentation which is not allowed to happen for this component. It led to candidates' marks being limited and only the work of each specific candidate being credited, rather than the presentation as a whole. This should be avoided as it leads to candidates getting very low marks.

Another thing that has happened this year is candidates speeding up their voice recordings to fit their presentations into the 10-minute time frame. This could impact marks negatively as the engagement is not the same and things could easily be missed if the pace of the presentation is too fast.

There were a few noisy environments, for example school bells/announcements and general school recess noise. Such interruptions often unsettle the presenters, many of whom are already extremely nervous, causing them to lose the flow of their argument. While it is understood that school life must carry on as normal, the location for presentations and the intrusion of external noise/distraction should be taken into consideration so that candidates who have worked hard can do themselves justice in their presentations.

Centres should be aware that the framing of the question can hinder candidates' performance. For instance, presentation phrased as 'To what extent is Problem X related to Issue Y' does not yield itself to an effective presentation or an effective solution. The most effective presentations were able to concisely identify an issue with detail and support from different countries.

Some centres this year submitted short videos without the candidate presenting, just running through the PowerPoint and then submitting a transcript. This limited candidates' marks as they had not submitted a presentation. This should be avoided in the future.

A significant trend this year was the noticeable use of AI by candidates, particularly in the reflective paper. In most cases, AI was used to polish language rather than to generate content. However, this did not appear to improve the quality of work or lead to higher marks – in some cases it was detrimental as reflective papers did not make sense. Centres need to be aware of this and check work for use of AI before it is submitted.

General comments

Topic selection varied, though familiar topics such as Air/Water/Industrial Pollution, Urbanization, Overpopulation, Human Trafficking, Immigration, Homelessness, and Obesity were all commonly found in this series. Candidates should be encouraged to explore a wide range of topics that interest them. Some

topics which were both interesting and well-handled were the use of regenerative farming techniques to combat the impact of climate-caused food insecurity; the impacts of gambling addiction on society; lax food processing regulations on public health; single use plastics in school canteens and the impact of traffic congestion on the economy. It is often clear in both the Presentation and the Reflective Paper to what extent a candidate has been interested in and has engaged with their topic. Generally, those candidates who were invested in and enthused by their topic produced work of a high standard that enabled them to communicate that enthusiasm and investment to their audience. Such candidates often scored well across all the Assessment Objectives.

In general, most candidates made sure their presentation did not exceed 10 minutes, and their reflective Paper did not exceed 800 words. Most of the presentations also made good use of the 10-minute time frame. A few presentations did exceed the time limit, which sometimes negatively impacted the solution mark, while other presentations were well under the time limit and this generally impacted negatively on the development of the argument. Some candidates failed to manage their time effectively and ended up rushing at the end and this also compromised the quality of their solution.

Comments on specific marking criteria

Presentation:

AO1a PROBLEM ANALYSIS:

The importance of the phrasing of research questions cannot be underestimated. The strongest research questions were phrased in such a way as to draw out a level of critical thinking. One-word titles such as 'poverty', 'alcoholism', and 'overpopulation', often tend to elicit descriptive/narrative responses. Some examples of well-considered research questions were 'Is the use of prescription medicine to treat cystic fibrosis ethical?'; 'Do natural resources bring more harm than good to developing nations?; 'How can we solve the destruction of cultural heritage and why is it important that we do?'; and 'From a humanitarian perspective, do economic sanctions work?'.

Careful initial analysis of the problem should be the foundation on which the rest of the presentation is built. While the causes of any problem are important, equally important are the various impacts that the problem has or has had on anyone or anything. If a candidate simply tells the audience what the causes of the problem are, they are only giving their audience a part of the story. The strongest responses considered both the causes and the impact of the chosen problem across different aspects/sectors, both the immediate community and the wider world. Discussion was detailed and considered different areas such as economic, environmental and social impact, with sustained use of detail and data to support the argument throughout the presentation.

Successful presentations took a systematic approach to defining, breaking down and exemplifying the problem. An example of this was a candidate who focused on the extent to which the prison system assists or hinders the rehabilitation of inmates. The candidate explored the problem and looked in depth at its impact both locally and globally. Analysis needs to be sustained and well-supported throughout the presentation to merit four marks.

Less successful presentations defined the problem and perhaps provided some statistical evidence or examples but did not discuss the effect the problem had on people, animals, the environment, or the economy. Another issue was when candidates did not focus on the actual problem and either went straight into a solution or just focused on the benefits of their topic rather than the problem. One example of this was a candidate who focused on the benefits of having rights such as paid maternity leave, rather than the impacts when such rights are lacking – therefore not showing the audience what the issue is.

AO1b RESEARCH:

For the most part, this criterion was well addressed. Candidates consistently demonstrated the ability to conduct independent research. Generally, considerable volumes of research were evident, often very detailed but relying heavily on secondary sources such as articles and papers from the internet. Whilst there was still heavy reliance on statistical data, many candidates diversified their sources by including references from various countries, academic publications, credible media sources and surveys and case studies drawn from the press or from personal experience. A small number decided on primary research, such as carrying out interviews or questionnaires within college or further afield and this was commendable, especially when

the data gathered was used effectively to underpin or elaborate on the candidates' arguments. Many candidates demonstrated an ability and willingness to research something very thoroughly.

There were also some poorly researched presentations. Generally, candidates who scored in the lower bands of the mark scheme tended to be those who had carried out minimal research or made very brief reference to research, lacked links between the research and the focus of the presentation, or had relied solely upon research relating to their home state, or country. Candidates should be reminded of the 4-mark descriptor for this AO, specifically the skill of using research from a variety of contexts. As mentioned previously, a range of contexts can be achieved through the use of websites, academic papers and journals, books and news articles, as well as drawing research from a variety of different countries. Another way of achieving a variety of research contexts would be for the candidate to conduct both primary and secondary research. A large number of candidates structured their presentation by tackling the impact of the problem within different contexts – starting with their local community, some then moved out into other areas of their country and then moved to consider specific countries on a global scale. This approach tended to work well, helping to ensure the requirements of AO1b were achieved, as well as forming an effective structure for the presentation.

AO1c EVALUATION OF SOURCES:

This proved to be the most challenging section for candidates. While many presentations were well-researched, the majority lacked any meaningful evaluation or synthesis of sources. Most candidates merely listed citations at the end of their presentations, often on a single slide, without integrating evaluation into their arguments. As a result, the majority of candidates were awarded 1 mark, with some scoring 0 due to the complete absence of any reference to sources.

For 1 mark only, many candidates included a bibliography and directly referred to it briefly. However, there were a few candidates who did not include a bibliography or reference to it at all, not revealing where they got any of their information from. For 2 marks, candidates needed to evaluate at least one of the sources they had used, by discussing for example the credibility, reliability and currency of the source. Some candidates attempted to do this by simply stating that a source could be trusted but then failed to explain why, for instance by discussing the author's credentials, e.g. 'This information comes from X newspaper, which is a trusted source'. The candidates need to say why the source is trusted to achieve marks for evaluation. Some candidates went into detail about the author of the source, but never mentioned that this made it reliable, stopping them for achieving marks for evaluation.

To achieve 3 marks, candidates need to show some evidence of source synthesis. This means comparing/contrasting similar or contradictory information drawn from each source to make a point. If candidates have not first evaluated any of their sources, then even if there is evidence of some synthesis, they will not gain 3 marks. Source synthesis relates to the skill of using information in one source to corroborate or refute information or ideas in another source, so simply stating that 'Both these sources are reliable sources' alone does not count as synthesis.

A candidate presenting on obesity provided a good example of evaluating the credibility of their source/s as well as synthesising two sources. In this example, the candidate contrasted the research of two bodies, which argue alternative ideas behind the rates of obesity around the world.

One candidate presenting on Habitat loss found examples of sources that cross-reference one another: 'This peer-reviewed article was authored by Professor Dasgupta… This source was also referenced in the article written by Paxton (previously mentioned in the presentation), as this piece contained important data on the issue of the economy if habitat loss continues. Both sources highlight the severe consequences that a lack of biodiversity could have…'.

AO1d SOLUTION:

Many candidates did not leave themselves enough time to give detailed evidence for their solution, which limited the marks awarded. Some candidates were still following the old syllabus and came up with an 'innovative' solution which they argued as being better than their team's solution. This is no longer a requirement.

There were very few submissions with comprehensive solutions and analysis of these and even fewer explaining the outcome of the solution elsewhere in detail. Some candidates drew on reports from global organisations detailing in depth the effectiveness of solutions and quantifying lives or money saved for instance. Some solutions missed out on marks due to lack of evidence to support their effectiveness.

Some candidates presented one problem and offered multiple solutions, for example a candidate who talked about food waste and offered three solutions: better food planning, buying 'wonky' vegetables, and aerobic digestion. The issue here is that there is not one solution explored in enough depth or with enough support to achieve the top marks. It would be better to focus on one solution and go into detail about where it has been successful elsewhere and why that would be a good solution to the issue locally or globally.

Candidates in the higher scoring range not only proposed feasible interventions but also demonstrated their effectiveness through case studies or success stories. For example, one candidate's solution to elephant killing looked at the impact evidence surrounding 'de-tusking' as a solution, to great effect. Another candidate considered Wetland restoration in Costa Rica with excellent support from similar global projects. Overall, stronger responses effectively linked their solutions to real-world success stories.

AO3a ARGUMENT:

The structure of most candidates' presentations was generally sound with 3 being the most common mark awarded. This was an indication that while there were some well-argued points in parts of the presentation this was not consistently done. Such presentations often lacked the signposting/linkage between ideas and sections to be considered well-argued enough to gain 4 marks.

There were varying approaches to the structure of argument. Candidates could improve by remembering that there are two aspects to this criterion: structure of argument and well-argued points. Many candidates managed to present an argument with some structure and make some well-argued points within that structure. There was a flow to such presentations, they were easy to follow and had a degree of natural progression and order. Some candidates used signposting effectively to produce a well-structured argument. Such candidates often structured their argument very methodically, relying upon key slides and headers, beginning with a clear outline of the issue, exploring it both locally and globally, and then reaching a solution – explaining the justification for and effectiveness of their chosen solution.

While most presentations lacked sustained logical and coherent argumentation to earn the top mark of 5, a few stood out as exceptions. Candidates who excelled on this criterion used clear and often unobtrusive signposting throughout, making their presentations easy to follow with lines of argument that were clear from the outset and developed logically. Ideas and arguments were consistently well-supported with explicit reference to research that had been carried out. One particularly strong candidate did their presentation on the decline of the bee population. They structured their presentation effectively by first exploring the local dimension of the issue, then broadening the scope to examine its global implications, before finally proposing a solution. This logical progression helped to build a clear and compelling narrative, allowing the audience to understand the scale of the problem and the rationale behind the proposed response. One candidate gave a strong sense of being in control of their presentation, making the audience well aware of where the argument was going next by using a combination of signposting phrases, such as 'Now I'm going to talk about…' and rhetorical questions 'A big question that's asked is why do we need…', or by re-focusing attention on their visual presentation, 'Here we can look at…'. This also helped them score well for AO3c.

A commonly chosen way to begin the presentation was to provide an outline of key words/glossary and a breakdown of the perspectives or 'lenses' taken by each of the group members. In some cases, this used up a significant amount of the permitted time and did little to improve the marks of the candidate. Dictionary definitions of commonly understood words are generally unnecessary unless the word is open to misinterpretation, or its definition is likely to play a key role in developing the argument.

AO3b VISUAL SUPPORT:

Most candidates opted to use graphs, charts, diagrams and pictures for their visual information. Many candidates gained a minimum of 2 marks due to their slides having at least some relevance to the topic and more candidates used some images rather than relying on text only which was positive. Candidates who explicitly referred to and actively engaged with the content of at least one of their slides, for instance by talking the audience through a graph or a chart, were awarded 3 marks. Some candidates had several graphs or charts relating directly to the arguments they were developing, and they talked through these in depth, using them to drive their argument forward. This indicated that the visuals had been carefully selected to serve a purpose, and gained the candidates 4 marks. Top-scoring candidates were instantly noticeable and able to use the slides, graphics, maps, charts and other visuals in a meaningful and purposeful way. Those few candidates who adopted a variety of visual approaches and used them to consistently support and drive their arguments forward, as well as communicate their points clearly and engage their audience, were awarded the top mark of 5 for this criterion.

Many candidates would benefit from additional guidance on how to select and engage with visual aids, and by practicing their presentations beforehand and receiving feedback on how they can improve. Candidates need to use their visuals strategically to reinforce key points and should always explain their relevance.

AO3c LANGUAGE:

Some candidates struggled to demonstrate real awareness of their audience, and this limited them to lower marks for this criterion. Most candidates began with some form of greeting, such as 'Hello', which was not enough by itself to engage the audience and audience awareness was often not maintained. Phrases like 'you' or 'as you can see' were occasionally used but did not generally translate into a consistent or effective engagement strategy. Too many candidates continue to use an 'essay in speech' style format to deliver their ideas, rather than engaging in a first-person communication that connects with the audience. To score more than 1 or 2 marks for this criterion, candidates need to think about their language, tone and manner of delivery in order to draw their audience in and engage their interest.

Candidates with more effective presentations spoke slowly, made eye contact and referred directly to their audience using personal pronouns, asking questions, anticipating responses and using imperatives to gain their audience's attention. Enthusiasm and confidence made their presentations engaging and interesting. When interacting with the data on visual aids, or discussing specific information for example on graphs, tables and photographs to support an argument, they would say, 'let us look at', or 'as you can see here', thereby engaging the audience with their research and findings. Some candidates made use of rhetorical questions, which can be an effective linguistic tool. However, in some cases this was their sole method of directly addressing the audience and was used perfunctorily, rather than for effect. Other candidates only remembered to consider the presence of the audience when talking through a slide/graph but promptly forgot them for the remainder of the presentation. Effective approaches were those which used a combination of methods of address, including rhetorical questions, asides or comments directly made to the audience, instructions and short statements. One example of a candidate making use of direct address such as, 'I will give you a second to digest the data', rhetorical questions, 'but how can this be addressed?' and collective pronouns, 'if we have a common goal…'.

REFLECTIVE PAPER

For the most part, candidates showed some evaluation of collaboration and learning. Candidates often use the reflective paper to discuss their solutions and the team solutions without any reference to collaboration or learning. This should be avoided as it is using up their word count and does not gain them any marks.

AO2a COLLABORATION:

In this criterion many of the candidates tended to focus on complaints about group dynamics or personal frustrations, instead of analysing of how the group functioned or what was learned from working as a team.

Candidates with the most successful papers realised that they needed to discuss group processes, challenges, and how differences were resolved. Many candidates spoke about setting up online platforms for ease of communication and reflected on how teamwork affected their understanding of the topic. The most effective format in order to encourage evaluation of collaboration seemed to be where candidates stated a method or approach used by their group, for example 'we carried out individual research on solutions and then came back together to share our findings', followed by a clear and explicit statement which evaluated the effectiveness or success of this approach, such as 'by coming back together for feedback, this ensured we did not overlap each other's research, and helped to ensure an open and constructive communication between us all'. One systematic and effective approach can be found in a reflective paper in which the candidate considered three aspects of the team's collaboration: Planning, Communication and Problem Solving. The candidate then proceeded to take issues such as conflict in role assignment or unequal contribution, and then broke it down into the following areas: what happened; its impact on the team; how it was addressed and the effectiveness of how it was addressed.

Less successful reflective papers were those which tended to provide a running commentary of wasted lessons, rehearsals of presentations, groups fallings out, lengthy commutes to school or candidates leaving the class, for example. These reflections were descriptive and tended to lack consideration of collaboration or learning. Some candidates used the reflective paper as a format to voice irritations or describe at length points of conflict with their group members, using it as an opportunity to name the least helpful members of their team. These reflections were descriptive in nature and lacked any real critical consideration thereby keeping the response at 2 marks.

AO2b LEARNING:

Candidates often stated what they had learned during the project but failed to evaluate this learning. They did not reflect on the personal impact their learning might have had on them, their opinions, outlook on life or behaviour; or how that learning might be of specific use to them in the future. Learning can refer to what the candidates have learned about the topic they researched, but equally it can refer to what they have learned about themselves, their own skills and personality. Some of the best responses covered both these elements. Some reflective papers included particularly thoughtful and, at times, moving insights into what the candidates had come to understand about serious global issues such as gun crime and climate change. In a few cases, candidates described taking direct action beyond the project, including launching campaigns or engaging in voluntary work to promote social change.

Several candidates expressed that they had come to value the process of working on the project as much as the final outcome. Several recognised the personal growth that came from collaborating with others or being pushed out of their comfort zones. Others reported being challenged to reconsider aspects of American society and politics, particularly in relation to economic systems, social inequality, and gun ownership.

In less successful responses, candidates simply repeated what research they had carried out without considering what they had learned from it and therefore they could not move beyond 2 marks.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

| Paper 9239/04 |
| Research Report |

Key messages

The Cambridge Research Report is assessed against 15 skills-based criteria. To reach the higher attainment levels, candidates need to address all the areas for assessment. Assessment areas most often omitted were the methodology section, critical evaluation of sources and reflection on perspectives. Candidates must set out in their introductions which themes they are using to analyse the implications of their title question. It is also important that candidates outline why these themes have been selected to analyse the question.

It appears many centres provide candidates with a framework to scaffold their reports. Whilst this can be a beneficial practice in preparing candidates, some centres are providing frameworks that are too rigid. Reports from particular centres were identical in their structure and consequently constrained the potential creative thinking of their candidates. Some centres provided frameworks that prevented candidates from addressing all of the assessment criteria, diminishing opportunities for higher attainment.

The Research Proposal Form should be used jointly by teachers and candidates to ensure that the title questions are compatible with the assessment criteria.

General comments

The reports produced by candidates covered a wide range of topics and issues. Popular areas of focus this series were Artificial Intelligence, Genetic Modification Climate Change and Migration. Candidates were able to focus in on contentious issues arising from these topics having completed preliminary research to understand the relevant issues and perspectives. This process, coupled with teacher feedback places candidates in a strong position to construct their title question. The title of the Cambridge Research Report must be in the form of a question.

It should be noted that unlike AS Level coursework, there is no requirement for the report to have a global dimension.

Research Log

Candidates are free to design their own Research Log template. The majority of candidates produced tables with clearly labelled columns in which to record pertinent information and reflections. It is strongly recommended that candidates incorporate a 'future plans' column to ensure that the Research Log has some future orientated goals. Equally important is a column to record candidate reflections on the research decisions and source material. A weekly or fortnightly entry is recommended.

Research Log exemplars are available in the syllabus and other training materials.

There are two Assessment Objectives (AOs) for candidates to address in their Research Logs. In AO1, candidates should be looking forward and setting out objectives and milestones giving a clear indication of planning. AO2 is focused on the skill of reflection, candidates should reflect upon the decisions made and research undertaken. In AO2 candidates should also record source notes.

There were several very detailed Research Logs submitted, these demonstrated clear planning throughout the research process as well as analysis of the research findings and decisions. It should be noted that critical evaluation of research material should not be presented in the Research Log.

Questions and Perspectives

A successful research report requires a well thought out title question. The research report needs to set up a debate between contrasting perspectives that respond to an issue raised by the title question. Here are few examples of effective title questions from this series: '*Is physician-assisted dying justifiable?'*, *'Are carbon taxes effective?', 'Is using AI in education beneficial?'*. These examples all contain two key elements that make them strong title questions. Firstly, they can be answered 'yes' or 'no' and therefore it is clear that the title questions set up a clear debate between contrasting perspectives. The contrasting perspective will be either for or against the title question. Secondly, the example questions are all raising issues that are well documented, therefore enabling the candidate to find a wide range of relevant and credible source material. The title questions shown can all be considered through the lens of different themes. For example, the candidate asking *'Is using AI in education beneficial?'* could consider the question through an economic lens, an ethical lens or an environmental lens, to name just three. It is important that the candidate sets out in the introduction or methodology which themes the report will use to analyse the title question. Candidates must also reflect upon why they have chosen the identified themes and how they will shape the report (see Reflection section below).

Less successful title questions often lack focus or fail to set up a debate. For example, the title *'How does psychology address discrimination and prejudice individually and socially?'* does not suggest a debate and therefore may lead to a descriptive report. Also, the lack of clear parameters makes it uncertain what issue the report will address. '*Is it possible to get away with murder?'*, is a title question that may seem as though it sets up a debate. However, it is evident that the answer to the question is yes. A candidate posing such a question will not be able to find relevant and credible research to support the 'no' perspective. The above title question could have been reformulated as '*Have modern policing methods increased the rate of convictions for murder?'* for example, to allow a debate between contrasting perspectives.

Synthesising research material to build coherent perspectives is a key assessment aspect of the research report. In preparation for demonstrating this skill it is advised that candidates use their Research Logs to make notes of similarities and differences in their research materials. Having done this, candidates will be able to make explicit links between their research materials as they develop arguments and perspectives for and against the title question. This is the skill of synthesis. The extended example below comes from the report titled *'Is physician-assisted dying justifiable?'.* The candidate raises the issue of misdiagnosis via the first source and develops the point via an example from a second source. The two sources are synthesised to build the perspective that argues against physician-assisted dying.

'One of the main medical concerns around the legalization of euthanasia is the possible misdiagnosis of patients and its irreversible consequences. Medical professionals, despite the advances in diagnostic technology, acknowledge that errors in diagnosis can still occur in terminal and debilitating illness. A study by BMJ Quality & Safety Journal made an estimate that approximately '12 million Americans are misdiagnosed annually' with 10 – 20 per cent of these cases involving serious conditions (Singh H, Meyer AND, Thomas EJ, 2021). Whilst this source only focuses on America it provides concrete data to prove that misdiagnosis is a legitimate issue in today's society and could trigger significant consequences if euthanasia was to be legalised.

An article in the BMJ Journal shared a case study which strongly shows the reality of misdiagnosis in euthanasia. In the Netherlands, where euthanasia in psychiatric disorders is legal in certain circumstances, 'a 68-year-old patient, diagnosed with bipolar disorder, requested euthanasia because of tiredness, repeated falls and racing thoughts'. To support her wish, her family and psychiatrist agreed that euthanasia would be the most suited treatment. However after a second opinion was given, the doctors shared their disagreement with the diagnosis of bipolar. After the discontinuation of her psychotropic drugs her mobility and tiredness improved, after reflection the doctors came to the conclusion that her struggle in life could be explained by 'intellectual disability and an attention deficit hyperactivity disorder'. This second opinion supported her to find meaning in life when if no second opinion her life would of be taken due to a simple misdiagnosis (Schmahl O, Oude Voshaar R, van de Poel-Mustafayeva A, Marijnissen R, 2021).'

The comparison of perspectives is a skill that should be demonstrated at several points in the research report. Candidates should offer a comparison of perspectives before their intermediary judgements at the end of each thematic section and then offer a more holistic comparison of perspectives before the final judgement is made. The majority of candidates were able to offer a comparison of perspectives in the build up to their final judgement, however many candidates did not demonstrate this skill in the build up to their intermediary judgements. The main reason for this was the omission of intermediary judgements (see Concepts, Research Methods and Judgements below).

To reach the higher attainment levels, candidates need to move beyond a descriptive approach that essentially juxtaposes a summary of each perspective and move to a more evaluative approach that compares the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective.

Sources

As stated above, the research report should set up a debate between contrasting perspectives, therefore it is important that the sources candidates use contain strong lines of argument. Using purely informative sources often leads to descriptive research reports rather than reports that develop clear arguments and perspectives in response to the title question. Candidates should try not to use more than six sources when considering each thematic implication of their title question. Using too many sources prevents the candidate from being able to offer full analysis of each source.

Candidates engaged well with a wide range of source material, much of which was academic and highly credible. However, some candidates still try to use too many sources in their reports. Using too many sources prevents the candidate from being able to offer full analysis of each source.

Critical evaluation is assessed in all components of the Global Perspectives and Research syllabus. There are still many candidates who are not addressing this area of assessment in their research reports. Although many candidates still evaluate their sources in terms of provenance, which is creditworthy, more candidates are demonstrating more focused critical evaluation. To reach the higher levels candidates need to evaluate aspects more specifically related to the arguments or evidence presented by the source, thereby making the critical evaluation explicitly relevant to the title question. The following example comes from a report titled '*Does social media activism lead to social change?'.* The candidate evaluates the problems of using qualitative data to support broader claims. The critical evaluation is developed and made explicitly relevant to the title question.

'*The study also relies heavily on qualitative analysis and case studies, which makes it harder to measure the real, long-term impact of social media activism. While it is clear that viral campaigns raise awareness, there is less evidence that they lead to lasting political change. Its examples are convincing, but the lack of quantitative data limits how broadly its conclusions can be applied. This makes it a useful but slightly narrow perspective in terms of evaluating impact. The conclusions drawn cannot be generalised beyond the specific context the case study pertains to*'.

Concepts, Research Methods and Judgements

As candidates undertake research into their chosen topic area, they will engage with concepts and complex ideas. Using the Research Proposal Form as a framework, teachers and candidates can identify relevant concepts and complex ideas that will inform the research report. Teachers may not be subject specialists in the candidate's chosen research topic area. Therefore, it is important that candidates are able to explain to their teachers how the identified concepts relate to their research report. Although candidates are expected to engage with concepts and complex ideas, they need to make their report accessible to the layperson (see 'Communication' below). If candidates cannot demonstrate a sound grasp of the identified concepts and complex ideas through discussion with a teacher, then they are likely to find it difficult to do that within their report.

In the report referenced above (*Is physician-assisted dying justifiable?*), the candidate utilised the following concepts and complex ideas: Autonomy, Sanctity of Life, Slippery Slope, Hippocratic Oath and Public Policy.

There are still many candidates that do not include a methodology section in their reports. The methodology section assesses a higher order skill that encourages the development of independent enquiry. Candidates should demonstrate an understanding and use of appropriate research methods and methodology. Candidates are often generic in their approach, and references to search engines and data types have no specified relationship to the topic area of the report. To reach the higher attainment levels, candidates need

to explain why particular sets of methods are appropriate for specific subject areas. Candidates are expected to engage with the methodology underlying their choice of research methods.

Candidates will often set out their themes in the methodology section and this is perfectly acceptable. However, candidates should not engage with critical evaluation of their source material in this section.

Primary research is not a requirement. It should also be noted that candidates should not be engaging with primary research that may break ethical guidelines or compromise their safety. Teachers should give due consideration to any proposed primary research before giving their approval.

Ideally, the research reports will contain a series of intermediary judgements and a final judgement. It is important that judgements respond directly to the title question posed. Although most research reports contained a final judgement, many did not offer intermediary judgements.

In the research report referenced above (*Are carbon taxes effective?*), the candidate analysed their title question through three thematic lenses; political, environmental and economic. At the end of each section of the research report, the candidate offered an intermediary judgement that was preceded by a comparison of perspectives (see Questions and Perspectives) pertaining to each identified theme. The comparison of perspectives offered support for the intermediary judgement. The candidate then came to a final judgement in the report's conclusion.

Reflection

Candidates should identify their chosen themes in the introduction and/or methodology. The skill that is being assessed here is the candidate's ability to reflect on why the themes have been selected and how they shape the report. Very few candidates are addressing this in their reports. Below is a strong example of what is required from a research report with the title *'Does Artificial Intelligence pose a threat to marginalised groups?'*. The candidate reflects upon why their themes are important and considers the relationship between them. There are some helpful diagrams on page 15 and 16 of the syllabus that visualise the interplay of topics, themes, issues and perspectives.

'The hypothesis is that generally AI worsens inequality due to biases in training data. The report analyzes themes from healthcare, economic and legal perspectives because their impacts are often realized immediately, as opposed to areas like education or social inclusion, where it can take time for the impacts to show. These themes – healthcare, legal systems, and economic opportunities – cover sectors which have a sizable impact on marginalized groups. For example, healthcare impacts life expectancy and any errors in that could have severe consequences. The legal system oversees patrol, arrests and freedom, and biases in AI could lead to systemic racism and inequality. Exclusion in economic opportunities, which determines livelihoods, can lead to poverty which can widen societal divides. Also, these sectors are interlinked. For example, exclusion from economic opportunities can reduce healthcare access. And biased legal decisions can hinder economic growth. So, by focusing on these themes, I can provide a nuanced and comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted impact AI has. For example, wrong diagnosis in the healthcare sector can have lasting consequences, and in the legal sector it may amplify racism through the 'machine said it, so it must be correct' mentality. Similarly, AI-powered hiring systems can reinforce income inequality and reduce workforce diversity, hindering economic growth and innovation. The report is structured into three sections, one per theme. Each section presents contrasting perspectives, concludes with a summary, and the entire report ends with an overall conclusion and reflection.'

The next area reflection for assessment is the candidate's ability to reflect upon the strengths and limitations of their conclusion. Although many candidates considered strengths or weaknesses of the process behind producing the research report, they did not always reflect explicitly on the strengths and limitations of their conclusions. This is creditworthy but not at the higher assessment levels.

There is no requirement for candidates to offer suggestions for further research. Although ideas for further research implicitly hint at weaknesses within the report, generally any further research suggestions did not link to improving the report's conclusions.

Many candidates are presenting the type of reflection on perspectives seen in components two (Essay) and three (Team Project). This type of reflection focuses on how the perspectives have consolidated or changed the candidate's original point of view. In other cases, candidates offered a descriptive account of what had been learned during the process of producing the report. This is creditworthy, but only at the lower assessment levels.

Several candidates offered solutions or future recommendations which is not a requirement.

Communication

There are several strands to this area of assessment. The first assessment area pertains to the report's structure. Candidates need to construct their introductions carefully. The terms and scope of the report that are set out in the introduction should be adhered to in the report. For example, there were cases where candidates stated in the introduction which themes would inform the research report and then didn't refer to them again.

Content pages and headings are not essential, but they do provide a useful framework. Headings, in particular, are an effective way for the reader to navigate the report. Candidates should also use discourse markers, if effectively done these will guide the reader through the report. To achieve at the higher attainment levels candidates must follow the guidance in the syllabus (see page 24) which states, 'the report must be written in continuous prose and must not exceed 5000 words. An accurate word count must be clearly stated.'.

Another communication skill being assessed is how candidates engage with subject specific terminology in a way that makes this accessible to the lay reader. Reports should be written for an audience that does not have expertise in the topic area. Subject specific terminology will be used if candidates engaged with concepts and complex ideas (see Concepts, Research Methods and Judgements above). Making the terminology understandable to the reader through explanations and arguments will demonstrate this aspect of communication skills.

The Harvard referencing system is recommended as it makes it clear to assessors where and how sources are being used to support perspectives. This system has been exemplified in the candidate extract used in the 'Questions and Perspectives' section of this report. It is recognised that different subject areas use different referencing systems and candidates are free to use any appropriate system. Many candidates were able to present effective referencing regardless of which referencing system they chose to use. An effective system is one where each citation has a full reference that is easily located in the bibliography. A full reference means that the reader has enough detail to enable them to find the source without relying on a hyperlink. The references should be set out systematically and logically in the bibliography. The Bibliography should be uploaded as a discrete document and not as part of the Research Log. Also, the Bibliography should not contain critical evaluation of source material.,