



National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

CODE F8K6 11

COURSE Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

SUMMARY

This Unit is a mandatory Unit of the Intermediate 2 Philosophy course, but it can also be taken as a free-standing Unit.

This Unit offers progression for candidates who have studied an appropriate Intermediate 1 course or Unit(s). It is suitable as an Intermediate 2 level introduction for those who have no background in the subject. Candidates develop the knowledge and skills necessary to gain a basic understanding of normative moral theories. The theories studied in this Unit are of both philosophical and general human interest. They are relevant to such questions as ‘What do we mean when we say that an action is right or wrong?’, ‘How can we decide the way we should act?’ and ‘Why is it difficult to agree a common approach to moral issues?’

Specific aspects of normative theories and issues are studied in this Unit but the critical thinking skills developed are relevant in a wide variety of contexts. These skills prepare candidates for the study of Philosophy at Higher or in Courses at Further Education colleges. Candidates will also be prepared for the study of any other subject which requires the critical examination of complex or abstract issues. In addition, candidates will have demonstrated the skills necessary for entry into any field of employment where the ability to examine issues and arguments is required. They will also have demonstrated a basic awareness of the complexity involved in ethical judgements which is relevant to all areas of human activity.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate an understanding of normative moral theories.
- 2 Critically examine normative moral theories.
- 3 Critically assess normative moral theories.

Administrative Information

Superclass: DE

Publication date: March 2010

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2010

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged.

Additional copies of this Unit Specification can be purchased from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Please contact the Customer Contact Centre, telephone 0845 279 1000.

National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Intermediate 1 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course or Unit(s)
- ◆ A social subjects Course or Unit(s) at Intermediate 1

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 2 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 5*).

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

CORE SKILLS

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill	None
Core Skills component	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 5

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit Specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate an understanding of normative moral theories.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe the difference between consequentialist and deontological approaches to moral judgements.
- (b) Describe specific normative moral theories.
- (c) Describe the approaches taken when these theories are applied to moral issues.

OUTCOME 2

Critically examine normative moral theories.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Compare and contrast normative moral theories.
- (b) Describe the similarities and differences in approach when addressing moral issues.
- (c) Refer to moral issues as part of this examination.

OUTCOME 3

Critically assess normative moral theories.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain the strengths and weaknesses of specific normative moral theories.
- (b) Refer to moral issues as part of this explanation.
- (c) State a position on which theory offers the most appropriate approach to making moral judgements.
- (d) Give reasons to support this position.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the mandatory content for this Unit can be found in the Appendix at the end of this Unit Specification.

To demonstrate satisfactory attainment of all the Outcomes and Performance Criteria candidates must produce written and/or recorded oral evidence which samples across the mandatory content of the Unit.

The evidence should be produced in response to a closed book, supervised test with a time limit of one hour. It should be gathered on a single occasion.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content and allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty percent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding in line with Outcome 1. The remaining forty percent of the marks available should be awarded for critical examination and assessment in line with Outcomes 2 and 3. The use of a cut-off score is appropriate for this assessment.

Unit assessment is holistic in nature. When reassessment is required individual candidates should therefore attempt a new assessment in its entirety to ensure that a different range of mandatory content is sampled.

The standard to be applied, cut-off score and the breadth of coverage are illustrated in the National Assessment Bank items available for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates must study **all** content. A brief overview of the content appears below.

In this Unit, candidates develop a basic understanding of the differences between consequentialist and deontological approaches to moral judgements. They then examine specific aspects of two normative moral theories. They study the content by investigating the following:

- ◆ Introduction: How can we decide if an action is right or wrong?
- ◆ 1: Utilitarianism as an example of a consequentialist theory
- ◆ 2: Kant's moral theory as an example of a deontological theory

Questions in the Unit and Course assessment will sample across the mandatory content. It is therefore of vital importance that candidates are familiar with **all** content. A detailed outline of the mandatory content can be found in the Appendix at the end of these Support Notes.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

Candidates gain an understanding of the general distinction between consequentialist and deontological approaches to moral judgements. They then examine specific aspects of two normative moral theories which illustrate these approaches. The concepts involved are abstract in nature, therefore care must be taken to illustrate them in a way that is accessible to Intermediate 2 candidates. Further, it is a requirement of both Unit and Course assessment that candidates refer to moral issues when describing, examining and assessing the relevant aspects of these theories. Teachers and lecturers should therefore illustrate the theories, related concepts and criticisms with reference to moral issues and scenarios. **However, it is important to avoid an in-depth study of specific moral issues. Illustrations should focus only on aspects of the moral issues or scenarios that will help candidates to understand the specific theories, concepts and criticisms they study.**

The moral issues and scenarios chosen for illustration are a matter for the professional judgement of the teacher and lecturer in light of the resources available and his/her knowledge of the prior experience of candidates. They should be directly relevant to the aspects of the theories being examined and be chosen to stimulate discussion and promote understanding. For example:

- ◆ The problem of justice, in relation to Utilitarianism, might be illustrated with reference to crime and punishment. Candidates could examine the implications of the Greatest Happiness Principle in relation to whether it is better to 'punish' an innocent person in order to deter others, rather than allow a crime to appear to go unpunished.
- ◆ The problem of ignoring consequences, in relation to Kant, could be illustrated with reference to a scenario in which a vulnerable, innocent person is being sought by a cruel authority. In order to save the innocent person it is necessary to lie, but lying would go against Kant's principle of Universalisability. Candidates could also discuss the problem of competing duties in relation to such a case.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

It is of vital importance that candidates do not simply learn to describe the aspects of normative theories and the criticisms they study, but also learn to discuss and apply them. By applying the relevant Utilitarian and Kantian principles to a wide variety of issues and scenarios, candidates will enhance their understanding and their ability to critically examine and assess them in a meaningful way.

For candidates who study this Unit as part of the Intermediate 2 Course, there are significant opportunities to integrate knowledge and/or skills in the remaining three Units. The skills which are developed in the *Critical Thinking in Philosophy* Unit are relevant and should be applied when examining the normative theories issues in this Unit. The ability to critically examine and/or assess concepts and theories is relevant to all Units in the Course. Candidates will have many opportunities to adapt and refine these skills when using them in a variety of contexts.

All of the content in this Unit can also be studied in the Higher *Moral Philosophy* Unit. If a centre makes the judgement that the Higher Unit would be more appropriate for a particular candidate, the candidate can be assessed at that level. However, it should be noted that there is additional content and differences in the skills being assessed at Higher. Additional learning and teaching will be required to ensure the successful completion of the Higher Unit in these circumstances.

If candidates go on to study the Higher *Moral Philosophy* Unit there will be significant opportunities to build on and develop the knowledge and skills they have already acquired.

Guidance on induction and a variety of classroom activities can be found in the *Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Course* in the Course details.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

Details of the appropriate conditions for assessment of competence in this Unit are outlined in the Evidence Requirements for the Unit in the Statement of Standards. Centres must make sure that all Unit assessment is carried out under the stated conditions.

Candidates will develop their knowledge and skills throughout their study of all mandatory content. This would suggest that appropriate instruments of assessment may best be attempted as an end of Unit test.

The mandatory content for this Unit should be assessed by restricted and extended response questions. The questions should sample across the mandatory content of the Unit. The questions should allow candidates to generate answers which demonstrate competence in all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. Sixty percent of the marks available should be awarded for knowledge and understanding in line with Outcome 1. The remaining forty percent of the marks available should be awarded for critical examination and assessment in line with Outcomes 2 and 3.

Appropriate instruments of assessment, marking schemes and cut-off scores are contained in the National Assessment Bank items for this Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

DISABLED CANDIDATES AND/OR THOSE WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

NB: This Appendix is within the Statement of Standards, ie the mandatory requirements of the Unit.

In this Unit candidates develop a basic understanding of the difference between consequentialist and deontological approaches to moral judgements. In addition they examine two specific normative moral theories. Important elements of the skills of analysis and evaluation are developed in relation to these theories. The specific normative theories and the aspects to be studied are detailed in the mandatory content below. **Candidates must study BOTH theories; there are no options in this Unit.**

Candidates are introduced to the distinction between consequentialist and deontological approaches to moral judgements. They can study two specific normative moral theories which illustrate one possible consequentialist approach and one possible deontological approach to moral judgements. The Utilitarian ideas of Bentham and Mill are studied to illustrate a consequentialist approach. The ideas of Kant are studied to illustrate a deontological approach.

Candidates at Intermediate 2 level cannot be expected to grasp the relatively complex ideas of Bentham, Mill and Kant through abstract study alone. For this reason, teachers and lecturers should illustrate the **relevant aspects of the theories**, and their **implications, strengths and weaknesses**, with reference to **relevant moral issues**. Specific moral issues are not prescribed. This is a matter for the professional judgement of teachers and lecturers based on the range of candidates studying the Unit and the resources available. However, care should be taken to ensure that the **moral issues selected are relevant to the mandatory content and Evidence Requirements of this Unit**. Candidates must refer to moral issues in response to questions in Unit and Course assessment.

The mandatory content which must be covered is outlined below:

Introduction:

How can we decide if an action is right or wrong?

Consequentialist Approach	the consequences of an action determine if it is right or wrong
Deontological Approach	the motive for an action determines if it is right or wrong

1 Utilitarianism as an example of a consequentialist theory

The Greatest Happiness principle	
Calculating potential happiness	Bentham's hedonic calculus Mill's higher and lower pleasures
Act Utilitarianism	Assessing each situation individually on a case by case basis
Rule Utilitarianism	Adopting rules which tend to promote the greatest happiness when universally adhered to

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

Difficulties/weakness	The problems with consequences: short and long-term? The problem with ‘happiness’: the happiness of sadists? The problem of justice: Tyranny of the Majority
-----------------------	--

2 Kant’s moral theory as an example of a deontological theory

The Good Will Duty v Inclination Maxims The Categorical Imperative	1 st formulation: Universalisability 2 nd formulation: Human beings as ends in themselves
Difficulties and weaknesses	The problem of ignoring consequences The problem of competing duties The problem of potentially misguided perceptions of duty

Glossary

It is accepted that different textbooks may use different terminology from one another or use the same terminology in different contexts. Therefore, for the purposes of clarity and consistency, the following definitions are those which will be used in SQA documents, Unit and Course assessments and associated marking schemes:

Act Utilitarianism: A type of Utilitarianism that holds that the moral worth of each action depends upon whether it individually on that occasion produced the greatest happiness.

Aggregate: A sum total of something amassed out of parts.

Autonomy: Being able to choose for oneself.

Categorical Imperative: An unconditional principle that is binding on everyone. Often contrasted with hypothetical imperatives which are only binding if you want to achieve some particular goal or end.

Competent Judges: A term used by Mill to describe people best placed to judge between higher and lower pleasures. Competent judges are those who have experienced both sorts of pleasure.

Consequentialism: The view common to any first-order ethical theory that holds that the consequences of an action are the primary factor in calculating its moral worth.

Contradiction: Asserting that something both is and is not the case at the same time. Eg, Barack Obama cannot be and not be the President at the same time. He either is, or he is not the President; he cannot be both.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

Deontology/Deontological: The ethical theory that the moral worth of an action is intrinsic to the act itself rather than its consequences. Kant's deontological approach argued that moral obligation lay in doing one's duty.

Duty: An action that a person is morally or legally obliged to perform.

Duty Ethics: Another word for deontological theories which focus on duty as the source of moral worth.

Equity/Equity Principle: The first order-ethical theory that everyone's interests are of equal importance or at least are worthy of equal consideration.

Felicitic Calculus: Another name for the Hedonic Calculus.

Greatest Happiness Principle: The morally right action is that action which maximises happiness.

Hedonic Calculus: A method proposed by Jeremy Bentham of calculating how much utility an action produces.

Hedonism/Hedonic Principle: The first-order ethical theory that whether an action is morally right or wrong depends on whether it promotes the maximum pleasure.

Higher Pleasures: A term used by Mill to describe intellectual pleasures such as literature, art or music, as opposed to the 'lower' physical pleasures.

Hypothetical Imperative: A conditional principle that is only binding if you want to achieve some particular goal or end. Contrasted by Kant with categorical imperatives which are unconditionally binding.

Inclination: A tendency, disposition or desire to behave in a particular way or to choose one course of action over another. Kant contrasts inclination with duty as a motive for action.

Intentions: What an agent wishes to achieve by an action.

Intrinsic: Relating to the inherent nature of a thing, eg. skydiving is an intrinsically dangerous activity.

Justice: Concerned with fairness and equality, particularly in the distribution of goods or punishments.

Kantianism: The moral views (and other views) of the Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant.

Lower Pleasures: A term used by Mill to describe non-intellectual pleasures such as food, drink and sex.

Maxims: Underlying principles of action or rules of conduct such as 'Don't steal'.

Moral Dilemmas: An ethical problem which involves choosing between competing courses of action which may appear to be both morally praiseworthy or both morally blameworthy.

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Moral Philosophy (Intermediate 2)

Moral Law: The law of duty as regards what is right and wrong. Kant claims we can identify the moral law by using reason while other philosophers have argued that we require God's guidance to help us identify the Moral Law.

Moral Philosophy: The branch of philosophy that studies the concepts of right and wrong. It can be subdivided in Normative Ethics and Meta-ethics.

Motive: The reason for doing something.

Normative Ethics: The study of moral issues and the first order theories that attempt to resolve moral dilemmas. Concerned with answering the question of what it is that makes an action right or wrong.

Prudent: Careful or sensible. Often contrasted in philosophical contexts with 'moral' or 'altruistic'. So paying our taxes would not count as moral, no matter if the poor benefit, because my reason is self-interested or prudential.

Qualitative: Concerned with evaluating the non-measurable features of an object. A qualitative measure of a cake might be how tasty it is as opposed to a quantitative measure such as how heavy it is.

Quantitative: Concerned with quantities or amounts of things. A quantitative measure of a cake might be how heavy it is as opposed to a qualitative measure such as how tasty it is.

Quantify: To measure.

Rule Utilitarianism: A type of Utilitarianism that holds that the moral worth of each action depends upon whether it accords with rules which in turn are justified by their tendency to promote the greatest happiness.