

Philosophy (National 5)

Draft National Course Specification



Valid from August 2013

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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Course outline

Course title: Philosophy (National 5)
SCQF: level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)
Course code: to be advised

Mandatory Units

Philosophy: The Nature of Being (National 5)	6 SCQF credit points
Philosophy: The Nature of Knowledge (National 5)	6 SCQF credit points
Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (National 5)	6 SCQF credit points

Course assessment **6 SCQF credit points**
This Course includes six SCQF credit points for 40 additional programmed hours to allow preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ People and Society¹ (National 4) Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ Religious Moral and Philosophical Studies (National 4)

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this Course. Further information on relevant experiences and outcomes will be given in the *Course Support Notes*.

¹ This is a new development. The title of the new Course is still being considered.

Progression

This Course or its components may provide progression to:

- ◆ other SQA qualifications in social studies or social science subjects, religious, moral and philosophical studies, or related areas
- ◆ further study

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

Equality and inclusion

This Course Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information please refer to the *Course Support Notes* and the *Course Assessment Specification*.

Rationale

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles

This Course builds on the broad general education as well as social studies and religious and moral education principles and practice.

The thinking skills used in Philosophy help learners to develop as members of society who can express themselves confidently but also appreciate the values of others. Learners become more confident in reasoning and develop greater self-awareness and understanding of the diverse views of humanity. These skills and attributes enable learners to become more effective contributors and encourage more responsible citizenship.

Purpose and aims of the Course

The main purpose of this Course is to challenge learners to think clearly about problems by asking questions about the world we live in. Learners will explore ideas and philosophical arguments relating to general and fundamental philosophical issues of relevance in the world today. Learners will develop the ability to use critical thinking skills and terminology to analyse and evaluate arguments and to develop their own reasoning skills.

The Units in the Course will provide learners with a basic knowledge and understanding of different themes, approaches and theories in Philosophy. Thinking, analytical and communication skills which are important in education and employment are developed throughout the Course.

The broad aims of the Course are to:

- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding of philosophy
- ◆ develop thinking, analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to philosophy
- ◆ enable learners to communicate ideas confidently and in a reasoned manner
- ◆ offer learners insight from the ideas of others which may be different from their own

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

This Course is suitable for all learners with an interest in using thinking and communication skills to explore ideas about human existence.

Generally, learners will have little or no prior experience of studying philosophy. However, earlier learning in the broad, general education and life experience provides a good foundation for learners to progress to this qualification.

Philosophy offers learners opportunities to be reasoned in the way they respond to debates in philosophy and promotes challenge and enjoyment in learning.

Learners who like to discuss and share ideas are likely to be enthusiastic about the Course.

Skills that learners develop in the Course include: the ability to describe different philosophical ideas; analysing arguments using critical thinking skills; using appropriate texts and sources; developing reasoned arguments for discussion and debate, and expressing views that are informed by critical thinking and philosophical enquiry.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

This Course has been constructed to facilitate a hierarchical arrangement with Higher Philosophy (SCQF level 6).

The main purpose of the Course is to develop thinking skills. A central theme of the Course is to analyse how we think about difficult questions of life such as existence, truth, reality and what it means to be moral. Each Unit of the Course promotes the development of thinking and communication skills.

Learners engage with difficult questions of life and discuss, debate and analyse ideas to develop their thinking and reasoning skills. This contributes to developing confidence in reasoning.

Thinking skills used in Philosophy can be developed in all Units of the Course.

Options within Units offer personalisation and choice.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

Philosophy: The Nature of Being (National 5)

This Unit develops the learner's ability to think critically about philosophical questions, for example does God exist and do human beings have free will? Learners will investigate diverse views and begin to structure arguments and develop reasoned views.

Philosophy: The Nature of Knowledge (National 5)

The purpose of this Unit is to develop the learner's ability to engage in philosophical questions about the nature of knowledge. Learners will be able to prepare arguments and contribute to discussion and debate. Views and reasoning will be developed by discussing, debating and analysing different philosophical views and referring to key texts and sources.

Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (National 5)

The purpose of this Unit is to enable learners to investigate questions in moral philosophy. Ideas about what is regarded as right and wrong will be studied using examples from real life. Learners will select texts and sources to illustrate key philosophical positions in moral arguments. Learners will apply contrasting positions to moral issues to develop their understanding of the issues. Learners will develop a logically structured moral argument and draw conclusions.

Conditions of award

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

Skills and knowledge

Full skills and knowledge for the Course will be given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course includes:

- ◆ discuss and debate different philosophical views
- ◆ develop reasoned argument for discussion and debate
- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding of the structure of arguments
- ◆ apply basic concepts from critical thinking and philosophy to analyse and evaluate arguments
- ◆ explain and discuss philosophical positions on the nature of being
- ◆ explain and discuss philosophical positions on the nature of knowledge
- ◆ explain and discuss philosophical positions in moral philosophy
- ◆ communicate informed views on philosophical questions with reference to appropriate texts and sources

Assessment

Information about assessment for the Course will be included in the *Course Assessment Specification* which will provide full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the Unit Specification.

They can be assessed on a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

Philosophy: The Nature of Being (National 5)

The learner will be able to describe philosophical arguments by identifying, analysing and using the basic building blocks of the arguments studied.

Philosophy: The Nature of Knowledge (National 5)

The learner will be able to prepare both sides of an argument using key texts and sources. Learners will contribute to discussion and debate by taking part in a relevant activity about the nature of knowledge.

Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (National 5)

The learner will be able to outline the logical structure of a moral argument. Learners will describe the main features of moral arguments and apply contrasting moral stances.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units will be provided in the *National Assessment Resource*.

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)². At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

In this Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ challenge
- ◆ application

² Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html

successful learner, confident individual, responsible citizen, effective contributor

This is assessed through a [project](#)³ and [question paper](#)⁴. The project will require application of understanding and skills and techniques from across the Units. Learners will undertake a project to research a philosophical question or issue, and complete a question paper, which will require demonstration of retention and depth of knowledge and understanding from Course Units.

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³ Definitions can be found here: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45528.html

⁴ See link above for definition.

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

(Note: The information given below reflects the initial thinking on significant opportunities for development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. These may be subject to change as the development process progresses.)

It is expected that learners will also develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that are likely to be appropriate for this Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

- 1.1 Reading
- 1.2 Writing
- 1.3 Listening and talking

3 Health and wellbeing

- 3.5 Relationships

1 Thinking skills

- 1.1 Applying
- 1.2 Analysing and evaluation

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

Administrative information

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Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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