



Higher  
Course Assessment  
Specification



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# Higher Philosophy Course Assessment Specification (C754 76)

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

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## Course outline

<b>Course title:</b>	Higher Philosophy
<b>SCQF level:</b>	6 (24 SCQF credit points)
<b>Course code:</b>	C754 76
<b>Course assessment code:</b>	X754 76

The purpose of the Course Assessment Specification is to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It describes the structure of the Course assessment and the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed.

### Course assessment structure

Component 1 — question paper	60 marks
Component 2 — assignment	30 marks
<b>Total marks</b>	<b>90 marks</b>

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course.

### Equality and inclusion

This Course Assessment Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html)

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment of this Course is provided in the *Course Support Notes*.

## Assessment

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

### Course assessment

SQA will produce and give instructions for the production and conduct of Course assessments based on the information provided in this document.

### Added value

The purpose of the Course assessment is to assess added value of the Course as well as confirming attainment in the Course and providing a grade. The added value for the Course will 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 assessment, added value will focus on the following:

- ◆ breadth — drawing on knowledge and skills from across the Course
- ◆ challenge — requiring greater depth or extension of knowledge and/or skills
- ◆ application — requiring application of knowledge and/or skills in practical or theoretical contexts as appropriate

This added value consists of the following:

- ◆ Drawing on, extending and applying the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired during the Course. This will be assessed by a question paper and an assignment. Over the Course assessment there will be broad parity between the assessment of skills and the assessment of knowledge and understanding.
- ◆ Demonstrating breadth and application of skills, knowledge and understanding, in the question paper. This will sample knowledge and understanding from across the Course and will require learners to use philosophical thinking skills.
- ◆ Challenge and application of skills in an assignment requiring learners to investigate a philosophical question and develop a coherent and reasoned line of argument.

### Grading

Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

The Course assessment is graded A–D. The grade is determined on the basis of the total mark for all Course assessments together.

A learner's overall grade will be determined by their performance across the Course assessment.

### Grade description for C

For the award of Grade C, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated successful performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

**Grade description for A**

For the award of Grade A, learners will have demonstrated successful performance in all of the Units of the Course. In the Course assessment, learners will typically have demonstrated a consistently high level of performance in relation to the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course.

**Credit**

To take account of the extended range of learning and teaching approaches, remediation, consolidation of learning and integration needed for preparation for external assessment, six SCQF credit points are available in Courses at National 5 and Higher, and eight SCQF credit points in Courses at Advanced Higher. These points will be awarded when a grade D or better is achieved.

## Structure and coverage of the Course assessment

The Course assessment will consist of two Components: a question paper and an assignment. The question paper will have three Sections.

### Component 1 — question paper

The purpose of this question paper is to assess breadth and application of philosophical knowledge, understanding and skills from across the Course.

This question paper will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ The ability to analyse and evaluate arguments, theories of knowledge and moral theories
- ◆ The ability to understand and explain the implications and consequences of arguments and theories
- ◆ The ability to express reasoned views
- ◆ Knowledge and understanding of argument structure, philosophical fallacies, methods of reasoning and other factors relevant to evaluating arguments
- ◆ Knowledge and understanding of key theories of knowledge
- ◆ Knowledge and understanding of key moral philosophical theories

The question paper will have 60 marks (approximately 67% of the total mark).

There is differentiation within each question.

**Section 1**, titled 'Arguments in Action' will have 20 marks. This Section will be made up of questions requiring the candidate to draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired during the Course. Questions in this Section will sample the knowledge and understanding described in the *Further mandatory information on Course coverage* section of this document.

**Section 2**, titled 'Knowledge and Doubt' will have 20 marks. This Section will be made up of questions requiring the candidate to draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired during the Course. Questions in this Section will sample the knowledge and understanding described in the *Further mandatory information on Course coverage* section of this document.

**Section 3**, titled 'Moral Philosophy' will have 20 marks. This Section will be made up of questions requiring the candidate to draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired during the Course. Questions in this Section will sample the knowledge and understanding described in the *Further mandatory information on Course coverage* section of this document.

### Component 2 — assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate challenge and application by demonstrating skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a philosophical question.

This assignment will give learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding.

**Knowledge:** material that is relevant to explaining or understanding the question.

**Analysis:** the breakdown of something into its constituent parts and detection of the relationships of those parts and the way they are organised.

**Evaluation:** occurs when a judgement is made on the basis of certain criteria.

**Reasoned view:** the ability to develop and sustain an argument that leads to and supports a clear conclusion.

This assignment will have 30 marks (approximately 33% of the total). The assignment will be marked holistically according to the criteria given in the Detailed Marking Instructions.

## **Setting, conducting and marking of assessment**

### **Question paper**

This question paper will be set and marked by SQA, and conducted in centres under conditions specified for external examinations by SQA. Learners will complete this in 2 hours and 15 minutes.

### **Controlled assessment — assignment**

This assignment is:

- ◆ set by centres within SQA guidelines
- ◆ conducted under some supervision and control

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

### **Setting the assessment**

Set by centres within SQA guidelines.

SQA will provide a brief for the generation of evidence to be assessed. Learners will have an open choice of philosophical question to be researched.

### **Conducting the assessment**

The assignment will be conducted under some supervision and control.

## Further mandatory information on Course coverage

The following gives details of mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding for the Higher Philosophy Course. Course assessment will involve sampling the knowledge and understanding.

### Mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding: what learners must know, understand and be able to do for Course assessment

#### Component 1: question paper

##### Arguments in Action

All candidates should be able to demonstrate **knowledge and understanding** of arguments by:

- ◆ distinguishing statements from questions, commands, exclamations and arguments
- ◆ distinguishing arguments from other types of writing
- ◆ describing the components of an argument — premises/reasons, conclusions and inference indicators, ie premise and conclusion indicators

All candidates should be able to **analyse** arguments by:

- ◆ representing an argument as an argument diagram
- ◆ identifying whether an argument is using inductive or deductive reasoning
- ◆ identifying different methods of argumentation — analogical arguments, counter examples

All candidates should be able to **evaluate** arguments according to the criteria of acceptability, relevance and sufficiency by:

- ◆ identifying issues relating to acceptability:
  - plausibility
  - ambiguity
  - appropriate appeals to authority
  - confirmation bias
- ◆ identifying issues relating to relevance:
  - ad hominem
  - fallacious appeals to emotion
  - fallacious appeals to authority
  - inappropriate analogy
- ◆ identifying issues relating to sufficiency:
  - deductive validity
  - inductive strength
  - slippery slopes
  - denying the antecedent
  - affirming the consequent
  - post hoc ergo propter hoc

Note that the skills of analysis and evaluation presuppose certain knowledge and understanding. Therefore, where a candidate is expected to be able to identify, for example, a fallacious appeal to authority they can also be expected to describe and explain this fallacy.

### **Knowledge and Doubt**

All candidates should be able to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding and the ability to analyse and evaluate extracts from the following rationalist and empiricist texts. Candidates should be able to evaluate arguments and criticisms of Descartes and Hume by commenting on their strengths and weaknesses.

#### **Descartes' Rationalism: *Meditations on First Philosophy***

The method of doubt as a way of freeing us from preconceived opinions, leading the mind away from the senses and providing a foundation for knowledge that is immune to further doubts:

- ◆ The unreliability of the Senses      Meditation 1
- ◆ The dream argument                      Meditation 1
- ◆ The deceiving God argument      Meditation 1
- ◆ The malicious demon argument      Meditation 1

The foundation of knowledge:

- ◆ The Cogito                                      Meditation 2
- ◆ Clear and distinct ideas                  Meditation 3
- ◆ The trademark argument                  Meditation 3

#### **Hume's Empiricism: *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding***

The origin of ideas:

- ◆ Perceptions: impressions and ideas      Section II
- ◆ Simple and complex Ideas                  Section II
- ◆ The copy principle                              Section II
- ◆ The missing shade of blue                  Section II

Sceptical doubts concerning the operations of the understanding:

- ◆ How we arrive at the knowledge of cause and effect      Section IV:I
- ◆ The foundation of conclusions from experience      Section IV:II

### **Moral Philosophy**

All candidates should be able to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding and the ability to analyse and evaluate the following aspects of utilitarianism and Kantian ethics. This includes discussing their application to given situations or issues.

a) Classical utilitarianism as an example of a consequentialist theory

- ◆ The greatest happiness principle
- ◆ Bentham's hedonic calculus
- ◆ Mill's higher and lower pleasures
- ◆ Mill's competent judges
- ◆ The distinction between act and rule utilitarianism
- ◆ The adequacy of classical utilitarianism as a moral theory

b) Kant's moral theory as an example of a deontological theory

- ◆ The sovereignty of reason
- ◆ The good will
- ◆ Duty versus inclination
- ◆ The categorical imperative
  - the process of universalising the maxim
  - distinction between treating someone as 'an end' and treating someone as 'a means only'
  - contradiction in conception and contradiction in the will
  - distinction between perfect duties and imperfect duties
- ◆ The adequacy of Kantian ethics as a moral theory

# Administrative information

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## History of changes to Course Assessment Specification

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
2.0	<p>Re-worded description of 'added value assessment' and skills, knowledge and understanding assessed within the assignment/question paper.</p> <p>Marks for question paper changed from 100 to 60.</p> <p>Further mandatory information on Course coverage' changed as follows:</p> <p>Re-worded mandatory content for Arguments in Action; removed 'Descartes Meditation 6' from Knowledge and Doubt; added 'Descartes Meditations 2 and 3' to Knowledge and Doubt; added 'Hume Section 4 Part 2' to Knowledge and Doubt; clarified requirement to study Kantian ethics within Moral Philosophy.</p>	Qualifications Development Manager	April 2014
3.0	<p>'Structure and coverage of Course assessment' section: description of the skills, knowledge and understanding required for the question paper and assignment amended.</p> <p>'Further mandatory information on Course coverage' section: changes made across the three Unit sections to clarify the terminology and organise it into an order which provides a practical flow for delivery.</p>	Qualifications Manager	April 2016

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Note: You are advised to check SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Assessment Specification.

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