

Moderation Feedback — Central

Assessment Panel:

Social Sciences

Qualification area:

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
Included in this report**

Philosophy: Higher, Intermediate 2

Central Moderation

General comments on central moderation activity

1. General improvement in Teacher/Lecturer experience of assessment.

Specific issues identified

1. Better Preparation of Candidates.
2. Administrative and Assessment Issues.

It was clear from centres moderated that teachers/lecturers are building up a significant amount of experience in assessing appropriately the standards expected of candidates. There were fewer candidates who were being clearly presented for unsuitable courses.

Centres where candidates performed well were also ones where teachers/lecturers gave good, clear feedback of what could be done to improve performance for a reassessment or a better pass. We saw many good examples where candidates demonstrated a broad knowledge of a topic, drawing upon the works of philosophers and other relevant experts not in the prescribed syllabus. Teacher/lecturer marking was positive, there were no examples of negative marking, and, where marking schemes, etc were included, showed clear improvement in consistency and accuracy.

Generally, candidates tackling Classic Text questions had a good firm grasp of the main concepts, many producing quality answers well beyond a unit pass level. However, some candidates given a basic pass, lacked clear evidence of analytical skills and tended to give essentially descriptive answers with little evaluation. This point was highlighted to the centre. In the Problems of Philosophy unit (D422) Metaphysics questions (eg existence of God) were generally well done, candidates demonstrating good knowledge of the Ontological, Cosmological and Teleological arguments. Induction questions were well tackled. However, answers on Objective vs Subjective Morality and Liberty vs Equality were less well done. It was felt, in the former case, this was more a reflection on how the individual centre tackled the topic.

Feedback to centres

1. It seems that some centres still feel it is necessary to do three assessments per unit rather than two. Two assessments are sufficient for SQA purposes.
2. Some centres are still using inappropriate coding for candidates, eg H, which, presumably, stands for Hold/Deferred. It would be useful if the new coding be reinforced again to centres.
3. Some centres were sending in incomplete work for a unit. Whilst an acceptance was initially given for a unit it was on condition the full evidence was submitted when the unit was eventually completed. Centres need to classify carefully the units they designate for a March completion date.
4. If a centre was not accepted the main reasons for that were linked clearly to a failure to follow SQA processes. Therefore, non acceptance was linked to the use of non-NAB items that had not been prior moderated, were not clearly suitable and did not have a marking scheme to explain where credit was awarded to candidates or, even, no comment at all was made on the candidate's work.

The moderation process revealed some of the good practices that ensured candidates achieved well involved giving clear feedback to candidates on performance, whether for reassessment or a better pass. The benefit of broadening candidate knowledge of other philosophers aided candidates in dealing with the prescribed texts. Candidates showed a good grasp of the key concepts in the Classic Texts and in many areas of the Problems of Philosophy unit (Induction, Metaphysics). However, questions on Moral and Social Philosophy were less well done.

Teachers/lecturers were beginning to demonstrate consistent and accurate assessment of candidate work, including a wider knowledge of the syllabus requirements. However, whilst most required exacting standards from candidates some borderline candidates were given a little too much credit for descriptive rather than analytical answers.