

## Moderation Feedback – Central - 2005

**Assessment Panel:**

**Social Sciences**

**Qualification area**

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

**Philosophy: Higher  
Intermediate 2**

## **General comments on moderation activity**

Thus, for some, the assessment process was proving to be a significant challenge whilst for others the tasks demonstrated they were working well beyond the requirements of a Unit pass. Generally, candidates were being presented at the appropriate level.

On the whole candidates demonstrated a good knowledge/understanding of the key philosophical areas tackled in the Moral Philosophy (D424) and Problems in Philosophy (D422) Units. Use was made of a range of classical and contemporary sources in a commendable manner. However, the need for some candidates to develop the relevant analytical and evaluatory skills, central to Higher, is an ongoing issue.

In the Problems in Philosophy Unit candidates generally tackled Epistemology and Metaphysics questions. One centre used to good effect its own assessments and this, along with a detailed marking scheme, produced very good answers for both questions. This, however, was not always the case with centre generated assessments. Another centre used a mixture of NAB and centre designed tasks. This proved less effective although, given the teaching was split between two staff, who achieved significantly different responses from the same candidates for Metaphysics and Epistemological questions respectively, the key consideration may well be one of guaranteeing consistency within the centre where two or more staff are involved.

Generally, in the Moral Philosophy Unit (D424) candidates at Higher and Intermediate 2 levels showed an appropriate grasp of the two Normative themes. Candidates regularly quoted from a range of element sources and philosophies. The key issue, as recognised by many of the teachers in commenting on candidate work, was the need to improve on analytical and evaluatory aspects of their responses. Certainly, there were candidates who were working significantly beyond a Unit pass and did well to analyse the moral problems in the light of the Normative theme, others would need to improve significantly in this area to achieve an award in the June exam.

## **Specific issues identified**

Centres were generally accurate in their understanding of procedures.

There were no identifiable areas of misunderstanding with the requirements for specific Units/Courses.

## Feedback to centres

Centres are encouraged to continue the good practice identifiable in this year's moderation sample.

- 1 Candidates should be encouraged to make good use of a range of philosophical sources, contemporary and classical, when tackling philosophical issues. For instance, in addition to explaining the two Normative Theories by reference to Kant, Mill and Bentham, including quotes from core sources, alluding to modern philosophies such as O'Neill, Singer, Hunthouse and Williams might also be used to demonstrate understanding and broaden the analytical/evaluatory aspects so crucial to good performance.
- 2 It is, however, the analytical and evaluatory aspects of candidate answers that require the most attention from centres. Whilst there were many candidates achieving well beyond a Unit pass as a result of good analytical/evaluatory skills, something that will stand them in good stead for the June exam, others were struggling to analyse the implications of a particular philosophical stance and evaluate its particular strengths/weaknesses. It is accepted many teachers are aware of this issue and did highlight this problem in feedback to candidates.
- 3 The amount of advice given to candidates in most centres is to be highly commended. Some centres extended the kind of advice given into helping candidates develop essay writing skills, such as sentence structure, grammar and accurate expression — highly commendable. The key aspect of good practice that consistently comes through was the use of an advice sheet to enable a candidate to identify his/her strengths and weaknesses, to clarify which aspects of an answer fulfilled the specified learning outcomes, how to develop analytical and evaluatory skills in a way that would improve the answer to achieve a good pass in the June exam.
- 4 It is important that where a centre uses its own assessments there should be a clear marking scheme prepared and sent along with work for moderation. It is highly advisable that pre moderation of a centre's own assessment be sought before being attempted by a candidate.