

Our ref: TS/Philosophy/10/06

30 October 2006

To: SQA Coordinator (Secondary Schools, FE Colleges)  
Directors of Education  
SCIS  
Customer Account Managers

**For the attention of all staff responsible for the  
delivery of National Qualifications in Philosophy**

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	Note and pass on
	None — update/information only

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Dear Colleague

### **National Qualifications in Philosophy**

The contents of this letter should be passed to the member of staff responsible for National Qualifications in Philosophy.

### **Diet 2006**

The Principal Assessor reports for diet 2006 can now be found on SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)). These include:

- ◆ PA report Intermediate 2 and Higher
- ◆ PA report Advanced Higher

### **Appeals**

The procedures for stage 1 and 2 appeals were completed during September and October. Colleagues are requested to follow the guidance set out in the following documents prior to submitting appeals:

- ◆ *The Appeals Process: a guide for centres* (AA0690/3, June 2002)
- ◆ *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* (A0992/2, April 2004)

Both documents can be downloaded from SQA's website.

The most commonly found problems in evidence submitted for appeals this year were:

- ◆ Evidence is partial and does not sufficiently represent the whole Course
- ◆ Evidence has been marked inconsistently and does not match the national standard
- ◆ Evidence submitted does not reflect centre estimate

These issues were reported in previous update letters and Principal Assessor reports, however, similar problems were replicated in 2006.

Centres should note that the above problems may disadvantage candidates and staff are encouraged to read the Principal Assessor reports.

The document *Estimates and Assessment Appeals: Guidance on generating evidence* is currently undergoing revision with the revised version due to be posted on SQA's website in October. The revised version clarifies what evidence is required when submitting an appeal for question paper-based Courses and states:

'An integrated prelim which covers a minimum of two Units of the Course plus supporting evidence, such as a high scoring NAB, for the third Unit would support an Appeal for a Grade C (and possibly a B), but not for a Grade A.

For an Appeal for a Grade A, the most convincing evidence would replicate the standard format, duration and security of SQA's question paper.'

### **Marking instructions**

The finalised marking instructions for diet 2006 Course assessments at each level are posted on the Philosophy page of SQA's website.

### **National Qualifications Review**

At Higher and Intermediate 2 only the revised Courses are now available. The Advanced Higher Course remains unchanged and is available only for session 2006/07 after which it will be discontinued. The Advanced Higher Units will, however, remain as free-standing Units in the SQA catalogue.

Also on the website is the Course Assessment specification with a specimen question paper. These are there to assist teachers and lecturers devise a prelim examination that will serve as good centre evidence in the case of submitting appeals. Centres are, however, reminded that the specimen question paper cannot be used as the sole source for a prelim.

*Logic* (Higher) will remain as a free-standing Unit.

### **Sharing good practice**

Teachers and lecturers delivering the newly revised Higher in Philosophy may be interested in a website that has been set up to allow the sharing of ideas. It is **not** an official SQA site but has been set up as a forum where teachers can swap ideas, ask questions and make suggestions. You will find the site at: <http://philosophyhigher.schtuff.com/>

### **Assessment Panel**

The Social Sciences Assessment Panel continues to meet twice a year to look at issues arising in Philosophy as well as the other Social Science subjects. Colleagues are free to feed issues arising in their subject to the Panel either directly through panel members or via SQA officers.

### **Marking for SQA**

Each year the number of entries for the Philosophy Courses are increasing. If you are interested in becoming a Marker in Philosophy, an application form can be downloaded from SQA's website ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)). Alternatively, please contact us on 0131-561 6825 and we will send a form to you. To become a Marker, we normally ask that you have taught the Course for at least three years,

preferably within the past three years. We welcome applications throughout the year and, where a suitable vacancy exists, we may be able to offer an appointment for this year. In 2007, the first diet of the revised Course papers will be centrally marked — this entails the Marker marking scripts over one extended period in the same venue. In a number of subject areas we have had recent examples where the results in centres have improved dramatically after a member of staff joined the Marking Team. The experience of marking helps to increase the awareness of the demands of Course assessment and is proven to be excellent professional and personal development.

I hope that you find the above information useful. If you would like to discuss any matter in more detail, please do not hesitate to telephone me on 0845 213 5502 or e-mail:

**tom.stannage@sqa.org.uk.**

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Stannage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Tom Stannage  
Qualifications Manager  
NQ Social Sciences and Care

**Summary of content of revised Higher Course**

*Critical Thinking in Philosophy* (0.5 credit)

**1. Understanding the Nature of Arguments**

The purpose of an argument

Distinction between statements and arguments

Types of Reasoning

Argument structure

**2. Reliable and Unreliable Arguments**

Valid Arguments

Sound Arguments

Fallacious Reasoning

*Metaphysics* (0.5 credit)

**ALL** candidates must study **EITHER** Debate One **OR** Debate Two.

**Debate One: Is there a rational basis for belief in God?**

- a) The universe requires an ultimate explanation
- b) Apparent order and purpose in the universe requires an explanation
- c) It is impossible to decide if God exists

**Debate Two: Do we have free will?**

- a) Human experience of a sense of choice implies we have free will
- b) Moral accountability presupposes that we have free will
- c) The causal principle implies that our choices are predetermined
- d) Free will as freedom from constraint

*Epistemology* (1 credit)

### **Section 1 - Mandatory**

#### **a) Topic A - Introduction - Why are knowledge claims a problem in philosophy?**

Appearance and Reality  
Belief, Knowledge and Certainty

#### **b) Topic B - What is knowledge?**

The distinction between knowing 'how' and knowing 'that'

The Tripartite Theory of Knowledge

Problems with the Tripartite Theory

#### **c) Topic C: Can knowledge claims be justified?**

The central claims of empiricism and rationalism will be studied.

### **Section Two**

**There is a choice of option in Section Two.** All candidates must investigate **ONE** of the following options:

#### **EITHER**

The study of a rationalist epistemological position through an examination of key extracts from the writings of René Descartes.

#### **OR**

The study of an empiricist epistemological position through an examination of key extracts from the writings of David Hume.

By examining key extracts from the writings of the chosen philosopher, candidates will be able to identify the reasoning and assumptions which give rise to the standard positions of either rationalism or empiricism. Candidates must not simply learn to describe the ideas of the chosen philosopher. They must also develop the ability to identify key stages, key assumptions and weaknesses in the chosen philosopher's position. **For this reason, it is essential that candidates explain and, where appropriate criticise, the stages of reasoning and the assumptions which are present in each of the extracts prescribed in this Section.**

*Moral Philosophy* (1 credit)

### **Section 1**

#### ***A) Utilitarianism as an example of a consequentialist theory***

Consequentialist approaches to ethics

#### ***B) Kant's moral theory as an example of a deontological theory***

Deontological approaches to ethics

### **Section Two: Emotivism**

Candidates are introduced to one specific meta-ethical issue concerning the nature of moral statements. They study the linguistic issue of what we are doing (**i.e. what 'speech act' we perform**) when we claim that an action is right or wrong. To provide a focus for this study candidates investigate the question 'What are we doing when we claim that an action is morally right?' They then investigate the emotivist response to this question.