



National Qualifications 2014 Internal Assessment Report Philosophy

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

National Courses

F8K4 11 Critical Thinking in Philosophy

F8K5 11 Metaphysics

F8K6 11 Moral Philosophy

F8K4 12 Critical Thinking in Philosophy

F8K5 12 Metaphysics

F8K6 12 Moral Philosophy

F8K7 12 Epistemology

General comments

The majority of centres had a good grasp of the national standard. With regard to all Units, there was often evidence of internal verification completed to a high standard.

At times, more precise feedback could be given to candidates on specific points where they had done well (or where they require to focus their attention): this will help candidates to improve their skills and attainment.

Generally, all markers should stick to the letter of the marking scheme and SQA-supplied glossary when it comes to technical terminology like 'validity' and 'soundness', 'deductive' and 'inductive', in Critical Thinking. Doing so will help address any tendencies that there are to be too lenient when marking questions requiring definitional knowledge. This should also help candidates avoid inaccuracy when defining key terms in their responses. (The glossary is provided in the Arrangements document, Statement of Standards section of the Unit specification).

When awarding marks, markers should be certain that AE sections of candidates' scripts do contain suitable philosophical arguments presented by candidates.

In Epistemology, candidate responses continued to demonstrate that aspects of the Unit are better understood than others, while in Metaphysics candidates should still be encouraged to present arguments in standard form. (Both points have been noted in the past.)

In Moral Philosophy, there continues to be some issues with the marking of Kantian ideas and concepts. When awarding KU marks it is essential that candidates cover the necessary material (for example, the Categorical Imperative) in enough detail. Markers should also note the importance of key ideas such as the 'good will' and autonomy in Kantian moral philosophy when evaluating maxims.

Centres should be willing to request development visits where they feel that these would be helpful.

Course Arrangements, Unit specifications, instruments of assessment and exemplification materials

Most centres demonstrate that they have familiarised themselves with the latest Unit specifications and requirements for assessment.

A minority were not rigid enough when meeting specific conditions of assessment for NABs. For example, pupils should not re-sit a NAB using the same answer booklet or piece of A4 paper (so that the end result presents both a failed and passing NAB on the same piece of paper or booklet). Candidates should be provided with new paper and so on for a re-sit NAB.

Markers must adhere closely to marking schemes. This will help to maintain a national standard.

Current/up to date NABs must be used in the assessment of candidates. Marking schemes must match current NABs.

Evidence Requirements

On occasion, clearer indication of where marks have been allocated is necessary. Some centres have addressed this by providing detailed feedback to candidates (some using prepared feedback sheets), that will allow them to identify where they have picked up a mark (KU or AE) so that they do not have to rely on a tally of ticks (which do not always correspond exactly to the mark awarded). This practice will aid candidates when gauging their performance.

Administration of assessments

This is inconsistent across centres.

Centres must ensure that candidate evidence is dated, the full name of the candidate is provided on the answer sheet, and the NAB number is indicated. Individual answers should be correctly identified.

Different NABs should be used for re-assessment. Candidates should be supplied with separate answer booklets or sheets of A4 for any re-assessment.

Teaching should not be tied solely to NABs in order to secure a passing result.

Areas of good practice

- ◆ Assessors provided good feedback and comments to candidates.
- ◆ Some assessors indicated when marks were awarded for KU or AE, which is helpful to candidates when reflecting upon their learning, assessment strategies and preparation/revision.
- ◆ Markers provided comments that together with follow-up discussions would prove helpful to candidates.
- ◆ A number of centres double-marked scripts: this is good practice of internal verification.

Specific areas for improvement

Centres must ensure that candidates are familiar with key terms and their definitions provided in the glossary of the Critical Thinking Unit.

Technical definitions (of validity, deduction and induction, for example) should be consulted when teaching and when marking.

Standard forms should be used in all argument reconstruction in all Units.

Centres must rigidly adhere to the conditions of assessment as specified in the NAB packs.

Centres should ensure that feedback to candidates is clear and well-directed at all times.