

Moderation Feedback - Central

Assessment Panel:

Philosophy

Qualification area

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

Philosophy — Intermediate 2, Higher

Central Moderation

General comments on central moderation activity

The moderation process examined a range of responses to Units D421, D422, D424 at Higher and Intermediate 2 level. Both Moderators found the moderation process was more time consuming this year and that this very likely reflected the fact that acceptance/non-acceptance of centre submissions required more fine judgement calls. Strangely, this was perceived to be a good sign. The good practice identified in previous moderations was becoming more widely implemented.

The location and availability of SQA staff meant any problems were quickly dealt with. Support by SQA staff was excellent.

Specific issues identified

Consistency and accuracy of teacher assessment of candidate performance was a key issue. Centres largely relied upon NAB items for assessment purposes. Allowing for teacher professional judgements, candidates were generally providing responses relevant to the presentation level. Candidates for Moral Philosophy generally showed a good knowledge of the narrative theories and their application. It was more difficult to achieve an overview of candidate performance in D422.

Generally centres did not submit marking schemes, more problematic was that centres were unclear about the completion of the Moderation Sample Form, some putting in a mark rather than indication of Unit pass or fail.

Centres which were not accepted had, generally, not submitted the required two assessments per Unit rather than inappropriate answers.

Feedback to centres

Consistent, accurate and positive marking of candidates work are the hallmark of centres moderated this year. It is clear that presenting centres have taken to hear the advice professed both in the Principal Assessor's and Senior Moderator's reports.

Centre presentations for D424, Moral Philosophy, showed candidates generally demonstrated a good understanding of the two narrative theories and clearly limited these to the moral issue under consideration. Responses in Classic Texts, D421, similarly showed candidates generally had a good understanding of the topics tackled, reference being made to a range of primary and secondary sources, crucial was the fact that responses went beyond knowledge/understanding of the text and that candidates showed good analysis and evaluation whilst making a reasonable effort to answer the set question. Problems in Philosophy, D422, generally elicited satisfactory responses on scepticism and the existence of God.

It was re-assuring to see centres continuing the good practice seen in previous years. Good, clear feedback given by teachers, including strengths and weaknesses in individual candidate answers and advice on how to achieve beyond a Unit pass will certainly prove very useful in preparing them for the final exam. In particular, the use of a checklist and additional written comment is to be encouraged.

Unfortunately, despite clear evidence of continuing good practice, some centres were not accepted. The major reason for this was a failure to submit the minimum two pieces of work per Unit, as advised for 2003-4. It is important that centres request only Units that they can complete for the 31st March deadline for moderation. The other reason was candidates being presented for the wrong level - Intermediate 2 rather than Higher. The problem was compounded by a lack of clarity as to whether candidates were tackling Intermediate 2 or Higher assessments with little advice or feedback to candidates.

Overall, it was felt that Unit assessments enabled teachers to exercise professional judgement on candidate performance and prepare them appropriately for the final exam.