



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Philosophy B: Classic Texts in Philosophy

Unit code: FK82 34

Superclass: DE

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to develop candidates' knowledge of philosophy by examining a number of classic texts in the history of Western philosophy. The Unit will look at three philosophical texts and critically evaluate key arguments. By examining philosophical arguments in their context candidates will gain experience in dealing with complex texts from a variety of historical periods. It will also develop their skills in critical analysis and allow them to become familiar with the language in which philosophy is written. This Unit is intended for those candidates who wish to develop their knowledge and understanding of Philosophy and for those who wish to use it as a basis for further study.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Explain key themes and arguments in Plato's *Republic*
- 2 Evaluate key themes and arguments in two contrasting philosophical texts

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

The previous study of Philosophy through Units and National Qualifications at SCQF levels 5 or 6, or other similar qualifications, is desirable but not essential. Candidates would benefit from achievement of HN Unit *Philosophy A: An Introduction to Philosophical Debate*.

Credit points and level

2 Higher National Unit credits at SCQF level 7: (16 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

General information (cont)

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF 6 and *ICT* at SCQF level 5 in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Assessment

This Unit will be assessed holistically using two instruments of assessment, as follows:

- 1 Outcome 1 will be assessed by a closed book instrument of assessment sampling from the evidence requirements for the outcome.
- 2 Outcome 2 will be assessed by one open book assessment covering all evidence requirements for the outcome.

An exemplar instrument of assessment and marking guidelines has been produced to indicate the national standard of achievement required at SCQF level 7.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Explain key themes and arguments in Plato's *Republic*.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Plato's Metaphysics and Epistemology: The theory of forms; arguments for the forms; the allegories of the Sun, Line and Cave;
- ◆ Plato's Social and Political Philosophy: The philosopher king; criticism of democracy and other forms of government; Social organisation and the ideal state.

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can give:

- ◆ a description of Plato's arguments on the topic
- ◆ an analysis of Plato's arguments on the topic
- ◆ an evaluation of Plato's position on the topic

This part of the Unit will be assessed by a closed book assessment, which means candidates should be assessed without the use of notes, textbooks, VLE or other materials in a supervised setting.

The knowledge and skills for Outcome 1 will be sampled in the assessment. Candidates will only be assessed on **ONE** topic chosen from the topics listed in *Knowledge and/or Skills*.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

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Assessment Guidelines

There is a wide variety of methods of assessment that would allow candidates to meet the evidence requirements. The following are suggestions and there may be other methods that would be suitable. Centres are reminded that Prior Verification would help to ensure that the national standard is being met.

This assessment could take the form of a set of unseen structured questions requiring a response of approximately 1000 words across all questions *or* an essay, also requiring approximately 1000 words *or* an oral response to set questions requiring the candidate to respond in sustained detail for approximately 8 minutes *or* an oral presentation of approximately 8 minutes duration *or* another method decided by the Centre. As this is a closed book assessment, it would not be appropriate for candidates to use visual aids (such as Powerpoint presentations or posters) in the oral presentation, rather it would be a sustained presentation without the aid of notes. Broad guidance on the area to be assessed will be given one week prior to the assessment date. It is likely that if it is a written assessment it will take between 90 minutes and two hours to complete.

Outcome 2

Evaluate key themes and arguments in two contrasting philosophical texts

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Key theme(s) from two contrasting philosophical texts
- ◆ Major arguments relating to the two contrasting themes

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ Explain the key theme/s tackled by the texts
- ◆ Define and use appropriate philosophical terminology relevant to the theme
- ◆ Explain the major positions adopted in the text
- ◆ Evaluate these positions in terms of possible strengths and weaknesses
- ◆ Draw a personal conclusion with regard to the text

The assessment will be open book and should be completed according to a prescribed format set in advance. The format chosen will provide evidence of all items listed under the knowledge and skills section. A feedback session with the candidate should ensure authenticity of the candidate's work.

The assessment will be *open book*. This means that candidates will be allowed access to materials (eg text books, notes, VLE).

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Philosophy B: Classic Texts in Philosophy

Regardless of the assessment method chosen, the candidate must submit a bibliography presented in a standard referencing format such as Harvard. In response to the task set, the candidate must convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent form.

Assessment Guidelines

There is a wide variety of methods of assessment that would allow candidates to meet the evidence requirements. The following are suggestions and there may be other methods that would be suitable. Centres are reminded that Prior Verification would help to ensure that the national standard is being met.

This assessment could take the form of an open book essay with an expected candidate response of approximately 2000 words *or* an individual oral presentation *or* poster exhibition with expected candidate's response of approximately 15 minutes in presentation *or* explanation of poster *or* any other method that is appropriate to meet the evidence requirements. Candidates could also provide the evidence requirements in the form of an individual Blog or creation of a website, with approximately 2000 words.

Tutors should make candidates aware of the importance of the judicious selection of appropriate academic sources. Neither of the two texts chosen as the subject matter for Outcome 2 should be the same one chosen for assessment of Outcome 1 (i.e. Plato's *Republic*) and must tackle a common theme or issue to facilitate a comparison between the texts. Suggested texts can be found in the *Guidance on the Content and Context section*.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Philosophy B: Classic Texts in Philosophy

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 80 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This is one of a suite of Units that covers Philosophy within HNC/D Social Sciences Group Awards. This Unit prepares candidates for *Philosophy C: An Introduction to Logical Analysis*. The Unit can be taught as a free-standing Unit or as part of the HNC/D Social Sciences Group Awards.

The aim of this Unit is to provide grounding in a variety of texts from the history of Western philosophy. The Unit allows candidates to not only tackle relatively contemporary texts but also to ensure that they are exposed to at least one ancient Greek text in which they can see philosophy in one of its earliest written forms. Plato's *Republic* is chosen as a mandatory text because of the range of topics tackled in the text, the variety of interesting passages it contains, the historical significance of the text and the accessibility of language in its modern English translation. The choice of the remaining two texts is left at the discretion of the centre but consideration should similarly be given to the accessibility of the language for the level of the Unit.

Candidates may benefit from some historical background to contextualise the text in its period and well as some relevant biographical detail of the philosophers tackled. Some key questions to prepare the candidates for exploring a text might be:

- ◆ What key events influenced the arguments in the text?
- ◆ Which movements or schools of thought does the author exemplify?
- ◆ What contemporary debate(s) does this text contribute to?

Suitable texts for Outcome 2 could be:

Rene Descartes: Meditations on First Philosophy

- ◆ Method of Doubt
- ◆ The Cogito
- ◆ God as Guarantor of Clear and Distinct Perceptions
- ◆ Resolution of Doubts

David Hume: Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding

- ◆ Theory of Impressions and Ideas
- ◆ Hume's Fork
- ◆ Causation
- ◆ Animals

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Philosophy B: Classic Texts in Philosophy

These two texts make a good selection because they both tackle a number of similar themes (eg. Epistemology; Metaphysics; Religious knowledge) and stand on opposing sides of a number of debates. This means that interesting contrasts and comparisons can be made between them and a single instrument of assessment could be used to demonstrate knowledge of both texts and the associated skills of engaging with these texts. Centres, however, are at liberty to choose two alternative contrasting texts which explore at least one common theme or topic. This will allow tutors to take advantage of particular areas of expertise.

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Centres should structure the teaching programme to allow time for development of Core Skills and other transferable skills and for assessment practice within the notional hours suggested.

Centres should design appropriate assessment instruments based on a method that is suitable in allowing candidates to meet the evidence requirements. This can be written or oral (depending on the needs of the candidates and the organisational aspects for the Centre in choosing particular methods). If an oral method is chosen, it is recommended that Centres record this (either by DVD or digital recorder etc.) or provide assessor notes on the presentation for External Verification purposes. Oral presentations (or poster exhibitions) must be done individually as each candidate has to show evidence of meeting all evidence requirements, so a group presentation would not be suitable. If the Centre is using a Blog or creation of a website as the way of gathering evidence, this should not be in the public domain. Rather it should be on an Intranet or private area of a VLE to reduce the likelihood of plagiarism. Authentication of the candidate's work is essential. It would be helpful to collect notes or PPT presentation materials from the candidate as further evidence of meeting SCQF level 7 in the presentation.

A Centre can choose to use a mixture of methods across a cohort, as it may be more suitable for some candidates to give a written response and for others to use an oral method or to create a 'Blog' etc. It is possible to combine the poster exhibition with an oral presentation, where, for example, a candidate may produce a detailed poster explaining how two texts tackle an issue or theme and would evaluate the arguments in an oral presentation using PPT or a mind map as a visual aid. The time across all evidence requirements covered would be approximately 15 minutes (not 15 minutes each for the poster and for the oral presentation, but rather combining both in the time). They should also be done on the same occasion. Whichever method is chosen the candidates should be allowed access to notes, text books or other materials, as the assessment of Outcome 2 must be conducted open book.

Centres should make sure they can authenticate a candidate's work. This may be done by questioning a candidate about their work, by seeing drafts of work under construction, by having partial write-up in presence of assessor or by using an anti-plagiarism tool, such as Turnitin or SafeAssign, which checks Internet sites.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Philosophy B: Classic Texts in Philosophy

Remediation for Outcome 1 could be done by oral clarification for minor omissions or to clarify minor detail. If additional information is required this can be added, as long as it is in total approximately 100 words or less per outcome. If these conditions cannot be met, then the candidate should be reassessed using a different set of questions for Outcome 1.

Remediation for Outcome 2 should be done by a review of the original work. Candidates should be asked to hand in a complete piece of work, with amendments incorporated in the appropriate context, rather than a large add-on at the end, or asked to fully rewrite their work to a prescribed format if it did not meet requirements. Oral clarification could be used for minor omissions or to clarify minor detail. If it is thought appropriate that a candidate tackle a different topic or question, then that new submission would count as a reassessment.

In oral work, candidates can be questioned by the assessor at the end of their presentation or explanation, where minor omissions occur, or where clarity is required. This would help to reduce the need for reassessment. However, where more work is required to meet the evidence requirements (eg where the quality of evidence is poor in a presentation) another presentation of the same duration, on the same topic or question as the original would be required. Only where a different topic or question is attempted would this be classed as reassessment.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The delivery and assessment of this Unit may contribute towards the development of Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6 and *ICT* at SCQF level 5. It can also support the development of other transferable skills, such as, essay writing, referencing, citation and bibliography skills and thinking, analytical and critical skills.

It is possible to develop **Communication at SCQF level 6** if the assessment takes the form of an essay or oral presentation. **For written communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce well structured written communication on complex topics.** To develop this skill candidates can be encouraged in both formative and summative assessment to present all essential ideas/information and supporting detail in a logical and effective order; use a structure that is organised and use paragraphing to make distinctions between facts, opinions, arguments and conclusion, use a format, layout, and word choice which are appropriate to the content and context, and use spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and sentence structures which are consistently accurate.

The candidates could be tasked with producing a written communication which presents, analyses, and evaluates a substantial body of information. These skills can be developed through formative activities, such as shorter essays on specific arguments in a philosophical text, without being formally assessed for certification of the Core Skill. The task of comparing and evaluating two texts is complex, so should easily fit with SCQF level 6.

It is important to develop essay-writing skills for candidates' future progression. In doing this candidates should also be encouraged to use an appropriate referencing method, such as Harvard, for any formative or summative essays. Referencing, citation and bibliography skills are best developed using the vehicle of formative essay writing.

For oral communication at SCQF level 6 the skill is: produce and respond to oral communication on a complex topic. In both formative and summative assessment the candidate could be encouraged to give a detailed oral presentation on the two texts, which would be a complex topic. The specific skills of using an appropriate level of vocabulary, consistent spoken language structures and formality, conveying all essential information, opinions, or ideas with supporting detail accurately and coherently, and with varied emphasis as appropriate and responding to others, taking account of their contributions would be developed in an oral presentation or in an oral explanation of a poster exhibition. Although a summative assessment would require individual work and individual presentation, a formative assessment could be constructed that would encourage candidates to work in a small group, with a few people contributing to the presentation. This may allow a candidate to experience the demands of oral presentation before choosing this as an option for summative assessment of the Unit (if Centre is able to give a choice).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Philosophy B: Classic Texts in Philosophy

For the Core Skill of Information and Communication Technology at SCQF level 5 the skills are: 'Accessing Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to access information within a range of tasks' and 'Providing/Creating Information, use ICT independently, effectively, and responsibly to carry out a range of processing tasks'. This Unit can help to develop such skills by the use of mini formative presentations using PowerPoint or other ICT presentation tool that will also support the development of oral communication. A summative assessment using ICT presentation methods is also possible. Specific areas of accessing information using Internet searches or VLE use and providing and creating information can be developed in such tasks. Creating a Blog or a website for the summative assessment is another way in which this Core Skill can be developed. This could be used where candidates (and their lecturer) have particular skills and interest in ICT.

Thinking, analytical and critical skills could be developed by posing questions at appropriate points in the delivery, enabling discussion and promoting the need for candidates to take responsibility for learning by encouraging the development of research skills via the Internet or using text books.

Curriculum for Excellence

The Curriculum for Excellence aspires to place learners at the centre of the curriculum and develop their capacities as Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors. All four capacities will be developed throughout this unit.

This unit will develop the literacy and communication skills of the learners by way of formative and summative assessments. Independent learning is required throughout this unit, whilst the opportunity is available for group learning through formative tasks. The subject of philosophy demands independent thinking, and through reasoned evaluation encourages learners to reach satisfactory conclusions. Further opportunity is offered to develop technological skills by way of researching via the internet, the production of word documents, PowerPoint presentations, blogs and/or the creation of a website. Collectively these skills contribute towards the creation of a **Successful Learner**.

Time management skills should improve during the delivery of this Unit, as should the ability to relate to others through formative tasks. The topics in Philosophy B should allow the learner to develop their own thoughts of the world around them, and they will be given the opportunity to express these views within the classroom setting. This should lend to the emergence of a **Confident Individual**, particularly if they gain success in the achievement of the Unit.

Philosophy B can also contribute to learners becoming **Responsible Citizens** by allowing the opportunity to develop knowledge and understanding of issues which touch on society and the learner's place within it and by giving learners the chance to formulate their own justifications for the views they hold.

Learners can become **Effective Contributors** to society by learning to work together effectively in teams within the class setting. This can be achieved through group-work where they can apply critical thinking within new contexts. In planning group tasks, evaluating arguments and presenting their findings, learners will also develop problem solving skills.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Philosophy B: Classic Texts in Philosophy

Both oral and written communication skills will also be developed. This can be achieved through written work, individual PowerPoint presentations, and the creation of blogs and websites.

All these skills can be developed within the Unit.

Open learning

This Unit could be delivered by open or distance learning; however, it would require planning by the centre to ensure sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

Arrangements would have to be made to ensure that the assessment for Outcome 1 was conducted closed book and under supervision. For Outcome 2 a written response in the form of an essay or answers to structured questions could be posted or emailed to the assessor or uploaded onto a VLE. An oral presentation could be used that would be recorded on DVD and sent to the assessor, or could be done using video-conferencing or web-link and observed by the assessor.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Clarification of remediation and reassessment statements.	26/10/12
03	Time for closed book assessment extended to two hours.	08/05/13

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Philosophy B: Classic Texts in Philosophy

This Unit is designed to develop your knowledge of philosophy by examining a number of classic texts in the history of Western philosophy. The Unit will look at three philosophical texts and critically evaluate the key arguments within. By examining philosophical arguments in their context you will gain experience in dealing with complex texts from a variety of historical periods. The first text will be Plato's seminal work *The Republic* and your centre will select two others which explore a common theme. This Unit will develop your skills in critical analysis and allow you to become familiar with the language in which philosophy is written. It is intended for candidates who have a general interest in philosophical issues and will develop a range of skills necessary for further study in philosophy.

At the end of the Unit you will undertake two assessments. One will be *closed book* and will focus on the philosophy of Plato in a written response of around 1000 words. The other will involve you in critically evaluating the two other texts you have studied. You will be given the task/question at an appropriate point in the delivery of the Unit. The assessment may be a written essay of approximately 2000 words or a set of structured questions with an expected response of approximately 2000 words or an oral presentation of 15 minutes or a poster exhibition of approximately 15 minutes oral explanation or another method decided by your centre. Your centre will inform you of the chosen method, which will be *open book*. This means that you will be allowed access to materials (eg text books, notes, VLE).

As you progress through the Unit material, you will be encouraged to develop the Core Skills of *Communication* at SCQF level 6; *Information and Communication Technology* at SCQF level 5 by the types of activities you will experience.

You will also be given opportunities throughout the Unit to develop as a successful learner, a confident individual, a responsible citizen and an effective contributor.