



National 5  
Course  
Specification



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# National 5 Philosophy Course Specification (C754 75)

**Valid from August 2013**

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this Course Specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

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## Course outline

**Course title:** National 5 Philosophy

**SCQF:** level 5 (24 SCQF credit points)

**Course code:** C754 75

### Mandatory Units

**H24J 75 Philosophy: Arguments in Action (National 5) 6 SCQF credit points**

And either

**H24K 75 Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt (National 5) 6 SCQF credit points**

or

**H24K 75 Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt with a Scottish Context \* (National 5) 6 SCQF credit points**

and

**H24M 75 Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (National 5) 6 SCQF credit points**

**Course assessment 6 SCQF credit points**

This Course includes six SCQF credit points to allow additional time for preparation for Course assessment. The Course assessment covers the added value of the Course. Further information on the Course assessment is provided in the Assessment section.

\*Scottish Studies Award contributing Unit: This Course Specification should be read in conjunction with the relevant Scottish Studies Unit Specification on the [Scottish Studies Award web page](#).

### Recommended entry

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 4 People and Society Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 4 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course

### Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Higher Philosophy Course
- ◆ Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course
- ◆ other SQA qualifications in social studies, social science or related areas at SCQF level 5 or SCQF level 6

An understanding of philosophy also provides a useful background for study or employment in a number of other areas such as the media, politics, social science, health professions and law.

Further details are provided in the Rationale section.

## **Equality and inclusion**

This Course Specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence. For further information, please refer to the *Course Support Notes*.

## **Rationale**

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this Course, and its component Units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Course provides learners with opportunities to continue to acquire and develop the attributes and capabilities of the four capacities as well as skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work.

All Courses provide opportunities for learners to develop breadth, challenge and application, but the focus and balance of the assessment will be appropriate for the subject area.

## **Relationship between the Course and Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles**

This Course builds on learners' general education as well as on their existing knowledge and understanding of social studies and of religious and moral education principles and practice.

Philosophy involves learners in exploring issues about knowledge, morality and the world we live in and enables them to analyse and develop philosophical questions and arguments. These skills will in turn help them to develop in all four capacities.

The Course contributes to personal and social development as learners engage with a range of important questions and issues that will inform their own ideas and opinions. The thinking skills used in the Course will help learners to order their thinking and express themselves confidently, while also helping them to appreciate the values and beliefs of others. This will enable learners to become more effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Philosophy not only enables learners to develop a broader understanding of different views — it also helps them to develop confidence in their own reasoning and in their ability to make informed decisions.

## **Purpose and aims of the Course**

The main purpose of this Course is to challenge learners to think clearly about problems by asking them questions about the world we live in. Learners will explore philosophical ideas and arguments relating to general and fundamental philosophical issues of relevance in the world today. Learners will develop the ability to use philosophical thinking skills and terminology to analyse and evaluate arguments and to develop their own reasoning skills.

The Units in the Course will provide learners with a basic knowledge and understanding of different positions and theories in Philosophy.

Thinking and communication skills, which are important in education and employment, are developed throughout the Course.

The broad aims of the Course are to:

- ◆ develop basic knowledge and understanding of philosophy and philosophers
- ◆ develop basic thinking, analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to philosophy
- ◆ encourage learners' ability to use abstract thought
- ◆ offer learners insight into the ideas of others which might be different from their own
- ◆ develop communication skills appropriate to philosophy

### **Information about typical learners who might do the Course**

This Course is suitable for all learners with an interest in using thinking and communication skills to explore ideas about human existence.

Learners who like to discuss and share ideas are likely to be enthusiastic about the Course. Philosophy offers learners opportunities to be reasoned in the way they respond to debates and promotes challenge and enjoyment in learning. Generally, learners will have little or no prior experience of studying philosophy. However, their general education and life experience will provide a good foundation for them to progress to this qualification.

Skills that learners develop in the Course include: the ability to describe different philosophical ideas and theories; developing reasoning in discussion and debate; analysing and evaluating simple arguments; using appropriate sources and expressing views that are informed by critical thinking and philosophical enquiry.

# Course structure and conditions of award

## Course structure

This Course provides a foundation for progression to the Higher Philosophy Course.

The main purpose of the Course is to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of philosophy and their analytical, evaluative, thinking and communication skills.

The course aims to enable learners to engage with challenging questions about the human condition such as existence, truth, reality and what it means to be moral. This will help them to develop confidence in their own reasoning and understanding of challenging concepts.

Options within Units offer personalisation and choice.

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a number of ways.

### **Philosophy: Arguments in Action (National 5)**

This Unit develops learners' ability to think philosophically. Learners will acquire a basic set of thinking and philosophical skills which they can apply to analyse and evaluate a range of everyday and philosophical arguments, drawing from a variety of contexts.

### **Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt (National 5)**

This Unit equips learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and discuss theories of knowledge. Learners will investigate reasons for scepticism in philosophy, with reference to different sources. Learners will actively explore problems associated with theories of knowledge, and use thinking skills to evaluate theories and to express opinions with supporting reasons.

### **Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (National 5)**

This Unit equips learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to examine and understand specific philosophical issues in moral philosophy. Learners will be introduced to different moral theories and philosophers to help explain different moral positions in relation to real-life situations. Learners will explore how different theories can be applied to moral issues. Learners will develop their own opinions about the theories explored and support these with reasons.

## Conditions of award

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all of the Units as well as the Course assessment. The required Units are shown in the Course outline section. Course assessment will provide the basis for grading attainment in the Course award.

## Skills, knowledge and understanding

Further information on the assessment of the skills, knowledge and understanding for the Course is given in the *Course Assessment Specification*. A broad overview of the mandatory subject skills, knowledge and understanding that will be assessed in the Course is given in this section. This covers:

- ◆ using philosophical skills and techniques
- ◆ knowing, understanding and being able to clearly explain basic philosophical positions and theories
- ◆ discussing and debating philosophical positions
- ◆ analysing and evaluating philosophical positions, at a basic level
- ◆ identifying assumptions at a basic level
- ◆ recognising reasoning and common fallacies used in arguments
- ◆ developing knowledge and understanding of the structure of simple arguments
- ◆ applying basic philosophical skills to analyse and evaluate simple arguments
- ◆ communicating philosophically-informed views on questions and claims using suitable terminology and with reference to appropriate texts and sources

## Assessment

Information about assessment for the Course is included in the *Course Assessment Specification*, which provides full details including advice on how a learner's overall attainment for the Course will be determined.

### Unit assessment

All Units are internally assessed against the requirements shown in the *Unit Specification*.

They can be assessed on an individual Unit basis or by using other approaches which combine the assessment for more than one Unit.

They will be assessed on a pass/fail basis within centres. SQA will provide rigorous external quality assurance, including external verification, to ensure assessment judgments are consistent and meet national standards.

The assessment of the Units in this Course will be as follows:

#### **Philosophy: Arguments in Action (National 5)**

When presented with a simple argument, the learner will be able to analyse the argument by distinguishing the conclusion from the premises, identifying assumptions and presenting the argument in standard form. The learner will be able to identify any common fallacies and evaluate the reliability of the argument.

#### **Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt (National 5)**

The learner will be able to explain reasons for scepticism by describing a philosophical definition of knowledge and identifying problems with relying on sense, experience and reason. The learner will evaluate theories of knowledge by explaining a rationalist view and an empiricist view, and will express an opinion on rationalist and empiricist views with supporting reasons.

#### **Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (National 5)**

The learner will be able to explain and evaluate a moral theory. This will involve describing the main features of a moral theory and applying the theory to specific moral issues. The learner will evaluate the theory by describing its strengths and weaknesses, and will express an opinion on the theory, giving supporting reasons.

### Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of [added value](#)<sup>1</sup>. At National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher, the added value will be assessed in the Course assessment. The added value for the Course must address the key purposes and aims of the Course as defined in the Course Rationale. It will do this by addressing one or more of breadth, challenge or application.

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<sup>1</sup> Jargon Buster can be found here: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html)



In the National 5 Philosophy Course, added value will focus on:

- ◆ breadth
- ◆ application

The Course will be assessed through a [question paper](#)<sup>2</sup> and an [assignment](#)<sup>3</sup>.

The question paper will sample philosophical knowledge and understanding from Course Units and will assess the learner's ability to apply knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate theories and arguments.

The assignment will be a report on a philosophical investigation using philosophical skills, knowledge and understanding to give a reasoned view on a question or claim.

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<sup>2</sup> Jargon Buster can be found here: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58409.html)

<sup>3</sup> See link above for definition.

# Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and are drawn from the main skills areas listed below. These must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities.

## **1 Literacy**

- 1.1 Reading
- 1.2 Writing
- 1.3 Listening and talking

## **5 Thinking skills**

- 5.3 Applying
- 5.4 Analysing and evaluation

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course. Further information on building in skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for the Course is given in the *Course Support Notes*.

## Administrative information

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**Published:** September 2014 (version 1.2)

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### History of changes to National Course Specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	1.1	Philosophical investigation requirements amended for clarification.	Qualifications Development Manager	June 2013
	1.2	Scottish Studies Award Unit contributing information added. No other changes made to document content	Qualifications Manager	September 2014

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