



Higher
Course
Specification



Higher Philosophy Course Specification (C754 76)

Valid from August 2014

This edition: September 2014, version 2.1

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this Course Specification can be downloaded from SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk.

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

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2014

Course outline

Course title: Higher Philosophy

SCQF: level 6 (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C754 76

Mandatory Units

| | | |
|---------|---|----------------------|
| H24J 76 | Philosophy: Arguments in Action (Higher) | 6 SCQF credit points |
| H24K 76 | Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt (Higher) | 6 SCQF credit points |
| Or | | |
| H24K 76 | Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt with a Scottish Context (Higher)* | 6 SCQF credit points |
| H24M 76 | Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (Higher) | 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 one or more of the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

- ◆ National 5 Philosophy Course or relevant component Units
- ◆ National 5 Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies Course

Progression

This Course or its Units may provide progression to:

- ◆ Philosophy, social studies or social science subjects at SCQF level 7

An understanding of philosophy also provides a useful background for study or employment in a number of areas such as the media, politics, social policy, 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 an exploration of questions about knowledge, morality and the world we live in. The Course enables learners to become more aware of the complexity of everyday and philosophical questions and arguments. The skill of looking critically at questions and their responses will help learners in their journey to the four capacities.

The Course contributes to personal and social development as learners engage with a range of philosophical questions and issues. Learners are enabled to develop their own ideas and viewpoints, and to analyse and evaluate the philosophical positions of others. Learners will develop their ability to express arguments and viewpoints coherently, whilst also appreciating the values and beliefs of others. The Course will therefore enable learners to develop awareness and understanding of a diverse range of philosophical viewpoints. This will help learners to become more effective contributors and encourage more responsible citizenship.

Learners who engage with philosophy are able to develop a broader understanding of different views and develop confidence in their own reasoning and 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 analyse and evaluate philosophical positions and arguments and to develop their own reasoning skills.

In this Course learners will be encouraged to challenge assumptions and to apply their knowledge and understanding of different positions and theories in philosophy. Thinking, analytical and evaluative skills, which are important in education and employment, are developed throughout the Course.

The broad aims of this Course are to:

- ◆ develop knowledge and understanding of some key philosophical concepts and questions concerning arguments in action, moral philosophy and epistemology
- ◆ develop critical thinking, analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to philosophy
- ◆ develop the ability to engage with abstract ideas
- ◆ develop the ability to develop and express reasoned arguments and conclusions
- ◆ develop skills of analysis, evaluation and expressing a coherent line of argument, by investigating a philosophical question

Information about typical learners who might do the Course

The Course is suitable for all learners with an interest in using thinking and communication skills to explore questions about human existence. Learners who like to discuss and share ideas are likely to be enthusiastic about the Course.

Learners progressing from National 5 Philosophy will find that the Course provides opportunities to build on their thinking and communication skills and extend their knowledge of philosophy.

Course structure and conditions of award

Course structure

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

Each Unit of the Course develops analysis, evaluation and the ability to express reasoned views. Learners will develop their ability to analyse and evaluate philosophical positions and arguments and apply these to given situations. Each Unit is sufficiently open and flexible to allow choice in contexts for learning. 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 (Higher)

This Unit develops learners' ability to analyse and evaluate arguments. Learners will develop knowledge and understanding of argument structure, philosophical techniques and errors in reasoning.

Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt (Higher)

This Unit develops learners' ability to analyse and evaluate theories of knowledge. Learners will develop knowledge and understanding of rationalism and empiricism.

Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (Higher)

This Unit develops learners' ability to analyse and evaluate moral theories. Learners will develop knowledge and understanding of a key moral philosophical theory.

Conditions of award

To gain the award of the Course, the learner must pass all 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 will be 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:

- ◆ The ability to analyse and evaluate arguments, theories of knowledge and moral theories
- The ability to understand and explain the implications and consequences of arguments and theories
- ◆ The ability to express reasoned views
- ◆ Knowledge and understanding of argument structure, philosophical fallacies, philosophical techniques and other factors relevant to evaluating arguments
- ◆ Knowledge and understanding of key theories of knowledge.
- ◆ Knowledge and understanding of key moral philosophical theories.

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

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 a Unit-by-Unit basis or by combined assessment.

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 (Higher) Learners will develop the ability to analyse and evaluate arguments using argument diagrams and apply knowledge and understanding of argument structure, philosophical fallacies and philosophical techniques.

Philosophy: Knowledge and Doubt (Higher)

Learners will develop the ability to analyse and evaluate empiricist or rationalist texts. They will develop knowledge and understanding of the two theories.

Philosophy: Moral Philosophy (Higher)

Learners will develop the ability to analyse and evaluate a moral theory. They will develop knowledge and understanding of a moral theory, and apply it to a specific situation or issue.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these Units is provided in the *SQA Secure Site*.

Course assessment

Courses from National 4 to Advanced Higher include assessment of added value¹. 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 breadth, challenge and application.

This will be assessed through a question paper² and an assignment³.

¹ Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster>

² Definitions can be found here: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/jargonbuster>

³ See link above for definition.

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

The assignment will require learners to investigate a philosophical question and analyse and evaluate relevant philosophical views or positions. They will use philosophical skills, knowledge and understanding to develop a coherent and reasoned argument.

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 evaluating

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 and Unit Support Notes*.

Administrative information

Published: April 2014, version 2.1

History of changes to National Course Specification

| Course details | Version | Description of change | Authorised by | Date |
|----------------|---------|---|------------------------------------|----------------|
| C754 76 | 2.0 | Re-worded Course aims, skills, knowledge and understanding and description of added value assessment. This has clarified the aims, skills, knowledge and understanding of the Course, and provided clearer information on the structure and coverage of Course and Unit assessment. | Qualifications Development Manager | April 2014 |
| | 2.1 | Scottish Studies Award Unit contributing information added. No other changes made to document content. | Qualifications Manager | September 2014 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

This specification may be reproduced in whole or in part for educational purposes provided that no profit is derived from reproduction and that, if it is reproduced in part, the source is acknowledged. Additional copies of this Course Specification can be downloaded from SQA's website at www.sqa.org.uk.

Note: You are advised to check SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Specification.

© Scottish Qualifications Authority 2014